

the personal, conscious (I hope) that he has many Sunday afternoons ahead of him and can afford to do the job properly. At present he has struck a rich literary vein which I trust will keep him occupied for some time. In his last talk Mr. Mulgan made the point that for the New Zealander English literature, though a rich inheritance, is not sufficient; we need as well a firm foot on our native soil. Probably most of Mr. Mulgan's listeners are reasonably familiar with the New Zealand soil newly dug by contemporary writers, but few of us bother to go back to those beginnings with which a lifetime of service to New Zealand writing has made Mr. Mulgan so familiar.

### Family Life

THE series of talks on *The Family* now well-launched from 2YA on Friday nights should have the effect of propping up the tottering edifice and casting a romantic anthropological aura over an institution we have always taken for granted, and for worse rather than better. Nurtured hitherto on *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* we have perhaps tended to regard the Family as something to be escaped from, or in gloomier moments, as the Dear Octopus from whom there is no escape. In the first talk Professor Field touched on the long and honourable history of marriage and the family, in the second

Mr. Danks regretfully wrote it off as an economic unit, stressing, however, its social value and by implication urging us to Accept No Substitutes. Now that economic necessity is no longer the strong inducement it was for strengthening the bonds of family, Mr. Danks argues that there must be a



conscious effort by all members to make the family a staying concern. I am always well disposed to talks of this type, which enable us to see impersonally and in the perspective of tradition situations which we, because of our involvement, cannot see in the round. As it looks as though we shall be living in families for some centuries to come, it is good to be helped to an intelligent interest in what we must perforce experience.

### Potted Operas

AFTER hearing the complete broadcast of *Carmen* from 4YA, I found it trying to return to the "potted

operas" represented by the ZB series *Opera For the People*, in which the first half of Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* occupied a programme. Several departed spirits must have stirred in uneasy graves on this occasion, not the least of them, apart from Shakespeare and Gounod, being the late John Barrymore. Shakespeare spun some delightfully cobwebby lines around the two young lovers, frail stuff which simply couldn't bear the double translation into French and back into English. Many of the poet's lines were kept intact (the narrator certainly helped in this respect, by giving us a lot of Shakespeare spoken as well as sung), but many of the lines were not pure W.S. and the result was irritating. In any case, Gounod miscalculated when he imagined that the plays of Shakespeare gain by musical setting as operas in the popular style.

### Toscanini Programme

A RECENT 4YA programme about Toscanini was reminiscent of certain film-sequences which used to be a novelty but which are now, by frequent repetition, dreadfully familiar. I mean those sequences where the heroine, as an opera-singer is represented as making her way to fame and fortune in a rapidly superimposed series of shots of various opera houses, programmes, backstage glimpses, fluttering calendars, furiously sawing violins, express trains, close-ups of singer and conductor in dif-

ferent operas, and so on. The whole thing represents many years of slow and patient hard work, but on the film it occupies a brief couple of minutes. The Toscanini programme was similarly produced. The composer's long life of devotion to the cause of music was given in a series of brief notes about his career, interpolated with snippets of this or that Toscanini recording. The music resembled the music of several recent films of the lives of the virtuosi, in that no record was allowed to play itself out completely without interruption; only at the tail end of the programme were we allowed time for some really connected music, unadorned with factual detail. Both the facts of the composer's life and the music he conducts are important, but I suggest that neither can be appreciated when one is superimposed on the other.

### Where the Cups Come From

AS I happen to be a lover of pottery I found the BBC feature "Window on Britain: The Potteries," especially interesting. But surely no listener could fail to appreciate, if not the pottery itself, the description of its making and firing, of the locality in which the world-famous potteries are situated, of the transport of raw materials and finished product. Housewives would feel a sympathy with the narrator who saw millions of cups in the making and yet,

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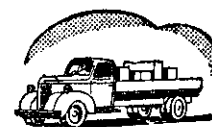


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