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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Experiment

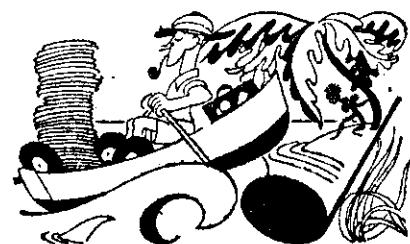
SUFFICIENT BEAUTY, by C. Gordon

Glover, was listed by the NZBS, perhaps cautiously, as a "radio experiment," and a little misleadingly as "a single day in the life of an ordinary man." Although strictly true, this was misleading because it at once calls to mind James Joyce—with whom the play has not the remotest connection—and also because although Ron Sensible may be described as an ordinary man, the day in question is scarcely an average sort of day. The caution one can perhaps understand, because the language of the play has none. It is wildly, finely extravagant, with its "blue-green wind" and its "scent of the broom" mingling with the less delicate odours of a London pub. It is reminiscent of G. H. Chesterton, its flaunting romanticism thrown into relief by touches of solid, down-to-earth humour. There is Ron's wife Glad, for instance, who would rise "creaking in her stays" at the Last Judgment; and the London cabby who manages to convey in a few words his utter bewilderment at the fare who asks to be taken to "just anywhere on the Embankment." But the core of satisfaction in this experiment was not the language nor the characters, good as they were, nor even the fact that it failed to fall into the usual groove of radio plays. The really outstanding feature was its aware and effective use of the radio as a medium.

A tale of misguided courtship, with a flavour so old-fashioned that one could sense the aspidistra on the hall table, it was expertly read, and the reader certainly got out of it everything that was written into the original. But there just wasn't enough in the story to equal the effort that was put into producing it, and it fell a trifle flat. I had the feeling that I had heard it all before, and written so much better—probably an unconscious echo of the number of times I have heard some radio speaker or other reading the breach-of-promise scenes from *Pickwick*.

Castaway

PRESUMABLY it is now *vieux jeu* to suggest the possibility of leaving gramophone needles or reading glasses on one's kitchen table back home; the quibble was probably raised when the first reading list and the first selected recordings were compiled, possibly when the Ark first rested on Ararat. Yes, the first southerlies have been felt in the



Anna Christie

PRIZE for the most inconsistent session to date probably goes to 2YA's recently-installed *Radio Theatre*, open for a full hour on Friday nights. No greater contrast can be imagined than between last week's "Meet the Wife," a trivial and unfunny comedy, at which I remained to scoff, and this week's "Anna Christie," the strength and beauty of which came over the air unimpaired. It is possible of course that visual memories of stage and screen performances were at hand to add their significance to the spoken word (I can still see the white heavy-lidded face that confronted me whenever Anna's voice came over the air, but whether Garbo's or some unknown's from the local repertory society I don't know), but this would not account entirely for the extraordinary impressiveness of the whole effect. The unbroken continuity and pace of the radio version may have had something to do with it, or perhaps the particular intimacy that is radio's long suit when it comes to plays. But probably the reason is merely that *Anna Christie* as I heard it on Friday night, was an example of a first-rate play interpreted by a first-rate company.

"Alf's Dream"

ONE of the series of stories read by a speaker of the NZBS production unit was a trifle by W. W. Jacobs, "Alf's Dream." I must admit I have read this author and liked him immensely; the nautically-minded characters of his yarns generally manage to raise a quiet chuckle or two. But I'm afraid "Alf's Dream" is not among the best of his efforts—or at any rate it didn't seem so when heard on the radio.

programme compiler's headquarters and they have made glad escape to their Desert Islands. Well suited to her role as first castaway was Miss Helen Gard'ner, who presented her six selected recordings from 2YA on a recent Thursday night. Miss Gard'ner's list sounded a note of praiseworthy individualism. I myself would find the *La Bohème* selections infinitely wearisome at fiftieth repetition, and Peter Dawson's *The Little Admiral* at second hearing. But (as Miss De Havilland won an Academy Award for saying) To Each His Own, and one man's coconut-milk is another man's kava. Her Bach selection, *Prelude and Fugue in A Minor*, few will disagree with, since to all musical desert island lists Bach is both Bible and Shakespeare. And I thoroughly approved the inclusion of Reginald Gardiner's (no, no kin) discourse on trains. Miss Gard'ner gave as her reason the necessity for hearing a cultivated English voice. I enjoyed hearing a cultivated English train.

Music for Children

THE only time when I have really cursed the power-cuts was when they broke into two delightful recitals for school-children given in the Dunedin Town Hall by the NZBS Symphony Orchestra. Although many of these works were not, strictly speaking, up to the programme standards expected of a symphony orchestra, yet they were eminently suited to the young audiences, and indeed, some of the items included in these afternoon concerts would form splendid lighter relief in the regular concerts of the orchestra. *Peter*

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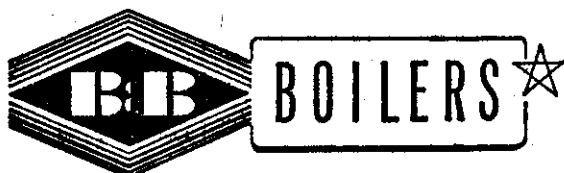
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