

(continued from previous page)

judge, the modern Hawaiian repertoire consists of more or less indefinite variations on one tune, itself possessing about three notes. From this I except the "Hawaiian War Dance," which appears to have some relation to native realities. Has Tin Pan Alley utterly destroyed the genuine native music? Or does some of it persist, unnoticed, unrecorded, and unsung? The modern tourist, there is no doubt, has been far more destructive of the native customs of the Pacific than the blackbird and the missionary combined. He asked only for glamour and titillation, so that he commercialised and prostituted realities; and native music, which once possessed all the interest and excitement of the product of another culture, is now nothing more than a vehicle for the surrender of thought and the passage of money from the mindless to the mindless.

## King Charles' Head

A CERTAIN citizen of Auckland on a business trip in the South Island put through a long-distance call to ask how things were at home. "Listen for a moment," said his wife, "and you will hear that 1YA is playing Tchaikovsky's Serenade in C Major." "Nothing," he said, "could more completely reassure me that everything in Auckland is absolutely normal." There is something about this work that seems to entitle it to a place in any kind of session whatsoever. If a little lunch music is wanted, a little dinner music, something to fill in the time between 9.0 and 10.0 in the morning, packing for a light orchestral session or a plain orchestral session, or a major work to be featured in the afternoon Classical Hour, there is Tchaikovsky in C Major. (The only rivals for the utility prize in Auckland programmes are the selections from Borodin's "Prince Igor".) You have to hand it to composers who can write music like this. I am reminded of that great tribute paid to "Robinson Crusoe" by the steward in "The Moonstone": "When my spirits are bad—'Robinson Crusoe.' When I want advice—'Robinson Crusoe.' In past times when my wife plagued me; in present times when I have had a drop too much—'Robinson Crusoe.' I have worn out six stout 'Robinson Crusoes' with hard work in my service."

## Dropscene Stuff

IN my younger days I was entranced by the "Danse Macabre" of Saint-Saens. I even went so far as to buy a record of it, which was fatal. There



are some works which we can hear again and again, and the more familiar we are with their every note and nuance, the more delightful do they become—and the more strictly classical the music, the more aptly does this apply. But the

supernatural atmosphere of "Danse Macabre" on repeated hearings quickly reveals itself as a theatrically unnatural affair. For demoniac suggestion it fails entirely to compete, for instance, with such a work as Moussorgsky's "Night on a Bald Mountain." Its clicking skeletal revels, its tolling midnight bells, its cock-crow and cold dawning fail nowadays to rouse me to more than a gruesome chuckle.

## Wilful Willan

THE 3YA announcer told us that although Housman had been harassed by far too many composers wanting to set his Shropshire Lad poems to music, he could surely not have failed to admit the beauty of Vaughan Williams' settings "On Wenlock Edge." On the contrary, it has been reported that Housman, on hearing them, buried his ears in his hands. Housman, it appears, was allergic to music. It would be interesting to know what would be the reaction of the poet Alfred Noyes to the setting of his poems "The Trumpeter," by the Canadian composer Healy Willan. Station 2YA played this work, which was one of several Canadian compositions recorded by the BBC, and a rowdy piece of stuff it is. If I were the poet, I would have sent the composer a cable: *That kind of a noise annoys A. Noyes.*

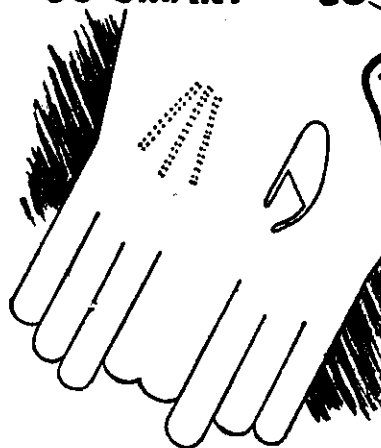
## Fish Story

LACK of dairies, tinned beef, and other sources of protein to fall back on made it a matter of some moment to the ancient Maori whether his fishing expedition was fruitful, and no doubt a great deal of feeling went into the incantation preceding it. A most heartfelt and dynamic rendering of one of these was given the other night by a gentleman brought in for the purpose by Miss Olga Adams, M.Sc., who was giving a talk on Maori fishing customs from 1YA. What people thought who tuned in at random while it was going on, I can't imagine. It was a fine show.

MISS ADAMS' talk itself was full of good material, so well assembled and delivered that I feel ungrateful in picking on what to me was its only blemish, and in making her a peg on which to hang a protest that I would make even more loudly in the case of many talks and stories in the Children's Hour, 12B's "Morning Reflections," and some other sessions. It is a matter of literary style. We were taught at school, sometimes explicitly, and always implicitly by the marking, that essays dealing with subjects of nature, of foreign peoples, other lands—anything bordering on the historic or romantic—should be written in a special language. "He ran quickly" became "Quickly he sped." "He waited anxiously" became "Anxiously he awaited." Boys and girls removed from us by time or space were "lads and lasses," and there was a bonus for words like "whither," "whence," and "wherefore." In committing herself to this style as the talk went on, Miss Adams had the backing of a substantial tradition. But for me nowadays a subject has only to be wrapped in this language, and it goes stone dead. Miss Adams so clearly wishes us to see the Maori as she does herself, as a living and mature human being, not as a weird child of a fairy story, that I ask her to consider whether the picture in her mind might not be transferred better to us in the prose of everyday life.

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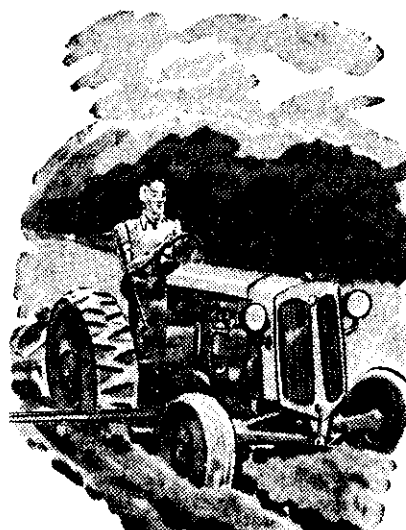
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