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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Idea for a Serial

HAVING just read Kylie Tennant's novel *Tiburon* I can't help thinking what a splendid radio play or serial it would make. Since it is a novel about the Australian backblocks, I couldn't help comparing it with "Dad and Dave," to the detriment of the latter. How many years has "Dad and Dave" been going now? It always seems a pity to hear the stalwart actor who takes the part of "Dad" wasted on such long-drawn artificial stuff, when there are such rich gold-mines as *Tiburon* waiting a prospector. I am not going to say that the people of this book are typical Australians, but I do say that to me they are real people, and the book has enough humour and tragedy to satisfy any serial-lover. I should like to see "Dad and Dave" scrapped, and the entire cast transferred to a dramatisation of *Tiburon*. The transition from the unreal population of Snake Gully to the totally unmoral but entirely delightful members of the White family would be a change welcomed by actors and listeners alike.

### Negro Empire

A PROGRAMME by a Cuban-style band, led by Edmund Ros, showed interestingly the extent to which the music of South America, as well as North, is dominated by negro rhythms. The Brazilian samba and the West Indian calypso—the last is, I think, a recent discovery, lively and amusing, without the Latin lusciousness of tunes in neighbouring lands—these one can understand, for the negro authorship is direct and avowed. But the more familiar rumbas and congas all have as their basis the drum-beat rhythm that gave birth to jazz and its congeners. What the negroes of the southern lands do not seem to have developed is anything resembling the spirituals of the plantations and the Mississippi. Whether because of some difference between Catholicism and evangelical puritanism, or for some other cause, the slave population of the Spanish and Portuguese countries has not achieved that re-statement of religion at its own level and on its own terms that the northern slaves brought to the level of a great art. But both dominate the music of the erstwhile masters—the captive took the victor prisoner.

### Green for Safety

THE magic of witches, ogres and giants or beneficent fairies, the fantastic tales of childhood, none of these was more incredible than the story of the little green light that did so much towards winning the Battle of Britain. Radar—mysterious, complex simplicity; uncannily accurate, an unspectacular secret weapon. It was at once an eye and an ear; it was a weapon both of defence and offensive. Unimpassioned, it was neither superhuman nor inhuman, yet far more than a common machine. Radar's unbelievable omniscience, its remarkable adaptability, almost make one forget that it had no life of its own, that it owed its creation and its existence to a concentration of human endeavour

even more extraordinary. The first scientist who perceived its immediate possibilities and those who brought it to its complete accomplishment; the girls and men who watched the green light in remote and lonely outposts of defence, and the men in the air and on the sea, for whom it was both a guide and a reassurance—there was in them all a patience and perseverance and a heroism as secret and unspectacular, but as vital as radar itself. The BBC production which told the story of radar skipped the obvious, courageously challenged the intelligence, gave more account to truth than glamour. It was broadcast documentary as it should be.

### Things That Go Bump

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK's *Nightmare Abbey*, the theme of the latest BBC "Have You Read?", was written chiefly to satirise the matrimonial difficulties of the poet Shelley, or rather the philosophical and feminist principles implicit in those difficulties, and does so



An illustration from "Nightmare Abbey"

very entertainingly. But it took also the form, very common among the satirists of the early nineteenth century, of guying the popular thrillers of the day. In the latter decades of the eighteenth, even the first stirrings of the Romantic Movement provoked an outburst of "Gothic" novels, which were invariably set in ruined castles or abbeys, swarming with owls, bats and other of God's humbler creatures; and were just as invariably concerned with the adventures of the unfortunate heroines, against whom the universe had taken a grudge and who were forever being abandoned, betrayed, forsaken, deserted, disinherited, and (occasionally) dishonoured, in an atmosphere of refined but Stygian darkness and the highest sentiments. Yet so rich and