

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

South With Scott

THE first episode of 2ZB's new Sunday night serial, *With Scott to the South Pole*, was a disappointment, though it is probably too much to expect a serial to do more than weigh anchor in the first episode. But I think I detect a certain elegiac stiltedness in the atmosphere. The characters are too consistently gentlemanly. The episode opens with Captain Scott and Dr. Wilson discussing their stay in New Zealand ("These New Zealanders have been kindness itself to us"), a pleasant interchange which, though historically probable, does not seem historically significant. Similarly the conscientious script-writer supplies polite affirmatives to simple requests such as "Lend me your glasses, if you please, Dr. Wilson," in case the listener should fail to infer the gentlemanliness of the reply. By the second half of the episode things have begun to warm up a little, since we are now well into the latitudes of high endeavour. There is plenty of scope for radio dramatics in the drama and near-tragedy of the storm and the struggle with the pack-ice, but the relevant extracts from Captain Scott's Journal which are read throughout the production are much more eloquent than the radio reconstruction, for all its garnishings of shrieking topsail, whinnying ponies, lurching cargoes, and crashing bilge.

A Hero Called Clifford

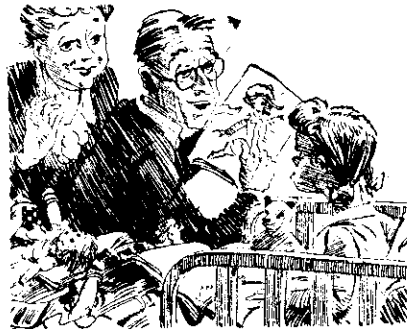
HAVING listened to the play in 2ZB's Radio Theatre on Thursday night, *Out of the Fog*, I felt I had paid my tribute to radio drama for the week, but I was lured into listening to *The Fake* (2YA) on Friday night by the fact that there were so many New Zealand repertory old boys in the cast. And *The Fake* turned out to be surprisingly good entertainment, largely because of the impressive dollop of villainy offered. There was far too little murk in *Out of the Fog*, the characters were all excessively above-board (the nearest thing to villainy was a restitution-bent ex-murderer) and the play suffered from a heroine so wedded to sacrifice that when blindness threatened to cut short her career as a concert pianist she must needs flee her fiancé and thus deny herself the alternative career of domesticity. *The Fake*, though possessed of an equally virtuous heroine, had the sense to keep her rather more in the background, and gave histrionic prominence to a dipsomaniac, a murderer with the courage of his convictions and the accent of George Sanders at his most sinister, and an ageing baronet gilded without but hollow within. This dramatically sound trio acted with verve enough to wipe out the author's initial mistake of calling his hero Clifford.

Convalescent Children

THE A.C.E. gave an excellent talk from 2YA on a recent Friday on *Amusements for the Convalescent Child*. Beginning with the axiom that the convalescent child should be regarded as from six months to a year younger than his actual age, and the treatment varied accordingly, Joan Paterson proceeded to give listeners not only ideas for entertainment but also hints on food for the

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convalescent and methods of administering unwelcome medicine. Towards the end of the talk she conveniently (for listeners) forgot her convalescent child in favour of children in general, and outlined suggestions for the conduct of parents which were obviously commonsense without being banal, and



had the advantage of being almost as easy for the parent to put into practice as for the child to follow. For practical helpfulness I thought nothing would beat the preceding Wednesday's talk on home-preserving "Self-Sealing Lids," but Friday's talk rose triumphantly to the more exacting demands of its subject.

Unison Please

ALL Join In, as Edith Day's BBC programme of Popular Entertainment was rather optimistically called; left me wondering how many people really do sing lustily to the strains of the wireless on such occasions. Even if one is more favoured than the old lady of Sheen (who said it was Odd, but she couldn't tell God Savé the Weasel from Pop Goes the Queen), one would have to sing very softly with one ear engaged in self-appraisal and the other anxiously on the radio. One could, of course, turn up the volume and thereby commit nuisance and antagonise one's neighbours. But I wonder if the hearty organisers of such programmes have ever tried it themselves, or even thought about it seriously from the point of view of the listener. If they had, they would surely choose a chorus rather than soloists with individual ideas, and their choice of songs would be in the *Ten Green Bottles* class. Then one might be reasonably sure of finishing the last verse at approximately the same time as the leaders, and not be left carolling into the darkness alone.

Ask a Policeman

AFTER hearing "the Policeman" in the BBC series, *British Characters*, I am inclined to endorse Mr. Gilbert's opinion. I don't think it was the intention of the script-writers to give listeners this impression, and the picture they gave was almost certainly that of an average policeman's career. But it sounded so infernally dull! And for anyone who is not intending to join the Police Force of Britain there was too much of the technical side of it: how

(continued on page 19)

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