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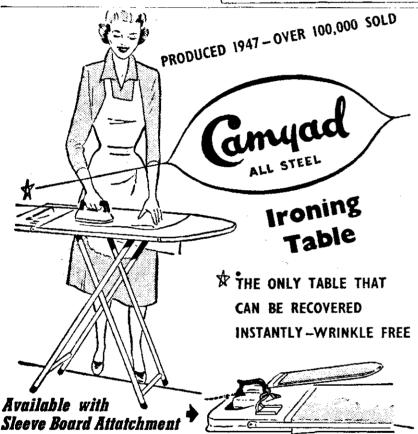
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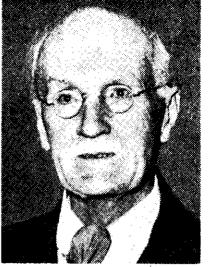
World Theatre

## GODS AND **GREEKS**

T was Euripides' Electra which saved Athens. Nine years after the great dramatist wrote his version of the savage story. Athens, city of morning and light, fell to the Spartans and their allies. As the conquerors stood without the city gates, says the story, they debated whether to raze the city to the ground. By chance they heard a man of Phocis singing a choral passage from Electra. He sang of the desolation of the heroine's home, and the Spartans, listening, were touched to compassion.

The tragedy of Electra and her brother Orestes is indeed a horrible one. The Greek belief seems to have been that the closer the kinship, the more moving the tragedy. So we hear of Agamemnon sacrificing his daughter Iphigenia for a fair wind on the voyage to Troy, His Queen, Clytemnestra, in revenge, gave herself to his cousin Aegisthus. When the king returned after the ten-year siege his queen and her lover murdered him. For their crime these two were in turn murdered by Agamemnon's children, Electra and Orestes. Was this deed justice or crime?

The great triumvirate of Athenian dramatists all treated the story in a different way. Aeschylus, still regarding the drama as essentially a religious rite, saw it as a conflict of superhuman powers to be written in a grand, imaginative style. Apollo ordered the murder; the Furies punished it and peace was made before the Areopagus of Athens. Sophocles made his characters more human, gave them personalities and so introduced a greater dramatic conflict which turned the old blood-feud into brilliant "theatre." Euripides, the nearest to modern in outlook, was a moralist and rationalist. He thought the murder a foul deed of darkness and the god who ordained it foul also, but his indignation against the moral order which produced such actions does not prevent his perverse, furious characters from being



PROFESSOR GILBERT MURRAY. whose translation of the "Electra" of Euripides is that used in "World Theatre"

real. They are no problem-play puppets and that is why, 2500 years later, they

The BBC World Theatre's version of Electra is produced by Peter Watts in Gilbert Murray's translation. The music is composed and conducted by Denis Arundell, and Joan Hart and Peter Coke play Electra and Orestes. Joan Hart has played important parts in a number of BBC plays. She was Viola in the World Theatre production of Twelfth Night, and was in the serial version of Pride and Prejudice. For more than four years she was a member of the BBC Repertory Company and has been seen in several films. Peter Coke made his London stage debut with Sir Seymour Hicks, and has since played all kinds of parts in radio and on the stage and screen.

J. C. Trewin, reviewing the World Theatre production of Electra in the BBC Listener, said that it would be remembered for its quality of excitement, held from the minute the Peasant uttered his prologue to the last splendour and pity of the judging god. Electra will be broadcast by 4YC on Wednesday, February 2, at 8.0 p.m., by 3YC on Saturday, February 5, at 9.30 p.m., by 2YC at 8.45 p.m. on Sunday, February 6, and by 1YC on Saturday, Febru-

ary 12, at 9.2 p.m.

## Wandering Ways

ZB Women's Sessions have been bitten by the travel bug it seems. First of all they have a series of talks which begin from 2ZB on Friday, January 28, and later from other ZB stations, called A Kiwi at Large. Agnes Bray, who wrote the talks, visited England and found herself the incumbent of a series of temporary jobs. With light-hearted colonial resource she became cook, hoppicker, typist-clerk, lady's companion, mother's companion, parlour-maid, proxy parent, housekeeper, charwoman and advertising copywriter.

These experiences gave her the entree into many kinds of life in England, and some extremely odd and interesting views of it. There was the time when, cook to one of the last remaining bachelor baronets who could afford to live on his income, she walked into an exclusive food store wearing her ancient New Zealand pabardine raincoat. As she charged up the goods she was somewhat surprised to be addressed as "Lady Nigel."

The shabby old gab, evidently carried with it an authentic county air.

On another occasion she found herself companion in a remote part of Bedfordshire to an old, old lady who was almost certainly a witch. She had only one ear, an eye which was a blood-shot, rolling marble covered generally by a rakish, not-too-clean bandage. Her mouth was twisted so that she spoke to you sideways. She wore her "sharp teeth" as she called them, only for eating, and Miss Bray was kept perpetually busy finding them when required, as the old lady was likely to take her milk and unsweetened apple purée, which was all she ever ate, anywhere. That job lasted only a very short time.

Angel's Flight, the new ZB Women's Hour serial to follow Meet the Mansons, is a kind of Cinderella story in reverse. It concerns a ragged little boy who climbs to wealth and importance at sea, in Sydney before the war, in Los Angeles and Hollywood, and finally in London's Mayfair.

Angel's Flight begins from 1ZB at 3.0 p.m. on Tuesday, February 1, and will be heard later from other ZB stations.