

many more Katherine Mansfield programmes of the calibre of 2YC's *Three Women*, which proved conclusively that translation to radio terms need not imply reduction. The studies were, of course, well chosen for radio, the gossamer eschewed in favour of good solid human emotion. The first two studies (*Mrs. Parker* and *The Lady's Maid*) were interpreted so sensitively that their freight of human suffering was delivered intact to the listener, though Maureen Ross-Smith had a slightly easier task than Peggy Walker, whose *Mrs. Parker* was so loaded by her creator with the materials of sorrow that it was a considerable feat to keep it from trembling into bathos. The last study (the more robust *Miss Moss*) was wisely given dramatic form instead of being played as a monologue, which made for a balanced programme, and the contrast of voices plus Sinclair Ronald's own virtuosity brought home Miss Moss's tragedy with terrific impact. Nothing like radio for making one realise that there's so much life in our literary figures!

—M.B.

Absent-minded Saint

HAVING enjoyed many brief trots with the cultured mind of Patrick Campbell, I did not expect that his BBC play, *The Saint of Virette* would prove to be over-pietistic or solemn. And I was right. Although it was adapted from someone else's story this gently comic tale of an absent-minded curé, unofficially canonised by his fellow-villagers after his death, was full of the characteristic wry fun and bland acceptance of human frailties of the lantern-jawed (if we are to believe Mr. Ronald Searle) writer. The holy priest, occupied with Bach on his celestial organ, interpreted the petitions of his former parishioners either over-enthusiastically or misguidedly, creating a situation which could be solved only by the tact of his successor. Very much of Brittany, this story, with all the marks of a sophisticated treatment of a real Breton legend, was most delightful listening for a languid Sunday afternoon. But why, in this case, did the BBC depart from its practice of giving us the names of the players? Or was it a cut in 1YA's studios to catch a dropped minute or two?

Incredible Castaways

TAKE it that *The Swiss Family Robinson* is still read (although it's years since I saw a copy), as someone makes another film from it every so often. But I've often wondered how modern youngsters would react to the unctuous Robinson Senior (surely the original Mr. Know-all), the incredible number of devices the wreck yielded, the extraordinary flora and fauna of the island, and the rest of the improbabilities of Wyss's tale. The BBC version which 1ZB have

been giving us found a brilliant way out of the difficulty—by simply refusing to take the book seriously. The tart narrator made capital fun out of the implausibilities, punctured Father's pomposity and interrupted his lectures, yet succeeded in making the priggish clan by no means unattractive. This effect was also partly due to Eric Portman, having a royal time as Robinson père, and the solemn recitation of the stilted dialogue by the children. The adult point of view made the serial perhaps a little too "clever" for the average child. In fact my dear children this specimen belongs to an indeterminate species hitherto unclassified although I have myself made quite a close study of its habits.

Putting in the Plug

TUNING to 1ZB, I landed recently in the middle of a programme of popular music which I took for granted consisted of overseas recordings. At the end of the session, I was surprised and pleased to find that it had been made up entirely of New Zealand recordings. Since then, I have heard several programmes of New Zealand recordings from the same station—the Duplicates the versatile Knaves, Nancy Harrie Mavis Rivers, and the rest of that quite outstandingly gifted group of popular singers and players that Auckland has produced. I cannot claim to be expert in such things, but to my no means unblunted ear, these records appear to be at least as good as the average imported item; they show a strong sense of rhythm, polish in presentation and an absence of raucousness. These artists whose work from 1YA has made them widely known, deserve the plugging they now receive from other stations. I don't think it is parochialism that makes me find them more acceptable than most performers of their kind.

—J.C.R.

Vigorous History

THE HERITAGE OF BRITAIN, 4YA's new series, promises to be one of those the BBC does so superlatively well. The first episode dealt with the different groups that have gone to make up the British race, and while not adding appreciably to anyone's knowledge of that subject, presented familiar information with such vigour and originality of approach as to make an interesting programme. The illustrations used were excellent, a brief extract chanted from the work of Caedmon being perhaps the most interesting since the rarest. If this programme had a lack it was in historical perspective, a thing difficult to achieve in radio, since the voices of our distant forbears must come through to us in the comprehensible speech of our contemporaries, and if they follow one another too closely, the elapsing centuries are telescoped. However, I liked this programme, and the intelligent use of a Polish immigrant as narrator, linked the past with the future vividly and without over-emphasis.

—Loquax

Conway Stewart

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