

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*

DEAR SIR,

The recent growth of interest in mathematics seems to be having the effect of increasing the mathematical sophistication of the general public

The other day at Victoria Railway Station, for example, I saw the following notice displayed by a bootblack:

$$\text{sir} + \frac{\text{sir}^3}{3!} + \frac{\text{sir}^5}{5!} + \quad ?$$

Pondering the fellow's hyperbolic erudition, I made my way to the bus station, and was pleased to see that my bus had just drawn in. Boarding it, I heard a woman behind me exclaim, in a tone which suggested that the means of solving some problem or other had at that moment dawned on her:

“Get to the back of the CUBE root!”

The emphasis on the penultimate word indicated that until then she had been getting to the back of the square root. For my part, I must confess that while I am able to *extract* square, cube or other roots, the process of “getting to the back of a root” is unknown to me. The woman subsequently boarded the same bus, and I would have asked her to enlighten me, but unfortunately the bus was crowded and I was on an inside seat while she was standing up; moreover she wore a somewhat disgruntled expression.

Alighting from the bus outside the National Portrait Gallery, I was amused to see that among the usual half-dozen or so pavement artists with their coloured landscapes was one who had chalked nothing but these words:

Modern art
Gets worse and worse
So I'm resolved
To write $\tanh^{-1} Q$.

Of course I could not refrain from dropping a coin into his cap and so earning his proffered gratitude.

Yours etc., BASIL MAGER

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Burgess Hill, Sussex

To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*

DEAR SIR,

Mr. H. W. Clayton of Summer Fields Oxford, will, on behalf of S.A.T.I.P.S.—the Society of Assistants Teaching in Preparatory Schools—be running a Mathematics Conference in York, January 4 to 6, 1962. A similar Conference was held in Cambridge in 1960 and many valuable contacts were made. The chief aim of these Conferences is to enable Public Preparatory school mathematics masters to meet and to discuss difficulties, methods, syllabus and such things, and to help people to realize that there is something beyond Common Entrance. At Cambridge, there were about 25 masters from Public Schools and about 100