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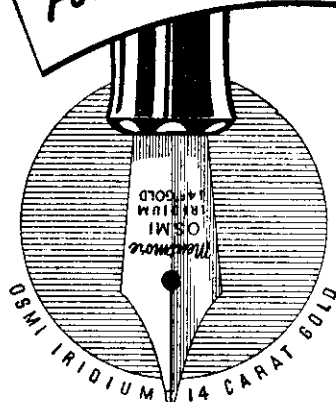
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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Cloak and Dagger

"BEAUVALLET," from a Georgette Heyer novel, is one of 3YA's current serials. The choice is to be commended, whatever the serialists have made of it; for Miss Heyer's costume novels, as distinct from her detective stories and one or two more seriously historical tales, are perfect in their kind. The formula of the costume novel is this: the author selects the fashionable world of some historical epoch other than this — the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the Old South and the Second Empire, seem to be preferred—and writes a simple melodrama, on a theme selected from Robin Hood, King Cophetua, elopement, disguise, disinheritance, and a few others; the characters must be noble in blood and spirit, preferably wealthy and certainly elaborately dressed, talking a strange dialect supposed to be period, and all must end happily. The odd thing is that novels thus gruesomely concocted can be immensely enjoyable; one is transported into a toy-theatre-and-wax-works-world, brightly coloured and two-dimensional, where all is for the best, and the values of fairytale are restored. Miss Heyer possesses the supreme gift of peopling this world with living beings; long may she reign.

### Jackpotted Joachim

IF you were asked the question, "For what was Joachim famous?" what would you reply? An entrant in 12B's Musical Quiz found himself in that position the other night, and £9 hung in the balance. "For the way he played the violin" was acknowledged to be half the answer, but did not, apparently, entitle him to half the prize money. What the other half of the answer is will surely depend on the point of view from which you look at Joachim's many-sided greatness. He has claims as a teacher and, some might think, as a composer. Those who play violin concertos may see him as the great master of cadenza writing. Others will remember his long, intimate association with Brahms which gave him first claim on that composer's violin music. His string quartet leadership is what the chamber music enthusiasts will think of first, and this was the answer the question-master wanted and assumed should be given. Although agreeing with this myself, I do not think the issue is so clear-cut as to be beyond argument. The night before, when the prize money was only a few shillings less, the corresponding question was about Wagner; it was not an easy question, but the answer was a matter of hard fact, not judgment. This, I think, is the way these riddles should be framed when a correct answer is worth a week's wages.

### Doubly Star-Crossed Lovers

I RECENTLY inveighed against the practice of turning perfectly good Shakespeare into dubious opera; but everything deplorable in this practice pales beside the limp and damp tastelessness of a ten-minute musical comedy heard recently and featuring several stars of radio comedy whom under normal circumstances I love and revere. The play chosen was one of those operated—"Romeo and Juliet"—and why it should be clever or funny to turn this into a musical comedy, littered with

positively mummified gags and tunes which attempt to burlesque comedy airs and succeed only in being weak imitations, eye hath not yet seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. "I'm fearfully sorry, Romeo old boy, but you've been banished from the jolly old city"—this is the expression of an utter mindlessness that makes one entertain fears for the future of civilisation. Queen Victoria had a word for it.

### Macdonizetti

"LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR" figured in a recent "Music from the Theatre" session—that very Italian, very operative tragedy, over which looms, like an astonished full moon, the face of Sir Walter Scott, from whose *Bride of Lammermoor*—read by Mr. Simmance the other day—is taken. The adaption of themes to Italian opera is a perennial cause of comment—James Agate has pointed out



that Damon Runyon's story "Sense of Humour" is almost identical with the plot of *Rigoletto*; but "Lucia" enjoys enough renown to suggest that the adaptation was not unsuccessful. But many pitfalls are there; a tale is told of an Italian company which performed this opera in Birmingham some years ago. It seems that the chorus of clansmen strode in a militant manner about the stage with their sporrans slung not fore but aft, thus resembling the humbler rodent animals in a rather diverting manner—a scene to which only Comp-ton Mackenzie could do full justice.

### A Quiz Query

THE element of competition in the 4ZB Talent Quizzes reminds me of the popularity which various Quiz programmes have always enjoyed. I suppose the same spirit is at the back of both types of programme—the idea of bringing out your light from under the bushel, and to see whether it has any monetary value. The invention of the first Quiz programme has a lot to answer for. Even those closely concerned with commercial radio have at times paused and asked themselves "Why?" Ilka Chase, herself a popular figure on American radio, says in her racy reminiscences: "Any child exposed to radio today must conceive of literature as a body of quotations, capable of being memorised and worth money. Education has assumed the character of an amiable inquisition, conducted on a sliding scale. Somewhere along the line, the boy must have been handed an inaccurate map of the world which puts the Pierian spring deep in the heart of Eldorado. It is a forbidding picture, this glorification of

(continued on next page)

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