

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

A White Christmas

TO Mrs. Beatrice Ashton's *Christmas in America* was accorded the unique distinction of being broadcast from 2YA on two successive Monday mornings. And it was almost worthy of such signal honour, though I speak with the disillusion of one who Broke an Important Engagement to listen to it, assuming it to be the second of a series. In keeping with the major aspect of its subject the talk was meaty and flavoursome, and Mrs. Ashton is the fortunate possessor of a voice that matches the slight astringency of her prose style. But I must confess that I am, far from sharing Mrs. Ashton's conviction of the essential propriety of a white Christmas, and my dominant emotion at the conclusion of her talk was a pharisaical thankfulness that we in New Zealand are not as other men are, that we are sensible enough to celebrate our Christmas in a climate where children can rouse their betters at dawn without acute discomfort to either, and where the housewife can escape the labour of preparing three large meals on Christmas Day by the simple expedient of taking a picnic lunch. Mrs. Ashton admittedly saw the ugly form of Big Business lurking behind each tinselled bough up to

the very day itself, but the brave glow of the lighted tree before dawn on Christmas morning routed him completely. Since I have never seen a lighted Christmas tree before dawn on a Christmas morning I continued to see Big Business skulking among the branches, and the smell of roast turkey, instead of exorcising this unwelcome presence, seemed incense to do him honour.

Allegory Non Allegro

I WAS disappointed with Ursula Bloom's *Displaced Persons* which I heard the Sunday before Christmas from 2YC. The action of the whole play moved in a fog of confused atmospherics, which, while it undoubtedly heightened the emotional effect, contributed so much to the obscurity that the emotions roused were dissipated for want of a suitable channel. I find myself sufficiently at sea in the flesh-and-blood production of an allegorical theme, when by referring to a printed programme I can find out that a certain female figure mistimed in grey tulle represents Grief, but I am no Joan of Arc, to hear voices and at one hearing grasp their vital significance. Furthermore the nativity parallel was stretched so tightly to cover

this modern interpretation that the bathetic sound of rending material could sometimes be heard. (I thought the toolshed, alternatively referred to as the out house, a case in point.) And finally, though the events of to-day may tempt us to believe that we have got nowhere in two thousand years of Christianity, the suggestion that the generation now being born must redeem the world (if it can) can scarcely be regarded as in keeping with the Festive Spirit. I was only saved from acute melancholia by the fact that 2YC's orchestral programme plunged me straight into Haydn's Uninhabited Island Overture.

Bewhiskered

WHY should it be considered correct for a man to have a moustache, but not a beard, side-whiskers, or long hair? Why should the trimming of the whiskers be a thing of such rigorous fashion that the man who doesn't conform to current taste is regarded with a great deal more curiosity, disdain, and uneasiness than the woman who doesn't conform to fashion in dress? Such reflections would normally occur to any listener who heard "The Beard" from 4YA; the story of a young man who came home from the war, with a full naval-type beard, and decided that he was going to keep it in civil life. The Beard at once became a symbol. To his parents it was just another sign that war brings changes and children grow up and out of control; to the women in our

hero's life it was a source of fascination; to his fellow-workers, an eccentricity; to his boss, a nuisance. But to the wearer of the Beard, it was one of those principles for which the war was fought—the freedom of the individual. This latter aspect of the matter was somewhat submerged in the method of treating the play, although the comic touch was obviously the right method. The hero ascended the ladder of notoriety and worldly success with unusual ease, thanks to the publicity of the Beard, but I wonder what would happen to the average man in similar circumstances?

Morning Glory

IT is a matter of taste whether My Lady chooses to abandon her household cares in favour of someone else's episodic domestic crises, or whether she prefers to board Mr. Thunder's pirate ship on the Caribbean. Personally, I would choose the Caribbean. Then I could return to my mop and duster shuddering at the thought of "the leathen" in the rigging, or a broadside below the water line. But apart from adding a little extra vigour to my wielding of the mop, "Mr. Thunder's" connection with domesticity is nil. No one is going to regret that pirates do not happen upon the domestic horizon: one even prefers them to remain in the Caribbean, if one thinks about it at all. But with the domestic serial the case is

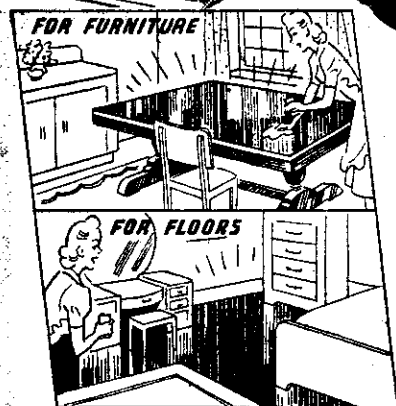
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