

RICHARD III.

NO—men and women never loomed so large

And the sky, harried only by hawks and falcons
Crouched closer to their heads than it dare press on ours.
Yet in that low space between earth and sky
Could each of these scarred lives quiver in turn
Like bell, and gong, and klaxon?
And burn in all the known brightnesses
Almost extinguished, like the last red spark on a candlewick
Or like a blue-white star in a small room
Or like a fire won free from what it feeds on
And roaring with its gale-voice where it wills?
Was there room for curses of such swelling fury
As would will to lift the monuments of the dead
To dash them down on the cursed one living—
Room for prayers like a heart planted in a garden and bearing flower?

BUT these men tower beyond the size of humans

Speak as if they would burst out from the stage
And devour the whole world in one great stride.
The sky is gone—has fled beyond their widest reach
To give space to their gaze like a speeding javelin
To let the curses well in a bell mouth wide enough
To let the waited prayers drift higher
Still unstirred from the sweet shape the lips gave it
To make room for their voices that fling the air and light aside.

NO, they were humans, and the sky crowded closer to their heads,
But the Blaze of Avon

Took the memory of each one to his own fire and warmed it
And fed justice even to its jagged men and women;
He saw them clear, and unperplexing, and fully worded, and explained
And renewed them all. Why should he not say
"Put on these my people like a robe, brother-actors,
And show each one.
I think I have smashed Time in the face and dazed him here.
He will reel a little when you act my play."

—Henry Brennan

(continued from previous page)

expressing himself, and Mr. Sargeson, with a well-trained weather-eye on his public and his duty to it. Actually, of course, the discussion got no nearer to resolving the New Zealand artist's dilemma of having his roots in one place and his intellectual stimulus in another, but it was heartening to listeners to find that either choice could lead to the successful conclusions represented by the two protagonists, though disconcerting to discover that Mr. Sargeson thought himself regarded as a freak rather than as an object of almost nation-wide reverence. Listeners found themselves a little out of their depth in such topics as The Writer as Saint, and The Writer as Community Conscience, but whenever deep waters tended to run still the chairman was ready to turn the attention of his charges to livelier and less metaphysical topics.

Intellect and Emotion

I FIND the ZB's Sunday night *Mind Your I's and Q's* amusing if not instructive, though my main emotion is thankfulness that I am not involved. The persons who get the actual questions are comparatively lucky (failure to supply the correct answer is passed off by Bryan O'Brien with a well-bred laugh) but less fortunate are those next on the list who are required to produce (entirely impromptu) a few well-informed and pithily-phrased remarks on the preceding answer. Various gambits have been evolved to deal with the situation, chief among them the Stall for Time. (Mr. Fairburn, however, seldom employs a gambit, but seems to have the happy knack of being able to talk around a topic indefinitely. In the last session I have heard, he denounced the speed of modern living, and by speaking very fast managed to

crowd an awful lot of denunciation into his meagre allowance of time.) The purpose of the session is "to stimulate listeners' own thoughts on current events," but by this criterion I should say the session was a failure. No, its appeal (and it definitely has an appeal) is rather emotional. For little intellectual stimulus can result from a session as glaringly impromptu as this, but on the other hand the floundering of transfixed participants and the sternly judicial demeanour of the compere arouse to a high degree those emotions of pity and terror so strongly recommended by Aristotle.

Noises On

BECAUSE radio script-writing requires a different technique from that of stage writing, many radio authors seem to fall over backwards in the attempt to avoid a straightforward piece of dialogue. Instead, we get a script so full of radio "effects" that there is room for little else. Background music, thundering hooves, church-bells, seagulls and sounding surf, slamming doors, storms, and all the gasps, whispers, sobs, and groans of which the human voice is capable, are exploited to the full and then allowed to overflow. There are some plays, however, where similar devices are legitimately introduced and skilfully used to heighten the tension of the plot. I am thinking here of *Mr. Todhunter*, a play produced by the NZBS unit. In this play the story is told by a gossipy man on a train, and in order to introduce each necessary flash-back to the action of the story proper, the author allows the train to plunge, momentarily, into a very radio-genic tunnel. This device was not overdone, but neatly introduced to heighten the tenseness of an increasingly tense plot. Altogether, this was one of the most effective of the NZBS productions.



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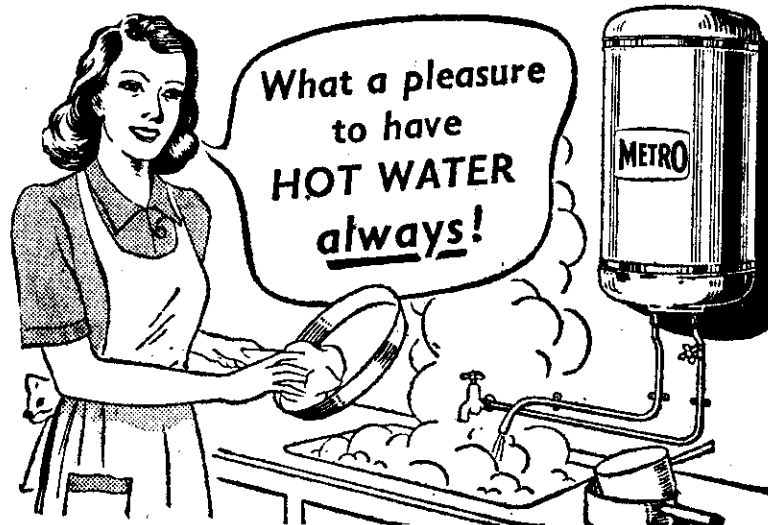
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