

## At Midnight Speak with the Sun

THE commentator was excited. Someone had nibbled at a ball going away on the off. "He hadn't a sight of the ball. He hadn't been in long enough to touch it. If he'd been in longer he would have touched it and would have been out first ball." The game was being played at Lords, not Ballyhooly, but anything can happen after midnight. Drugged by sleep, the runs mount one upon the other; the dismissals, the dropped chances, the bumpers, the sixes, loom up like noises through light anaesthesia. Arthur hands over to Rex, Rex hands over to Alan, and Alan hands over to John (the one with the Yorkshire accent and the literary allusions) through the buzz of a street light arc-ing somewhere. What! Has Lindsay Hassett taken three hours to make 42? Poor fellow; trying to put Bedser away in 12 degrees of frost by the light of a gibbous moon. Nobody knows the trouble he sees. What are Andy Kirk and His Clouds of Joy doing in this company? Oh, it's been raining and we have adjourned to the studio. Our soft palate is raw from snoring. When we sleep in earphones we cannot sleep on our side. We have violet bags under our eyes, and our failing hand spills coffee on our egg-stained waistcoat, but it is a Test Match, and who cares how ghoulish we look at breakfast?

## Helen, Roger, and J. Arthur

"TUNED in, all unbeknownst, to 3ZB the other morning about soap opera time, and who was emoting but our own Mary Wootton, doing a screen test for J. Arthur Rank." That, I think, is how 3ZB would like me to start a write-up of their little programme. Listeners were asked to write in their impressions of the broadcast. "It isn't much to ask," said the announcer. Somehow this grated on me a little. Audience reaction is no doubt very valuable to movie executives; they have millions locked up in the artificial bosoms of their stars; and they want

to know what the customers think before they "discover" a new talent, but the system blights originality and snuffs out what artistic integrity there is in the movies. Mr. Rank has in the past made some fine pictures, in addition to some horrible stinkers, but this diversity is, in my opinion, preferable to flattening out the graph curve and producing a slick line of machine-tooled mediocrities. *Retournons à nos Woottons.* Mary was playing a character named Helen who had a doctor (Roger) in love with her, but was herself in love with one of Roger's patients (X). It was all rather obscure, but I gathered that X was to be carved by Roger, and Helen was becoming indignant about either X or herself being used as a guinea-pig. There was a good deal of intense half-voice stuff in which Miss Wootton acquitted herself well, but who is to say, on the strength of a few minutes of sound-track that a new actress has been born? The most we can say is that there are indications that she has talent, and we hope she will be given the opportunity of showing it.

## Eyes for the Journey

IN the printed programme for 3YL the word was "Falls." I looked at it for some time, thinking "I'm only an ignorant Pig Islander, but surely in Yorkshire they have Fells." Whatever they are, V. S. Pritchett lived his early life in the middle of them, at Sedburgh, and he described for the BBC his *Return Journey* there after 30 years' absence. For my money, Pritchett is the best of the living short-story writers who use English. His sensitivity to his surroundings makes me feel that I walk abroad blind. He is personal enough to make me wonder what kind of a man he is, and yet is universal in that he is constantly touching off small explosions in the minds of his readers, reminding them, in this case, of the dark, compelling, irrational urges of their own childhood, urges which are illuminated by the new light he throws on them. In this

(continued on next page)

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SCANNING this map of the coast around Port Underwood is Douglas Cresswell, author of the historical narrative "John Guard," heard at 3.45 p.m. on Sundays from 3ZB. In it he tells the story of John Guard and his 16-year-old wife, who came from Sydney to settle at Port Underwood in 1830, and through their story a good deal of the early history of the Port and of Cook Strait.

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