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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Good Value

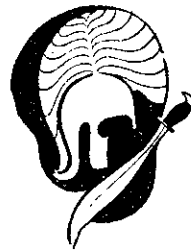
**VICTORIA THE GREAT**, which I occasionally hear from 2YD on a Sunday evening, reminds me of a gladstone bag—when it opens up there's more in it than you thought there would be. There are, to begin with, several of the expected historic personages, sounding as one has been led to believe they sounded, and including (naturally) the Queen herself, making characteristically Victorian remarks such as "It is my duty" in response to characteristically Albertian remarks like "I beg of you to spare yourself, my love." Then the heroine, Dorothy Lucas, the circle of whose private life intersects at various points (and always at interesting ones) the lives of her more prominent contemporaries. At the end of last Sunday's episode our heroine was being interviewed with a view to employment by Miss Nightingale, whose mode of expression (perhaps due to her liking for the phrase "dear child") reminded us strongly of Gladys Mitchell's Mrs. Bradley, even to the suggestion of an alligator grin. It was therefore something of a shock to our new-found feeling of familiarity when we found ourselves out of the serial and listening to a Fitzpatrick-worthy reference to (I think) "the lady with the kind eyes, the lady with the healing hands, the lady" (pause, then *rallentando*) "with the lamp" (exclamation point). The serial itself is workmanlike and convincing, and should not need this blatant salesmanship.

### The Sheltered Lifers

AS you have probably heard from Flanagan and Allen, it is an unpleasant feeling being on the outside looking in, yet it often happens to *ITMA* add cts. There's a crack from somebody, appreciative applause, a faint click perhaps, then great gales of laughter that set your radio rocking on its shelf. And you know that sex and censorship have simultaneously reared their ugly heads. Now there are two theories of censorship, the first, and harsher, that the censor is a Barrett of Wimpole Street, and the second, and more favoured (especially by the censor himself) that he is a dual piece of apparatus, combining ultra-sensitive barometer to gauge the susceptibilities of the community and filter arrangement for the removal of impurities. In either case it would seem that New Zealand listeners to Tommy Handley are more allergic to lewdness than their English equivalents, since extra censorship is provided; and it may be this extra-sensitivity of ours (and the consequent fact that we have few contacts with pitch) which give our faces that look which some overseas visitors describe as smug and others as clean and open. But to get back to *ITMA*. We agree that it is right for the few to be deprived in order to spare the blushes of the many, but we should like to call attention to the case of *The Wicked Lady*, in extenuation of which the Government Film Censor remarked that a certain amount of latitude was allowed when dealing with the reign of Charles II. We look forward to hearing Handley in a peruke and Hotchkiss in a farthingale.

### Journey Into Time

**ALLONA PRIESTLEY'S** talks *People Don't Change* are bitter, cathartic pills with a chocolate coating, and very, very effective. The opening of each episode is deceptively and pleasantly suburban, with nice normal uncle-nephew-friend dialogue about lawnmow-



ing and such, but soon Uncle in his matter-of-fact but go-getting way has led nephews and audience up the garden path to something very like the everlasting bonfire—last week to the Circus Maximus and to the Colosseum. Uncle's description of the chariot race was well up to NZBS standards and he had a more thrilling finale on which to deploy his virtuosity. His stroke-by-stroke account of a gladiatorial combat might have come direct from the lips of a panis-et-circenses McCarthy. At the conclusion of this trip into time we feel inclined to plead, as the authoress intended we should, "But people aren't like that any more!"—then have an echo answer "Remember Belsen."

### No Fatted Calves

RETURNED from a holiday in another island, I study the programme columns in *The Listener* with a view to resuming the normal thread of a commentator's existence. While there are not a few things I regret missing, the broadcasts immediately past and immediately forthcoming arouse in me none of the prodigal's emotions. Operatic titles translated into English exert their familiar, slightly horrible, fascination. Someone is still singing "Heavenly Aida"; someone else, Indian Love Lyrics; someone else still playing "Pomp and Circumstance March, No. 5." Granted that a member of our holiday company had a gramophone which made Tchaikovsky's Andante Cantabile sound like the "Song of the Volga Boatmen" played on a mouth-organ, and "The Lost Chord" by Arthur Sullivan sound like "The Lost Chord," by Arthur Sullivan; still there was about this a certain bizarrerie which nothing I am likely to hear from the NZBS will equal. In short, the holidays are over, and we are now back to the common round. But not quite; there's sap in't yet; and we have at least had excerpts from *Peter Grimes*.

### Justices Blinder Than Usual

**SHAKESPEARE** is on the Christchurch air again. In a studio recital, we had Len Barnes singing "When Arthur First in Court," which was the ditty warbled by Falstaff when entering the Boar's Head Tavern and the expectant presence of Doll Tearsheet ("Hang yourself, you muddy conger, hang yourself!" "What the good-year! You are both, i' faith, as rheumatic as two dry toasts, you cannot bear with each other's infirmities.") Resuming the Falstaffian theme the BBC *Shakespeare's Characters* series gave us Justices Shallow and Silence, that garrulous and convivial pair of old gentlemen with whom Sir John fell in while recruiting in Gloucester.

(continued on next page)