

this knowledge were more widely disseminated: the New Zealand child can hardly appreciate the Biblical pictures of the shepherd as the type of loving kindness, when he knows him as a powerful personality addressing his dogs from some hilltop with a flow of swear words audible at great distances.

Melodrama

"STERNER STUFF" from 4YA was subtitled "A Yorkshire Character Play," which almost persuaded me not to listen to it; if there is one thing that sounds "phony" on the radio it is what is termed a character sketch. However, there was a minimum of local colour in this one, the incidents in which could have happened anywhere, to anyone, in any industrial town. The main character was employed in a mill, and his wife and daughter (a couple of really detestable females if ever I heard any) nagged him about the impossibility of keeping up with the Joneses until the poor wretch committed what might be termed a passive murder. (The device of omitting to pass the tablets which would have warded off a fatal heart attack has been used already in *The Little Foxes*, but who is to remember that except a captious critic?) The senior manager now safely defunct, the hag-ridden husband thus steps into deadman's shoes, only to discover, years later, that his family now are plotting to remove him in his turn, to make way for his daughter's husband. He dies, appropriately and artistically, of a heart attack, in the same chair in which his late boss also breathed his last. This nasty piece of melodrama was put across very well, the husband being pathetically plausible, and the two women getting the most out of two entirely unsympathetic parts.

Love Me in All or . . .

THE small space given in *The Listener* to the programmes of 12B is used by someone with annoying casualness. Two new features of recent weeks—the excellent "Great Days of Sport" and the less commendable "Footsteps of Fate"—have each made their first appearance while other items were still listed in their place. On the other hand the notice of "You'll Enjoy Education" has gone marching on in *The Listener* like John Brown's soul for three weeks after the session has been buried. In two consecutive issues the 10.0 p.m. District Quiz has been misnamed the Junior Quiz; and whenever I tune into the Sunday night Personality Parade it seems to be running ten minutes late, if it runs at all. For people who listen day and night and always to 12B, these inaccuracies are of no importance. But those of us whose listening is selective, who like to take the best that offers from all stations, and who have within the family divers tastes all to be served by one radio set, find that 12B's little ways make us lose patience. As a result we miss some good things, and 12B does itself less than full justice.

Taking It Straight.

FOR 90 minutes on a recent Sunday evening 12M played recordings of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and very good it was to have so long a stretch of consecutive music uninterrupted by comments or chimes. When it was over I tuned in to 3YA's *Rigoletto* to find myself more than usually irritated by the

dramatic commentary. It is of course necessary at some time or other to learn the plot of an opera to enjoy the music fully, but like many other listeners I have seen *Rigoletto* on the stage in this country, I have heard the NBS annotated recording a good many times, I have read one or two opera books and at least one hundred accounts of how Verdi predicted such success for "La donna e mobile" that he kept the tune secret till the last moment. It is not a difficult plot to grasp, and all I ask now is to be allowed to sit back and listen to the music. Whatever justification there is for a talkative guide to help us through our first one or two hearings of an opera, the time comes when we would journey alone. The pleasure that 12M's *Elijah* gave made me think it would be a fine thing if some of these smaller stations would give us a few week-end operatic evenings—just the straight recordings.

The Hum of Expectation

THE advance of science, in itself a quest for truth, unfortunately makes it easier in some ways to practise deception. It is no longer accepted that the camera cannot lie and we can never be sure that even the documentary film or photograph is a record of the actual event. It is even more difficult to verify the authenticity of a radio broadcast. An innocent and regularly used deception is the addition of preliminary noise and applause to a recorded or studio performance to reproduce the atmosphere of the concert-hall. It is a device, however, that rarely deceives. When the announcer at the recent Wellington symphony concert described the "hum of expectation" there was no doubt of its reality. It is almost impossible to synthesise the formal informality of the orchestral noises, the last moments of tuning and warming up, or the symphony of shufflings as the audience settles itself to listen. More difficult still is it to imitate that indefinable feeling of anticipation. The listening mind flies the intervening miles and joins the waiting audience.

Between Earth and Heaven

THE "Days of Creation" series, now drawing to a close at 3YA, takes its theme from Genesis, but notably lacks the unquestioned confidence of that record. There is, indeed, a distinct note of doubt and even pessimism, as of poets gone astray in a hostile universe. So far there has been a good deal of Housman—and Shropshire was nowhere to go for a laugh—at least one excerpt from James Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night*, about the most thorough expression of despair in the English language. One day ended with Nashe's *In Time of Pestilence*—"I am sick, I must die. Lord have mercy on us"—and there was D. H. Lawrence's expression of sheer dislike of the animal kingdom in "Bats." Omar is eschewed; I should think because hedonism does not match with the mood of the series. There is, of course, a good deal on the other side—Wordsworth, Brooke, Rossetti—but even then much of the consolation takes the form of open mysticism (Blake, Emily Dickinson, Vaughan) which never really maintains that the universe is a pleasant place to be in. The standard of selection and reading has throughout been particularly high, and on the whole this is probably the best literary series heard this year.



SPEAKING CANDIDLY

Films and People in New Zealand

by GORDON MIRAMS ("G.M.")

is likely to be the most notable New Zealand book this Christmas . . .

"It must be a good picture, because G.M. says so in 'The Listener.'" Have you ever overheard a remark like that? We have, but we doubt if G.M. would really be pleased about it. Maybe he has his fans who blindly accept his opinions, but he does give his reasons for liking and disliking films; and some of those who disagree most are among his most constant readers.

In this book, G.M. talks about films, but with more elbow room than in his "Listener" articles. The book, however, is quite new material—not a collection of his "Listener" reviews. In his familiar, pleasant, but provocative manner he passes under review the "star" system, censorship, and the effect of films on children. He sketches the film industry and its ramifications, the way films are made and what makes them popular. In fact, he covers every aspect of New Zealand's most popular form of entertainment.

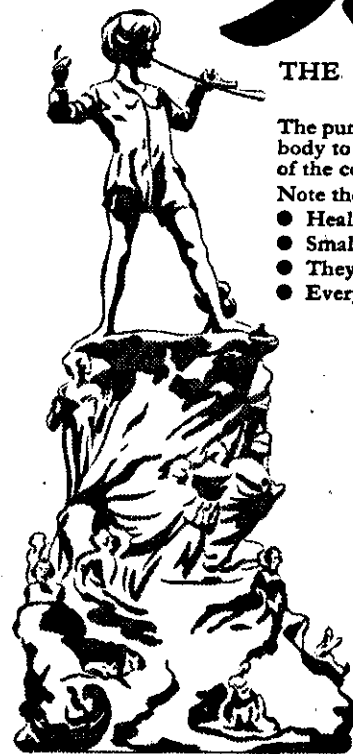
Thirty illustrations supplement the text. The volume is splendidly produced, showing New Zealand book production at its best.

13/6 from all booksellers

PAUL'S BOOK ARCADE, HAMILTON, PUBLISHERS

Now on Sale—Buy Some Today

Buy Health POSTAGE Stamps



THE NEW "PETER PAN" DESIGNS ARE IN TWO COLOURS!

The purchase of Health Postage Stamps enables everybody to help the Health Camp movement. One third of the cost of Health Stamps goes to the Camp funds.

Note these points:

- Health Stamps are POSTAGE Stamps.
- Small lots of Gift Stamps may be sent abroad.
- They increase in value.
- Every Post Office sells them.

Buy a fresh supply regularly.



1 1/2d. 1d. for Postage. 3d. 2d. for Postage.
1d. for Health. 1d. for Health.
Colours: Green and Fawn. Colours: Red and Fawn.