

(continued from previous page)

than the position of a later writer whose name I missed—whose experience was clearly so predominantly industrial that he felt no uneasiness. Anti-industrialism in verse would be no great loss in most cases; though the pre-urban charm of Gilbert White's *Natural History* (Mr. Simmance's choice for the week) with its engaging description of the habits of a tortoise—to whom, he says, Nature has given more than the normal span of days, that he may spend more than two-thirds of his time asleep—is pleasing in its reminiscence of older days. But you can't industrialise tortoises.

## Milk and Water Detection

IT is difficult to justify an interest in bloodstained knives, or strands of human hair on blunt instruments, or the microscopic inspection of the dust from a murderer's pocket, but when we saw scheduled from 2YA a D.S.I.R. Winter Course talk called "The Detective in the Laboratory," our minds ran hopefully on topics such as these. "Holmes dipped into this bottle or that, drawing out a few drops of each with his glass pipette, and finally brought a test tube containing a solution over to the table. In his right hand he had a slip of litmus paper. 'You come at a crisis, Watson,' said he. 'If this paper remains blue, all is well. If it turns red it means a man's life.'" We remembered, too, that tense moment in "The Documents in The Case," when in a darkened Laboratory Peter Wimsey waits while expert hands conduct an experiment which will show whether the mushroom poison used was in natural form (accident) or synthetic form (murder). Then there was Dr. Thorndyke who dived into his laboratory too often for the reader's satisfaction. Such were our expectations, and it is no doubt a great reflection on our mental health that when we arrived a little late at 2YA's session, owing to an inconsiderate telephone call, and found that the conversation had drifted around to the testing of milk samples, our feelings were a mixture of disappointment and nausea.



## "The Maid of the Mill"

THE third of 2YA's song cycles was Schubert's "The Maid of the Mill" sung in two instalments by Joan Bryant, with Elsie Betts-Vincent at the piano. It was, of course, a pleasure to hear the whole cycle; too often are we put off by having odd songs taken out and sung in "brackets" as if they existed independently. But I did not find Mrs. Bryant entirely suited to the matter in hand. "The Maid of the Mill" wants no demure prettiness added to her present charms. The ingratiating winsomeness of Mrs. Bryant's voice is ideal perhaps for "Still the Lark Finds Repose" and songs of that character, but Durbinque scoops are unnecessary to the interpretation of Schubert. They were fatal of course in the last song, which opens with the first six notes of "Nellie Bly," for this needs to be disguised rather than emphasised.

## Nemesis

THE quality of the music offered in 12M's 7 p.m. Orchestral session, ebbs and flows from time to time like the temperature chart of an undulant fever

patient. When I mentioned it in this page a few weeks ago, the quality was high, and now that it has fallen as low as in the past two weeks I blame myself a little—an ancient Greek would have known better than to invite the wrathful notice of the gods by drawing attention to his good fortune. At the present time an hour composed mainly of Suppe, Eric Coates, Johann Strauss, and Chabrier, may include a little Walton or a Mozart overture, or it may not—there is no way of finding out except by keeping tuned in to the station, and it doesn't always seem worth it. If there is considered policy behind the present arrangement, it is difficult to reconcile it with the fact that during the same hour 1YX is busily engaged in broadcasting music of a very similar vintage.

## Five Plus Nine

TWO Beethoven Symphonies from Dunedin stations in one week, and those the Ninth and the Fifth! The comparison was inevitable. Argument can always be engendered among musicians as to the effectiveness of the introduction of voices into an orchestral work, and there will never be any agreement between those who consider that Beethoven made a colossal blunder in bringing a chorus into the Ninth, and those who declare that this joyous outpouring of song is a fitting climax, not only to this particular symphony, but to the entire nine! Since no original comment is possible, I take a minor place between the two groups, maintaining that the symphony is too long and the voices incongruous, but being humbly eager to listen as often as a station will broadcast it. And I maintain in the face of anyone who accuses me of triteness, that the Fifth is still the most dramatic of all symphonies, in spite of what the exploiters of the commercial value of the V-sign have done for its opening bars.

## Concerto—Suggestible

ANY successful doctor can show you an amazing collection of varied gifts from grateful patients, but I doubt whether any of them could display so spectacular a trophy as Dr. Dahl, to whom Rachmaninoff dedicated his second piano concerto, heard the other night from 1YX. Rachmaninoff's first symphony and his first concerto were not a popular success, and for some years he tied himself in miserable and unproductive knots with his fears and self-distrust. In the end Dr. Dahl straightened him out by the process of repetitive suggestion — "You will begin to work again. You will compose a concerto. You will compose with great facility. The concerto will be of good quality" *da capo*. Basking in the rich, uninhibited flow of the C minor concerto which resulted from this treatment, I was tempted to make an appointment with a psychiatrist and hope for similar fertility; recollecting, however, the first piano concerto, heard the other day from 1YA, I decided that a morbid sub-conscious and a helpful doctor would not alone be enough, and that a certain in-born flair for composition was probably also essential.

## STAMPS

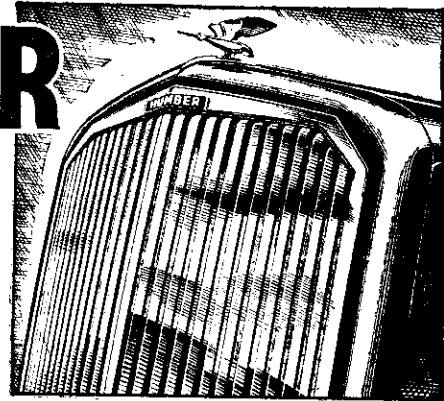
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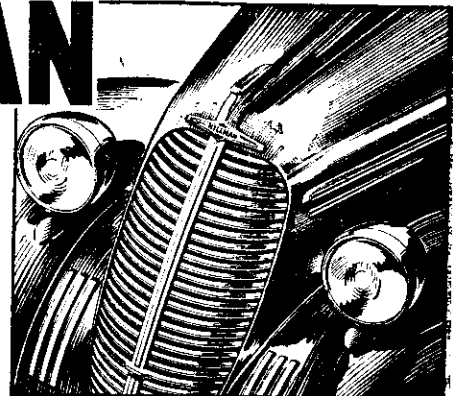
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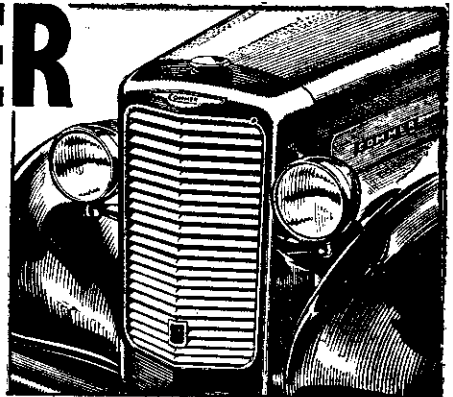
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