

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JEANS TO POINCARÉ

IN THE INTERESTING and thought-provoking article "How Social is Science?" (SR Apr. 27) Poul Anderson has wrongly attributed to Sir James Jeans the statement that a heap of unorganized facts is no more a science than a heap of bricks is a house. The observation was originally made by Henri Poincaré: "Le savant doit ordonner; on fait la science avec des faits comme une maison avec des pierres; mais une accumulation de faits n'est pas plus une science qu'un tas de pierres n'est une maison."

FRED CALVELLI.

Montara, Calif.

NO APPRECIATION

THE ARTICLE was very helpful. I think it would be a fascinating study if some writer investigated why certain inventions were not applied at certain times. For example, as Mr. Anderson suggests, with a supply of chattel slaves the Greek inventors found no appreciation of their primitive steam engine. That would be one part of the study.

MARK STARR.

New York, N.Y.

UNCONSCIOUS CHANGE

AFTER TELLING us concisely what constitutes science, what the difference is between science and technology, what is known of the development of science, and what effect language may have on the development of science, Anderson suggests that the scientific enterprise and what scientists investigate depend on the society and that "we might take a little thought before changing the conditions of the society too much." This assumes that we are aware of the changing conditions in society and that we are, in fact, "conscious" engineers of any change. And this is based on the broader assumption that we have a satisfactory knowledge of human behavior. We do not. A science of human behavior now is at the same point in its development as physics was at the time of Kepler.

ROBERT E. WRIGHT.

Iowa City, Iowa.

LONG REST FOR R & H

ROBERT LEWIS SHAYON is to be commended for not writing in dread of the reputations of the Messrs. Rodgers and Hammerstein (SR Apr. 27). As a viewer and a fairly intelligent person, I have rarely been as insulted as I was by R & H. Even Betty Furness has more respect for her viewers than R & H seem to have. "Cinderella" was not designed for tele-viewing; it was just that its creators were afraid of presenting it on Broadway. The plot was dull, the characterizations were duller, and, if you will forgive the pun, the music was dulles: it flitted here, it flitted there, it never once was really



"Please look pleasant. In a moment you may resume your normal expression."

marked by clarity, not to mention quality.

Frankly, I think that Rodgers and Hammerstein need a long, long rest.

HARVARD HOLLENBERG.

New York, N.Y.

MISSPENT TALENTS

I MUST REGISTER my eager agreement with Shayon in characterizing "Cinderella" as a "wonderless bore." Perhaps the critics were compelled to acclaim it for, by now, it is well-nigh sacrilegious brazenly to dislike anything by the two maudlin millionaires. But then, the R & H "Cinderella" shouldn't be unduly criticized for failing to deliver as promised by the advance sounding of trumpets. What ninety-minute mish-mosh *does* live up to advance notices? Indeed, "Cinderella" is but one in a long line of wonderless bores fondly referred to in the trade as "spectaculars"; but "spectacle" seems a more apt judgment of these one-hour or ninety-minute parades of misspent talents.

BILL BENNETT.

Muskegon, Mich.

TOO SHORT

PROFESSOR MARSHALL FISHWICK had some fascinating thoughts as he flew from Washington to Richmond (SR Apr. 13). but I rather doubt that he had them within the span of time he indicates. I very much doubt that he did really fly from "Washington to Richmond in a quarter of an hour," even with the plane being nearly five minutes late. The flying time from Washington to Richmond is more nearly forty minutes, I find. Let us hope, however, that Professor Fishwick

takes many more such trips, and that they all inspire him to some equally provocative thoughts.

ROBERT ROY WRIGHT.

New York, N. Y.

A VISIT FOR MODISANE?

I HAVE JUST TODAY read "The Man Who Didn't Come to Dinner" (SR Apr. 20). As I read line after line I kept thinking how wonderful it would be if Mr. Modisane could come to our country. Then I came to the paragraph wherein he stated his desire to do just that. It would be fine. He seems to have so much to offer.

HAZEL M. WHITE.

Kansas City, Mo.

MORE REPORTS

WE HOPE NC visits some other countries in Africa and that we can have his analyses in SR. We should know more about the prospective explosive developments in the more than forty different countries of Africa.

JAMES CORRY ELLINGTON.

Galveston, Tex.

PUBLISHER'S CONTRIBUTION

I ENJOYED THE article and have a suggestion to make. Doubtless the widow, like all proud women, would dislike "charity." Instead, why don't the publishers of Henry Nxumalo's book send her, instead of just the royalties, all the profits over and above their expenses? That would be a good piece of publicity on their part and enhance the sale of the book.

PAMELA HARNETT.

Chicago, Ill.



BROADWAY POSTSCRIPT

Requiem for a Roué

EUGENE O'NEILL's genius for naturalistic playwriting finally led him into writing long works in which people—as in life—say the same things a dozen times; in which people—as in life—do not change; and in which people—as in life—peel off the shams of pride to arrive at a moment of short-lived serenity, and then rush back to other protective shams. This is the pattern of his final play, "A Moon for the Misbegotten," which though it has played successfully in Stockholm and Berlin is only now having its New York premiere.

Unfortunately, this American production instead of strengthening the bonds of love, anguish, and humor which tie James Tyrone, Jr., Josie Hogan, and her father together, spends too much of its energy on less essential matters. To tell us she is a messy and unlovely farm girl Wendy Hiller works frantically at contorting her face, walking in grotesque postures, and speaking in a slightly cockney accent that cannot help but remind us of her Liza Doolittle in the film, "Pygmalion." As her father, Cyril Cusack supplies the exact physical appearance and accent of the peppery, little Irish farmer, but he employs an unusual technique in which he seems to drift away from the activities onstage only to snap suddenly back in when his line is due. As a result, the first half of this production is—except for one moderately effective comic interlude when Josie and Phil play a practical joke on their rich neighbor—pretty much characterization and conversation. And we find ourselves drowsily tuning in and out on the play.

It is only when Franchot Tone, as the drink-sodden half-dead James Tyrone, enters to keep his date with Josie that "A Moon for the Misbegotten" comes to life. Miss Hiller now forgets her eccentric characterization and begins to play the gradual unfolding of an unattractive woman allowing herself the risk of confessing her love and exposing her need to be loved in return. And Mr. Tone rises to the performance of his career as the man who has sought out evil as an antidote to his own incapacity to have fine emotions towards those he should feel deeply about. Indeed, he exhibits a spark of greatness when he suddenly bursts into anger at Josie for pretending to be a slut. And the love that they finally arrive at is a love beyond the temporary gratifications of

shared bodily pleasures. For sexual intercourse only rakes up James Tyrone's guilt-ridden past. His radiant moment of love consists of being held asleep in the arms of Josie, who gives him the understanding affection he needed but never got from his mother. Josie's final lines, spoken beautifully by Miss Hiller, mean even more because we sense O'Neill speaking to his dead brother: "May you have your wish and die in your sleep soon, Jim darling. May you rest forever in forgiveness and peace."

William Pitkin has come up with some excellent morning sky effects that carefully refrain from being too showy, but at the same time reinforce the poetry that lies underneath the squalid surface. Perhaps with a bit more time the cast also will find more of the play that lies beneath O'Neill's words. Only then will it create a full stage world for fellow misbegottens, as did the Jose Quintero productions of "Long Day's Journey Into Night" and "The Iceman Cometh." In the meantime, even the flickering satisfactions of the second half of this performance will make a visit to the Bijou Theatre a rich and memorable experience.

The First Gentleman" has about it the conventional appeals of romance and regality plus a recurring pattern of ironies that give it a dramatic punctuation. This combination in the hands of that skilful and stylish actor, Robert Morley, proved so popular to London audiences a decade back that Norman Ginsbury's play ran close to two years there.

Yet in its American production it seems little more than a sketchy chronicle of King George IV's attempts to interfere with the marriage of his daughter, the Princess Charlotte. Director Tyrone Guthrie puts the accent on explosive farcical detail, and allows actor Walter Slezak to play George as a buffooning boor. The action is thus reduced to one repeated joke, the preposterous self-centredness of a dissolute monarch. Even Charlotte's death seems to exist only to prove that no conceivable human consideration could affect this monstrously self-indulgent ruler.

With this sort of treatment, Mr. Ginsbury's attitude towards his story remains unclear. We neither despise George for his ruthlessness, nor do we sympathize with him for his inability

to have warm human relationships. What we are left with is a mildly amusing portrait of a vain man.

As the center of attention, Walter Slezak plows through the dialogue as if it were all comic material that he must constantly make funny. Looking every pound the king, his outrageous confidence demands our laughter. Yet one misses the kind of modulated delivery that could make the play's cautious wit sparkle. One also misses the elegance that earned George IV the title of "Europe's first gentleman." In the subsidiary roles, Inge Swenson brings fresh beauty and unbridled enthusiasm to the part of Charlotte. When she isn't pirouetting she's skipping, and when she isn't skipping she's bouncing. Isobel Elsom adds a theatrical highlight as Charlotte's disenfranchised mother, and Peter Donat manages to be noble without also appearing smug as Charlotte's husband.

Ralph Alswang has designed sets which are both practical and lush, and director Guthrie has contributed some fine directorial touches such as seating the King on a hobby horse as he takes advantage of Charlotte's naivete. Yet he somehow fails to organize the rambling events of "The First Gentleman" into a meaningful story on the one hand, or a laugh riot on the other.

DUBLIN.

That tiny Ireland should be the source of such theatre talents as America's greatest playwright (O'Neill), Britain's greatest modern playwright (Shaw), and the world's greatest living playwright (O'Casey), would seem more than sufficient excuse for a patriotic celebration, and so it is that Dublin this week begins its first annual theatre festival. Following Edinburgh's example the festival will have its international treats, which include the Sadler's Wells Ballet, Jean Vilar's Theatre Nationale Populaire, and the European English-language premier of Tennessee Williams's "The Rose Tattoo" (Ireland has no theatre censorship, though the play's most important prop will have to be smuggled past the sodality). There will also be a new British production of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest."

More exciting to the visiting theatregoer will be special productions of O'Casey's "Juno and the Paycock" and Synge's "Playboy of the Western World" by the renowned Abbey The-

