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would be presented from 2YA last Sunday afternoon. And very well presented it was, too, with Robert Newman as browbeating counsel (nice change to have the interview in a mere office) and Beryl MacMillan as the browbeaten Woman with a Past. I feel that Mrs. Dane's past will be a bit passé by now, but so cryptic was the single ten-minute scene that I simply must go back to the original (it will mean a visit to the Library stack-room, to find out what it was all about. Did the NZBS assume us to be better-read than we are, or was it their deliberate intention to drive us headlong into the pursuit of knowledge?

Deadpan Alley

Who is Chester, what is he,
That all our hucks commend him?
Has he got what Handley's got
Or shall we up and rend him?

CHESTER, to answer our first question, is Cheerful Charlie Chester, who airs his Civvy Street Rag from 2YA on Monday nights. At present the Rag doesn't seem to me to be in the same street as *ITMA*, but fashions change in residential localities and it is possible that if Cheerful Charlie holds out for another two years his Civvy Street will be an even better address than Tomtopia. At present he seems somewhat ill-at-ease in his rehab. suit. It is seldom possible, in a radio show, to come near to real humour. The radio comedian's deadpan cannot be his fortune, and it is a long and difficult business to build up a comic personality on vocal mannerisms alone. So the majority of our radio shows depend, as *Stand Easy* is forced to do, almost entirely on wit. It may be good wit (some of Cheerful Charlie's show was very bright), but it strikes no spark of human affection in the listener. Tommy Handley of course began in the same way, but by staying the course long enough he was able to build himself and his stooges into characters in their own right, and endow them with an illusion of humanity and more than an illusion of human frailty (or else why do we follow Chinstrap's progress so concernedly?) Chester fans feel confident that their Charlie will be another listener's dream come true.

Radio Playwright

WHEN one finds oneself praising indiscriminately the work of one writer because "it is so much better than most," it is time to sit up and take notice. So I roused myself from the little welter of satisfaction into which C. Gordon Glover's plays had thrown me, and tried to look at them a little more severely, to pay them the well-earned compliment of serious criticism which so few radio-plays merit. *Farewell Helen*, a story of love and incompatibility, was from almost every point of view a fine piece of work. A slight flaw in production was noticeable in the delivery of the "interior voice" which, with the radio tuned to normal, was inaudible. The plot was, I suppose, slight; by which I mean that there were no murders or sudden deaths, no violent crises, simply a man who finds his love for a woman incompatible with his own system of living and of values, and who lets it all end "not with a bang but a whimper." Slight then, if you like; but not unimportant. Of the unqualified merit of the second play (*One Day in the Luxembourg*) I am a little more doubtful. It is "the story of a genius whose conceit wrecked his life, and of his expiation." There is the same portrayal of a sensitively-balanced human mind, the same

mingling of fact and fantasy; but there was a rather more conventional treatment of the story which rounded off the corners and tied up the ends without making a more convincing play of it. Mr. Glover has a fine mastery over the extremes of extravagance and restraint, and he does not hesitate to use both; nor is he afraid to make full use of poetry and song in building up the structure of his play.

Stand-Up Clap

I HAVE heard nothing better in the morning talk line than the series on *Ideal Home Life* which concluded at 2YA last Friday with Violet MacMillan's *Art of Reading to Children*. In fact, only the following "Story Behind the Song—Robin Adair" restrained me from rushing out to pay my radio licence on the spot. Apart from the practical help offered by these talks, the A.C.E. deserves credit for the attempt to raise the status of the profession of housewife. Housewives as a class are tempted to look upon their occupation as a lowly one, to fill in *Domestic Duties* on the census paper as though it were synonymous with Unskilled Labour, to exclude themselves wistfully from the ranks of Career Girls and Professional Women. This series of A.C.E. talks is based on the confident assumption that it takes an intelligent woman to be a homemaker, and that an intelligent woman is interested in homemaking as a profession, on its theoretical side as well as its practical side. She wants to be not only as good a cook as her husband's mother but as necessary to her children's mental and emotional development as Brick Bradford and Dorothy Dix. These talks have not only given the Woman in the Home direct guidance on specific topics, but have also reminded her that, as in any other skilled occupation, reading, discussion, and eternal vigilance are necessary to keep abreast of modern developments.

United Nations Week

THE Broadcasting Service has, to judge from the programmes, done full justice to United Nations Week. "Music of the United Nations" has been featured from all the national stations—although the cosmopolitan nature of our musical programmes cannot be disputed at any time—and some fine productions have been collected under this heading. One work which I was particularly glad to see listed, having somehow missed hearing it before, was Robinson's "Ballad for Americans," presented by Paul Robeson, the American People's Chorus, and the Victor Symphony Orchestra. This is an original and interesting work, containing a large—but not too large—element of jazz rhythm, and an equally satisfying element of genuine ballad spirit. The words were clear, and the frequent repetition kept the unity and the theme of the whole from being obscured. (But it was very obvious that we were not going to be able to escape Paul Robeson's triumphant "I am A-ME-RI-CA!"—one could only be grateful it wasn't a "Ballad for Czechoslovakians!") A less inspired production was 3YA's Studio Presentation *A Song for the Nations*. This was an anthology of poetry and music, consisting of extracts from the work of Shakespeare, Shelley, and Whitman, with incidental music by William Walton. It was pleasantly delivered, and no doubt a lot of thought went to the selecting of the material; but I fail to grasp the significance of the choice.

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