

(continued from previous page)

how many were thankful, on the other hand, that they had once had a chance to learn and to do other things.

## To be Sung on Cook Strait

[T is good to hear a studio orchestra pressed into service, as at 2YA the other night, accompanying singers in Mozart and Verdi, where the piano is but an uncomfortable makeshift. But the following evening 1YA's orchestra entered the traditional province of the piano and accompanied Rena Edwards in songs by Brahms, Schumann, and Schubert. I try to keep an open mind about transcriptions, but I am sad when I have to forgo one of the loveliest pieces of all piano writing, the accompaniment to Schubert's "To be Sung on the Waters." Yet I had to admit it was still a water-song, though of another kind. Those rising and falling semi-quavers under the pianist's right hand are the ripples of a lake; taken by the strings they bore a strong resemblance to the sounds of a high wind whistling in the rigging, and a great ship straining to ride the waves. After all, we are not always drifting idly on still waters; sterner and rougher journeys must be undertaken, and they too are worthy of incidental music. This, I thought, is how Schubert might have written for those moments when the Rangitira leaves behind her the last shelter of Port Nicholson, draws abreast of Pencarrow Head and runs full smack into a Southerly.

## Unconscious of Their Doom

MR. SIMMANCE'S latest reading reminds me of a schoolboy of my acquaintance who paraphrased Hamlet's: "Who would fardels bear?" as "Who would have children?" Called "Ye Blessed Creatures," it was a selection of literary quotations, from the 16th Century to the Brontes, on children, their behaviour and characteristics. A 16th Century dialogue between a schoolmaster and his charges—Will Hay had nothing on them—set the note of the programme, which was hearty, untrammelled, original sin. From that moment one reeled through the centuries among a horrific array of urchins, oiks, adolescents, and unsatisfactory damsels of the Victorian era; and every now and then Mr. Simmance inserted a carefully-selected Jack Hörner of sugary innocence, penned by some charitable optimist of a 19th Century welfare worker. I found myself wishing for certain modern artists to illustrate the programme—a Fougasse drawing in some omnibus volume of a small, defiant youth hoisting an enormous black flag of piracy; or any of the long array of anti-social infants depicted by the lamented genius of Pont. The morning paper has since recommended the doings of a gang of juvenile anarchists who place bombs in lavatory-pans in Lyttelton.

## Handy Things, Facts

"MY hair is grey, but not with years, Nor grew it white In a single night, As men's have grown from sudden fears." Lord Byron wrote this, but do

you believe that anyone's hair can turn white overnight? You do? Then listen to the voice of Science: "Physicians have never found an authenticated case. . . ." You would hardly credit it, but when the island of Krakatoa blew up in 1863, the bang was heard 3000 miles away. Do you share the popular belief that a drowning man rises three times to the surface? Then listen to the voice of Science: "Whether a body sinks or not depends on the relative density of the body and the water. . . ." Does history really repeat itself? Why, of course; you have only to look at the case of Czechoslovakia. Here is what Frederick of Bohemia wrote in 1623, and here is what Dr. Benes said in 1938. Does this paragraph leave you with a feeling of dizziness and non sequitur? It does? That is because it is a fair and faithful summary of a short session called "Here are the Facts," heard from 12B just the other night.

## "Here's to Pure Science"

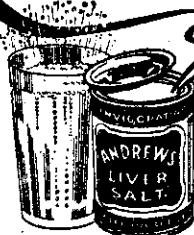
SOMEBODY asked the BBC Brains Trust the other night what was the use of science discovering such facts as the exact distance between the earth and the moon. A question like this to a scientist is as a trumpet to a war-horse, for the pure scientist is a man looking for the truth, and many of the most epoch-making discoveries have been mere offshoots of this search. Dr. C. P. Snow, answering for the profession, went so far as to say that a country that encouraged pure research into scientific knowledge would have greater material results to show at the end of ten or twenty years than one that kept its workers on the job of solving specific problems. Research workers are usually too busy and too absorbed in the quest to bother about the uses and abuses to which their discoveries are put; but the purse-strings are often held by utilitarian minds who expect a regular, tangible, and marketable product from them, as if they were prize-laying hens. So now and then when they get together, they drink this toast: "Here's to pure science, and may it never be any damn use to anybody."

## The Impatience of Joad

"BRAINS TRUST" is on the air again in Dunedin, and a broadcast by 4YA revealed the usual stimulating divergence of opinions which we have grown to expect from the famous fighters who participate. An enquiry regarding the de-bunking properties of philosophy (a quotation from Keats) led the members of the Brains Trust to a conclusion with which I agreed; that science may analyse a rainbow but can't explain it away. It was pleasing to hear that the twin stars of mystery and imagination are not yet to be eclipsed. Another question, as to whether the world would be a better place if the aeroplane had never been invented, provided Professor Joad with an opportunity for one of his most pessimistic harangues. He contended not only that we are immeasurably worse off because of the aeroplane, but that he could see no adequate reason why we should not be even worse off in the future. "Why does everybody imagine that people will suddenly start behaving in a better, more enlightened way than before? They never have!" Luckily for the listener's peace of mind, other members of the Brains Trust took a more optimistic view of the future.

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