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the *Belle* continues to grow in popularity with each revival. It has about it, by now, that bouquet and aroma associated with wine from a vintage year, and can be sipped with relish by epicure and ordinary diner alike. It would be absurd to claim immortality for this or any other operetta, but there must be some reason for its frequent and successful revival, and the answer certainly isn't in its plot, which, examined at all carefully, reveals no more solidity than the featherweight plots of most musical comedies. However, it boasts a set of striking characters, and while listeners are able, from memories of past performances, to visualise the appearance of the Ornamental Purty Brigade, Blinky Bill, and the Salvation Army lass herself, it little matters what nebulous plot has been concocted in order to introduce their various acts. In the broadcast version, the plot was happily relegated to nonentity by a rather de-bunking commentator, and listeners were free to concentrate on the music. The more I hear of *The Belle of New York*, the more I think that it is the only musical comedy which nearly approaches the standard of the Savoy Operas. Why didn't Gilbert and Sullivan think of it first?

Flavour for All

FOR a programme to which very few can have the leisure to listen, the A.C.E. talks have a wide range of appeal. I have several times found myself listening without having previously intended to do so, as in the case of a recent talk on "Flavour." Having no particular desire to discover which culinary antics imparted the more flavour to



this or that, I fully intended to switch off at the beginning of this talk. But as I was not told to keep my oven cool or my lid on, I warily settled down to enjoy the scraps of information that were being imparted—the sources of herbs and spices, customs and traditions, and so on. One point in particular started a train of thought which I still pursue in off-moments—the effect of sound on one's enjoyment of food. The snap of a celery stalk and the crunch of an apple are apparently of vital importance to the eater, a fact which the inventors of some patent American breakfast foods have not been slow to seize upon. Clearly there is scope here for a little inventive skill. Why not a soup that whistles on being inhaled?

Vivid Picture

MR. AND MRS. F. T. WARD, missionaries on Pitcairn Island, have prepared a series of talks which are currently being heard from 4YA. The first of the series, entitled "A Ship Calls," proved to be a very vivid picture of this almost inaccessible outpost. We met the islanders, so to speak, on an equal footing, and this was due to the missionaries' use of the pronoun "we." In most travel talks, the listener is merely required to sit back and listen while a description is given of places and people in whom he can take at best only a second-hand observer's interest. With the friendly use of "we," which seemed to include the listener too, the people of Pitcairn became near neighbours instead of something out of a travelogue; and the exhilarating experience of pushing off for the ship in that tossing whale-boat was one which came over the radio surprisingly graphically. Such things as the long-drawn hail of "Sail-oh!", the description of the signal-bells, and the varied orders shouted as the boat navigates rough waters, were all minor but excellent details whereby a straightforward talk was converted into a dramatic description. These talks are to be given fortnightly, and the next one will certainly find me listening.

World Theatre

AFTER Christmas fare one is usually quite glad to go back to bread and butter for a while; but after the Christmas fare of the *World Theatre* series our daily bread is inclined to turn to ashes in the mouth. I rarely miss a radio play, and in the course of listening to Rostand's *L'Aiglon* from 4YA, turned regretfully to my home station in Christchurch to hear *The Lady from Abroad*, by Mabel Constanduros and Howard Agg. It was 20 minutes badly spent, and I was glad to have *L'Aiglon* to return to. But of all this series not one has, in my opinion, come up to the standard of *The Trojan Women*, considered solely as a radio production. In all the others one was conscious of the fact that it was a radio production, and this applies particularly to Shaw and Ibsen. But with *The Trojan Women* one can almost believe that Euripides had a radio audience in mind when he wrote it, so much is gained and so little lost by this form of presentation. It is, however, possible that one cannot regard this work with critical detachment merely because of its success on the air, and it is probably self-deception to imagine one can.

Otago's Celebrations

OTAGO will enter its centennial year at midnight on Wednesday, December 31, when the Mayor of Dunedin (D. C. Cameron) will preside over a gathering of citizens on the steps of the Town Hall and deliver an inaugural address. There will be speeches by various other prominent citizens, and Station 4ZB, with a roving microphone, will mingle with the crowd, covering different aspects of the initial celebrations and giving listeners first-hand impressions of an historic occasion. Station 4YA will broadcast its Centennial Survey at 7.30 p.m. on December 31, and in it the Mayor will extend a welcome to all New Zealanders to attend the celebrations.

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