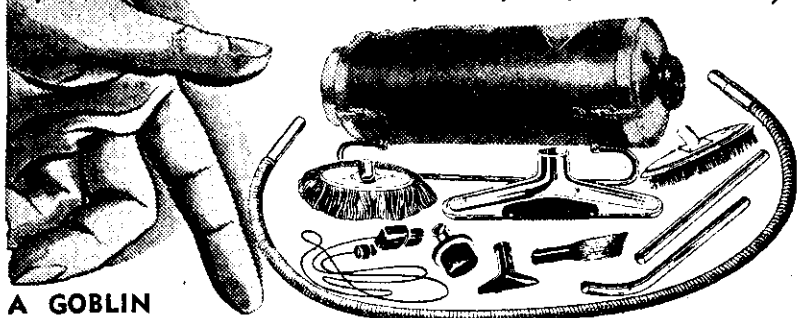


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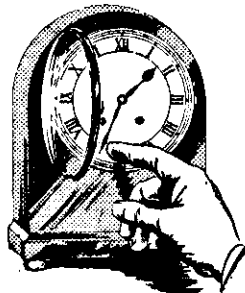
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H.7a

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RADIO VIEWSREEL What Our Commentators Say

Bless the Bride

I FEEL disposed to bless the BBC for giving us this radio version of what Cochran's Young Ladies and A. P. Herbert can do when they get together. From Opening Chorus ("Bless the Bride") to Grand Finale ("Bless the Bride") there was never a dull or a repetitive moment. At Opening Chorus the bride is about to marry the Hon. Thomas Trout, at Final Chorus she is due to be united to her beloved Pierre, and between these two pegs hangs the daintily contrived web of the plot, bedewed with lyrics by A. P. Herbert. (The Hon. Thomas loses Lucy's heart by telling white lies, and wins the audience's with his delightful "I'm too good to be true.") It seems a long time since radio listeners were presented with a nice bright brand-new musical comedy, complete with dialogue, and now, having seen the New Look, I doubt whether we will be content with the good material but outmoded trimmings ("O Sly Cigarette, O Shy Cigarette") of *Floradora* and *The Country Girl*.

Questions of Taste

IT was obvious from Ngaio Marsh's two last talks ("Defending the Hackneyed Classic" and "The Angry Listener") that here was a woman nobly planned to warn, to comfort, and command. The comfort came mostly in the first talk, where Miss Marsh gave us groundings the moral support of her approbation on two grounds: the first, that we had resisted the snob-appeal inherent in pursuit of the not-so-well-known but perhaps not-so-classic classic, the second, that we had the happy knack of picking on the best for our nefarious purposes, so that years of hand-to-hand and mouth-to-mouth circulation had not succeeded in wearing the hackneyed classic completely thin. More credit perhaps belongs to those who selected what we must con or play by ear, *To Be or Not To Be*, *Minuet in G*, Mendelssohn's *Spring Song*. For aesthetics too can be taught by sheer grind, and many a man has taught himself first to stomach and finally to appreciate bananas or Picasso merely by keeping at it long enough. I felt more at ease listening to the second talk, in which Miss Marsh denounced with righteous indignation those so sure that their own tastes are the sole criterion of the Good that they begrudge time on the air to brows of other depths.

Fighters for Freedom

ONCE upon a time there were three little girls, and their names were Emmy, Lizzie, and Millie, and they lived at the bottom of a well of treacly mid-Victorian genteelism. The story of their escape from the well (the diet of treacle was making them very ill) is being told in three Sunday morning programmes from 2YA under the arresting title *Queen Victoria Was Furious*. I heard the first last week, which told the story of Elizabeth Garrett, the first Englishwoman to qualify as a doctor. Next week is, I think, Emily Davis, the founder of Girton College, and the week after comes Millie, Elizabeth's young sister, who grew up to take a leading part in the struggle for the vote. Elizabeth's story was told wittily yet

weightily, the brightness of the presentation not being allowed to detract from the audience's horror at the unnecessary humiliations and disappointments of Elizabeth's struggle. (Incidentally, it did happen here—the first women medical students at Otago suffered much as Elizabeth Garrett suffered, and this is a country where the vote was given early.) So Victorian girlhood, in spite of being "strangled by ropes of beads, and crushed beneath the weight of waxed fruit," was finally rescued from the well, and the three little girls who had once lived at the bottom of it played John Stout to those still remaining. An excellent programme, I thought, apart from the title. If we are to believe the programme (and history) others beside the Good Queen were furious.

Many Happy Returns

PEOPLE'S personal reminiscences are not as a rule good entertainment value, and in real life they are something we usually dodge whenever possible. There are exceptions, of course; fame, or a particularly mis-spent youth generally get a hearing. It is some time



since I heard the first of the BBC series *Return Journey*, but the second, John Moore's return to his native Gloucestershire, rather bore out my vaguely remembered impressions of the first, that the ingredients of this sort of programme are unusually variable. So one might have anticipated that John Moore would recall his childhood's familiar haunts and friends, with a nostalgic note, and a description of a typical Gloucestershire village neatly worked in. But I could not have predicted that Mr. Moore would view his return from the excellent vantage point of the local pub, where a large part of the reminiscing is done by the local inhabitants. Nor did I expect him to find among his acquaintances so many characters that might have stepped straight out of the pages of Shakespeare—Pistol, Nym and Bardolph, the three rogues of Double Alley, and Mr. Justice Shallow, to say nothing of all the rude mechanicals. I felt, however, that Mr. Moore (or Mr. Cleverdon) was rather trading on the fortunate proximity of Shakespeare's birthplace to his own, in order to eke out his own quite excusable paucity of suitable impressions.

Murder Won't Out

THE Secrets of Scotland Yard are being discreetly revealed now from all Commercial stations. Clive Brooke's narrative, told with all the modesty becoming to a Yard Inspector, did full justice to the case of Mr. Donkin, who

(continued on next page)