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massive 16 stone; her reputation has been established through the medium of the radio, and now should be secure even against the advent of television. From 3YA recently the story of Kate Smith's life was broadcast. It was uneventful enough, judged by most standards. But what impressed me most about it was the fact that her great bulk, which proved such a stumbling block to success in her early years, has now risen to dizzy heights in publicity value. She is not just Kate Smith, with a voice; she is 16-stone Kate Smith, with a voice, and heard with affectionate familiarity all over the world in consequence.

What Children Like

AS an example of coincidence or co-ordination we had three programmes from 4YA, all in the same week, dealing with the taste of children. There was an A.C.E. talk for those with leisure to listen in the mornings, "Children's



Taste in Books, Radio, and Films," a subject which has been sufficiently investigated for me to avoid stirring up a hornet's nest by discussing it here. Then there was "Great Music Written for Children," which formed part of an excellent new Saturday evening series entitled *Music for Pleasure* (a title which expresses the main purpose of listening more aptly than many programme-labels). Listeners who heard these programmes would also be interested in the studio performance of a programme by Gil Dech and the 4YA Concert Orchestra, assisted by the Dunedin String Group of the National Orchestra; included in this programme was Quilter's *Children's Overture*, and the orchestra made a most attractive and stimulating thing of it. Whether or not it was written primarily for children doesn't matter; it certainly does appeal to children—I know, because I've tried a record of it on various children of different ages, and its appeal was direct and obvious. Many adults feel themselves competent to estimate children's taste, when all they are estimating is their own taste, modified by an adult conception of what they imagine children will like. When in doubt, try it on the child.

Women of Destiny

I CAN think of no better description of the effect of hearing *The Trojan Women* than the ancient one "purged with pity and terror." After sitting spell-

bound for an hour and a-half under the combined beauty and horror of this play, wishing to escape the unbearable weight of its accumulating tragedy, yet unable to do otherwise than go on listening, I found myself completely out of sympathy with the remainder of the week's programmes. Later, under the influence of the doomed and hated Helen, I tuned to a talk on "Women in Politics," from 4YA, and found myself listening to a description of various women whose influence on the destiny of nations was of a later date. The back-stairs intrigues, the string-pulling, the settling of national issues in the boudoir, which were the miserable efforts women had perforce to adopt in order to get their way, all suggested that the famous, or infamous, Helen was, in comparison with women like de Maintenon, Marie Antoinette, Madame Roland, and Charlotte Corday, a passive pawn in men's affairs. This programme by Mrs. Freed was the first of a series, and I hope, by the time this appears in print, she will be dealing with the more spacious, happier, modern times when women's political influence is exerted openly for more ideal reasons than personal advancement and the ambitions of friends and relatives, and when one sex does not have to scheme and intrigue behind closed doors, or resort to violence and bloodshed, in order to make its wishes known to the other.

All in the Name

IT is not often that the title of an unknown play by an unknown author makes an immediate appeal. *The Angel and the Aspidistra*, broadcast recently from 3YA, sounded promising; I found myself compelled to listen with a view to finding out what connection, if any, there was between the Angel, the Aspidistra, and the usual run of radio plays. I was—inevitably, I suppose—disappointed. It may be true that good plays have been spoilt by bad titles, but it is even more true that a good title can be spoilt by having a bad play attached to it. This was not a good play. The theme was murder. The Aspidistra served as a parking place for the poison bottle—and, of course, as a Symbol. But the function of the Angel is still not quite clear—unless it served to make everything come out all right in the end. And this was undoubtedly the case. The murderer dies in the odour of sanctity, having atoned for his crime by being killed in a bombing raid and winning the George Cross. (It is so Nasty to have a Murder in the Family.) This of course make everything all right; the rest of the family breathe a sigh of relief, and place the skeleton (duly crowned with laurel) back in the ancestral cupboard, unsmirched.

Unable to Accept

A FEW weeks ago A. R. D. Fairburn made a recording of a talk indicating the impression of Europe to-day held by New Zealanders generally. This he sent to the BBC, who broadcast the recording. As a result a number of letters were sent to him care of the BBC, which forwarded them to him in New Zealand. One was from an old friend in England asking him to call and see him; a second was from the father of another friend, asking him to spend the week-end at his English country home; and a third was from an irate Scottish nationalist, berating him for overlooking the existence of Scotland.

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