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## Listening While I Work (32)

By "Materfamilias"

THE play from 2YC the other Sunday night, *The Great Barrister*, by H. R. Jeans, was new to me, but apparently the play was not new; the records certainly were not. It is intended to be a hilarious comedy, but although Mr. Jeans has a number of entertaining ideas, the play has not quite a light enough touch to bring them off. Each funny situation was underlined just a little too much—the boy sent to Eton and Oxford to have all intellectual nonsense knocked out of him, the ridicule heaped on the fortune-teller who foresaw Europe in 1939 in the grip of an ex-house painter, the mar who received a knock which made him incapable of telling anything but the truth; and so on. The play is amusing, of course, and ingenious, but more delicate writing and more skilful acting would have made it more so. But it was at least a change to have a comedy and not a drama or a mystery thriller.

\* \* \*

WE listened to two Children's Hour programmes last week—"we" being myself and four children to the age of 10. The first programme was appreciated. It included Hans Andersen's "Little Match Girl," which all knew and recognised (we turned on in the middle of it) but were quite pleased to hear again, a record in the series *Famous Names*, and another story which two of our number voted as beneath their dignity; also a song or two which the children knew from school and criticised with some asperity. I was interested to find that they all liked *Famous Names*, which this time gave a short dramatised account of Sir Christopher Wren.

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THE other session to which we listened was misnamed in the programme "The Flying Machine of 1499." As this was only a small part of a fairly long feature, it caused a preliminary disappointment. The whole session consisted of scraps and incidents: Leonardo da Vinci's Flying Machine, Cellini's bronze casting, something about Big Ben and Roman arches, with other oddments which left no impression. I do not think children like skipping from one topic to another with all the ends unfinished. They have not the historical background to understand where the different bits fit. I wonder how many children know what is meant by casting a statue in bronze or why a flying machine in 1499 is so remarkable. When flying is so much part of everyday life as it is to the child of to-day, it seems more curious to him that people in the past could not fly than that they tried unsuccessfully to do so.

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VERSE AND STYLE is a sufficiently vague title to confound unwary listeners into thinking they might hear some learned literary authority. Actually, I found this an entertaining 15 minutes. Maria Birelli sings (not croons, sobs, moans or swoons) and Billy

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