

which was a relief, after a surfeit of "Silent Night" and "O Come All Ye Faithful" from other sources. I must congratulate these singers on the fact that it is possible to hear every word they sing. I will add that I thought "Nativity Cradle Song" their best effort (possibly because of the beauty of the Robertson arrangement), and the accompanied carols I liked least. Surely this type of music is traditionally unaccompanied, and more effective if done without the aid of a piano, an instrument which few genuine waits could hope to carry with them on their nightly rounds!

Dullness at Seven

"THE briskness of the morning call changed to dullness at noon." When the listener has ceased to be moved by the occasional vivid phrases in which the reports of the share market are clothed, the feeling grows that the Stock Exchange is perhaps just a great playing field, and the proper place for reports of what has gone on there during the day is among the Sports Results. The monetary value of the transactions recounted to us is ridiculously small—fifty shares in some well-known firm have been bought, or they have been sold, or somebody has offered them for sale, but would-be purchasers have bid two shillings too little. A few of these items and five minutes on the air is gone, yet the sum total of money involved is but a few hundreds of pounds. Is there some deep significance in these movements of little handfuls of shares? If so, let us have a commentator to put them into perspective for us, to explain their portent. If there is not, if it is just that a few men play a game whose rules are Greek to the rest of us, then away with them to a quieter corner of the programmes. Seven o'clock at a main National station is an important hour and worth something of more general interest.

Music As Usual

A YEAR ago I wrote some plaintive words on this page about the lack of classical music from Auckland stations in holiday time. This year I can report contentedly on the Christmas Day fare. Quite apart from the special music of the season, there were some good things to be picked up at odd hours by people who were having their first opportunity in weeks for a little leisurely listening. At 2.0 p.m., for instance, 12M put on an hour of Mozart which included the D Minor Piano Concerto and the "Linz" Symphony. Later there were sundry Dove Songs and Italian Caprices from various stations, and at the end of the afternoon "Peter and the Wolf," to which the household cat settled down to listen with approval when he came in to superintend the preparations for the evening meal. Between 8.0 and 10.0 1YX played as usual two good hours of symphonic music. These arrangements, as I say, passed neither unnoticed nor unappreciated. Nor did we forget that they were made possible by people who were working while the rest of us were trying to relax. Even when the domestic turmoil of a family Christmas involves us in some surprisingly hard work, we are

supported by a pretence of holidaymaking. For the few who have to turn out to keep regular hours at their usual posts in the essential services there can be no such illusion.

The Wind and the Rain

THE weather office and Dr. V. E. Galway must have conspired, just before Christmas, to lull Dunedin listeners into a false sense of well-being. The weather prophecy was for fairer weather; Dr. Galway, in similar strain, chose as the first offering in his "Masterpieces of Music" the lovely round "Summer Is a-Coming In." The fresh young voices of the choristers, the sparkling atmosphere of verdant growth which this song suggests to the listening mind, and the hopeful, if cautious, weather report prompted me to get out the family bathing suits in readiness for a fortnight of brilliant sunshine. Instead of this, we had the sort of Christmas weather for which a more appropriate theme song would have been "Hey-ho, the Wind and the Rain!"

Nativity Odes

THE Rev. J. R. Hervey had time for only four poems in his Christmas poetry reading from 3YA—one by Milton, one by Herrick, one by a sixteenth-century poet, Robert Southwell, and one of his own, quite worthy of its august company. The Herrick poem indeed was not one of its creator's most successful works; attempting to repeat the naive realism of medieval nativity poems, it succeeded only in adopting a somewhat unexpectedly patronising attitude towards the Christchild. But this served to illustrate an interesting common feature of all poems in this programme—that the point of departure of each was the medieval carol type, a thing visible in the metre of Herrick, Southwell, and even Milton. In Mr. Hervey's case it was there as a remote underlying shadow—the long distance, not only of space and time, which separates the modern world of Bethlehem. Of the style of the reading much might be said, all of it laudatory.

Round The World By Music

A GREAT many songs and other pieces of music take the name of a country, a city, or a town as part of their title and theme. Years ago there was, for instance, a vogue for going back to Dixie, Alabama, or some other place guaranteed to rouse nostalgia. Singers to-day complain of not being able to get Indiana off their minds or tell of boyhood days in ole Oklahoma, while orchestras disport themselves in Persian markets and gardens.

With the idea of making a world tour in a more comprehensive way, the NBS will use place names for a new series in the *For My Lady* session, under the general title of "Music from the Map." Songs and compositions such as Afton Water, On the Road to Mandalay, Brigg Fair, and so on will be used in a form of globe-trotting to music. The new series is to start from 3YA on Monday, January 14, at 10.10 a.m., afterwards going round the main National stations.



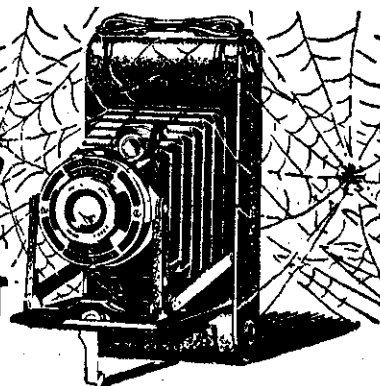
The Indian Rope Trick—the magician's top of the bill illusion.

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