

didn't sprout wings and fly back into the pages of the crumby magazine from which they escaped.

—J.C.R.

Those Pioneers Again

ONE MAN'S KINGDOM, Ruth Park's historical romance, was an ambitious attempt to give us something of the rude rough drama of the pioneers in one hour. It was pretty much the mixture as before—fine dogged types in the usual setting of hard work, romance, solitary and difficult childbirth, two deaths and a flood. Through it all they remained fine and dogged. The literary exemplar of this play was, I suspected, *Gone With the Wind*; and whether this can be regarded as a worthy model, depends, of course, on one's assessment of the merits of that work. The production of *One Man's Kingdom* fell short of the high standard I have come to expect of NZBS plays, the script being broken in too many places by bursts of music, sighing of wind and other background noises. The beautiful words and thoughts uttered by the narrator ("So the children slept on the breast of New Zealand close to her volcanic heart," meaning "They lived in the King Country"), did little to soothe my mood of critical distaste for what seemed to me the vulgarity and the sentimentality of this production. I regretted its appearance as a play, as a tribute to the pioneers, but perhaps most of all, as chosen entertainment for 4YC listeners.

—Loquax

Butler v. Homer

WHETHER Homer or an unknown woman wrote the *Odyssey* seems in many ways an academic problem, but in Samuel Butler's hand it became a living question involving interesting literary values. I realise after listening to 3YC's Centennial Memorial session on Butler that I have missed something by reading the *Odyssey* several times and the *Iliad* not at all. Mr. Brasington opened the way with a little light skirmishing, appropriately recalling Butler's belief that "dead men meet on the lips of living men." The big guns of scholarship were manned by Professor Pocock and it was at this point I found myself in difficulties from which only television and a projected map of Greece could deliver me. I got the drift but not the content of the argument, filled as it necessarily is with place-names. A light touch came in when Professor Pocock described Ulysses as returning to Nausicaa's house "wearing some of the family washing." And I did like the inadvertent humour of Mr. Brasington's downright assertion that "anyone can do it," i.e., read a translation of the *Odyssey*. It seemed a pity that Butler's Hangelian music could not have been wedged between two fairly heavily packed talks. But to say more of such a thorough and illuminating session would be niggling.

Onward, and Upward

THE Harmonic Society's concert from 3YC provided a pleasant hour's listening. The highlight was, of course, *Then Lugheth the Year*, composed and conducted by John Ritchie. To the strictly lay ear it was a vivacious and well-varied Cantata, not tiring the listener

by resting too long in one mood. The advent of the New Zealand composer John Ritchie, marked by this Cantata and the music for the Centennial ode, is something else to take delight in. Bewail as we may the cultural desert these islands seem at times to be, I would not be surprised if a Gallup poll showed us as more interested in culture than the Old World. We have almost a horde of poets, many drama societies full of healthy vigour, innumerable choirs, and now it seems a possibility of unexpected talent emerging in the musical world. Perhaps in time we might even whittle down the vast bulk of fifth-rate things our small country also seems to have time for.

—Westcliff

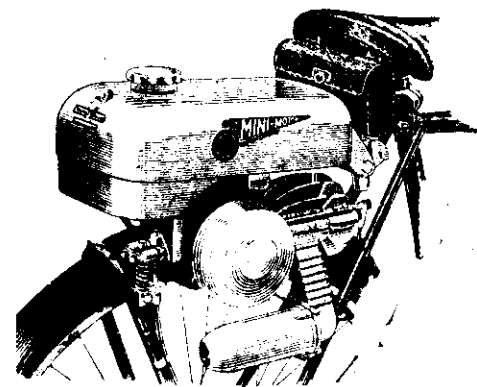
Flowers of Speech

I FEEL the ZBs would have made a better job of the programme I heard from 2YC recently, *The New Zealander as Orator*, which halfway through seemed to me to fall a victim to its own thesis that "a country gets the arts it deserves." Having decided that (a) New Zealanders interpret "the good life" in material rather than cultural terms, and (b) that the two-party system of government is not conducive to oratory since neither party is open to conviction, the writer was content with only two post-Seddon examples—a moving but not outstanding memorial speech of Sir James Carroll in 1926, and the exordium from one of Sir Carl Berendsen's UN speeches. What this half of the programme needed, I decided, was a live wire with a tape-recorder picking up the flowers of rhetoric so prodigally flung on street-corners, in the law-courts, at revival meetings, anywhere, in fact, where the converted still bear in mind the orator's main purpose, to convince. (I realise, of course, that the listening public might have been petrified at seeing the Medusa-head of controversy so boldly raised.) The first half of the programme was, however, exciting, and the reconstructed examples of old colonial eloquence were all the more convincing to Wellington listeners delivered as they were by Aucklanders Anonymously.

The Heart Bowed Down

NOW that the leviathans of *World Theatre* have left our welcoming shores their berths have been re-occupied by the usual collection of, battered and invincibly romantic coasters, returning after a leisurely voyage round other New Zealand stations. Victor Andrews's *Pheasants For Four* was a typical example. Based on the fallacy that the drama-starved New Zealand listener is ready at all seasons of the year to swallow White Christmases and spectres as wedded to time as the nine o'clock pips, the play can scarcely have evoked, even at first hearing, that sense of personal involvement which is essential to dramatic appreciation. A BBC translation of Georges Blanc's *Classified Ads*, on Monday, seemed to me a happier augury for the listening week, and I plunged into it eagerly, only to find that Part I. of the piece had been broadcast four weeks previously. I blush now to think how I carped at the intrusion of the *Nine O'clock News* into the first *World Theatre* series or as much as mentioned that *Othello* came to us in nightly parts.

—M.B.



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