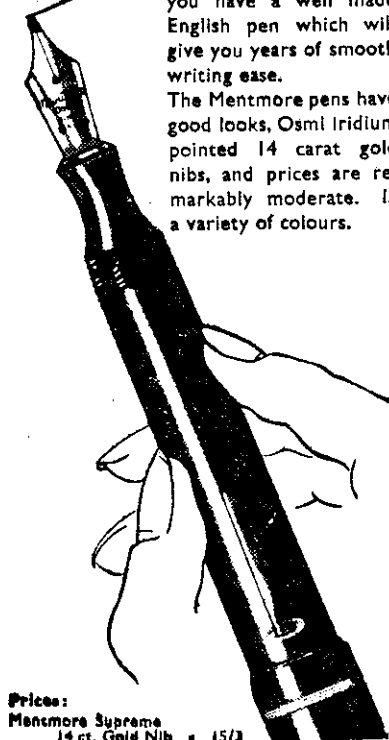


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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

**Greenery-Yallery, Grosvenor  
Gallery . . .**

"MR. WHISTLER MEETS MR. WILDE," a tale of the yellow years of the decadents by the New Zealand author John Gundry, was broadcast by 3YA. Mr. Gundry is clearly devoted to his theme, and handles its most entertaining aspect, the epigrams, challenges, critiques, and general literary back-chat, with great effect; though I should like to ask whether as a point of chronology, the giants of those years were addicted to the phrases "definitely" and "too, too." Perhaps Professor Sinclair could enlighten us? This also seems a good moment to repeat the funniest (fictitious) episode of the Whistler-Wilde duets, which comes from Brahams' and Simon's masterly *Don't, Mr. Disraeli*. Whistler (who, incidentally was a most unpleasant human being) and Wilde were reputed to say something good whenever they met; but on this occasion: "Hullo, Oscar," said Whistler. "Hullo, Jimmie," said Wilde. They looked at each other. They thought furiously. They hurried on. But as a matter of fact, Mr. Gundry has in his main theme fallen into the characteristic error as regards Wilde, of presenting his jokes and cynicism as only a facade or mask behind which lurked a suffering human being with a love of Nature and Mankind. It is not so: Wilde's serious work is either Dionysiac drive like *Salome* or unsuccessful emotionalism slashed with self-pity, while in a pure joke like *The Importance of Being Earnest*, he displayed real genius and produced a work of distilled, unalloyed, irresponsible laughter which may very well be the only piece of his creation fit to live.

lowed by his "Oxford" Symphony. This finished comfortably before 9.0 p.m. and to bridge the gap we were given neither Heinrich Schlusnus nor Elisabeth Schumann, nor yet Handel's Arietta nor even Tchaikovsky's Andante Cantabile, but a Haydn minuet played by Wanda Landowska on the harpsichord. The second memorable incident was when the records were muddled at the beginning of a major work and the announcer apologised and began it again. On other recent occasions when similar accidents have happened, the announcer has pretended to be as unnoticing as a robot, with the result that we have felt towards him the wild and impotent rage that fills us when we feed a penny into a stamp machine and it refuses to disgorge a stamp. Yet he has only to behave like a human being, to say "Sorry, let's begin again," and we melt at once, feeling that in his position even we ourselves might have made a similar blunder.

### Arranged for Four Hands

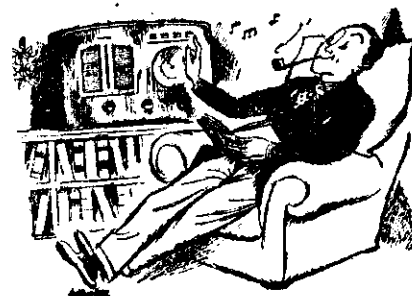
AFTER a gap of some years I heard Schubert's "Tragic" Symphony from 1YX the other night and from 2YA three days later. For me it has the same indelible familiarity that surrounds "The Slave's Dream," the first declension, "Morte d'Arthur," and other things that were learnt in adolescence and therefore stick with greater persistence than anything acquired later. In those days if we became acquainted with symphonies at all, it was by the method of piano duet—great fun for the two people concerned and sheer purgatory for everyone else within earshot. Now we turn a

### Tours Down By-paths

THE other night John Reid took one-poem poets as his subject in his weekly "By-paths of Literature" series from 1YA. He began with a defence of anthologies for their role of preserving poems by people who have only once in a lifetime written something worthy of immortality. There is an amazing number of these, from Omar Khayyam, which is long enough to have a life of its own outside anthologies, through poems the size of Thomas Dekker's "Sweet Content" down to the magical single line, "a rose-red city, half as old as time," which is all we know of the life-work of an ambitious poet and cleric. Mr. Reid caught my sympathetic attention at the outset by wondering, as I have often done, what on earth "A garden is a lovesome thing" is doing in all these august anthologies. There is a dry, caustic quality about Mr. Reid's voice and style which is better suited to gentle debunking than to revealing beauties and imparting enthusiasms.

### We Note with Pleasure

TWO small incidents at Auckland stations in the past week have filled me with a golden glow of approval. Station 1YX ran a session which included a Haydn concerto played on the harpsichord by Wanda Landowska (why do we have this lovely thing so seldom?), fol-



knob, sit back with a full orchestral score and knowledge comes more slowly, in a panoramic perspective, but it is somehow less a personal possession. Beethoven's first five symphonies will never dig themselves into me so completely as the last four, because in the days of our duets we owned Vol. 2 but not Vol. 1. Nobody can pretend that such duets are a pleasant noise, but 20 years ago the alternative was silence; now that their alternative is the broadcast recording of a first-rate orchestra it is harder to determine their worth.

### "An Excellent Thing in Woman"

THE soft and gentle voice that read the "For My Lady" programme on Fernando Autori from 3YA (one of the

(continued on next page)

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