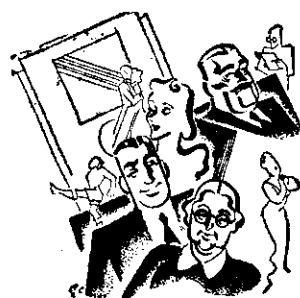




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## Tom Brown's Body

O. L. SIMMANCE attempted the periodic style the other night when he chose for his regular 3YA reading excerpts from the "History of Rome," by Arnold, of Rugby. The Doctor, whom most of us remember from *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (which we read before experiencing our own) as a fiery and passionate being, given to presiding gauntly over his pupils' deathbeds and religious ecstasies, here conducts Hannibal and his elephants over the Alps with a singularly undramatic mellifluity. In fact, its rolling calm comes very near indeed to incongruity with its subject; but, either on its own merits or by virtue of Mr. Simmance's voice, which is well adapted to this style of prose, it here achieved a sort of beauty, that of clear and polished statement, despising both realism and drama. Nevertheless, it should be taken in small doses, to avoid the soporific.

## Be Bold

PROVIDED that the voices are pleasant, friendly and confident, I like to hear a variety of accents and even of

# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

pronunciations from our announcers, and in harping too much on correct pronunciation of foreign names we may be unnerving them, and aggravating their more common and chilling fault—a tendency to appear indifferent to or unfamiliar with their subject, and to be doing their homework at the microphone. I don't care whether they say *Bruno Walter* or *Bruno Valter*, but I do dislike *Bruno-painful pause-Walter* as I heard it the other night not only at the beginning of a concerto, but also at the end, during which long interval the announcer might have done worse than determine the matter by tossing a coin. This always gives me a feeling of cold embarrassment, as if I had myself been discourteous in enjoying a recording that the station is, for some reason, quite ashamed of possessing.

## By Jove!

IT would be interesting to know how many of the listeners who tuned in to 2YA on a Sunday afternoon to hear the "Aurora's Wedding" ballet music by Tchaikovski were able to listen right through. The item had a superimposed spoken part, which was intended to recreate the atmosphere of the ballet. There would be two kinds of listeners to this programme, those who had seen the ballet, and those who had not. Had I been one of the latter, I feel I would have gained little from hearing that this personage or that was "pirouetting in the centre of the stage" or "doing an arabesque over to the left"; whereas I might have enjoyed the music had I been able to hear it properly. But in fact, I was one of those who do remember the ballet, and I did not find this sort of thing either helpful or entertaining: "By jove, he leaped right into the air then! It's marvellous," or "I don't know what's happening now. Oh, I see, they've formed four circles . . . the circles are going round, faster and faster and FASTER. They MUST be getting giddy!"



## Ducks Take a Knock

IT'S a very complex subject, egg production and marketing, but the Home Front Talk this week gave a lucid explanation which must have been the result of painstaking preparation. I was sad, though, to see ducks out of favour; I have always found them more grateful and friendly than hens, without that cantankerous cruelty to one another that makes the fowl-run a place of horror. It is too bad that while the blame for anything that is wrong with a hen's egg may be affixed to anyone but the hen, Nature occasionally plants one of her less kindly organisms in the new-laid duck-egg itself, thereby slightly alarming people and discrediting the duck. And so the ducks must not increase too wantonly or we'll have a glut of duck eggs. "And we don't want that, do we?" hinted the speaker. Well, I'm not so sure; some of us by now would rather like to see what a glut of any kind

of egg looks like. And how many dozen make a glut? The number that would strain our present marketing system, or the far greater number required to strain the digestive system of every citizen in the country? But as I said at the beginning, it's a very complex subject.

## From the Heights

AFTER hearing Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* from 4YA on a Sunday afternoon, I looked forward to hearing Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust* the same evening. I was disappointed to find that it was the hoary evergreen *Faust* of Gounod which was to be given. *Dr. Faustus*, as read by Godfrey Kenton, was impressive in the extreme. The last scene, with a repentant Faust, appalled by his inevitable doom, spending his last hour in futile remorse, swept the listener magnificently into those metaphysical realms where the soul seldom ventures. After these heights, it seemed the essence of anti-climax to listen to Gounod. The singing was good, of course, with most of the soloists we heard in New Zealand during the Centennial presentation of this opera. But sung in any language save that intended, an opera seems as strange as a picture painted in the wrong colours. Those banalities of the script which we overlook in a foreign tongue become immediately apparent in English, and the opera, like most operas, seems to contain a preponderance of let-us-aways and come-comes and ah-no-it-cannot-bes. The script-writers who supplied Gounod with his words, used only a part of Goethe's *Faust*, the love story of Faust and Margherita; and shorn of all save the obvious trappings of the supernatural, the plot is just another seduction, and not a graceful one at that.

AT least Marlowe's *Faustus* is as noble in his desires as a poet can make him, since he aspires to none other than Helen of Troy, in the unforgettable line, "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?" Gounod's *Faust*, of course, being under the spell of Mephistopheles, may be excused a little for his conduct, but in these days when belief in a personal Devil has shrunk to a minimum among opera-goers, it seems incredible that Faust's higher instincts couldn't have got the better of him just once in the play. The music swamps the absurd libretto in a flood of melody. It is difficult to believe that one opera by one composer could contain so many popular favourites, the Calf of Gold, Soldiers' Chorus, Loving Heart of Sister Kind, the Flower and Jewel Songs, and so on through a long list. Indeed, the opera is a complete string of popular arias with a minimum of connecting recitatives. However, on this occasion I was looking forward to Berlioz, and I felt in the mood of the listener who exclaimed, "Rather Gounod than no Faust, but rather any Faust than Gounod's!"

## All About Hawks

I TUNED into 4ZB's *Wild Life* in time to hear Dr. R. A. Falla talking about hawks. Whether the word brings to your mind a picture of an aristocratic

(continued on next page)

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