THINGS TO COME

A Run Through The Programmes

Edmund Kean, Tragedian

WITH all the practised venom of the safely-established actress, Mrs. Siddons, who was once playing in a Belfast theatre opposite Edmund Kean, called him "a horrid little man"; and on further experience of his ability said that he "played very, very well," but that "there was too little of him to make a great actor." But the critics of those days described his impersonations of the great Shakespearian characters as containing grandeur and beauty. Probably his most powerful performance was in the part of Sir Giles Overreach in Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. The effect of his first impersonation was such that the pit rose *en masse*, and even the other players themselves were overcome by the terrific dramatic illusion. Listeners who would like to hear more about "this ugly, mis-shapen, crow-voiced, drink-sodden wonder of a man," as he was once described, should tune in to 3YC at 9.20 p.m. this Sunday, November 28, to *A Dream of Passion*—a portrait of Kean.

Harmony in His Little Finger

THE first of a series of programmes featuring Schubert's symphonies (he wrote nine, counting the Unfinished) will be heard from 1YC at 8.0 p.m. on Monday, November 29. It is of interest to note that Schubert was born on January 31, 1797, at half-past one in the afternoon, at the House of the Red Crab in a suburb of Vienna. He thus became the only one of the so-called Viennese school of composers to be actually born in that romantic city, yet strangely enough he had not a drop of Viennese blood in his veins. However, Schubert did have "harmony in his little finger" according to one of his childhood tutors, and, as everyone knows, began composing at a very early age. His first symphony was written at the age of 16, the second and third at 18, the fourth and fifth at 19, and the sixth at 21. The last and "great" symphony in C Major ("of the heavenly length") was composed 10 years later, in the year of his death, the date on the score being March, 1828.

Paul and Steve

WHEN Paul Temple, the BBC's famous radio detective, first made his bow in 1937, he got a tremendous reception. Within five days of the first episode being broadcast, over 7,000 letters from listeners had poured in. In the numerous serial-thrillers in which Temple takes part Francis Durbridge (author) and Martyn C. Webster (producer) have developed a technique of swift action and baffling mystery that make each new story as exciting as the last. *Paul Temple and Steve* (which starts from 4YZ at 9.30 p.m. on Monday, November 29) deals with the unmasking of the master-criminal, Dr. Belasco, and its eight episodes contain enough sinister goings-on to glue the most hardened serial-addict to his chair, and enough interest and suspense to restrain others in the family from turning it off. Needless to say, Belasco's identity is

kept a secret to the last—even the radio cast didn't know until the last episode which of them would prove to be the villain in disguise.

"Will Shakespeare"

STRANGELY enough (or perhaps it's not so strange) the world's greatest playwright has inspired few plays about himself. One of the best of the few is Clemence Dane's *Will Shakespeare*, an "invention" which links Shakespeare (and the Dark Lady of the sonnets) with the mysterious death of his rival and fellow-dramatist, Christopher Marlowe.

The play was first performed at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London, in 1921, and the BBC have made a radio production of it in which Val Gielgud (brother of John, and Director of Drama for the BBC) plays the part of Shakespeare, and Fay Compton plays Mary Fitton (the Dark Lady). The production of *Will Shakespeare* is in two parts, and Part One will be heard from 2YA at 9.32 p.m. on Sunday, December 5.

The Real Scot

HOW Scots are the Scots? Or (metaphorically speaking) how much haggle is there in a haggis? To mark November 30 this year the BBC have issued a special *St. Andrew's Day* programme debunking many of the fallacious music-hall notions people have about the Scottish national character—the meanness of Scotsmen, their proverbial caution, dourness, and so on. The programme was recorded in the Scottish studios of the BBC, and in an amusing and entertaining half-hour listeners are treated to plenty of Glasgow dialect, Scots dance music, and Scots humour—all with the authentic flavour that never fails to please anyone whose ancestors came from north of the border. *St. Andrew's Day* will be heard from 2YC at 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 30, from 1YA at 7.58 p.m. and from 4YA at 7.45 p.m. on the same day.

The Curate's Egg, Et Al

> Reverend Host: "I'm afraid you've got a bad egg, Mr. Jones!"
> Curate: "Oh, no, my lord! Parts of it are excellent!"

THE original Du Maurier cartoon about the curate's egg is only one of the countless jokes that have made *Punch* (in which it first appeared) not just a comic paper, but a national institution, read religiously by patriotic Britons (and, perhaps, laughed at by them just as religiously) every week of the year. Since the first number was published on June 17, 1841, *Punch* has reflected faithfully, in its own inimitable way, the social history of Britain, its

traditions, and its changes. The first staff included Gilbert A. Beckett and Douglas Jerrold, who were soon joined by Thackeray, Hood, Leech, and Tenniel, and in fact big literary names have nearly always been associated with the paper. If its stature is not now what it was in those days, it is still big enough for *Punch* to find its way into a million homes (and to rouse a million laughs) throughout the Commonwealth. The story of *Punch*, as told by the BBC, will be heard from 1YA at 2.0 p.m. on Sunday, December 5, and from 2YA at 9.30 a.m. on the same day.

Tannhauser from 3YA

THE score of *Tannhauser*, Wagner informs us in one of his prose works, was written directly on to the specially prepared paper necessary for the engraving, each page being printed on the stone immediately and 100 copies taken off. This process

naturally destroyed the original manuscript, and it is the only one of Wagner's operatic scores which has not been preserved. *Tannhauser* was written before the great *Nibelungenlied* cycle and other works of his mature years, and although on a grander scale than *The Flying Dutchman* its musical execution is uneven. It is not until the Third Act (according to some views) that the real Wagner emerges from the amateurishness and theatricality of much of the music. Nevertheless the opera is still one of Wagner's most popular, and it is especially noteworthy for its extended overture, which in the Paris version (1861) merges into a great dramatic ballet on the opening of the first scene. A recorded version of *Tannhauser* will be heard from 3YA at 8.15 p.m. on Sunday, December 5.