

# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### The Down-Turned Glass

THE *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, as read by Sir Ralph Richardson (2ZB, Sunday, November 21) was an edifying and dramatically satisfying experience, but those of us who have tended to identify Old Omar with the joyous youth in which we first discovered him may feel some slight regret at having another illusion shattered. For Sir Ralph is actor rather than reciter, and though I suppose there is not much more necessity to deliver the *Rubaiyat* in the quaver of old age than there is to pipe Blake's *Songs of Innocence* in childish treble his interpretation throws new light on the whole thing. "Come, fill the cup, and in the fire of spring The winter garment of repentance fling" is not the exuberant and safe defiance of the young man for whom death is far away but the braver challenge of an old man for whom it is just round the corner. And accustomed as I am to hearing "Myself when young" roared in lusty bass it came as something of a shock to hear it spoken with the puzzled bewilderment of still questing age. The philosophising had more bitterness than I have usually read into it, and there was even a faint flavour of Polonius in the moralising, and in the fussiness of "Ah, lean upon it lightly, for who knows From what once lovely lip it springs unseen." And what sea-change has overtaken the gay hedonism of "Here with a loaf of bread beneath the bough?" Sir Ralph Richardson's *Rubaiyat* is an indication that we do need more and less hackneyed renderings of the hackneyed classics.

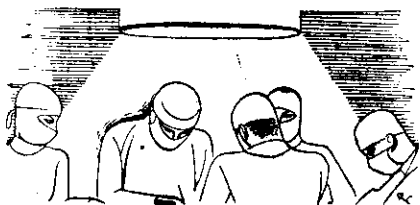
### Radio Roughhouse

ONE thing about 2YA's Monday night discussions is that they are never (well, hardly ever) hamstrung by gentility. The recent discussion on radio drama (participants—A. J. C. Fisher, a producer of it, Lloyd Lamble who acts in it; and John Gundry who writes it) was in places frank enough, and though in the early stages I was worried lest Mr. Speaker demand that the honourable member withdraw that remark I decided by the end of the discussion that there was probably a strong element of showmanship in all this giving and taking of insults. But even though you know at the wrestling that the large hairy man with the beard who yelps when he's hurt and keeps wanting to fight the referee is not really a Bad Sportsman, but is only that way to make you feel happy when the hero wins, you can't help liking the hero best, and I was all sympathy for the patient and nice-mannered Mr. Gundry. Mr. Lamble proved himself a facile and graceful exposeur of serialised-life-behind-the-scenes, and Mr. Fisher's long suit was the loving and tongue-savouring reproduction of his favourite adjectives, interminable, regrettable, decadent, exhibitionist, sensation-mongering (all used of radio serials). This session of open slather was so effective in stimulating my intellectual curiosity that from now on I am resolved that every

soft-soap serial will receive my earnest consideration. Another pulse for the sponsor to keep his finger on.

### Lust for Life

I FELT somewhat rebuked for the close attention I had just given *Green for Danger*, when I heard A. R. D. Fairburn's remarks (in the following *Mind Your I's and Q's* session) on the lust for death which in the human species runs a close second to the lust for life. That, said Mr. Fairburn, is why people still



go to war, get themselves killed in road accidents, read thrillers, and listen to crime serials. But I prefer to think of all these as manifestations of the lust for life, since to look on death, even the several-times-removed-death of the character in the thriller, makes one increasingly conscious of one's own aliveness, and the more able (and willing) to put up with the inconveniences of the state. *Green for Danger* in addition to its sudden and extremely vocal deaths has the advantage of a hospital background (operating theatre, hissing steriliser, clink of instruments, the muffled command through the mask) which is quite sufficient to cold-foot the audience even without the murders. Then there is Inspector Cockerill, whose comments are as lacking in taste if not in bite as Stanley Holloway's gravedigger. My only regret is that I am permitted to surrender myself to this caddish but fascinating entertainment for only half-an-hour at a time—I should prefer a three-hour orgy and get the thing out of my system.

### For Home-Builders

"ARCHITECTURE for the People" from 4YA, was the first of a series of talks on the subject of that house we all intend to build some day. These talks are to be recommended to any listeners interested in housing, general and particular. Nowadays that means all of us. Some of us live in old and ugly houses which are too good to pull down and re-build, even if we had the means to do so; a few of us live in almost perfect homes; many of us live in other people's houses, and would welcome anything with a roof, provided that it belonged to us. But the housing shortage is no excuse for building ugly, inconvenient, or unnecessarily costly homes, when it is just as easy, by a little planning, to have homes that are worth looking at inside and out, easy for the housewife to manage, and as cheap as is consistent with good quality. In the first of these talks, Mr. Barry Martin went into the primary considerations of the section, the foundations, the planning of floor space, and so on. Apart from practical advice, he suggested the consultation of an architect with regard to the appearance of the home—and superfluous as this advice ought to be,

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