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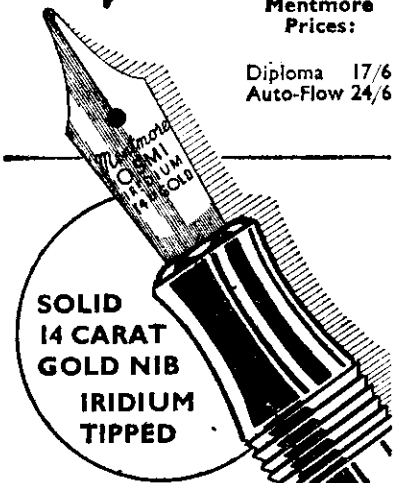
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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Thanksgiving for Victory

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S choral "Thanksgiving for Victory" came from 3YA this week. Perhaps the most immediately outstanding were the spoken passages, chiefly from Isaiah. We were not told who the speaker was, but he gave one of the best performances of its kind I remember; avoiding the vices of both pulpit and stage, he achieved a kind of impersonal grandeur. "To proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of prison to them that are bound. . . ." The only point I should question is "they shall repair the waste cities, the desolation of many generations." Most of the cities were desolated by the present generation, and our chief preoccupation is to avoid desolating all that remain. But the composition as a whole was a good and faithful rendering of the victory mood of the last year. One remembered the American in the broadcast from the U.S.S. Missouri two months ago and his voice as he said: "Perhaps this is the last surrender." The balance between jubilation and awareness of responsibility was superbly struck.

Alamein Anniversary

NOT many after-dinner speeches would make good broadcasts. The BBC broadcast of the Alamein dinner in London heard the other day from Main National Stations was an exception—a lively function and a good clear recording. "Monty," who was in good form, said that at the outset of his command of the Eighth Army there was considerable speculation as how long some of the gentlemen in front of him would last in their commands; the laughter that held up the show here was renewed when he added that there was even more speculation about his own tenure. He presented Mr. Churchill with a volume of poems written by men of his desert army. (Lord Wavell, who sought comfort from poetry in that same desert will appreciate this to the full.) In making the gift he said he had found some difficulty in choosing it, for Mr. Churchill had everything he wanted. He waited for him to add "except office," but he forbore. It is told how "Monty" meeting Winston during the war said: "I neither drink nor smoke, and I am one hundred per cent fit," whereupon the P.M. retorted: "I both drink and smoke, and I am two hundred per cent fit." At the Alamein dinner Winston referred to the austerity of Alexander and Montgomery, which fortunately they did not ask their guests to share. Disraeli put it less kindly when he said of Gladstone that he had no redeeming vices. The sensual Briton, however, is quite prepared to overlook the Puritan strain in the two victorious Field-Marshal, just as Lincoln ignored the stories that Grant was drinking and told the gossippers that if they would let him know what brand of whiskey Grant drank, he would send a cask of it to his other generals.

These Foolish Things

MAX AFFORD'S New Zealand-written thriller, "The Queer Affair at Kettering"—an excellent one, parenthetically, but it has been noticed here before—wound up in fine style from 3YA the other night. It concludes, you

may recall, with the detective and his wife driving home in triumph singing a Song of the Returning Hunter, the chorus and most of the refrain of which consists of the words "The bear went over the mountain," repeated many times. The war-chant lasted some time, as they kept breaking off to explain the solution of the mystery to one another; but finally it died away in the distance. Then there was a short silence, and the announcer, in the voice of one who has tasted all the bitterness in the world, said, "You will now hear *Night on Bare Mountain*, by Moussorgsky."

Appointment with Fear

THIS series of spine-chillers, which has apparently been cheering up the long spring evenings on the West Coast for some time, began from 3YA on October 25th. Observing that the author was John Dickson Carr, known to me as the most ingenious familiariser of the utterly impossible in the whole whodunit field (I should like to put him in a hermetically-sealed room with Edmund Wilson) I listened with eagerness, the more so as I already knew him to have the gift of radio-dialogue. You remember his "Army of Shadows" about a fake newspaper brought out in Brussels under the Belgian occupation? Nor were my expectations disappointed. I suppose that since Wallace became king in Thule anybody might have made two gangsters kidnap the Lord Chief Justice and his clerk to prevent him sentencing a confederate; but only Carr would have made the Justice and his clerk physically resemble the gangsters so that the hero can suggest that they set the house on fire and make it appear that they—the gangsters—perished in the flames; so that the gangsters rush off and do so and, soaking the place in benzine, are overcome by the fumes (which leave hero and heroine unasphyxiated and even voluble) just as the police burst in. What I like in Carr is that there isn't any plummy realism about him. Nor would any other mortal man, in trousers or in toga (I am thinking of Julius Caesar, who defeated his kidnappers at athletic exercises and subsequently crucified them) cause the Lord Chief Justice and his clerk to challenge the gangsters to poker and skin them to the back teeth.

Que Diable Allait-il Faire . . . ?

IN introducing a batch of competitors in 2ZB's Talent Quest the other night, the announcer hinted that the male competitor was conspicuous by being the only representative of his sex. As far as I was concerned he made himself a good deal more conspicuous by aiming much higher than the women in his choice of song—though perhaps "aiming higher" is an awkward metaphor for his chosen piece which was "O Isis and Osiris," from Mozart's *Magic Flute*, a song whose success depends on a pure and steadfast tone on long notes that go down, down, down, almost into the very boots. I suspect this of being a difficult song. Its slow simplicity gives not a shred of cover for faltering or inadequacy. Sung superbly, it just sounds easy, so there is not much credit to be had either way. Mr. X did not sing it superbly, but good luck to him for trying. Nor did he win first place



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