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"One would think, Father William, that somehow your shape Would bar games from Marbles to Cricket, And yet you can manage a good round of Golf— Pray how do you possibly stick it?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son, "I was always too weak or too sickly, But once I discovered this wonderful Salt I began to get strong very quickly."

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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

First, Second, Third

COMPETITION festivals have been in the air again. So much do they figure in the musical lives of many students that the mere mention of "comps" immediately kindles a light—I hesitate to call it the light of battle—in their eyes. The musical value of competition festivals is questionable. Although it has often been advocated in their favour that many musicians who afterwards achieved fame saw the light of their musical day as competition-winners, it must be admitted that there are as many more who have contributed much to music who were in their youth among the unsuccessful or who were unmoved to compete at all. The value of competitions depends wholly on the spirit in which the performer competes and in which the adjudicator listens. The placing of the winners is of small importance compared with the creation of musical goodwill, leading to better standards of taste and performance. A competitor who imagines that "first" is necessarily synonymous with "excellent" or a judge whose sympathy extends to extravagant unqualified praise are both doing harm to the cause of music. The spirit of competition in some form or other is in the blood of all healthy young citizens. If it extends to music it is good only if sublimated to the greater enjoyment of the art.

Orchestral Who's Who

READING the Julian Huxley article in a recent *Listener* about the pleasure and profit to be derived from *Who's Who* reminded me that I have recently derived profit and pleasure from 2YD's programme *Who's Who in the Orchestra*. In fact, had I listened to every programme I would by now have been on intimate terms with every component of the symphony orchestra from piano down to French horn. As it is, after listening to two programmes I am comparatively familiar with string quartet, and trumpet. But more enjoyable even than the lively discussion of each instrument's development and powers are the illustrations which accompany each programme. Last week Tchaikovsky's *Serenade Suite* was used as an example of the string quartet, and thanks to the preceding commentary I found myself listening to it with some degree of intellectual instead of merely emotional appreciation.

Respect Without Love

I HAD a feeling when listening to the Tennyson *Book of Verse* programme from 2YA the other evening that the compiler of the talk was not a Tennysonian. He was careful to pay homage to Tennyson the Craftsman, thus by implication denying his right to a place among the truly great, to apply to him his own tribute to Virgil—"landscape-lover and lord of language"—while stripping verisimilitude from his contemporaries' vision of him as the Lucretius of the age. Kenneth Muir, in his essay *Heirs of Shelley* says of Tennyson that he "acquired unequalled popularity by advocating progress in the abstract and reaction in the concrete." The writer of this talk does not go as far as this, but you detect in him a definite puzzlement at Tennyson's lack of social consciousness. I liked his theory of the conflicting forces in Tennyson's poetry, the war

of Public Voice with Private Voice, the war of Garden with Wild. But I feel that no true admirer of Tennyson would have allowed so much of the programme to be devoted to the Lotus-Eaters, nor have collaborated with a reader who intoned rather than spoke his lines. The general impression given by the programme was that we had come to bury Tennyson, not to praise him.

Men Without Egoism

ARNOLD GOODWIN'S talk on "The Art of the Puppet Theatre" from 1YA was a triumph of the spirit over the flesh. Obviously handicapped by a severe cold, the speaker nevertheless still managed to convey to the listener his unbounded affection for the puppet. The puppet has a very ancient lineage and it was only the smug decadence of the 19th Century theatre which condemned him to be the plaything of children and sent him on the road a vagabond showman. To-day, as Mr. Goodwin pointed out, there is a renaissance of puppetry. The puppet never aspires to stardom. He is never late for rehearsals, never temperamental—except when he perversely decides to entangle his strings—and asks nothing more from the producer than careful, intelligent manipulation and a comfortable hook upon which to rest. He is unaffected by colds, actors' equities, union awards, or Hollywood's blank cheques. "Men Without Egoism," Gordon Craig described puppets. Yet they have personality; subtle and penetrating.

Where Angels Fear . . .

EVERY Monday night sees me rushing into *Fool's Paradise*, in my opinion the funniest programme on the air at the moment. The chief characters are two amateur cricketers, Spencer and Woolcott (Wayne and Radford) epitomising all that is best in what a recent correspondent so happily called "bunny-rabbitry." In a recent episode, "Bodyline," there is, as might be expected, a corpse. Charlie, the corpse, is an integral part of the plot, but to me his significance lies not so much in the part he plays (and has played) in the action as in his faculty for bringing out the essential qualities of those with whom he comes in contact. He is the perfect touchstone. The essential villainy of Charlie's former colleagues (members of an enemy spy ring) is shown by the fact that they treat him as a piece of left luggage for the purpose of embarrassing their enemies; the essential goodness indigenous to the English cricketer, however humble, is shown by Spencer and Woolcott's failure to be embarrassed for long, or to feel anything but slightly irritated affection for Charlie at each of his frequent reappearances. At no time do Spencer and Woolcott suspect Foul Play, for this is a thing no cricketer has ever heard of. Ask the Australians.

You Can Have It Both Ways

DID you hear James Stephens on William Blake, in the BBC programme from 4YA? Did you agree with his dogmatic pronouncements? Not being a Blake authority, I hesitate to say that I found Stephens intensely annoying, but I am inclined to think other listeners may have found him so too. In Stephens' favour was his attractive brogue, to