

the only route possible, demolishing the tomb. Finally, only Waters emerges, and is joined later by Alison. The play was brilliantly acted, and several scenes were splendidly written. But, as a whole, it made no unified impression on me, and seemed let down by the absurd and wholly improbable situations.

Good Egg

DR JOHN POCOCK'S strikingly individual mode of speech and incisive judgments have been missed from our radio since his translation to Cambridge University, and I must therefore applaud whoever is responsible for commissioning him from time to time to speak to us from England. His most recent talk was on the London Theatre in 1956, and a masterly survey it was. How expertly he revealed the relationship of the theatre of the last 10 years to the fluctuating tempers of the times, submitting, for what he calls the Fry period, the obsession of English playwrights for manner rather than matter, for the way in which themes were stated, rather than the themes themselves. All that is past, it seems. We are now in the period of *Cards of Identity* and *Look Back in Anger*, in both of which highly successful productions at the Royal Court Theatre, a genuine ferocity is apparent. Pocock welcomes this, though he makes several acute reservations about the importance of Lucky Jim, Kingsley Amis's hero, who has been adopted, Pocock feels on insufficient grounds, as the archetype of the fifties. He was at his most interesting on the visit to London of the late Berthold Brecht's Berliner Ensemble.

He examined the *alienation-technique* of this playwright, with its Marxist ground-base, and sought to discover how the technique and the area explored in these plays could be related to our own theatre. Little, he finds; our themes are unlikely to deal with man in his social aspect purely, but with the problems of power, love, and crises of individual action.

—B.E.G.M.

Fabian Frolics

BECAUSE the writings of many of the Fabians are so humourless, one comes to think of them as earnest, solemn inheritors of the dourer qualities of Nonconformism. But how different was the picture painted by Gertrude Hutchinson in her delightful BBC feature, *The Fabians and I*. As a perky child of 14 (engagingly impersonated by Denise Briar) Mrs Hutchinson went to work, first as messenger, then as office girl, for the Fabians. And she found them, if an odd lot, also kindly, considerate people who had not, at least at this stage, allowed humanitarian theory to swamp their awareness of individuals. Beatrice Webb insisting that Gertrude should continue to attend school, Sidney Webb consulting his watch in botheration like the White Rabbit, a Fabian escort of eight taking Gertrude to see her first ballet, Bernard Shaw casuistically defending his predictions on the Dempsey-Carpentier fight, H. G. Wells in a tantrum—these recollections, presented with clear-eyed affection, made the Fabians more likeable and human than they have ap-

peared before. Most memorable of all was the description of these political theorists around a piano roaring "T-T-T-Trotsky. . . When the m-moon shines on the K-Kremlin" to the tune of "K-K-K-Katy." Fabian frolics, indeed.

War in Song

IS there anything so nostalgic as a song which has been associated in our minds with a personal landmark or a decisive period in our lives? Even without the personal reference, the placing of songs in their historical context seems to bring out the human side of great events as nothing else can. Certainly the BBC programme *The Blue and the Gray* (ZB Sunday Showcase), which recreated the American War between the States through its songs, illuminated all the tragedy, waste, and pathos of this bloody war, with striking poignancy. Even the most sentimental of the songs—"Just before the battle, Mother," for instance—gained a new dignity from the setting of the war, while others of more delicate feeling, such as the haunting, "All Quiet on the Potomac," directly projected the tragedy of civil war. What a musical nation the Americans are! (This programme showed plainly their spontaneous love of song—something that current "pops" and Tin Pan Alley trash tends to disguise. And thanks to Charles Chilton's admirable script—firm in economy and evocative detail—these war-songs reflected the strange mixture of toughness and softness which seems an enduring American characteristic.

—J.C.R.

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Six of a Kind

THE launching this month of six different crime serials from the Commercial Stations illustrates both the popularity of the species and its variety. The Mickey Spillane breed of hard-boiled private dick is typified by Richard Diamond, played by Dick Powell, the American film star, in the dead-pan, wise-cracking style lampooned by Stan Freberg. In Greg Collins, the American has been crossed with the English strain of Paul Temple and Steve. Greg and Gail Collins take their crime with a little comedy and romance, and in their travels from Mexico to Italy they meet plenty of unusual situations. All the American sleuths move fast, taking a new crime each week.

The British like a more leisurely way of life, plenty of action on a long-term plan. "Simon Mystery" is the unconventional British Security agent, whose latest adventures deal with crime on a large scale—the English criminal empire organised by the wearers of "The White Cross," and "The Saboteurs," who operate in Paris, London and New York. Guy Doleman, now appearing as Major William Evans, is also a Security officer, who, with Howard Craven as John Stuart, wages a secret war on a power-mad dictator who is trying to control the world by directing tempests to the major cities.

The amateur variety has more charm and savoir-faire, and much more time for the ladies. The Hon. Anthony Halliday goes to Paris to find Raoul Davigny, and becomes involved with the French underworld and the beautiful Danielle Claudet. His blithe contempt for danger guides him through a maze of sinis-



KEITH EDEN

Alias Greg Collins, alias Simon Mystery

ter intrigues. Another of that ilk is Simon Crawley, played by George Edwards. This young man arrives in Sydney with little except unlimited self-confidence and amazing sales talk. A series of burglaries and murders distract him from his career as a writer, but he eventually solves the mystery and reveals the arch-criminal. A complete novice in crime, Simon does make mistakes, but they are all part of the fun of the game of detection.

Richard Diamond is being heard from 22A on Tuesdays at 8.0 p.m., and from the ZBs and 1XH on Wednesdays at 9.0 p.m. No Holiday for Halliday is played on the ZBs at 8.0 p.m. on Mondays. The other serials are played at 10.30: *It's a Crime*, *Mr Collins* is from all ZBs on Monday, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays 12B plays *Simon Mystery* in "The White Cross," 22B plays *Simon Mystery* in "The Saboteurs," 32B has *Tempest*, and 42B plays *The Amazing Simon Crawley*.

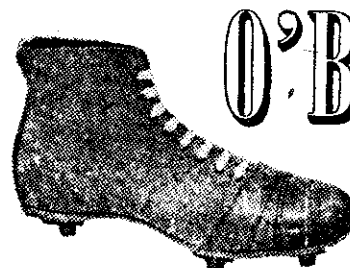
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