

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Tommy Handley

DEATH has laid a heavy hand on the programmes recently. The talk I heard by James Agate on *The Art of Living* was all the more impressive coming from one who has now no need to practise it, and it was a good test of the speaker's calibre that the sentiments expressed should still maintain their sturdy validity in spite of the dwarfing effect of the shadow of death, which reduces so many of our "Wake Up and Live" philosophies to chickweed proportions. And now I have just heard of the sudden death of Tommy Handley, who has been my Saturday night solace for many years, and provided me with more laughs than all the other radio comics put together. All due credit of course to ITMA's scriptwriter, but it was Tommy, with his india-rubber voice, who put the laughs across, and listeners will remember him fondly for the fact that he never kowtowed to the studio audience at the expense of the listening one.

SUMMER WIND IN ARROWTOWN

DUST hides the face of the Arrow hills in the evening,
coming between them and the street,
tree-lined, tree-darkened.

GUST after gust coming up
from the narrow, steep, bleak bluffs
hanging over the river.

THE wind is a voice
and the dust is a phantom,
so that children, playing,
are roused from absorption
and raise, for a moment,
small serious faces.

What? Who calls?

BUT the dust moves on
with the question unanswered.
The stone hut is roofless
by the gorge at Kawarau,
and the races are broken.

THE dredge lies rusting
in the Nevis Valley.
Grass grows on the tailings
where the mindless sheep wander.

WILLOWS bend over Molyneux;
over the waters where men
fever-ridden, gold-haunted,
Waded, and dipped, and dug, and died.

APPLES grow in Roxburgh.
Matagouri and snow-grass still find life
near the massed rocks of the Lindis,
echoing now to car and cattle-truck,
while the grudging Dunstons
no longer take the breath and the heart
from the seeking, climbing men.

A CAIRN by a creek
remembers where they fell in the ranges
on the night of the big snow,
succumbing, through pain and reluctance,
to the essential, final aloneness.

THE shores of the Lakes see the tourists
where Rees and the Shennans sought for
homesteads;
Thorlby and Teviot, built for grandeur,
now house the tractor
and serve as barns for hay.

IN Arrow the street is quiet
Where Bully Hayes blustered.
The gold office is open
for two hours on Thursdays,
and a chimney is all that is left of Ballarat
where the pretty ladies lived.

THE wind blows up the Arrow gorge
in the evening,
bringing with it the dust of men and of
dreams.

—Isobel Andrews

Tennyson's Albert Memorial

AS an introduction to a series of readings from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, Katrina Hill's talk from 4YA was excellent. It is better to devote an entire preliminary session to a discussion of the work to be presented than to



allow valuable time to be taken up, during the actual readings, with accounts of the poet and his subject-matter. Katrina Hill traced the genesis of the Arthurian legend through Malory and Spenser to Tennyson; and although it must be conceded that Tennyson sentimentalised his theme, *Idylls of the King* is far from being what someone called "Tennyson's Albert Memorial." Tennyson's star followed much the same course as Mendelssohn's—adoration during its ascendant and then a long period of neglect. But that cultural snobbery is passing. Tennyson is emerging again, and the 4YA readings from *Idylls of the King* will be followed with interest.

Easy Money

I AM still somewhat dazed by my first experience of Jack Maybury's *Money-Go-Round* session, but it is guaranteed to provide parlour economists with a nice handy proof of inflation. To the sponsor money is obviously made round to go round, the payroll is a large one, and a consolation prize of five shillings

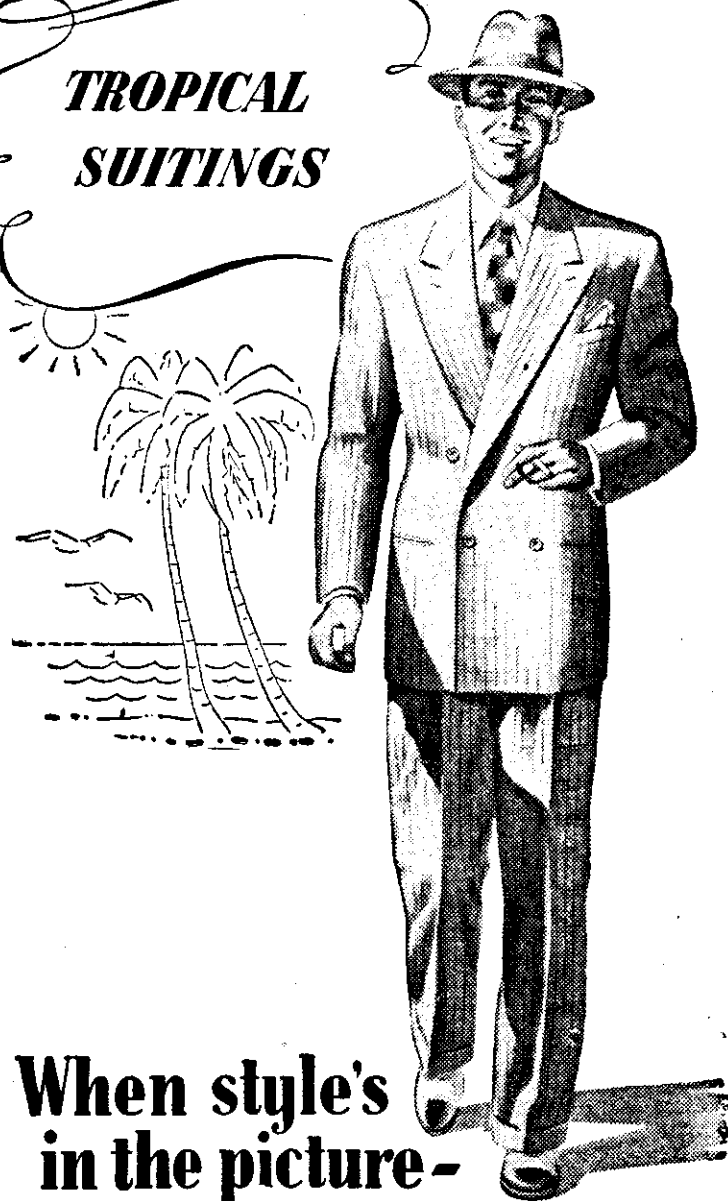


is absolutely *de rigueur* for the least knowledgeable of competitors, provided he is prepared to be forcibly fed the answer. As the prize-money jackpots up a little more is required of the competitor, but a guinea for knowing what the Vicar of Bray was noted for strikes me as easy money. Of intellectual interest there is comparatively little, of human interest considerably more (though obviously personalities meant a lot more to the studio audience than to the radio one, judging by the clangour of their reactions). But the only real excitement of the session came from the contemplation of the golden stream being sponsor-diverted into so many pockets.

Too Much Technicolour

MRS. HODGSON'S talks from 4YA, *Byways of Maoriland*, are a little too like a travel-brochure; she reads rather than speaks her descriptions, and appeals rather to the tourist than to the listener born in New Zealand. In other words she gives a technicolour picture rather than a documentary. She does,
(continued on next page)

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