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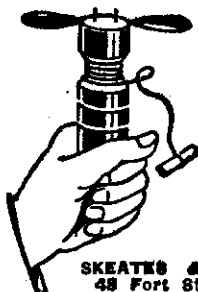
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Listening While I Work (37)

By "Materfamilias"

WE get a good many "music talks" of one sort or another in the course of the week, so we should all by now have become discriminating about them. Apart from the apparently never-ending series on musicians, conductors, orchestras, and opera houses, there are such series as *Composers Through the Ages*, and the special series on such composers as Elgar and Sibelius and their music. But to all this fare two recent sets of talks have made a vivid contrast. On Friday evenings we have had from 1YA a series of Winter Course Talks by H. C. Luscombe, and from 3YA a series by Maurice Clare on *Violin Music And its Background*. As I have only one pair of ears and as I can listen in much more comfortably to 3YA than to 1YA, I cannot claim to have heard all of both sets of talks, or indeed much of Mr. Luscombe's at all. But both series differ essentially from the general run of musical talks. They are more technical and less generally "popular." Yet they made an immediate appeal to me. They were by specialists who were talking about something that they really knew and loved. And they did their own talking. It is probably inevitable that a certain number of our talk should be prepared by one person and read by another, but it is a pity. We get so used to hearing talks read that we may not even realise how far the reader sometimes fails to put across just what the writer intends. Sincerity of expression matters so much more than tone of voice or even—dare I say it?—correctness of accent. Again it is, in this case, so pleasantly and patently clear that Mr. Clare's knowledge of violin music is not just something he has got out of an encyclopaedia. Whether he is talking about violins or about composers or about the music itself, he is talking from a deep fund of his own knowledge.

THE programme *Elgar and His Music* has, I believe, had a considerable following of listeners. The great virtue of this series is that it is long enough and full enough to give listeners a very considerable hearing of Elgar's music.

ON Saturday evenings from 2YA we have *Barbara At Home*, by Mary Scott. This is an unusual serial, partly because the episodes are read and not dramatised, and partly because it is a series by a New Zealander about New Zealand life. Barbara is a New Zealand farmer's wife. She makes soap, receives unexpected guests, and gets in and out of all sorts of predicaments. I like hearing about her, though she is totally unlike any conception I have had of a New Zealand farmer's wife. To me these women have always been so much the epitome of efficiency that Barbara has come as rather a shock. In fact, I do still believe that farmers' wives have their store cupboards full, their gardens well stocked, that they make soap, and wash up and entertain guests and rear children without any trouble—to their husbands, anyhow. So Barbara's muddles

(continued on next page)