

J. Arthur Rank's, and the mortality it occasioned among our Export Quality brains was far too high. (Many a good man was gonged up on in the middle of giving the correct answer.) The questions were, I thought, harder than those asked in the International Quiz, and no credit was given for the near miss. The *All-New Zealand Quiz* strikes as coldly upon the constant quiz listener as Cromwell upon Merrie England, but the strong element of ruthlessness and repression in the regime is explained by the fact that its primary purpose is Elimination. In a session so relentlessly totalitarian in object the question of listeners' entertainment or competitors' comfort is of course quite immaterial.

### Mothers and Babies in Fiction

A MORNING session, *For the Confirmed Novel Reader* from 4YA, proved very rewarding. I anticipated that the speaker, Margaret Dalziel, would be dealing only with the better class of novel, and I was right. On the person who reads novels only for the sake of reading, I imagine the speaker would waste little sympathy. Her tone of voice, when dealing with the "mill-girl weds heir to dukedom" type of fiction, was somewhat scathing, and it was with obvious pleasure that she was able to assure listeners that this kind of domestic novel has had its day. Novels dealing with women's work, nowadays, are mainly realistic, she told us, and they place the accent (possibly too heavily) on the drudgery and difficulty of most women's jobs—including housework. I thought one remark a little too bitter. I refer to the statement (not the speaker's own, but a quotation) "The best view a mother ever sees of her children is their back view going out the gate." Surely there is a lot to be said for motherhood—even in realistic fiction—as a vocation. If the 80-hour week of the housewife and mother of small babies could be reduced by half, I imagine few women would prefer to give up home-keeping in favour of working for a boss. Why doesn't someone write an attractive novel telling us how this can be done? I guarantee it would be a best-seller.

### Purcell and Arne

THE songs of Arne and Purcell demand above all purity of line and clearness of tone. Their magic is not revealed by over-emotion, by vocal tricks, by forced "interpretation." How to sing them properly was shown recently by Peggy Highet in a recital from 2YA; her vocal line was comparable with the way a good string player would have interpreted the songs, and, in the early classical period music, no higher praise can be given. I sometimes wonder if the singers who sing "When Daisies Pied" ever sit down quietly to think just what the author of the poem actually meant.

### Elgar and Women

SOME of Elgar's minor masterpieces are found in his part-songs for women's voices—among them "The Swan" with its glorious accompaniment for two violins. This part-song is placed so beautifully for women that it is hard



### BREDON HILL

(With a wink at Mr. Housman)

CONSUMER Time on Bredon,  
The prices sound so dear,  
From all YA's they call them  
To people far and near;  
A happy noise? No fear!

HERE of a Wednesday evening  
(My love, they wouldn't lie)  
We heard the stable prices  
Go soaring up so high  
About us in the sky.

THE bills were mounting daily,  
But still the voice would cry:  
"Go to the shops, good people,  
Good people, go and buy."  
And then my love would sigh.

AND I would turn and answer  
With voice and visage glum:  
"You talk of ceiling prices?  
O noisy lad, come, come,  
You must think we are dumb."

CONSUMER Time, Dunedin?  
Oh, turn to the short-wave.  
I wish I were with Housman  
Where none has need to save—  
Lying pretty in the grave.

—A. R. D. Fairburn

to think of it in any other form, and it was delightfully sung in a recent 2YA Sunday afternoon programme by the English Singers, who have given several very pleasant broadcasts lately. On the same programme were more Elgar works, including "Like to the Damask Rose," originally a contralto song, and the popular "Shepherd's Song," here arranged for women's voices. Whatever one may think of the propriety of arranging works not intended by the composer for such a choir, one cannot but admit that in the form heard they were quite convincing.

### Unconscionably Short

THE ZB's have been lucky enough to get James Mason in a play or two, and his is always a name to attract those who have seen him in films. Wondering how the effect of his personality would come over the air, minus the effect of visual aid, I tuned to 4ZB to hear *Charles the King*, with James Mason and Pamela Kellino. It was surprising how Laughtonian the disembodied voice of Mason sounded on the radio at certain climaxes in this play; but the play itself, in spite of the vital acting of its stars, was a bit disappointing, compressing the story of Charles I—a theme for a five-acter—into a bare half-hour of radio entertainment. Thus shortened, the dramatic enactment of the struggle between king and parliament was shorn of subtlety, and failed to give Mason the scope necessary for the full exploitation of his acting ability. The illusion of period was not maintained, moreover, by the insertion, half-way through the play, of a pep-talk on the beauty secrets of Hollywood's screen stars. These half-hour plays would be vastly improved by being presented in one piece, with perhaps a short musical interlude; the dividing of a half-hour play into two separate and short "acts" is unnecessary and inartistic.

### What is Music?

I HAVE had a surfeit, I think, of radio panels, discussions, and brains trusts. Subjects tend to be repeated from different stations, and there is a limit to

(continued on next page)



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