

things they broke, queried Mr. Smith? Half, thought one ten-year-old with a passion for justice. And what about women's hats? Vaingloriously, several pumping Mums were reflected by the children, all in awful hats, spending hours in the shop, choosing two instead of one, taking them both back and choosing a third, when Dad didn't like them. And what about make-up? Have any of you an elder sister? It's very awful to have a sister, said an eleven-year-old, magisterially. No, they shouldn't wear make-up if they're young, said another, 'cos young women are beautiful, thus hoisting the banner of chivalry among these disenchanted critics. It all came out so pat, so forced, and was finally so tedious, that even Mr. Smith's promise of some choice slum titbits from Redfern will not easily seduce me into listening again.

The Master

LISTENING to C. P. Snow in the *We Write Novels* series, I was disappointed that his name was not J. Y. C. Betelgeuse, and that his interviewer, Walter Allen, was not, say, Winston Oriflamme, since each referred punctiliously to the other by his full name in the BBC manner, which amuses me vastly. "Tell me, C. P. Snow . . ." "Well, Walter Allen . . ." My favourite one, of some years back, is an irate chairman saying testily: "Come, come, Malcolm Muggeridge! Surely C. E. M. Joad and C. A. Lejeune: you won't lie down under that!" The BBC style of somewhere between familiarity and formality has always seemed clumsy. This apart, I like the sound of C. P. Snow, and his ten volume work, which seeks to explore the "Whole range of choices we have to make in a managerial society." His masters are Trollope and Stendhal, both, like himself, good civil servants. (Snow is a Commissioner of the Civil Service, and was formerly an atomic physicist.) Joyce set out to write "the whole palimpsest of himself," in *Finnegan's Wake*, and for all I know, succeeded. Snow regards this as an end, and he is one of those who has made a new beginning in the novel of intimate social relations, reflected over twenty years through his recording, and experiencing eye, Lewis Elliott. His last novel but one, *The Masters*, which Walter Allen thought the best, takes as its action the election of dons in a Cambridge College, and manages to raise in this way the whole essence of politics, and the problems of power. Such novels should be written—full marks—and by whom better than senior and responsible civil servants?

—B.E.G.M.

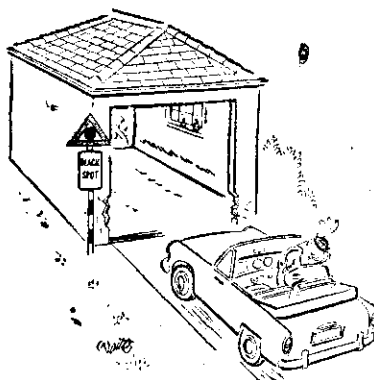
Placebo Flow

I SHOULD not have thought that there would be enough material in the topic, "How Can We Cut the Medicine Bill?" to keep a *Question Mark* panel going for half an hour. But thanks to two members challenging the assumption in the title as soon as the gong went for the first round, and to Dr. W. B. Sutch's skilful and informed chairmanship, this made a willing and interesting discussion. The going was a bit uneven at first, with two against the solitary one who supported the idea of economy; but, with the introduction of

the question of public health schemes and preventative measures, it broadened out into a more constructive affair. The most striking feature of the session for me, however, was its revelation of how the Welfare State concept is interpreted by some New Zealanders—notably in such remarks as Mrs. Harris's "the right of citizens in a democracy to have as much medicine as they want." Had she said "as they need," one might have agreed. But that outlook which equates "want" with "need" and the validity of defining a democracy by the extent of its distribution of free medicine were topics which the panel did not, unhappily, get around to debating.

As She is Spoke

I WONDER how many people have been listening to the *Paroles de France* series from 1YC. More, perhaps,



(C) Punch

than one might expect, for, despite the scorn of the utilitarian-minded and the poor-relation role played by French in modern secondary schools, there must be a fair proportion of YC listeners who

can follow most of the series. The facts and dates are given lucidly and simply in each programme; and the extracts are read at something less than that break-neck pace at which French people, regardless of the Anglo-Saxon ear, will usually perversely speak their own language. And how beautifully the passages are read. Jean-Louis Barrault's readings from Paul Claudel in the session devoted to that great poet, and some of the descriptive pieces in the two programmes on Brittany brought out the exquisite wrought-silver texture of the French tongue more clearly than anything I have ever heard before. Magnificently rounded sessions, presented with impeccable taste, and a poised charm, these could well bear repeating. Is it a mark of increasing YC maturity that they are broadcast without introduction or apology?

—J.C.R.

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