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Actual statement made on
15th January, 1943, by
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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Parturient Mother-Tongue

DURING the golden age of Rome, Latin was the language of the civilised world: after the dark ages it still survived in the different countries of the former Empire, but differentiated into the various Romance languages. To-day the English tongue has spread over the world not very differently from the Latin of old. Will its fate, 1000 years from now, be the same—itsself to survive as a classical dead language, possibly still spoken in the lecture-room, the pulpit, and the embassy, while a number of virile vernaculars, derived from it, flourish in different parts of the world, each with a living literature of its own, and each unintelligible to the others? This was the speculation thrown up in Professor Arnold Wall's Winter Course talk, "The Future of English," at 1YA recently. History did not necessarily repeat itself, said the Professor. The newspaper, the cinema and the radio were powerful standardising instruments whose influence was still not fully tested. Yet if the radio is to be the force that standardises the English of the future, before we comfort ourselves we should perhaps first examine the statistics and see how many hang nightly on the lips of Dad and Dave for every one who listens to the impeccable accents of the announcers of the BBC.

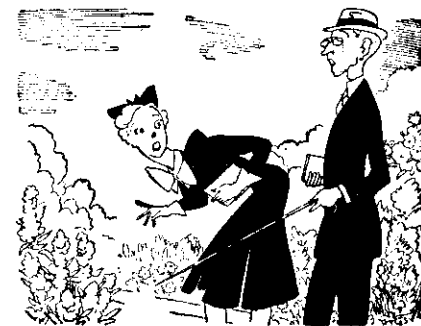
Justifiable Homicide

"LEGAL MURDER," a BBC short broadcast by 4YA, raised a knotty moral point. Can a man be guilty of a murder he has not actually committed? The story tells of the down-trodden employee of a ruthless business man, the typical meek little man in spectacles who keeps his smouldering resentment under too long, until it finally becomes too much for him and he murders the hated boss. Not by any obvious poison, bullet, or strangling cord, of course. No, he does it by sheer accident. He gets his enemy in a spot where the boss is ill-advised enough to draw a gun and fire it, killing not his clerk but a stray policeman who happened to get in the way of the bullet. It is proved that the boss and this particular cop are enemies also, and with other points, including the failure of the witness to testify to the truth, a case is made out strong enough to convict the boss and lead to his execution. The clerk has accomplished murder by simply failing to speak, and whether or not he is guilty legally, it is proved that morally he is a murderer. The long arm of coincidence in this story, however, reaches to such inordinate lengths that the listener can scarcely take seriously the problem of the possibility of legal murder.

Goading the Gardener

IT is interesting to note the widely differing times chosen by 1YA and 1ZB for their respective gardening talks. The former is early on Tuesday evening; there is something in the 1YA expert's voice that turns it into a devotional session—I mean this as the highest praise—and I always feel that listeners are as much in love with the subject as he is,

or, if not, that they very soon will be. Certain measures are advocated for the garden; this leaves Tuesday and Wednesday evenings for chewing them over (there is nothing the real gardener loves more than the leisurely ecstasy of planning with catalogues and diagrams), and Thursday for shopping, for the seed shops are too crowded for the connoisseur's activities on a Friday. The session at 1ZB goes through with much speed and efficiency, but to my mind is more in the nature of a pep talk. It comes



on at lunch-time on a Saturday—on the face of it an excellent moment; but what probably happens is that the man of the house realises (with relief?) that he has laid in none of the onion plants, bonedust, grass seed, or other materials recommended. Most certainly he will buy them next week, he assures his family, but in the meantime, he says, there is nothing much he can do this week-end, so he puts on his hat and sets out to watch the ball game at Eden Park.

Gluttony

IN a book review session from 1YA recently, one of the books discussed was "True to Type," a collection of extracts from the diaries of German soldiers killed or captured on various fronts. It was suggested that whereas Englishmen regard over-indulgence in food as disgusting, but over-indulgence in drink sometimes as somewhat dashing, the German soldiers in occupied countries regarded both forms of excess as a positive duty. The distinction between gluttony and drunkenness, which is active enough in practice, seems to exist on flimsy logic; except perhaps for the fact that alcohol is a luxury, whereas the glutton's pleasures may deprive the poor or the conquered around him of the very necessities of life. In spite of the rather horrible prowess at table of the best people in the later Roman Empire, and the habits now cited from "True to Type," gluttony is not an unfailing sign that a nation is about to collapse. The eighteenth century Englishman, for instance, was notorious all over Europe for his intemperate eating, and provided fruitful material for leeches, cartoonists, and the scathing pen of Addison. Yet somehow, without national disaster to deprive him of the material for gluttony, he managed to grow out of it and to acquire other interests. Is it fear, boredom, or a desire to show off, that leads a nation to take up a pastime which seems to offer an inconsiderable amount