

and still she was not worried. But when she could not find him anywhere, how frantic she must have got, so that in the end she rang the police, and we got to hear about it.

Or Mrs. Annie F. —. There she was living with her married daughter, probably sometimes sad that she did not have a home of her own and enough strength to do real work; perhaps often feeling and complaining that she was "quite a burden." So that, when her daughter started to make a cake straight after lunch and found that she had no baking-powder, Mrs. — was only too happy to offer to go to the grocer's down the street and get it. And the daughter, though she would not have minded going herself, knew how much the mother liked to "be useful" and let her go. In the meantime she began to get her ingredients all prepared. And when the things were all set out on the table and Mrs. — was not back as she should have been, the daughter began to get restless; but then she thought "most likely she has met somebody and has had a little chat" and she started doing something else and got so absorbed in it that quite some time elapsed before she realised that her mother had been away for more than two hours. Then she would go out and inquire at the grocer's and be told that Mrs. — had been in and had bought the baking-powder, but that was quite some time ago and she had left immediately. Then the chasing through the neighbourhood would begin, without success, and after a while her daughter would have to go home because the children were due back from school and the dinner had to be got ready. And only after her husband had come home from work, could one of them go and inform the police.

Worst of all is the story of little Alison with the freckles. She left home before

nine in the morning; she may be one of those who dawdle around after school or go and visit a friend; so it may be four o'clock or later before it is noticed that she is missing. What can have happened in all those hours? It is too late to find out from the school whether she has been there at all; something may have happened on her way to school. . . . Oh no, one would have heard of an accident by now. . . . So the agonised parents begin hunting up school friends or a teacher, and when they learn that their little girl has been to school they try to find out where and with whom she has been seen last. Or perhaps they are the kind of parents who threaten their children with what will happen to them if they bring a bad report. And when they hear that there has been a report that day and that Alison's was not very good they will not only be worried and frightened, but torture themselves with self-reproaches. Until . . .

YES, we never know the sequence of events after this "until" The last act in the Shortest Dramas is always missing. Since so many people on so many occasions make so many suggestions to the National Broadcasting Service I think I might be allowed to make just one: Could the Stations announce the missing Acts in the Shortest Dramas, at least when they provide a happy ending?

"Mr. and Mrs. — wish to inform those who took an interest in the disappearance of their mother (and mother-in-law), Mrs. Annie F. —, that she returned safely to her home late in the evening. She had decided, on the spur of the moment, to go to the pictures, and on coming out had forgotten her address. She was recognised by a kind young man who took her to her home in a taxi."

Or: "We are happy to announce that little Tony — was found by a local police constable, early in the afternoon. He was sound asleep in a paddock where, according to his somewhat muddled statement, he had gone to find "Little Boy Blue and his horn." His brown sandal shoes were muddy, and there was a tear in his navy blue pants. But not a hair on his (fair) head was touched."

Wouldn't that be nice?

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DEREK PRENTICE IN MELBOURNE

MUSICAL sound effects such as those used in recent BBC broadcasts, including *The Harbour Called Mulberry*, and *Radar*, are planned by Derek Prentice, late of the BBC, who is now in Australia under contract to 3DB Melbourne, to produce for that station. He says that after he has assimilated the features of the Australian scene by observation and personal contact, his technique will follow the lines developed by the American radio producer, Norman Corwin, and by leading British producers, including Cecil McGivern.



BBC photograph
DEREK PRENTICE

He announced on arrival in Australia that his BBC work had been very attractive, but he felt that he should experience sponsored broadcasting. He was particularly interested in his new job, he said, for it gave him his first opportunity of working under truly competitive conditions.

Mr. Prentice is greatly interested in experiments with the use of musical backgrounds to replace natural sound as a link between sequences in plays and radio features. He has had some experience of American and Canadian broadcasting methods and has gained a good insight into their quick-fire methods of presenting programmes.

As far as his ideas of musical instead of naturalistic sound effects are concerned, he has a special eye for Australian composers and musicians who think along these lines. This is his first visit to Australia and already he has found that, though the people generally are similar in their outlook to the people of England, there are a number of important differences which interest him greatly as a broadcaster and producer. He will have to study these closely, he says, before he can produce something likely to meet with the approval of Australians.

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