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the most L-L of L.C.'s, T. del R. She would also sing "Here in the Quiet Hills," by Carne, and "Fairy Tales of Ireland," by Coates. Now what would Miss Z sing? Something different, to be sure. But no. Miss Z would sing "Fairy Tales of Ireland," by Coates, and "Here in the Quiet Hills," by Carne. There must be something about these songs, I feel certain. Perhaps some sentiment in them strikes home with the amateur singer, like the wistful "Oh Could But I Express in Song," chosen with reckless candour by two other studio singers in the same week's programmes. Or is it import restrictions? Or examination set pieces?

### Haunted House-party

I DON'T like a thriller to start as a ghost story and end as a farce. That was why I got a little restless towards the end of "The Queer Affair at Kettering," by Max Afford, heard from 4YA in an NBS production which made the most of the somewhat "different" style of dialogue. It began auspiciously with a



house-party in an ancient country mansion, mentioned a strange room whence people unaccountably disappeared, worked up a splendidly ghostly atmosphere (a difficult thing to do on the radio) and, having disposed of a couple of members of the party in a murderous manner, there-

upon blithely proceeded to explain the whole thing away as an elaborate practical joke plus the famous absconding financier. This sort of thing seems a mixture of the detective novel and the supernatural folk-tale; let's have one or the other, but don't spoil the style by trying to weld them into one. No good ghost story writer would be guilty of such an anti-climax. For examples of ghost stories which remain true to their medium, see Oliver Onions' famous tale, "The Beckoning Fair One," Wilde's "The Canterville Ghost," or, indeed, anything by Algernon Blackwood.

### Positively Copperfield . . .

I HEARD from 3YL a recording of Mr. Micawber's Advice to David Copperfield, read by Bransby Williams, whom I heard again a couple of hours later from 3YA in an Old-time Showman burlesque. Mr. Williams' technique depends too much on mere rotundity and eccentricity of articulation to acquire that richness and gusto which place Micawber among the lesser gods; he sounds more like the traditional figure of the Impecunious Old Actor, fur-collared, moth-eaten, and for ever ingeminating the deathless phrase: "You were bloody marvellous, Laddie—how was I?" I should really like to hear Micawber read by Gillie Potter, become only slightly less cynical and more the actor; for, having become one of the great clowns in the popular mind, he can safely appear as not unconscious of his own absurdity, to which end the Potter voice, with its magnificent virtuosity in the reconditely preposterous, seems perfectly adapted.

### Island Spell

I ENJOYED that excellent BBC production about Tristan da Cunha. Here is a small spot of land dominated

by a great mountain peak, in the loneliest part of the South Atlantic, where ships seldom call, and the natural infertility of the soil makes it necessary to eke out the natural resources of the island by gifts and supplies from well-wishers on the mainland of Africa, or the United Kingdom. The community, founded by sailors of Nelson's day, still wear clothes of a fashion some fifty years outmoded. The inhabitants have intermarried, so that there are only eight surnames on the island. There is also a fabulous treasure buried on Tristan, in a place which is known to the people who live there, but they just haven't bothered to dig for it, for, as an old woman said to the missionary's wife

who tells the tale, "What use would gold be to us here on Tristan?" None of the people, even in the leanest years, would ever leave the island for more fertile, populous regions. One can imagine the lure, if this were a balmy Pacific isle, but, judging by the description given by Mrs. Rogers, Tristan de Cunha affords but a bare means of subsistence and a life of hard work. However, there is something to be said for a life which brings such peace of mind as expressed by an old woman of the island who said to Mrs. Rogers, as the latter embarked for England, "Thank the Queen for the blanket she sent me, and ask her if I may have a small cooking pot."

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