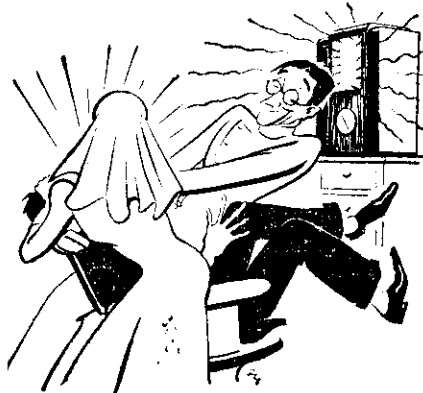


(continued from previous page)

neighbour's factually true account of her cousin's wedding reception. *Pieter Lien*, on the other hand, was a rattling good story, and would have rated a kind remark from Tusitala. But here again its factual truth was largely unimportant, and the story was too remote from the usual run of human experience to be true in the wider sense of being geared to human values. Throw her back, Tommy!

Desperate Doings

THE regular NZBS productions from 3ZB on Sunday evenings give us as a rule a good average performance. If it doesn't attain the heights of a really memorable production, at least it never sinks to the level of something that is best speedily forgotten. Or so I thought until recently. The production that made me



change my mind was called "Desperate Doings at the Dentist;" it was, to give it its due, well named. I had previously applauded the presentation of short stories, undramatised and unadapted, because even though the stories themselves were not specially outstanding, they were well-delivered and easy to listen to. "Desperate Doings" was not. There were moments when the reader's enthusiasm was positively embarrassing to a listener; there seemed to be so little to be enthusiastic about. The story was ordinary enough, being based on a fantastic dream which later appears not to have been so fantastic after all; but it was presented in the style of the persistent joker who can scarcely tell you his funny story for laughing at it himself. And that is very trying if you happen to be amused and even more trying if you don't. As it is, I am inclined to think that dentists should be ranked with Scotsmen and mothers-in-law as a source of mirth-provoking comment which is unoriginal, unfunny, and apparently unavoidable.

Golden Age

WEDGED in among the usual items of a recent 3YA Sunday afternoon bill-of-fare was the unexpected treat of a programme of 16th Century Church Music. This was presented with a short survey of the general historical background of the age, and of the music's relation to it—necessarily short and incomplete, but still sufficient to give an idea of the setting in which the music belonged, and its composer lived. It seems a pity that names such as Victoria, William Byrd, and Palestrina should be heard so seldom on the air to-day, although I suppose that works like these cannot be introduced indiscriminately into a programme. It also

seems a pity to emphasise, as the announcer of this programme did, the remoteness of the music—"that we should be careful not to judge it by to-day's standards"—or to suggest that what we are listening to are merely musical museum-pieces, curious and interesting but nothing more. Surely Palestrina's superb Mass, the "Missa Papae Marcelli," is one of the finest pieces of Church Music ever written. Those who saw the film version of *Henry V.* may remember the very fine use made in it of the music of this period; in particular I remember Palestrina's "Non Nobis Domine."

Arms and the Woman

I WAS always under the impression that the original posture of the hands and arms of the Venus de Milo was one of those Unsolved Mysteries; but I found the subject discussed recently under the title "This Actually Happened." It seems that the writer of this script must somewhere have come upon a clue, for we found him telling us that she was in such and such a position, with her hands held so and so, and in her hands he placed an apple (or was it a rose?—I forget the exact details). It is perhaps strange that I should have been mildly irritated by this revelation. Yet I wanted to snub the microphone with a curt "What of it?" Indeed, who wants to know what the statue was originally like? Venus de Milo has become so familiar and dear to the public that any tampering with her broken beauty seems a sacrilege; paradoxically, she is more perfect in her present form than any imagined restoration can make her. No mental picture of her arms would add anything to the value of her beauty; and although the story of the finding and mutilation of the statue was interesting, it wasn't necessary to suggest to the listener a visual image of original perfection. (It seems she was smashed by opposing factions when two ambassadors of different countries both wanted to buy her). To place imaginary arms on the Venus de Milo is, in my opinion, as superfluous as holding a guessing competition to discover what caused the smile on the face of the Mona Lisa.

Music from the South

MUSIC in Invercargill, judging by reports, is in a flourishing condition. (I mean amateur music, which is really the criterion of a country's musical status, for without intelligent amateur audiences no professional musician can hope to flourish.) Shortly after I had complained of the decline of concerted music in the far south, I read that the choral society down there has now the help of an excellent local orchestra; this enthusiastic outcome of hard-working effort on the part of both amateur and professional musicians is a piece of heartening news. Station 4YZ is one station whose programmes I don't receive very well, but its printed programmes are consistently interesting (I noticed Britten's lovely "Ceremony of Carols" in a recent Sunday programme, but was unable to hear it owing to a temporary aberration of my set). It is to be hoped that arrangements have been made to broadcast the united efforts of choral and orchestral groups; listeners whose reception of 4YZ is adequate will be well advised to look for such broadcasts in their programmes.



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