

'The Uneasy Crown'

Sir,—May we comment on the BBC Television programme, *The Uneasy Crown*, of which A. J. P. Taylor wrote the story and which Anthony Burgess discussed in your columns last week?

Any survey of the history of the kings and queens of Spain since the days of Philip II, coupled with an attempt to explain and assess the present dictatorial regime and to probe into the political future of Spain is bound to be superficial and schematic. But this cannot excuse a historian of the standing of Mr Taylor for a confused, distorted narrative and some errors of fact. In choosing the pitfalls of Spanish history as the highlights of the programme Mr Taylor silences the formidable, quiet effort made in the eighteenth century to bring Spain into line with the rest of Europe. Neither did he have a word for the remarkable cultural revival of Spain between 1875 and 1936 owing, no doubt, to the fact that in spite of social upheavals (not infrequent in other parts of Europe) and the six years of dictatorship under Primo de Rivera, it was a period of as much intellectual freedom as that in any other country in Europe.

Mr Taylor is, of course, entitled to have his own personal views about the present Spanish regime and the future of the country. He may think that Sr Fraga, the Minister of Propaganda soon on an official visit to this country, is the man of tomorrow and needs a build up. But to present him as a *liberal* minister is to mock a term the meaning of which many Spaniards inside and outside Spain are fighting to preserve.

Yours, etc.,

SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA

London, N.W.11

R. M. NADAL

duction, as he called it. Next day I was beginning a note to the publishers, saying, 'I realize I am only the author, but . . .', when the parcel post arrived, with six presentation copies. The book was out.

The publication date of his first book is probably the best-remembered landmark in a writer's career. His first book is a solid testimony to his

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on broadcasting subjects or topics arising
reserves the right to shorten letters for

In the second place he points out that computers, together with the science that goes with them, are no more than the imaginative creations and playthings of man. Hence to explain the latter in terms of the former is to invert the proper order of priority. But this unfortunately tells us nothing about the status of man since the concept of one automaton designing another or even producing a scientific theory is no longer held to be self-contradictory.

Finally, Mr Dawe's belief, which seems to lie at the core of his thinking, that scientific knowledge does not have to be taken literally, but deals only with convenient myths ('merely stories which have a more sophisticated meaning than a fairy tale'), strikes me as dangerous obscurantism. What does Mr Dawe wish us to accept instead as being genuinely factual, the raw material of common-sense experience ('nature does not hide her wonders')?

Dept. of Psychology,
Edinburgh University

Yours, etc.,
JOHN BELOFF

AS from 22, The Park, London, N.W.11.

14th October 1963

To the Editor of THE LISTENER,
British Broadcasting Corporation,
London, W.1.



Sir,

Any survey of the history of the kings and queens of Spain since the days of Phillip II, coupled with an attempt to explain and assess the present dictatorial regime and to probe into the political future of Spain is bound to be superficial and schematic. But this cannot excuse a historian of the standing of Mr. Alan Taylor for a confused, distorted narrative and some errors of fact. In choosing the pitfalls of Spanish history as the highlights of his programme THE UNEASY CROWN Mr. Taylor silences the formidable, quiet effort made in the XVIII century to bring Spain into line with the rest of Europe. Neither did he have a word for the remarkable cultural revival of Spain between 1875 and 1936 due, no doubt, to the fact that in spite of social upheavals (not infrequent in other parts of Europe) and the six years of dictatorship under Primo de Rivera, it was a period of as much intellectual freedom as that in any other country in Europe.

Mr. Taylor is, of course, entitled to have his own personal views about the present Spanish regime and the future of the country. He may think that Sr. Fraga, the Minister of Propaganda soon on an official visit to this country, is the man of to-morrow and needs a build up. But to present him as a liberal minister is to mock a term the meaning of which many Spaniards inside and outside Spain are fighting to preserve.

Yours faithfully,

Salvador de Madariaga

R.M.Nadal.