

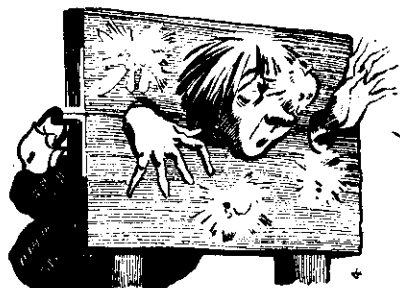


"... and so the poor peasant's daughter liquidated the handsome young prince, set up a people's government, and lived happily ever after"

Stevenson's time it was of everyday occurrence. Industrial expansion and the exploitation of the waste spaces of the earth were still leading to mass departures from the British Isles and North-west Europe. When Stevenson sailed for Samoa, the great Irish and German exoduses were over and the Italian and Slav inundations were yet to come; but a steady tide still flowed from England, Scotland, Ireland and Scandinavia. Stevenson's essays, not among his characteristic—there is a certain melancholy—give a memorable picture of what this emigration (he saw the "ex" of it rather than the "in") really involved. No longer the romantic extremes of hardship, with salt-beef and weevils and pre-Plimsoll shipbuilding; simply the soggy nadir of English cooking and an atmosphere of resigned and cheerful but utter depression that chills the spirits when we hear about it 50 years later. This was the last dying phase of the mass export of population as marketable goods that had marked the high industrial age. Stevenson depicts the whole phenomenon as chilly and grown old.

Warning To Actors

I WAS interested in "The English Theatre: Miracles and Moralities," a BBC programme from 4YA. With a few words of reminiscence, supposedly by



one who had taken part in early performances at the end of the 14th Century, we were plunged into a marketplace among the crowd who witnessed

such plays. Wisely the writer of this episode made his Crowd the same sort of gathering we might expect to-day, for human nature changes little, and the lure of a spectacle was the same five centuries ago as it is nowadays—except that we have grown a little too sophisticated to enjoy the rhyming couplets of doggerel and the antics of the workmen-actors. They had something, however, that modern entertainment lacks—they were entertainment of the people, by the people, for the people. And one feature of their presentation might well be incorporated, with advantage, in modern theatrical productions—the fact that being under the patronage of the town officials, actors who put on a dud performance or forgot their lines were punished for the offence.

Amberley Wild Brooks

JEAN BLOMFIELD'S piano group from 1YA recently was pleasant music of a kind that stirs the imagination without unduly taxing the more logical processes of thought. It is interesting to notice how sensitively written "impressionistic" music can re-create the atmosphere of a scene even if the listener is unacquainted with the source of inspiration. There is John Ireland's "Amberley Wild Brooks," for instance. I've never been to Amberley and I wondered, as John Drinkwater did about that other lazy-named place, Mamble, "whether people seem, who breed and brew along there, as lazy as the name." How wild are Amberley's brooks? Do they stumble over rocks, hidden in the bracken of a desolate moor, or is this as pleasant and pastoral a country as the name suggests? I do not know; I shall probably never know. No matter; the picture that arises from John Ireland's music is as clear, as picturesque if you like, as any painting, untempered by judgment, unhampered by associations. Jean Blomfield's playing, by the way, was sympathetically imaginative, her fingers always the servants of feeling.

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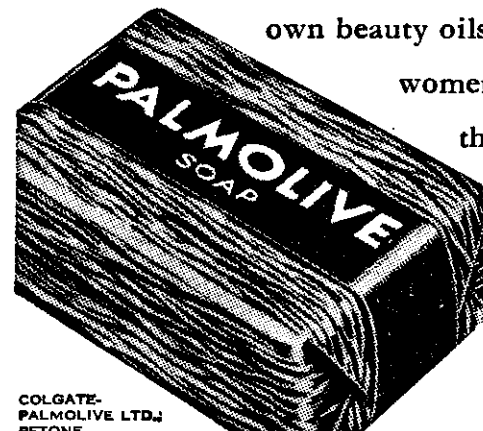
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