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ELLIMAN'S EMBROCATION

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Listening While I Work (22)

= By "Matertamilias" ,

T was almost with eager anticipation that I tuned-in to Professor Adams's "Readings from Shakespeare" from 4YA the other Friday evening. This, I thought, would be the equivalent in the spoken word of classical music. The programme was carefully chosen: Sibelius's "Prelude to The Tempest," Prof. Adams's reading of a scene from The Tempest, then three songs from the same play. Prof. Adams's voice is easy to listen to, and he reads as though he enjoys doing it. But speaking for myself, I found the reading of a whole scene by the one person not altogether satisfactory, especially as the parts of Miranda and Ariel need a woman's and a child's voice respectively. The effect was rather that of a symphony played on the piano.

"GOOD NIGHT, NEW WORLD," the play by H. R. Jeans heard from 2YD the other Wednesday, is not new. It has already been heard from a number of stations and it belongs to the Blitzand-Morale period of the war. The theme is Wellsian, but it has a more obvious moral than H. G. Wells ever perpetrated. The men of the world of a hundred years or so hence build a time-machine and in a series of visits follow up the life of a man of to-day. They visit him first when he is a schoolboy, then a student, and finally as a disheartened doctor in blitzed London, and they take him with them to their world to show him the bright land of the future, adorned with beautiful buildings designed by his son as yet unborn. With that promise he faces the immediately tragic future with renewed courage. This is a difficult theme to handle without sentimentality -for it is so much easier to become sentimental about building for the future than to do anything definite about it. In the heat of battle and blitz it is simple to plan in a vague and general way for a world in which wars are abolished and everyone is happy. (Wars in this New World are abolished because "nations found that they simply didn't pay.") I would like to think that war-as well as crime and dirt and injustice-could be got rid of so easily.

A SERIES of stories in two or three parts are running from the ZB stations on Mondays and Wednesdays at 7.15 p.m. This short-long type of story is quite well suited to radio. There is not the drag of the serial. On the other hand, a short story demands more skill in the telling. "Wrongful Deten-tion," the story to which I was listening the other night, may collect a number of youthful listeners. It teems with spies, murders, prison-camps, or rather castles, and other delicacies. But it is so patently improbable that it is tedious listening for anyone who has passed Standard The British spies talk in a most un-British manner, though when foreigners approach they adopt a forced accent—which, incidentally, all the foreigners also use. And I blushed for the behaviour of my fellow Englishmen in their predicament. If we must have improbability, let us have intrepid Scarlet Pimpernels who smile and keep calm and look like Leslie Howard and crack jokes. A

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