

prayer are sound sense in the training for fitness of mind, and Dr. Mary Barkas was happy in her choice of this quotation for the finale of a talk from 3YA on "Mental Health of the Adult." It was a good talk, full of clear, reasonable counsel. She put well the plea for a better attitude to mental disorders—a plea that we hear often, but clearly not often enough so long as any stigma attaches to them. More off the beaten track was another suggestion, not elaborated on, that youths leaving school should have a year or two for trying their hands in various jobs. The choice of occupation is still made very young, and often with little experience or data on the part of either parents or children. It becomes increasingly difficult owing to specialisation, wage awards and the high cost of keeping a family, for a man to change his job in later years. Probably only the psychiatrists know the full extent of the damage done by vocational mistakes, and Dr. Barkas is wise to remind us not to hurry the 16 or 18-year-old into choosing his narrow path.

Seven Minutes to Eight

THERE should be a special medal struck for those who arrange break-fast programmes. The hour between seven and eight in the morning is the time when the domestic regime teeters most perilously on the edge of revolution, anarchy, or mere bad temper. It only wants a blue note from Bing for one, or a too aggressive fugue for another, to provoke an "incident." The early morning programme organiser and the announcer, too, may hold in their hands the key to domestic harmony or disharmony. The same music may produce a quite different reaction according to the weather, the conflict between



alarm clock time and radio time (or no radio time at all) or the effects of the night before. When, for instance, I felt all the better one morning recently for a spirited performance of "Give a Little Whistle," I am inclined to put it down to the spring sunshine, for normally such blatant cheerfulness would make me just the reverse of cheerful. And when, moreover, I became positively benign at the usually revolting sound of a Wurlitzer organ, I can only conclude that conditions were in every way abnormal. Certainly the courtesy and efficiency of the announcer who unobtrusively faded out "Rhapsody in Blue" for a few moments to announce in a quiet voice: "1YA: the time is seven minutes to eight" when in fact I had thought it at least five past the hour, did much to engender equability of spirit and when "How About a Cheer for the Navy" was followed omnisciently by the news "The British East Indies Fleet is on its way to Singapore" I came all over aglow.

Long Live Pavlov!

YOU may have thought, in tuning to Mr. G. W. Parkyn from 4YA, that in his talk on "Custom," you were going to hear of some curious and foreign ways of doing things (like wearing a fez and having one or two extra wives)—things you can dismiss virtuously with a feeling of superiority as not affecting your own life in any degree. How wrong you would be. According to the speaker, custom is not something they have in those foreign parts; it is here and now. It grabs hold of you when you are born and doesn't let go of you till you are safely dead and buried. Your life is made up of a series of acts in which, whether you do it consciously or not, you either conform to custom or flout it (the latter usually with drastic consequences). Seeing there is little we can do about it, the customary thing to do is to choose a way of life and stick to it. Some of us choose the workbench, the suburban garden, the Saturday football; others the cocktail, the flaunted finery, and the social ladder; still others the book, the candle, and the bell. Within the same society these cultures are as alien to one another as the white man from the head-hunter. We may as well accept the fact that we are ruled by custom; for the chances that custom will alter your life are as thousands to one, against the unlikely chance that your life will alter in any way the customs of the society into which you happen to be born.

Composers Must Live

"IT is a strange state to which the great improvements in the technical and mechanical arts have brought our newest composers. Their productions are no longer music; they go beyond the level of human feelings, and no response can be given them from mind and heart." These remarks, which were quoted by Owen Jensen in his first talk on "The Arts To-day: Music" from 1YA, are not the comments of a modern critic on Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony—they are what Goethe wrote about Beethoven's Fifth. Having thus shamed his listeners into some open-mindedness towards contemporary music, Mr. Jensen gave an excellent general survey of the field, running a spirited race against the studio clock. In his second talk he settled down to a more informal and leisurely discussion of the status of the composer. The church is no longer the living composer's patron, nor are there wealthy Esterhazys, nor Princes of Weimar or Salzburg to employ him. In Finland and Russia the State has provided annuities for composers, and in America some hold university appointments. The cinemas provide something of a market, and the broadcasting companies occasionally commission work. But it now rests mainly upon ourselves as singers, players and listeners, to expect and accept contemporary music, to use it and, what's more, to pay for it. If there are too many of us whose musical enjoyment ends at Brahms or Debussy, the output of good composition will wither up. Mr. Jensen did not express himself in the stately idiom of St. Paul, but with his own brisk and fluent persuasiveness he seemed to be recommending more faith, hope and charity in our attitude to contemporary music, and—if we want to be provided with anything better than sounding brass and tinkling cymbal—a rather stronger accent on the charity.

Books For Older Children

GREAT ADVENTURES IN HISTORY AND LEGEND, by Frederick S. Hoppin, illustrated in colour by Edgar Wittmack, 10/6 posted.—The legendary story of Pegasus, the conquests of Alexander, the voyages of Magellan are only a few of the adventures recorded here. A book to please any child.

BOYS AND GIRLS OF HISTORY, by Eileen and Rhoda Power, 12/9 posted.—This is a history book about children for children. English life throughout the centuries and the great events of each age are so vividly depicted that history comes alive.

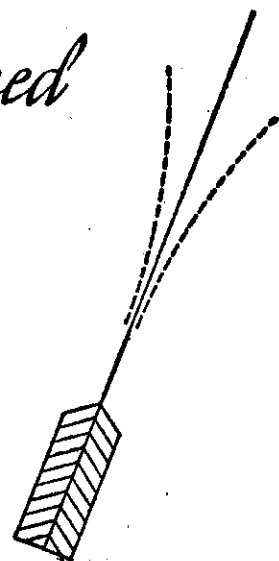
FARMER JIM, by D. H. Chapman, with black and white illustrations by C. E. Tunnicliffe, 10/6 posted.—This delightful story of English farm life is one which will appeal to all children. Farmer Jim has many interesting stories to tell—of the tractor that ran away, of the day he dug up Roman coins, but most of all of the daily life on the farm.

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