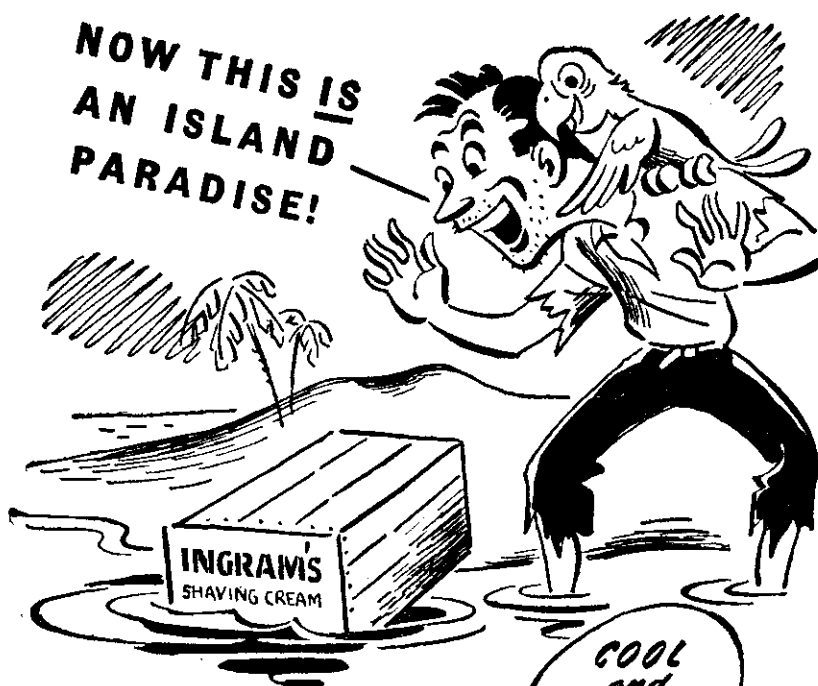


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WHEN the Falkland Islands got into the headlines, 2ZB was quick off the mark with a topical broadcast. Here Ted Biggs (right), a seaman from the Falklands, is seen being interviewed by Don Donaldson

BOOK REVIEWS

(continued from previous page)

Picasso and the Moderns unconvincing. Indeed he shows considerable confusion in mixing photography with art and vice versa.

—J.D.P.

STILL EXPERIMENTING

THE GORSE BLOOMS PALE. By Dan Davin. Nicholson and Watson, London.

THE appearance of this book almost suggests that the author himself does not take it very seriously. Binding, paper, and printing are all second-class, while the dust-cover is the kind of thing we usually see on the very cheapest fiction. Mr. Davin is still trying himself out, and sometimes getting impatient with himself, but even when he fails his failures suggest successes to come. Of the 26 stories in the collection about a dozen are stories in the accepted sense. The others are sketches and character studies with action, sometimes exciting and sometimes not, thrown in from the outside. The sketches of childhood are sensitive and often moving, but even here Mr. Davin can't quite keep out of trouble. In the middle of "The Basket," for example, an amusing and at the same time touching picture of two garrulous women, one with a garden, a heart, and a tongue, and the other with a tongue only, we come suddenly on this:

The garden flourished with the vigour of a disciplined jungle. Beans reared massively up their poles into the air like muscular sailors swarming up the rigging, rows of peas dizzy with height twined perilously on to the sticks they had outgrown and stretched their tendrils into space like the hands of greedy children. The cabbages squatted fatly on their stalks each rapt in an intensity of bulging growth. Delicate and succulent the lettuces folded their modesty into tempting balls and complacently awaited ravishment.

When he reaches adolescence he can still write like this:

It would have been much better to sit in "The Gardener's Arms" with the Philosopher and over pints of bought beer hear that eloquent drunkard discourse divinely on specious time till time in its most specious form incarnated itself in red-faced old Peters and cried: "Time, please, gentlemen, it's time." But it was too late now. No persuasive sophistries could penetrate that hard English hide of respect for the law and no

one is more indurated against eloquence than a publican. And so even if the self he envied had been there, it and the philosopher, two animated clumps of sense-data in the latter's phrase, would have retired already into the dark, exclaiming against a world where pub-keepers were not philosophers and philosophers were not kings.

And even when he is a seasoned man of war he can still talk figuratively about "blind and cold winds of anger blowing across the dry soil of her heart," and literally about the "wind whipping past them up the valley, its speed as urgent as theirs, as if it too pursued a soul."

There is hardly any verbal extravagance to which now and again he will not descend; but the lapses are so noticeable because they are lapses, and even when they are least pardonable they do not blunt the power and brilliance. One suspects of course that most of the material in this book is the overflow of the two more ambitious books he has already published. That would explain the sketchiness of some of the stories and the familiarity of some of the others. It raises a question, too, about the wisdom of printing so much so soon. But it emphasises rather than obscures the fact that wherever Davin is going it is wisdom at present to watch him.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME, The International Festival of Music and Drama, Edinburgh, 1947.

THE 1947 international festival at Edinburgh ended with a deficit of £20,777—about £12,000 less than had been anticipated in the original estimates. Had it been £12,000 more it would still have been money well spent, as the souvenir programme shows. The latter is a sober but dignified piece of work, cleanly printed on excellent paper, and well illustrated, though with the multiplicity of attractions it is a pity that the editors did not include a brief consolidating time-table.

QUACKLEDUCK: Stories by Esmea Rice, illustrated by Elizabeth Paterson. Georgian House, Melbourne.

CLEAR type, bold, bright and simple illustrations—most of them in colour—and stories which stand up to nightly repetition make this good fun for the pre-school and primer age-groups.