



a mystery connected with this series. Neither in *The Listener* nor on the air are we told where it was made. Internal evidence, including some of the slang dialogue, and, in the first session, an explanation of the very unKiwi-ish "furphy," indicates Australia as its birthplace. Why, then, is this not stated?

—J.C.R.

Maugham Character

THE CONSTANT WIFE is trivial, but a tour de force. In the role of Constance, Margaret Lockwood achieved considerable stature without surrendering appeal, and managed to hold the play together much as the sun does the solar system. The other characters were almost Wodehousian in their truiness to form and to period—particularly husband John, playing the heavy-handed surgeon, and given lines like "A terrible operation—you start cutting and you don't know where to stop," and his inamorata ("I know I behaved like a beast but I never thought you'd find out"). For all its trappings of farce (and enjoyable farce) this is a very shrewd play. Somerset Maugham has given Constance all the qualities usually pre-empted for the male sex—humour, logic, and inability to take things personally—and created a character that I couldn't take my ears off.

Mock-Heroic

TO hear all five cantos of *The Rape of the Lock* from 2YC in the same evening was an appreciable, and appreciated, piece of programme planning. The poem was read with gusto rather than subtlety by Peter Jackson; his technique was most effective in blowing from our minds any dust or suggestion of antique mould that may have settled on us from contact with library versions of the classic. (The pause before the "He said" at the end of each "epic" speech came with devastatingly comic effect). But I felt it was a method that, by too little variation in pace,

rather blurred the fine edge of the parody. It was undeviatingly mock-heroic, epic as the Player King, rather than Hamlet, would have rendered it.

—M.B.

Remembered Voices

WHEN the BBC dips into its library of recordings to make a programme on recent history, it is inevitable, I suppose, that the same voices should appear, whether the programme be an historical survey or whether, as recently from 4YA, it is related to the life of the present Queen. There was something a little too familiar about this programme. *Through Childhood to the Throne*—the last drops from an orange squeezed thoroughly in the past. It was not without interest, however; there seems to be a perpetual fascination in the repre-

sentation of remembered voices, and the brief account of the war years, with the voices of Hitler, Chamberlain, Churchill and Roosevelt, involved the listener in his own memories, thus ensuring that audience participation which is the essential of a good programme. The programme included the voices of George V, George VI, the Queen Mother, and recordings by the present Queen from the age of fourteen, but I particularly enjoyed the brief comment from George V's diary, quoted by the BBC with its flair for making its subject live for us in a few words—in this case, George V as a proud grandfather. "All the children were nice," he wrote in his diary after his Jubilee, "but none were as pretty as Lilibet and Margaret."

School for Players

IN a brief talk from 4YA one morning recently, Rilla Stephens created for us the atmosphere of the Old Vic Theatre School. It cannot be easy to communicate a way of learning so far out of the ordinary listener's experience, but Rilla Stephens never lost the wood for the trees, guiding us animatedly down clearly distinguished paths, pointing out this aspect and that, until we began to have some conception of what it was all about. Rilla Stephens had the imagination to base her talk on an assumption of our lack of knowledge, and the modesty which could enlighten us without condescension. But most attractive to me was her total absence of pose; to her, theatre seemed to be a job, a hard though rewarding job. From memory, I am almost sure she did not mention the word "art" once. Which was all to the good, to my mind.

—Loquax

"WHILE I was still at school I used to play all Shakespeare's boys at the Gate Theatre, Dublin, possibly because I had a very deep voice and very straight hair. We didn't dare tell our headmistress I was acting, so I always had to be away from school with one infectious disease after another.—Peggy Cummins, in the BBC's *In Town Tonight*.

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