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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Sweet Lavender

**THE ROMANCE OF PERFUME** is the rather hackneyed title of the series of recorded talks by Mrs. Dorothy Neal White now being heard from 2YA; hackneyed because, after all, it needs no Dorothy Neal White from Dunedin to tell us what the copywriters have been telling us for years. The talks which I have heard so far were, however, by no means commonplace, and eschewed any suggestion of the cloying sweetness expected from the title, though I think Mrs. White cheated a little by devoting a lot of time—at any rate in her second talk—to the Astringent Herbs. (Think how she'll wish she hadn't if she ever gets round to *The Romance of Medicine*.) Mrs. White produced not only interesting fancies, but interesting facts (I personally vouch for the truth of her suggestion that a drop of perfume on the upper lip is either a cure for sleeplessness or a compensation for it.) Moreover, I like these speakers who go out of their way to point out to listeners that there's often sound medical justification for an old wives' tale, since I regard this as another blow struck in defence of the sacred concept of Woman's Intuition.

### Thrice Bitten

A CERTAIN wariness now characterises my approach to 2YA's Friday night Radio Theatre. It has given me some dreadful hours. Never shall I forget the immense fatuity of *Meet the Wife*, which I think started off the series, the meaningless gyrations of the couple in *The Dominant Sex*, or the unpleasantness of the one about the man whose wife had "arty" friends. To balance these was *Anna Christie*, and, in rapidly descending order of merit, *If Winter Comes*, and *Love from a Stranger*, which had, at any rate, some moments of genuine dramatic suspense. With *Mischief in the Air* on a recent Friday, we found ourselves equidistant from both the comedy of manners and the tragedy of temperaments, in the clean pure air of the Boys' Own Paper. *Mischief in the Air* is a simple little comedy-thriller about a secret agent masquerading as a show sponsor who is bumped off with a blow-pipe. Its dialogue has a crisp Australian tang, its plot is reasonably strong in invention and construction, and I would without hesitation recommend it for the Children's Hour were it not that some parents might object to the fact that the hero's and heroine's attitude to the corpse is as cavalier as that of Hamlet to Polonius.

### Scottish Songs

ON a recent Sunday 4YA played a programme by the Glasgow Arion Choir, a series of Scottish songs sung in a most satisfactory way by a really well-balanced and well-drilled choir. The programme, a BBC production, contained many well-loved favourites, and some not so familiar. No fault could be found with the singing, but I felt that in one or two cases the arrangement was too elaborate; the simple, typical Scottish airs were overlaid with layers of counterpoint until they were recognisable only because they were well known, and memory was able to fill in the notes and phrases which the ear failed to distinguish. Surely the purpose of a choral arrangement of a folk-tune or traditional air is to enhance

the melody; when the arrangement becomes too intricate the whole beauty of the thing—namely, its exquisite simplicity—is lost. Was it necessary, also, for the announcer to explain carefully that the victim in the old song about the Deil and the Exciseman is really our old acquaintance the customs-officer? But perhaps I am bridling over a trifle; not all listeners to this programme would hail from Dunedin, and perhaps explanations are necessary to the Sassenach.

### Alas, Poor Ghost!

INTRIGUED by the heading "Was it a ghost?" to a paragraph in a recent *Listener* about the play *Frame for Death*, written by Victor Donald and produced by the NZBS, I duly tuned in, but I found that the author was just as much in the dark about the ghost as we were. In fact, he left it to us. This appears to be the perfect answer to the old problem of Pleasing the Public—a ghost for the superstitious and the easily-pleased, and another solution for the scoffers: one that they can work out for themselves. A persistent scoffer soon becomes rather good at this sort of thing. He says, "Ah, all done by mirrors (or electricity, or atomic energy)," if he is scientifically minded, and "Simply a matter of hypnotism (or telepathy, or something)," if he happens to be a psychologist. In this play, however, all he needs to have is a high opinion of the wits of the police force, and a sound knowledge of Edgar Wallace. Then he will see that there was no need for the poor ghost of the prisoner to bestir himself; it only wanted an ingenious member of Scotland Yard in a cunning disguise. The result: Justice, a Plot, and Promotion for the Ex-Ghost.



### The Best of Its Kind

IN a recent copy of the *BBC Listener* the critic Harold Hobson summed up a month's television programmes. The actual details need not concern us, since television is a thing of the future as far as New Zealand is concerned, but various remarks in his criticism may apply directly to broadcasting in all its forms in any country of the world. It may surprise readers to find Hobson saying that television programmes are on the right lines when they contain so much of every sort of fare that the result is a sort of radio haggis; certain listeners (as can be verified nearly any week by a perusal of "Letters to the Editor"), seem to imagine that criticism consists of cramming one's preference down the other man's throat. Elementary consideration of the purposes of radio will convince anyone that all tastes must be catered for, but Hobson remarks succinctly that the radio fare which caters for each particular taste must be the best of its kind. By all means let us have variety—"good" music, "light" music, humour, drama, informative talks, anything else your taste demands—but let the "good" music be

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