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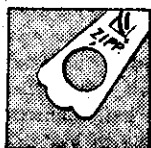
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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

"Punch's" Window

A NEW Zealander indifferent to *Punch* may well have thought better of that old but still youthful institution on hearing the BBC feature from 2YA. Presented in the form of dialogue studded with dramatized jokes, with here and there a skilfully laid trap for the questioner ("That was in the *New Yorker*"—"Yes, but it was in *Punch* some years before"), and always a bright eye for illustration of social change, the programme was so good as to remind me at times of the BBC's *Gilbert and Sullivan* standard. The best known jokes were carefully avoided. I know my *Punch* pretty well, in my life-time and before that, and I did not recognise one of those dramatized. The producer had to do without the artist, but how effectively he used the voice! The only criticism I would make was that the fire was a little too rapid at times. We had "The Song of the Shirt," the most famous item from *Punch's* Radical days. Many of us wish *Punch* could be a little more Radical now. Did you know that Tennyson is on the roll of Contributors? I had forgotten that his lambasting of Bulwer Lytton (of which he repented) appeared there. We were read part of an article which I took to be an example of the sort of thing that is rejected. Unfortunately it sounded rather like what is sometimes accepted. The Editor told us that the cartoon is still chosen at the weekly dinners. It is a pity that this collective wisdom reproduces so much that is tame. However, here was a lot of the best of *Punch* and the best is most welcome.

Finlay's Trio

ONE of the most interesting broadcasts I have heard for a long time was that of the Trio in G for flute and two violins by H. J. Finlay, of Wellington. The composer has given himself a difficult combination to handle in that the ranges of the instruments are so alike and so much in the treble. This means that unless the instrumentation is handled with skill we will be always conscious of absence of middle and bass parts. Dr. Finlay's placing of the music was done so neatly that the lack of bass was not felt at all in the first and last movements and only in the slow second movement did the ear sometimes long for a deeper chord. The harmonies were such as would not shock any ear accustomed to music of the last part of the 19th Century. The first movement was delightfully light-hearted, in divertimento mood. The second, and more emotional, slow movement aimed at a higher plane. That it did not entirely reach that plane I felt was due somewhat to the nature of the combination. The flute is an ideal instrument for displaying the shape of a phrase; it is not so adept at infusing that phrase with emotion. It was this, I thought, that made the movement seem a little long; were it scored for string quartet, or quartet and clarinet, for example, it might give the music more scope. The last movement was a sparkling little fugue and canon, full of deft touches, admirably suited to the instruments. The whole trio was a really first-class piece of work, and Dr. Finlay is to be congratulated. James Hopkinson's limpid flute tone has never been heard better. I thought that the violins, Francis

Rosner and Mary Hopkinson, sounded rather matter-of-fact, but it is difficult to know whether or not this was the style of playing which the composer wanted.

Our Civilisation

AT the age of 10 John James Feak was thinning turnips for tenpence a day. At 13 he was down the pit, pony-driving 12 hours a day for 9/4 a week. Together with the contributions of Dad and John's brother, who were also down the pit, this made a family income of £3 a week, which kept eight. Feak left the pit at the age of 21, in 1917,



with a bellyful of mining, and went into a steel works as a labourer at 26/6 a week. His parents didn't like him leaving the pit. After World War I, our civilisation being what it is, he was out of work four years and 10 months. He was luckier than some. He paid the rent by playing "amateur" football and cricket, but he was hauled into court for non-payment of rates. He felt badly about this, but the Magistrate was a good man, and ordered him to pay one shilling a week until he was back in work. The firm took him on again and he married. His wife, a careful manager, built him up from seven stone to 10 stone. He became pit foreman, and at 57 is in charge of the ladle, pouring steel into the ingot mould. After tax deductions he makes £7/14/- a week, for which he sometimes works fourteen and a-half hours a day. He is still paying rent. His wife had an illness which cost £100. So he'll go on working until the firm doesn't want him any more. He's been a strong union man all his life. Conditions are better in the industry now, and he's more concerned with raising output than with nationalisation. He's a stable character; a lifetime of getting up at 4.45 a.m. to do a day's hard, hot, dirty, ugly work hasn't made him want to murder anyone. He feels he has helped create some of the wonder and magic of our civilisation. The BBC, broadcasting his life in the series *Meet the People* didn't feel it necessary to point out how black this magic is.

Ruskin Fairy Tale

ONE of the nicest things I have heard from 4YA was a reading of John Ruskin's fairy tale *The King of the Golden River*. This is the first time, as

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