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Radio Review

The Common Touch

TRAVEL talks provide some of the best, and the worst, listening in our spoken programmes; they vary from a dreary recital of "... and then I went, and there I saw ..." to the vivid communication of the feelings of the traveller-explorer which makes the listener identify himself with the experience. To the second group belong Lenore Harty's talks on a trip to Yugoslavia, an attractively simple narrative which leads her, in the company of a Yugoslav student, from Oxford through the Customs barrier marking the beginning of the Iron Curtain, into Yugoslavia itself, and all the time gives the listener the sense of accompanying the party. Miss Harty has an excellent eye for small personal details—the difficulties of getting a bath, the annual haircut of many Yugoslav males, the food, the landladies—which, added together, give a lively and entertaining impression of one traveller's experiences.

Old Faithfuls

OF the five serials at present running from Dunedin national stations, two, having stood the test of time, lack any virtue of surprise for the listener; two, being of the standard of second-rate magazine fiction, have the same lack of sophistication for the listener; and the last (*Miss Billy*) achieves the distinction of falling into both groups. After getting off to a rather amateurish start, the production of *The Eustace Diamonds* has improved, and the company is picking its way through the intricacies of Trollope's plot in a comprehensible, if not inspiring, fashion; and *The Good Companions* geniality has not been totally exhausted by previous acquaintance with it both as novel and as film. This is the most one can say in favour of the best we are offered at present. Is there nothing available written in the '40's, or even as recently as the last two years?

—Loquax

Tribute to a Poet

I HEARD Dylan Thomas read his remarkable play *Under Milk Weed* a few days before he died last year. The sky-rocketing language, incomparably

read, and the warm humanity of his vision moved me deeply; I felt certain that with this work Thomas was moving into even richer fields of poetic exploration. This, too, was the opinion, in the fine *Tribute to Dylan Thomas* (1YC) of M. K. Joseph and James Baxter, who spoke of Thomas's development and his individual qualities. Allen Curnow's personal reminiscences, notably of Thomas's mixture of humility and confidence in his gifts, brought the poet vividly alive. Denis Glover gave a somewhat miasmic account of meeting Thomas in a wartime Soho pub; but I liked his description of the poetry as that of "being rather than of thinking." These were no machine-made, but genuine-felt, tributes to one of the greatest poets of our century, and perhaps the only really natural one. Curnow referred to the fact that Thomas, unlike so many modern poets, had no University education. I wish that, since two of the speakers were University teachers, someone had quoted Thomas's significant remark that the trouble with American poets was that they taught. "They graduate from college," he said, "and then they stay in college. When do they learn anything?"

Classical Music

THE time is overdue to draw attention to the consistently high standard of 1YA's *Classical Hour* each afternoon from 2.30 to 3.30. I don't know how wide the audience is for such a programme, but as the only local alternative is the *ZB Women's Hour*, I should imagine it has a fair hearing. Although there are a fair number of familiar pieces—Brahms, Beethoven and Schubert—the works are not confined to the war-horses, or even to better-known composers; and a week's listening gives a nice balance of old and new. The practice of playing usually only two works gets away from the "bitty" character of the rest of the daytime musical features. I enjoyed recently an hour formed of a Telemann Concerto, a Bach Suite and Couperin's *Pieces en Concert*, and on another day the rather piquant coupling of Saint-Saens's Second Piano Concerto and Sibelius's First Symphony. When I am able to listen during the day I always look forward to this programme, in which some rays from 1YC momentarily warm the somewhat bleak air of 1YA's daily musical offerings.

—J.C.R.

In a Glass, Darkly

THERE is no doubt, to my mind, that second sight exists. Granting this, however, it is not clear why, more often

"I KNOW WHAT I THINK ..."

HOW TO MAKE MORE MONEY

I SHOULD think nearly every radio in the country was tuned to the National Women's Session for the recent programme on "Ways of Making Money." Deftly compered and neatly tailored—the interviews were the ideal length of about three to five minutes—the programme suggested making toys, garments, or knitting at home, selling flowers to the florist, or raising pedigree cats. The economic motive was well to the fore in everybody's mind. The factory manager admitted he received hundreds of inquiries a year from people wanting to make soft toys at home, but "we pick only the better ones." The florist surprised me—she bought nearly all her flowers from home gardens. The pedigree cats were the highlight of the programme, but how many wives could persuade their husbands that it was necessary for business reasons to have two pedigree Persians sharing the bed? Two questions still bother me. How many of these business women have children at home? And if everybody is working at home, because of the high cost of living, who can afford to buy the baby's layettes, toys and sproys that they produce?

—Gibbet

(Readers are invited to submit comments, not more than 200 words in length, on radio programmes. A fee of one guinea will be paid after publication. Contributions should be headed "Radio Review." Unsuccessful entries cannot be returned.)

