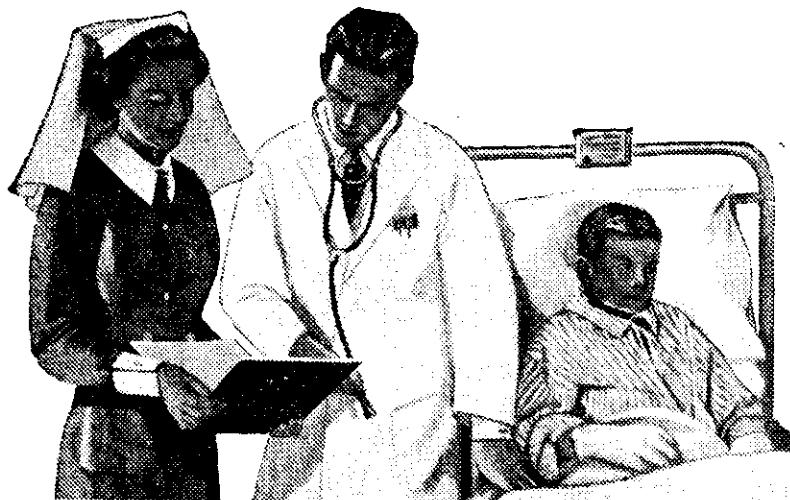


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# CALAMITIES COME IN THREES

Written for "The Listener" by "DUKIE"

THE man in blue looked depressed.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "Another murder?"

"Murders! That's all the average person thinks about. Something sensational: thwarted love, the eternal triangle, and then a beastly, gory murder. How they lap it up!"

"What is wrong then?"

"Just an accidental drowning. A little girl playing near the water. She fell in and the little boy with her panicked and didn't run for help soon enough. That's all. There'll only be about three lines about it in the paper. It's tragic, but not sensational. And there'll be two more of 'em."

"What? Two more children drowned, you mean?"

"Oh, not necessarily children, and not necessarily drowned. Two more sudden deaths, I mean."

"Why two more?"

"These things always run in threes. You just wait and see. Someone will get run over, or poisoned, or something. It always happens that way."

"So you think that everything runs in threes?"

"Yes, most of them do. Sudden deaths in particular. If someone gets drowned, someone else will commit suicide or some such thing."

THE waves of depression almost engulfed me as well.

"You don't think that your job is a happy one then?"

"Happy? How can it be? We're surrounded by misery and crime on every side. We risk our lives at times to keep people safe. We go into gambling dens and worse."

"Isn't that exciting?" I interjected, but he went on as though I had not spoken.

"And what happens? The very people we are trying to protect hate and revile

us. Crowds, given half a chance, hiss 'scab' and 'dirty copper' at us. Certainly the majority of the New Zealand crowds are not so very bad, but just look at what is happening in Sydney."



"Turning us into bogey-men . . . Stupid, that's what it is."

"What?"

"Why, if a policeman tries to arrest anyone, the crowd turns on the man doing his best to enforce law and order. They can't even get men to join the force over there, conditions are so bad."

I SAID nothing, but I was sure his face had grown longer and his gloom deeper even as we had been talking.

"Yes, conditions are bad—and getting worse. People seem to think that we invented the laws ourselves, so that we

(continued on next page)

## Stella May Become a Star

AN Auckland Town Hall audience, and 12B listeners, recently heard a remarkable pianoforte performance by Stella Smith, aged 11, who played Chopin's Waltz in C Sharp Minor, the Etude No. 4, Op. 10, in E Major, and Moszkowski's "Right-hand Study in F Major." She has had two and a-half years' tuition by her father, who gave her one lesson a day, and she has appeared only twice in public. On December 9 she gave a broadcast performance from the 12B radio theatre.

Mr. Smith has advised 12B that his daughter will not appear in public again for at least another two years, which will be spent in further training. Competent judges have predicted a great future for this young performer.



STELLA SMITH