

stories in colloquial speech. I would not have thought that lively, almost smart modern dialogue, could blend so well with the actual words of the Book of Daniel, but they did, in what was often a most piquant fashion. It had the effect of projecting the play on two levels; one, the ordinary commerce of social life for which the glib talk was appropriate, and on the other hand, the lofty issues of destiny and judgment were justifiably couched in the weighty splendour of the authorised version. Nebuchadnezzar was played as a demonic character from a psychiatrist's casebook, in the tones of a witty, if hysterical screech owl, by Donald Wolfit, and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were given sketch form as real people. There was, however, no psychological explanation of how they passed through the fire unscathed, and in the terms in which the play was presented to us, Nebuchadnezzar should have sought one. Daniel was brisk and efficient and rather tiresomely right all along. Nebuchadnezzar's reduction to beast's estate was presented as a comic predicament, and his moan of "Grass again!" when his chamberlain brings his victuals, gives an idea of the ironic flavour given to the story by its modern dress. Nebuchadnezzar, chastened by his vision of God, was a tame character, a poor old man, simply. One could not help preferring the zest and vain glory of the old rascal who opened the play.

Caged Lions

I HAVE now heard several of the *We Write Novels* series, the most recent being Joyce Cary and J. B. Priestley. I find myself dubious about their value. It should be interesting to hear such people talking about their work, but is it necessary? More, is it wise? It made me uncomfortable to hear Joyce Cary, whom I greatly admire, saying solemnly in an interview that man is doomed to be free. He is not portentous as a writer, but this was. He has spent twenty years creating a gallery of characters whose aim is, in action, to make such statements manifest. I feel that an explicit avowal of aim is a mistake. An artist should be like the Delphic sybil,

either silent or inscrutable. I recall that when T. S. Eliot was asked the meaning of *The Confidential Clerk*, he replied blandly that it meant what it says. And J. Z. Priestley, poor man, should not have been barboozled into saying that "I maintain that the two wars have done great damage to people." Obviously, all too obviously, they have, but the enormous triteness of this remark made me wince. Priestley, though, is by far the best I have heard in the series, a born broadcaster. His voice has a fine energy and a tone I am tempted to call sacerdotal, to avoid a cheap pun on his name. And he is so far only one who has stood up to the rather smug probings of Walter Allen. "You've obviously been greatly influenced by Dickens," said Allen. "Not a bit," said Priestley, severely, "I must really resent that." A little more resentment, a hint of fierceness here and there, would have dispelled the impression I have gained from this series that Walter Allen is a successful tamer of caged lions.

—B.E.G.M.

Flotsam Time

DEAR, dear! How the conventions of musical comedy do date. As *Blossom Time* staggered along its predictable way, laden with all the flotsam of old-style musical plays, with its dreadfully unfunny comedy, its mixture of *Student Prince* sentiment and stagey Viennese gaiety, and its incongruous words to Schubert's music, "arranged by G. H. Clutsam," I couldn't help wishing that a Sandy Wilson had done this genre over, too. All Selwyn Toogood's hearty mugging couldn't make anything of the intendedly uproarious Wimpassinger, nor could vigorous playing in the other parts disguise the banality of the plot and the fatuousness of the presentation of Schubert's character. Still, taking it for what it was—a relic of less sophisticated times in musical comedy—the NZBS production was diverting enough. Using the technique perfected by the films of having one person to sing, another to act, paid off well, and I enjoyed especially the singing of Robin Gordon and Daphne Ellwood, even if the arrangements caused a wince or two. Perhaps

I might have responded more warmly to *Blossom Time* had the Auckland weather been more springy and less wintry on Saturday night. And yet I think it would take more than a balmy spring evening to make me like that alleged "comedy."

More Light!

PERHAPS it is fallacious to imagine that Anglo-Saxons alone feel that solemnity is inseparable from seriousness, yet that Puritan grimness in the approach to the arts, which led Chesterton to beg someone to lead him to a pub, does seem peculiar to the English, and has its local manifestation on 1YC. Musically, 1YC is more adventurous than it once was, and the talks and plays are, of their kind, admirable. But, save for the occasional bright remark from Owen Jensen introducing Mozart, so little happens on this station which sug-

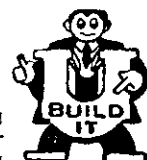
gests a sense of humour, an awareness of wit, or even just plain life, that an earnest Pakistani visitor might well gain the impression that the regular 1YC listener is a cross between Cotton Mather and Dean Inge. Yet surely the most assiduous YC fan must flip the dial sometimes in search of a little light relief. Why not, then, more talks in which wit and vivacity are as important as information; why not some readings from the great nonsense writers; why not an occasional dash of irreverence about some of the music, or some satire to sweeten the air? So long as the present policy remains, of permitting nothing which cracks the unsmiling mask of austere solemnity 1YC wears, regulars are deprived of even that human comedy which lends spice to many serious music recitals.

—J.C.R.

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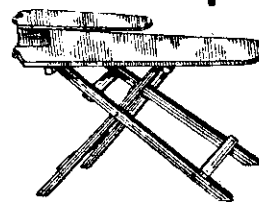


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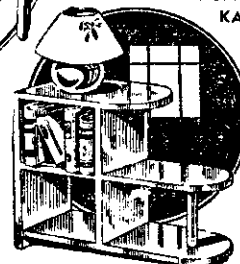


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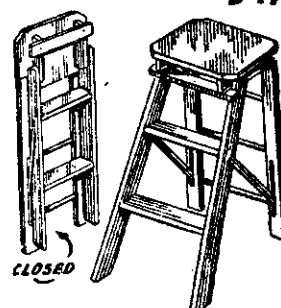
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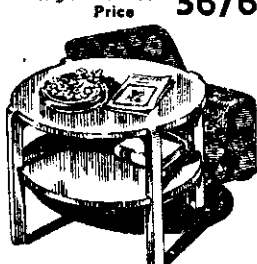
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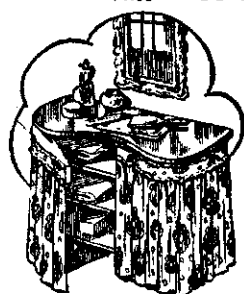
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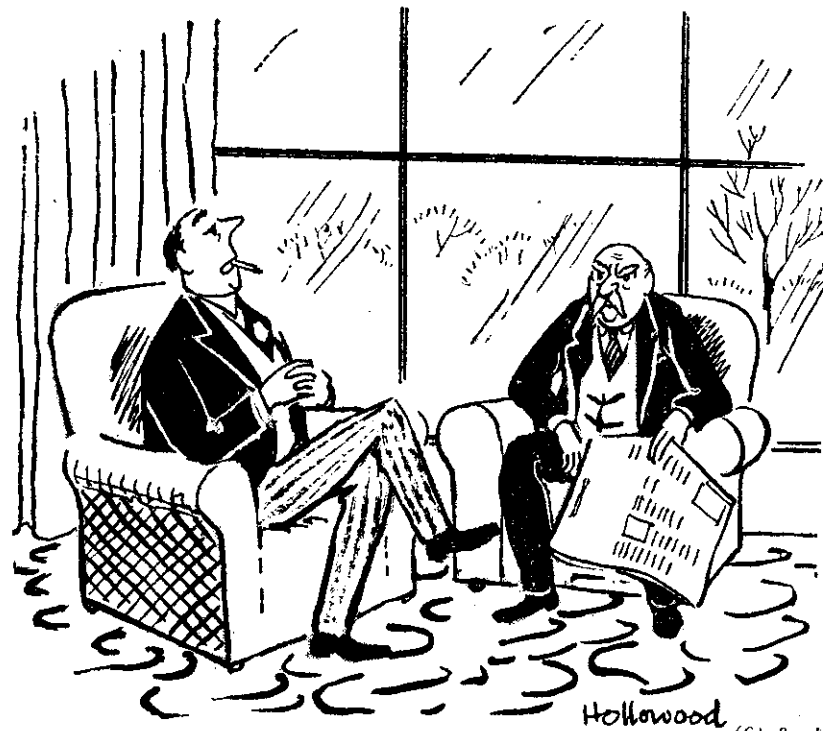


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"But they wouldn't show the commercials during the actual play—only while the bowler's going back to the mark"