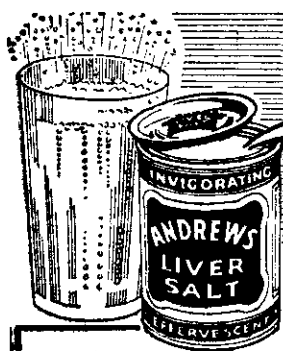




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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Law and Justice

I DON'T know whether the 12B series, "Prisoner at the Bar," is supposed to be based on true stories, but as the Lizzie Borden case was one of them, possibly the others, too, are factual cases. The case of Max Becker dealt with a murder trial which, if true as portrayed, had a rather astonishing result. Max Becker, convict, was tried for the murder of a warden during a wholesale riot and attempted prison-break from, if I remember rightly, Auburn prison. The facts here given were that he told his counsel he was innocent, that the counsel was a famous but dubious criminal lawyer, the prosecution relied on the fact that Becker's only witnesses were also convicts, but that the jury refused to be swayed by prejudice and accepted the convicts' word against that of the State's witnesses. Becker was acquitted. Maybe this did happen. All I can add is that I and two friends, listening to this play, decided privately that the verdict would be "guilty" and were somewhat surprised to find we had been backing the wrong horse. Was there something wrong with the manner in which the facts were presented to us, or was the infamous counsel a better pleader before his actual jury than was his radio representative?



survival of the fittest, and not worried about it unduly. But when a fortnight later a Mozart piano concerto in A Major was played from 1YA's studio, I thought once more about this law that leads to the featuring of one concerto and the suppression of others. It is not yet six months since Shirley Craig played Mozart in A Major with the 1YA orchestra; in 1942 it was played here by Eileen Ralph; and in the meantime my experience of any of the other two dozen Mozart piano concertos has depended on a few recordings. I wish I could see what it is about this K.488 that gives it priority over the rest of the K family. To me it is surpassed in richness by K.466 (D Minor) and K.491 (C Minor) in vitality and sweetness by K.467 (C Major), K.595 (B Flat Major), K.449 (E Flat Major) and K.453 (G Major); and in sheer excitement for the piano, by all of these. Certainly the A Major Concerto can look a bit dim in this constellation, and still be a very bright star judged by any other standards, but if there is any reason for this favouritism, apart from mere habit, I should be glad to know it.

### Sergeant Major

IT is not often that an ordinary soldier can bring his story to life on the microphone, but it happens occasionally. I wish to pay a tribute to the superb effort of the British sergeant-major who was present at the suicide of Himmler and broadcast in a BBC newsreel shortly after. It was pure Gerald Kersh style, and I particularly enjoyed the incident when Himmler, directed to his bed by the sergeant-major, said to an interpreter, "He doesn't recognise me": I said, "Yes, I do; you're Himmler. And that's still your bed. Sit down." He tried to stare me out," said the sergeant-major, "but I stared back, and pretty soon he dropped his eyes." Nothing, however, can convey in cold print the immense gusto of the speaker and the way in which the exigencies of his profession had given him perfect command over his language resources for the purpose in hand—a terseness and economy which, far more than Basic English, exemplified the principles of functionalism in speech. "He died in about fifteen minutes. And we threw an army blanket over him; and left him."

### Caution—Go Slow!

WHENEVER I am amazed at the wide range of subjects covered in the A.C.E. talks, I remind myself that a high standard of omniscience has been set by that pioneer of housecraft, Mrs. Beeton, who has tackled among many other things The Best and Most Humane Method of Killing all Large Hogs, Vaccination, Rearing an Infant by Hand, Wills, the Childrens Hour, Headache, and the Diet of the Wet Nurse. When the A.C.E. spoke the other day on Buying, Renting, and Letting a Property, I was not surprised to find that Mrs. Beeton devotes ten pages to this subject, opening with a solemn warning that "nothing demands more caution than deciding on the purchase of a house." Even Mrs. Beeton's strong spirit might have quailed at the complexities of the Fair Rents Act, the Land Sales Court, the

### Regiment of Women

THE astounding things that may be happening on the shoots of your best roses in spring were described in a racy and informative talk on insect pests in the "Wild Life" series from 12B recently. Each of those little eggs that you have neglected to deal with during the winter hatches a female aphid who shortly gives birth to a daughter; this daughter staggers immediately to her feet, digs her beak into the rose bud and begins sucking. Within 48 hours she has made her mother a grandmother, but grandmother does not sit back then with folded hands—she goes on bearing many more daughters, and the tenth generation from one solitary aphid, if unchecked by natural enemies, would need a number with 30 noughts to describe it, and would weigh as much as 500 million fat men. Not until the season is well advanced does this happy feminine party pull itself together and begin producing a few males who will enable it to lay weather-resisting eggs for the coming winter. At one stage the speaker was inciting us to get a good lens and watch these doings, but later on he recommended a good spray pump to put a stop to them.

### A Major Habit

WHEN Tchaikowski's Piano Concerto No. 1 appeared in 1YA's studio programme recently, I wondered idly and not for the first time, when and where and by whom it was decided that Tchaikowski's Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3 are not worth playing or recording. I have always put it down to the

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, JUNE 15