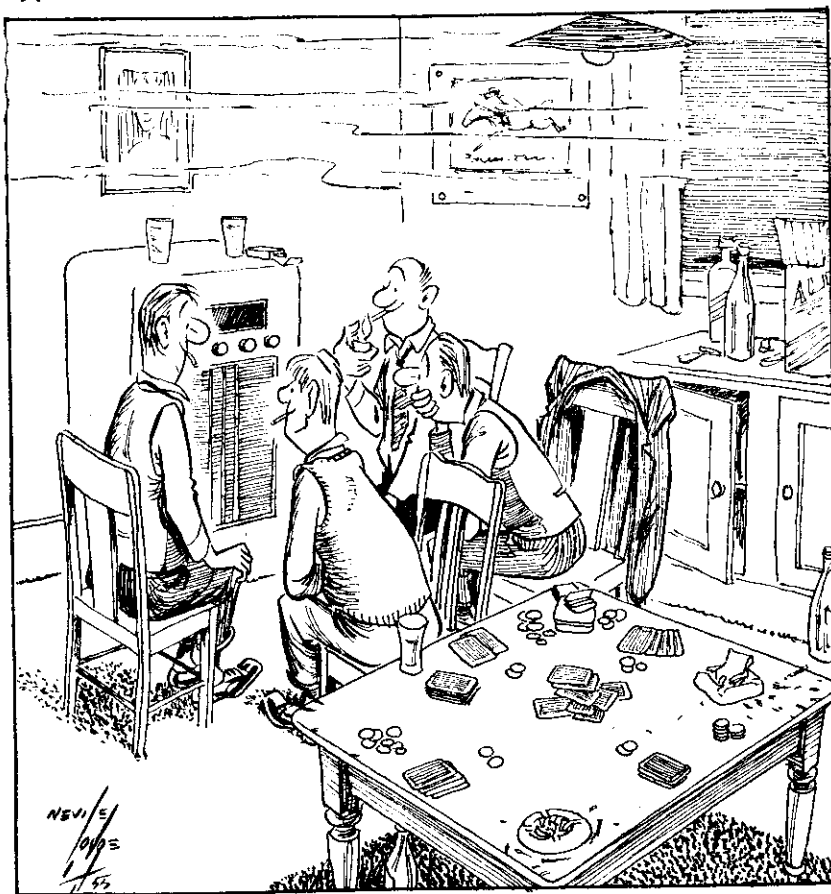


Lodge Listens . . .



"Care for a game of cards? He breaks open a new pack—shuffles—"

and Claudio, for example, and Phoebe and the gormless Silvius. The romantic rightness of the BBC *Merchant of Venice* owed a lot to the delightful playing of Bassanio by Tony Britton. He gave the role an engaging boyishness, so that we had the appealing diffidence in the Casket Scene to balance what can be the unsympathetic hysteria of the Trial. Michael Redgrave played a satisfyingly venomous Shylock—the snarling of the Trial Scene sounded in our ears long enough to scramble any sympathetic chords aroused earlier, thus leaving us emotionally free to enjoy the Happy Ending.

—M.B.

Places Where They Sing

I THINK one might fairly say that those not members of any Church, nor interested in religion, would find little reason to listen to ordinary Church service broadcasts. Their purpose is, of course, devotional, and not aesthetic; but frequent indifferent preaching and music ensure that their appeal remains thus restricted. Yet it would be a pity if experience of our religious broadcasts were to deter anybody from listening to the BBC Religious Service programme, broadcast from the YCs on Monday nights. These sessions, recorded in English churches, have an extra appeal in the dignity of the services, the literate nature of the sermons, and the fineness of the music. Anglican plainchant and Catholic Gregorian create an atmosphere that seems to me more suitable for radio than some other forms of church service. It was pleasing to recognise in last Monday's excellent broadcast from Westminster Cathedral the name of

Maxwell Fernie (formerly of Wellington) as organist. The singing on this occasion was among the best heard in the series. And Canon Collingwood's sermon showed that, contrary to what some local preachers seem concerned to establish, broadcast homilies need not be lengthy, ponderous and repetitive to produce a profound response.

Korean Reverie

U.N. action in Korea, called by some publicists, "the forgotten war," has inspired some bad films, but little else. However, Conrad Voss-Bark's *Letter from Korea* (1YC), one of the best BBC plays I have heard this year, did create, against a background of Korean cold and confused action, a most vivid impression of the stresses of war, underlining the irony in the statement, "In war the great issues overshadow the personal tragedy." The hopes, fears and nostalgia of five British soldiers holding a defile to cover the retreat of their unit, were revealed in a skilful mixture of dialogue and interior monologue. Reverie, which radio plays are well adapted to present, seems to me always in danger of becoming artificial and falsely rhetorical. But, despite some (perhaps intentional?) echoes of *Henry V*, the streams-of-consciousness of Mr. Voss-Bark's characters gave us a more believable insight into the minds of weary and desperate men than I can imagine any other technique doing. Skilful production and playing by the BBC Repertory Company made this a most satisfying play, which, though ostensibly set in Korea, touched issues raised whenever men are at war.

—J.C.R.

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 13, 1955.



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