

strings sound well, and the result on Saturday night was not at all bad, though we've heard it better. Do we go on with these standards, or have we some scheme for raising them?

HOWEVER, all this solicitude for the truth (as I see it) would have a hollow ring if nothing were said of Miss Salzman's magnificent playing in the Tchaikovsky concerto. She has been quoted in *The Listener* as saying she never gets tired of playing it. True to her word, she made it sound like something fresh and new she had just discovered and quite fallen in love with. Over the air, she seemed to fling herself into it with fierce enjoyment. Perhaps it was inevitable that in the matter of brilliant playing it would be a Concerto for One. Her version of the Mendelssohn Rondo Capriccioso, on the other hand, consisted of just so many quick notes.

Money Well Spent

IF you address a letter to Ruakura State Farm, the reply will point out to you politely that such a place no longer exists. This estate near Hamilton is now Ruakura Animal Research Station. Dr. C. P. McMeekan, its superintendent, speaking from 1YA the other night, made no apology for insisting on the distinction. The view is commonly held that a farm should pay its way; Ruakura will cost money. To what end? Dr. McMeekan, with admirable and effective honesty, promised nothing spectacular, though he hopes, as every research worker does, that the long years of drudgery and even disappointment will be compensated for by one or two golden discoveries. By lowering the incidence of sterility in herds, by raising the average butter-fat output or the expectation of life of the average New Zealand cow, this country would put a few extra millions in its pocket. Ruakura has these matters, among others, on its agenda, and there was something in the stern and uncompromising way in which Dr. McMeekan spoke that made one feel they were in very good hands.

Wallace

WIFE: "But there is nothing anyone could blackmail me for."

Husband: "I know, my dear, but—" This characteristic exchange formed part of an episode in the Edgar Wallace serial "Traitor's Gate," which has just ended at 3YA. Experts may not need to be told that the husband was in charge of the Tower of London and that someone had annexed or was annexing the Crown Jewels. "It is impossible," says the announcer in ritual phrase, "not to be thrilled by Edgar Wallace," and the odd thing is that he is almost right. I suppose that no mass-producing writer has ever kept up quite the same level; the characters are eternally repetitious, the situations often purely comic, but the sheer technical skill and gusto of the thing keeps one in a condition of sustained admiration. Perhaps there are one thousand better thriller-writers than the late Wallace; but I think he was a genius.

Eavesdroppers' Session

IT is difficult to write a good letter if it is addressed to more than one person. Letters that begin "Dear folks at home," or those travelogues written to circulate through a vast acquaintance, are

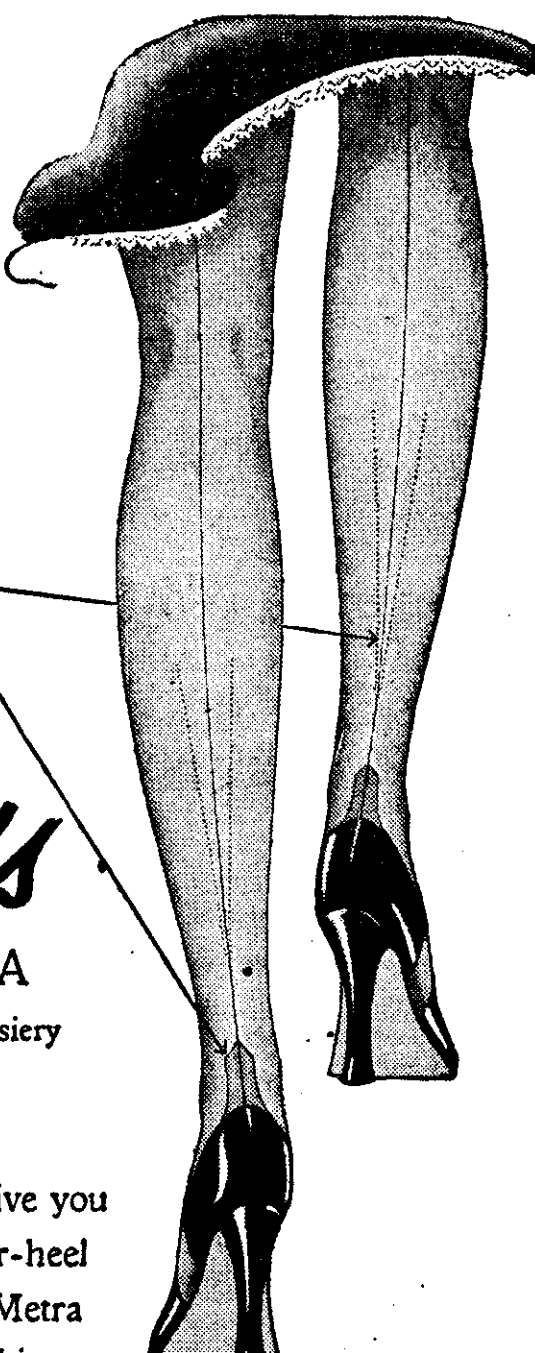
usually models of dullness and platitude, and this is behind the failure of many radio talks. The speaker perhaps tries to include every possible listener and in so doing loses the art of holding any of them. Or he begins his series with a special group in mind—say for instance that it is children—and the next day some greybeard friends meeting him in the street express enjoyment of his talk; after that he cannot forget the eavesdroppers, tries to include them, and the magic is gone. For this reason I have for months restrained myself from mentioning the pleasure with which many of us listen to Mr. Jenner, of Christchurch, who gives talks on Music Appreciation in the Broadcasts to Schools sessions at 1.30. It is only because I wish this pleasure to be more widely shared that I mention it now, and we will just have to trust Mr. Jenner to continue to keep the children firmly in his mind and the rest of us clean out of it.

Lives of the Poets

THIS heading is the title of a new literary series coming from 3YL on Sunday evenings. Unlike its numerous predecessors, it appears to be a local production. For this, praise is due; following on a long succession of overseas presentations, generally of high standard, it requires firmness of spirit to undertake the task. The method followed is of a critical narration interspersed with extracts from the poet in question, read in another voice. For the first in the series, the poet chosen was Robert Herrick; and I hardly think I would be wrong in saying that the compiler of the programme doesn't like him. True, he calls him at last "the greatest of the English minor poets" (is he?), but this sounded, as delivered, not unlike "the greatest of English inconsiderable poets." I am not sure that I agree with the presentation of Herrick as a timid sensualist who wrote with daintiness (sometimes combined with indelicacy) of flowers and female beauty, without however permitting these subjects to possess any reality in his life. "In fact, Herrick sometimes seems more interested in the dresses his girls wore than in the people inside them." Perhaps, but there was something sickly and cold-blooded in the picture thus drawn, which Herrick's actual work does not (or does not often) justify.

Folk-Song in the Making

PHYLLIS WILLIAMS' singing of Maori songs from 2YA made a most agreeable broadcast. To good singing was added an unassuming but illuminating commentary. The songs, which had a genuine Maori background, were not particularly notable musically, chiefly, it might be said, because of the rather obvious and unoriginal accompaniments. Had they been unaccompanied, the melodies might have developed personalities of their own. As to their subject matter, the songs were in true folk tradition, being either occasional pieces or in story form. Folk music arises spontaneously but gathers character as it is moulded by successive generations of singers. Perhaps if much of our Maori melody is left alone, unpublished and free from the fixation of a nineteenth century ballad accompaniment, it may acquire the strength of folk-song, and, in the course of time, there will be a background to New Zealand music.



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