

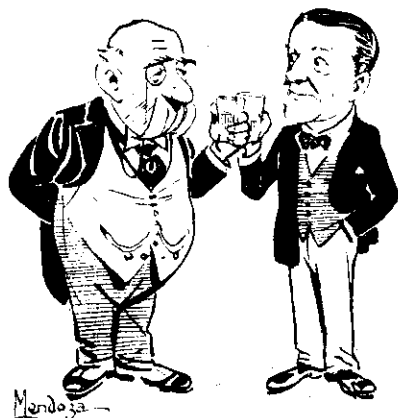
regret was that the names were too unfamiliar for me to register accurately. I felt a certain nostalgia (which will vanish with television) for the days when history lessons presupposed a blackboard in the background.

Getting Rid of Them

I AM continually amazed that so prolific a playwright as C. Gordon Glover should be able to hit the jackpot so often. *O-U-T Speils Out* is much less arty than the other Glover plays I have heard, so that one is denied the intellectual uplift that results from groping one's way through a luminous fog of whispered free verse. However, the entertainment value is just as high. Once again we have as central character the eligible young man, Helen-ridden rather than hag-ridden by a superfluity of past and present loves. But this time it's comedy, and the superfluities are removed at their own request to the satisfaction of all concerned. Noting the ease with which Mr. Glover uses the whispered voice hissing from the past to spur his hero to the necessary action I could almost wish Shakespeare were living at this hour, if only to know the joy of being able to dispense with Hamlet's father's ghost.

New ITMA Show

THE new *ITMA* show is on the air—new at least to Dunedin audiences. I wondered just what might succeed Tomtopia, a country of which I was getting rather fond. But to find Tommy Handley back in England again was refreshing, as it gave him a brilliant



opportunity of taking pot-shots at a lot of things which are not peculiar to England. The queueing system, the government, rationing, the housing system, and so on, are likely to prove Tommy's targets for some time to come. In issuing a new *ITMA* series, the organisers have wisely not altered the general outline of the programme. Most listeners to the new series, like myself, would be relieved to hear once again the phrases "It's being so cheerful as keeps me going," and the classical "I don't mind if I do." *ITMA*, whether situated in Tomtopia or London, would scarcely be the same without them.

Difficult Material

I FELT that in the selection of Henry Vaughan as a subject in the *Among the Immortals* series someone bit off more than he could chew. I don't mean that Henry Vaughan, mystic and poet, is not a suitable subject for radio presentation; but he is not fitted for a quick sketch including his life, his character, and his medium of expression,

done in the usual semi-dramatized manner of this particular ZB series. Vaughan's poetry, intimate and personal as it is, is just not suitable for inclusion in any radio programme outside the BBC Third, and it was a mistake in style to include the declamation by Vaughan of his own poetry in a very prosaic account of his history. I cannot imagine why the organiser of this programme decided that the unique spirit of Henry Vaughan would appeal to the ordinary ZB listener, or that his visionary writings could be effectively incorporated in a factual account of his life, in the script of which the characters were allowed to mix "thou" and "you" in the same sentence in the most confusing way. But it was a brave attempt to perform the impossible, and makes me hope that some day I may hear a straightforward reading from the same poet's works.

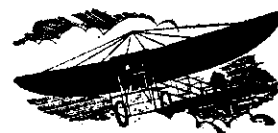
Black Magic

SOME nice problems in the lore of black magic were raised in *Superstition*, a play by Richard Armstrong, dealing with a ship that was cursed. Whether a run of bad luck can be attributed to the maledictions of an old woman who curses a ship in a mistaken belief that her son has been drowned; whether a subsequent succession of deaths is due to coincidence or not; these, although they form the plot, are not the main points proven by the play. The author, I think, was more concerned with stressing the mental effect of superstitious beliefs on the person who holds them, and the infectious power of superstition to spread its by-products of anger, fear, and uncertainty among credulous and sceptical alike. This aspect of superstition was stressed in the play by the widely divergent characters, exemplifying a variety of attitudes from whistling unconcern to nerve-straining anxiety. The play, well produced by the NZBS production unit, successfully made its point and then left the listener abruptly at the climax with the unsolved problem still unanswered: Was the curse effective or not?

Guest Conductor

THE National Orchestra's final Wellington concerts this year will be given on October 2 and 5. Dr. Edgar Bainton, a former director of the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music who is at present in New Zealand, has been engaged as guest conductor. Dr. Bainton has conducted in Wellington before, notably when the pianist Solomon played here with the National Orchestra in 1946, and the programmes he has chosen this time have a solid four-squareness about them that should satisfy most musical tastes.

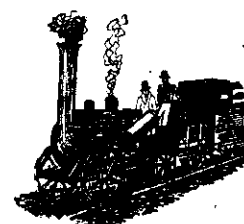
At the first concert, on Saturday, October 2, the Orchestra will play Haydn's *London Symphony* (No. 104), Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, the *Prelude to Act III of Wagner's The Mastersingers*, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7 in A Major*. The second concert, on Tuesday, October 5, will include Mozart's *Symphony No. 39 in E Flat Major*, Beethoven's *Leonora Overture No. 3*, and Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* and *The Mastersingers Overture*. The concerts will be broadcast from 2YA.



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