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FOR THE RELIEF OF PAIN

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Natural Speech

WHY does such a corner-polished expert as O. L. Simmance put slight hesitations here and there into his readings, like roughage in porridge? If the idea is to sound more natural it fails. The stumblings and hesitations of natural speech would come over the air like Clapham and Dwyer. This reflection came when I was listening to Bunyan's "Trial of Faithful," and wondering just why it is that seventeenth-century English was better at plain speech (in the broader sense of the term) than any other tongue. It is really insufficient to point to the Authorised Version as the improving influence, because it seems pretty certain that the Authorised Version's success was largely due to the fact that it was written as nearly as possible in the common speech. The particular quality of the tongue, I think, is not in vocabulary so much as in speech rhythms and the arrangement of clauses; and perhaps a major tragedy of history is its disappearance before the more polished Ciceronian rhythms of the eighteenth century aristocracy. This at its worst led to pomposity in the educated and gibbering in the uneducated, and the tongue of men and of angels, of Falstaff, Sir Toby Belch, Hakluyt, Cromwell and Bunyan has vanished forever.

Mouldy

WHEN 4ZB first started on the series, "Drama of Medicine," I thought that it was bound, sooner or later, to get around to the fascinating subject of penicillin. There certainly is enough drama in the story of penicillin to fill several programmes, but not when it is told in this fashion. Dr. Howard Florey sounded just like Young Dr. Kildare, and the tense moments of pulse-taking and respiration-observing sounded more or less like a class of V.A.'s in training. There was a woman (nurse? wife? friend?) who did nothing, presumably, for a couple of years but pour cold water on the doctor's fondest dreams and aspirations, and yet at the end of the chapter he still put up with her hanging around the hospital. Surely just a plain account of the discovery and application of the "wonder drug" would sound far more realistic to the common man than this highly-dramatised serial presentation. There was a previous programme dealing with penicillin, and there was to be a sequel, also dealing with it. I am not sorry that I missed the first, and I shall not go out of my way to hear the second.

Together Again

IT was good to hear "the NBS Orchestra" together again after what seems like a long term of dispersal. The musical forces that in their various times and places constitute the NBS strings, the NBS Light Orchestra, the NBS Quartet, the 2YA Concert Orchestra, and the NBS Symphony Orchestra, were gathered together under the baton of Leon de Mauny, Mr. Tyrer this time occupying the piano stool instead of the podium, for a performance of Beethoven's fifth ("Emperor") piano concerto. It was worth it. Mr. Tyrer gave a clean and

understanding performance of the solo part, and those remarkable transformations of the second main tune of the first movement were brought off really well—the tender versions for strings, the violent, majestic version for the full orchestra, and the melting, beautifully decorated piano versions. If there was an occasional squawk from the woodwind section, and if the opening of the last movement was a shapeless splash of notes, these things only served to remind us of what we might have been asked to listen to if a good deal of care and skill had not gone into defeating the difficulties of the performance. For it can scarcely be easy to get an orchestra that is only intermittently assembled in full force to imitate the results of full-time professional teams that have been working together for years.

Vocal Yokels

THE BBC Singers gave us "Songs in a Farmhouse" from 4YA. I was afraid it might prove to be too hearty for words, with a heavy yokel atmosphere and local colour. Instead of which it went to the other extreme; apart from



the title, there was nothing to indicate where the songs were being sung, and from the presence of a piano obviously in the Steinway class, and the beautiful accents of the chorus, I imagine the farmhouse must have been located in one of the BBC studios. However, there was nothing phoney about the songs, all traditional melodies, with an Elizabethan madrigal for good measure, and the delightful "Sumer is icumen in" (although this was actually accompanied by the piano aforesaid). A solemn thought it is that these folk-tunes survive mainly in BBC productions and are listened to mainly by trained musicians. Having just returned from a holiday in the country I am in a position to state that such music, the heritage of our race, is the last sort of music anyone would expect to hear either sung or listened to in any really authentic farmhouse.

Open-Air Music

PEOPLE who don't like Elgar were up against it on February 6 when both 2YA and 1YX devoted themselves solidly to this composer from 8 to 9 p.m., though his birthday is not until June 2. Those who do like Elgar had their problems, too, though the three items on 1YX's programme ("In the South," Introduction and Allegro for Strings, and the Enigma Variations) are more often

(continued on next page)