

him, accuses him of betraying the Volscian interests and, with the assistance of conspirators, slays Coriolanus in a public place.

The famous guest producer of this BBC version of *Coriolanus* is Sir Lewis Casson, and his equally famous wife, Dame Sybil Thorndike, plays the part of Volumnia, the hero's mother. *Coriolanus* is played by Bruce Belfrage. The production is in two parts, lasting in all for two and a-half hours, and will be first broadcast from 3YA at 7.25 p.m. on Wednesday, January 18.

Oliver Goldsmith was that curious phenomenon, an Irishman who could not hold his own in conversation. Garrick said that he wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll. Walpole described him as an inspired idiot. Boswell seldom missed an opportunity of ridiculing him in his *Life*, while Johnson declared that "no man was ever so foolish when he had not a pen in his hand or more wise when he had." Yet from behind the facade of inspired blundering that was his outward life he produced some enduring works of art. *She Stoops to Conquer* is the second play by the man best known for his poem *The Deserted Village*, and is one of the most popular comedies in English.

Why? It is not particularly witty, but Goldsmith's humour has a kind of coltish, kick-heels exuberance that often approaches farce, but never becomes so. And out of his dialogue spring those magnificent comic characters—the testy, crotchety Mr. Hardcastle, who loves "everything that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine"; his fat, foolish, simpering wife; Marlow, "one of the most bashful and reserved young characters in the world" (except with barmaids and servant girls) whose tongue can raise the roof of a tavern but cleaves to his own in a boudoir; and above all Tony Lumpkin, the doltish country bumpkin whose very words reek with the fumes of the ale-house and the horse-pond. Lumpkin is Mrs. Hardcastle's son by a former marriage. A frequenter of the Three Jolly Pigeons, he is idle and ignorant but cunning and mischievous, and is doted on by his mother.

The play was first produced at Drury Lane in 1773. This BBC production of it lasts for two hours, and will be broadcast first from 2YA at 8.0 p.m. on Thursday, January 19. Tony Lumpkin is played by Reginald Beckwith, Mrs. Hardcastle by the late Dame Irene Vanbrugh (who died last month), Mr. Hardcastle by Frederick Lloyd, Marlow by Hubert Gregg, and Kate Hardcastle by Margaretta Scott.

Young Marlow's father, Sir Charles Marlow, has proposed a match between his son and Miss Hardcastle, and the young man and his friend Hastings travel down to pay the Hardcastles a visit. Losing their way they arrive at night at the Three Jolly Pigeons, where Tony Lumpkin directs them to a neighbouring inn, which is in reality the Hardcastles' house. The fun of the play arises largely from the resulting misunderstanding, Marlow treating Hardcastle as the landlord of the supposed inn, and making violent love to Miss Hardcastle, whom he takes for one of the servants. This contrasts with his bashful attitude when presented to her in her real character. The arrival of Sir Charles clears

up the misconception and all ends well, including a subsidiary love-affair between Hastings and Miss Hardcastle's cousin Miss Neville, whom Mrs. Hardcastle has destined for the irrepressible Tony.

John Gielgud and Gladys Young take the principal roles in *The Family Reunion*, T. S. Eliot's haunting, compelling story, written in verse, of the Piper family and the conflict between their austere, autocratic mother and the eldest son, Harry, who believes himself accursed. It will be broadcast first from 1YA at 8.0 p.m. on Friday, January 20, and lasts for two hours.

T. S. Eliot was born in St. Louis in 1888, but became a British subject in 1927, because of his interest in the English Church and state. His most famous poem is *The Waste Land*, a work whose theme is the sterility and chaos of the contemporary world. A later poem, *Ash Wednesday*, made clear his allegiance to the Church of England. This was followed by *The Rock*, a pageant representing the past and present difficulties of the Church and its ultimate triumph, and *Murder in the Cathedral*, a latter-day morality play (about the assassination of Thomas à Becket) which clearly affirms the value of the Church as a medium for social action.

The Family Reunion was first produced in 1939. Harry, Lord Monchensey, returns to his English country home, Wishwood, after eight years abroad, following the death of his young wife. The occasion is the birthday of his mother, Amy, the imperious matriarch of a family which also includes his sisters, Ivy, Violet and Agatha, her brothers-in-law, Gerald and Charles Piper, and the penniless cousin, Mary. Harry does not conceal his contempt for the others and shows his neurotic, guilt-ridden condition by a blurted confession that he murdered his wife. He has returned in search of inner peace,

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L O N D O N
Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623

This is the title page of the first folio edition of Shakespeare, dated 1623, in which "Antony and Cleopatra" and "Coriolanus" were first printed. The photograph was taken from a facsimile copy in the possession of the Turnbull Library

but the avenging spirits (Eumenides) now become visible even to Agatha and Mary, although not to the others.

Anxious for her son's sanity, Amy summons Dr. Warburton, and the doctor warns Harry that any sudden emotion may kill his mother. Harry and Agatha have a talk and he discovers the basis of their sympathy when she reveals that his father had loved her, not Amy, who

had used him merely to have the children and home she desired. The father's frustrated desire to murder his wife seems to have been inherited from the son, whose sense of guilt is part of the fated atonement. Harry departs to complete his "pilgrimage of expiation," and the shock kills Amy, after which the family unity that she has sustained is destroyed.