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## Blimp in a New Form

I ONLY heard the closing scene of H. G. Wells' "The Truth About Pyecraft," but it appeared worthy of the original. Pyecraft was a gross person who obtained a magic recipe for "loss of weight," took it and floated gently up to the ceiling, where he lived a frustrated and indignant life for some days till a friend prescribed leaden underwear. The beauty of the thing was the psychological relationship between Pyecraft and friend, who would have hated his guts if the circumstances had not rendered them hardly worth considering, yet helped him out, whereat Pyecraft made his life such a hell by persistent pleading for secrecy that (in the original) the friend wrote a story and threatened to make it public. In the radio version, however, he threatened to come upon Pyecraft as he slept and abstract his leaden boots, thus leaving him in a state of uplift. It was the early Wells—the inspired storyteller—at his best. If only—but I grow political.

## Some, But Not Enough

AS a suitable time for presenting some of the greatest religious music ever written, Easter could hardly be bettered; but the opportunity was mainly missed in Dunedin, the number of broadcasts devoted to this type of music, although eagerly listened to, being meagre indeed compared with what might have been. On the afternoon of Good Friday 4YA broadcast Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, and in the evening (but merely by way of introducing a session of readings) the "Good Friday" music from Wagner's "Parsifal," and Handel's "Worthy is the Lamb." On Easter Monday we had the Good Friday music

# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

again, in the "Masterpieces of Music" series; and, heavenly joy! three movements from the Bach B Minor Mass! Dr. Galway deserves the devout thanks of music lovers for permitting us to hear what Parry described as "the mightiest choral work ever written"; a work, moreover, of which it has been said that if it were desired to elevate one work above all others the B Minor Mass is the only work which could possibly lay claim to the signal honour. In spite of this conclusion, with which most musicians must agree, we still await the performance of the entire Mass. What better time than Easter for giving it to us? Or if that were not possible, what better time for giving us at least one whole evening of music reflecting the spirit of Easter? But of such plan or intention the Easter programmes, as I have said, were singularly void.

## Double, Double, Toil and Trouble

SHAKESPEARE continued his Sunday night visits to 3YL with Sybil Thorndike and Lewis Casson playing two scenes from Macbeth (without incidental music this time). It is, I suppose,



very difficult to know what you want Lady Macbeth to be like and at first that tendency of actors to let the voice vibrate within the ribcage can be irritating. But, one is accustomed to it, the Murder—or surely the Murder, for in this the less soda the better—scene is surely the best dark scene anywhere in any language. These actors were not distinctively Scots, and for all the "others abide our question, thou art free" stuff I maintain that the play is; but Lewis Casson's sometimes noticeably gentlemanly voice fits in admirably with the character of Macbeth, with his self-induced villainy and his self-induced imagination.

## Semiramide, Part Panacea

WE hear a good deal these days about the therapeutic qualities of music. The idea is not entirely new, of course. Wasn't it in Rabelais' *Pantagruel* that the Queen cured all manner of diseases without so much as touching the sick, but with a mere song? She played, it appears, on an organ whose bellows were of rhubarb, pedals of turbit and the keys of scammony, and the leprous were all immediately cured. And of course in Italy those who were stung by the Tarantula were only cured by music.

It is most fitting therefore that the composer of the latest musical cure, even if it is only a half-measure, should be the Italian Rossini. I heard it the other night from 3YA and noted its tarantellish strains, and its delightful effects upon the colic whims. The announcer called it the Semi-remedy Overture, and made quite certain of the name, both before it began and after it had finished.

## The Poet and the Battle

AS music before and after Professor T. D. Adams' readings of "Battle Scenes in Verse" from 4YA, we heard the Triumphant March from Elgar's "Caractacus," and Holst's "Marching Song." While Professor Adams was reading to us about the Battle of Blenheim, I couldn't help thinking of the difference between the poet of olden time and the poet of to-day. In the early part of the world's history there was no mental or moral compulsion on the poet to take an actual part in warfare; it was more or less taken for granted that soldiers were there to fight the battles, and poets to write about them. Warfare was conducted on more or less dignified lines, and a poet who actually unsheathed his sword was doing so as a magnificent gesture, the fitting expression of it in verse being no less magnificent. Nowadays war is everybody's business; in a struggle for existence itself the poet doesn't ask himself what his emotions are before participating, he fights first and writes about it afterwards, and from the soldier's point of view. It's strange that music hasn't followed suit—both the Elgar and the Holst mentioned above are in so lofty a strain that, like Marlborough, they ride the whirlwind and direct the storm; but any common soldier who wants something to march to would do better with a common or garden composer like Eric Coates or John Phillip Sousa.

## Answering New Zealand

A RECORDED session from 4YA, with the Hon. Walter Nash, Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt, and Paul Robeson as the speakers, was the first in a series "Answering New Zealand." A little too much time was taken up in introducing the announcers and the speakers, and in back-patting each other's countries, leaving time to answer only two questions. Mrs. Roosevelt answered an enquiry about the relative interest which American and New Zealand women take in politics, by tilting the balance in the direction of the latter—but she admitted that figures prove that women in general don't vote in such numbers as men. Paul Robeson, however, had merely to provide some information about "The Star-Spangled Banner" which could surely have been found in the nearest encyclopedia. However, the fact that he actually sang a verse of the anthem (in what seemed an impossibly low key) made the session worth hearing.

## Cabin B-13

MOST addicts of the "queer" story will remember the one about the girl, visiting Paris with her mother, who went out on an errand and upon return-

(continued on next page)



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