



Making Xmas Merry . . .

THERE is nothing more lasting nor more beautiful than the story of Christmas. Coming to Christmas time after the troubles and struggles of a long year does seem like reaching a goal, pausing to rest.

This year the programmes of the National Broadcasting Service have several different presentations on various aspects of the Christmas season.

The NBS String Orchestra, with chorus, is to present "The Christmas" story, told in carols from many lands, at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, December 20, from the Exhibition studio. This special feature is composed of new and old carols, with words by W. Austin (1587-1633), Robert Herrick (1591-1674), Eleanor Farjeon, Frank Hendon, Pletcheev and others. In the case of carols of the 14th and 15th centuries, great care has been taken to arrange these in two-dimensional harmony. Listeners will recognise the music of

Tchaikovski and Bizet among composers of more recent times.

The carols are "Chanticleer," "Herrick's Carol," "In The Town," "Song of the Crib," "The First Nowell," "Wonder Tidings," "Three Kings," "Flight Into Egypt," "Band of Children," "Crown of Roses," "Praise to God," "Was-sail Song."

On Christmas Eve, at 9.25 p.m., 2YA will broadcast the Nativity Play by Dorothy Sayers, "He That Should Come."

There are several talks of interest at this time. Mrs. A. D. Houston will talk on "The Care of Pets at Xmas Time" from 2YA at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, December 18; Mrs. Carrie Wallace will present a talk on "Christmas in June" from 2YA at 10.45 a.m. on Thursday, December 21; Nelle Scanlan will talk on "A Contrast in Christmases—England and New Zealand" at 7.35 p.m. on Thursday, December 21 from 3YA; and from 4YA Professor T. D. Adams will give a reading from Washington Irving, "The Christmas Dinner." This is at 9.30 p.m. on Friday, December 22.

There are, of course, talks on how to enjoy your holidays, etc., but strangely enough, none on how to recover from them if you enjoyed them too well. (Perhaps these will come in the New Year.) There is, too, plenty of Christmas music throughout the programmes.

GARDENING WITH(OUT) TEARS

By I. W. Davey

I attribute all my present worries, except my wife, to the wireless. Being married is a piece of sheer bad luck caused by an unguarded question, but that's another story. This is all about the garden. I'll have you know that it was a very nice garden before this wireless business started. I used just to potter around during the week-ends, pulling out weeds here and there, spraying, sowing, digging, without a thought above the common seed catalogues.

Then all this was changed. One evening I tuned into a gardening talk—Miss Salvia Latifolia I think was the speaker—and from a pottering amateur I became a fanatic overnight.

But something seems to have gone wrong. And I'm worried. It's getting me down.

Mind you, I've nothing to say against the sweet peas that some-

how invaded the vegetable garden, and have shed their glory on the six foot wire-netting usually devoted to marrowfats. Nor do I grumble about the marrowfats that were planted around the verandah, and trained with delicate care up single pieces of twine. It's really much better so than otherwise. Look at the ease, and the time saved in gathering peas for lunch.

All Mixed Up

It's the curious array of vegetables and flowers mixed together that worries me. In the days of my pottering ignorance the flower garden was reserved for flowers, and the vegetable garden for vegetables. Now I don't know which is which, and my wife says I'm a chump, which may be true but isn't very helpful.

When Miss Salvia Latifolia told us one night to plant tuberous-rooted begonias I naturally dashed out and bought some. They were planted carefully in the vegetable garden in rows eighteen inches by two feet, and they flourished. But it was a swindle. My reasoning was thus: A tuberous-rooted begonia! Well, a potato is a tuber, and a potato is something to eat, so therefore a tuberous-rooted begonia is also something to eat. When the begonias started to flower of course I nipped off the buds to send the extra energy to the edible part, and when the time was ripe I dug them. But what did I find? Just the single tuber that I planted. It was an awful swindle—because we tried them roasted with a saddle of mutton for Sunday dinner, and they gave us a stomach-ache which meant recourse to the castor oil bottle.

Lettuce with the Flowers

It is the same in the flower garden. I sowed a packet of *Lactuca sativa*, and what do you think grew? Common lettuce plants, and Miss Latifolia had recommended

it for a border, only she didn't say in which garden. And there are a number of good specimens of cabbage (*Brassica*, she called it) and celery, and egg plant—even a few tomatoes growing among the dahlias and asters, and nestling alongside the cowslips and snapdragons, while in the vegetable (sic) garden I have a fine array of kelmia, and chionodoxa, and several alliums, even a Forsythia (I thought it was a fruit tree), jousting with the plebeian carrots, parsnips, and turnips, and twining coyly among the marrows and cucumbers.

I tell you I'm worried. I don't like it. Time was when I knew a plant could be eaten if it grew in the vegetable (sic) garden, and was ornamental if it grew in the flower (sic) garden, but now I don't know what will happen. And my wife goes on saying that I'm a chump.

It's all the fault of the wireless. In future I've decided to buy my vegetables from John Chop Suey and my cut flowers from the florist, and grow eggs for breakfast instead of radishes for tea.