

is back at his memoirs are somewhat tedious. I prefer my thrillers to end snappily, but despite these defects the play as a whole succeeded.

## Without Cream

**STRAWBERRY** culture is a matter that in the past we have gladly left to professionals, but now that the professional is up against it with labour shortages and other troubles, strawberries are so scarce and dear that many of us have almost forgotten what they taste like. The speaker in the *Grow Your Own Vegetables* talk from IYA the other evening wisely devoted his whole ten minutes to the business. Here is a small fruit for the home garden that can be grown from one end of the country to the other, and the directions were so lucid, definite, and comprehensive, that we no longer felt the undertaking to be hopelessly difficult and mysterious. The only thing that the speaker didn't tell us—how could he?—was where to find a bit of wirenetting to keep the birds off, but there must still be an old piece lying around somewhere. Except where winters are very cold and soggy, March is apparently the month to begin operations, and with the horrible fruitlessness of last December still fresh in the memory, I think many of us will act on his excellent advice.

## Taunting Tenors

**MY** set wouldn't reach the session from 2YH called "Tenors and the Girls They Sing About," but I listen to enough songs to be able to imagine it. When I read *The Listener's* facetious foreword paragraph about it, I wondered why somebody doesn't compile a session called "Tenors and the Offensive Things That Are Said About Them." Will nothing rouse these gentlemen to stand up for themselves, or are the composers right in assuming them to be so preoccu-



pied always with affairs of the heart that they are impervious to insult? But there is one composer who recently went too far. (Or didn't he? Nobody seems to have taken action against him.) This is Sir Edward Bairstow, who published a choral ballad "The Prodigal Son." When asked why he had given the title role to a bass instead of to a tenor he replied, "Who ever heard of a tenor leaving home?"

## Hands Off!

**I** THOUGHT I had suffered enough in hearing "Waltzing Matilda" and "Alouette" battered into singularly dull marches, but this pales beside the treatment meted out to "Sarie Marais," which is to South Africa what the above are to Australia and Canada. First it was combined with another Afrikaans song ("Ferreira") and the two, emasculated as to music and provided with Tin Pan Alley's worst in the way of words, were wished on an innocent public under the name of "Trek Song." Then it was provided with a fair-to-middling English

translation and recorded—I know not why—at a funereal pace and in an undulating manner. Then it was shoved, like its Imperial brethren, into a series of dull marches with titles like "British Empire Fantasia." However, one does occasionally hear it, usually from 3ZE, sung, with other South African folk tunes, either in the original Afrikaans or at the correct brisk pace. Why most entertainment manufacturers can't leave a good thing alone is beyond the wit of man to discern.

## No Vocal Interludes

**THE** easiest way to fill a Classical Hour is probably to put in two major works and leave it at that; perhaps the reason why we so seldom hear an hour

arranged this way is that the programme organisers are afraid of appearing lazy. Actually such a pattern is a pleasant change (for us as well as for them), for however much one enjoys Elisabeth Schumann and Alexander Kipnis, one wearies at last of the inevitability with which they are used to separate the instrumental items. It was a joyful surprise to hear recently a mid-afternoon Classical Hour that consisted solely of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet and Tchaikovsky's piano concerto in B flat minor; each of these two works had sufficient variety within itself to make its own half-hour seem short, and they are in such contrast to each other that the whole hour seem well balanced and satisfying.

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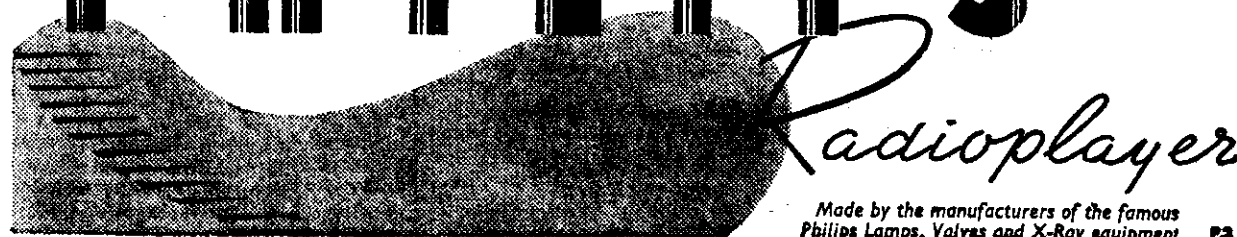
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