

in about the same degree as *David Copperfield*, but one hardly supposes that this inspired the sub-title. At all events, *Kipps* was the subject of one of the BBC's "Have You Read?" series; and the "simple soul" aspect of things was much stressed, especially by the method adopted of having Kipps tell his story in the first person, which removed whatever measure of observation and detachment Wells may have put into his work. The broadcast strongly resembled in manner and treatment Michael Redgrave's film of a few years ago and, like it, caused one moments of unease lest Kipps was being put across as the Common Man, with that unattractive pride certain characters in fiction take in being exactly like everybody else. But, of course, it was not so, in book, film, or broadcast; the author made one of his really telling contributions to human understanding in the unexpected and immortal climax. The amiable but totally null little draper's assistant, having passed through fairy-tale adventures to a fairy-tale happiness with the display of no talent, quality, or characteristic but a dazed innocence, suddenly comes out of a brown study with the remark (made as it were in his sleep): "I s'pose there never was a chap quite like me before." The individual is unique, Mr. Kipps, and thank you for reminding us.

Well-bred Music

"MENDELSSOHN AND HIS MUSIC"

from 3YA reminds us that this composer is another who has suffered by the adulation of his friends. Mendelssohn's music is not fashionable to-day because, for one thing, it is of a quality most susceptible to the vagaries of fashion. It is elegant music, polished, refined, aristocratic; there is never a wrong note. In an age devoted to the comforting actuality of realism when even music may be expected to have social and philosophical implications, the complete detachment of Mendelssohn's music does not find much favour. It is well-bred music. Its elegance is more than an absence of vulgarity. It is a positive perfection of purely musical values. Mendelssohn's friends of past decades who have attempted to flatter by imitation have spoiled the manners without giving them the substance of breeding or the finish of technical competence. In consequence his detractors confuse art with artifice, and mistake sincerity for artificiality. Mendelssohn is not a great composer in the line of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, but I would wager his stocks will yet rise again.

Our Own Composers

RECENTLY Dunedin listeners had the opportunity of hearing music by three New Zealand composers, played by the 4YA String Orchestra, under Gil Dech. There are listeners who are under the impression that nothing culturally good can come out of their own country; listeners who are unaware that music of any sort is being written here; and listeners, indeed, who look upon a New Zealander who writes music as some sort of rare monstrosity to be gently but firmly discouraged by being compared with great composers of other times and lands. It is true, on the other hand, that

we have a not inconsiderable number of composers (most of them learnt their craft in the Universities) who are steadily engaged in putting notes on manuscript in the faint hope that someone some day will take enough notice of them to have the thing actually performed. When this rare event does happen, listeners get rather a shock at the quality and genuine workmanship of the resultant product. The works presented from 4YA were "Theme and Diversions for Strings," by Frank Callaway, of Dunedin; "Minuet for String Orchestra," by a Wellington composer, A. D. Heenan; and "Fantasy for Piano and Strings," by Mary Martin, of Dunedin. The station is to be commended in bringing New Zealand composers to our notice, and it is to be hoped that more such programmes can be arranged.

Return of the Native

THE redoubtable Mr. Robert Gibbings (who, as readers of *The Listener* are well aware, is 19 stone, Irish, bearded, and a writer and engraver) made a series of recorded readings from his own book *Lovely is the Lee*, which have now come to 3YA. In the book his descriptions



of the hospitality, almost terrifying in its spontaneity, his accounts of the local idiom, local folk-lore and local customs of birth, marriage and death, these were full of understanding and respect and without anything

even remotely like condescension; yet one did seem to see Mr. Gibbings holding on to his hat, a stranger in a strange land. But once you hear his voice you realise that he is by blood, bone, breath and tongue, one with those of whom he speaks; when he tells stories of the oddities of County Galway he is not the wondering stranger. These oddities are to him simply the way those of his world choose to behave, and if we choose to look at them across a gulf he is looking back at us from the further side.

Old Master

SOMETHING happened to a BBC *All*

Join In session from 3YA the other night. These programmes consist of familiar numbers played and sung by various orchestras and artists, but with one particular personality of the entertainment world in charge of each. They are as a rule pleasant enough to the one-ear listener, but hardly merit the attention of both organs. But on this occasion the compère was Leslie Henson, in whose voice rasps the dust of every music hall since 1902, and who is himself an epitome of several decades of entertainment history. Well, the artists went through their programme much as usual, playing "Apple Blossom Time" and "Pedro the Fisherman" and other amiable noises; and Mr. Henson jollied them along in a self-sacrificing manner; only there was in the air a certain tension. Then, something happened. The compère announced that he was going to sing a song himself. And he did. For five or ten minutes there was nothing in the world but Leslie Henson, his songs, his stories, his reminiscences, his voice.

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