

of the week I heard another short story. This time by Martin Armstrong. This brings me to a reflection on the special advantages of the short story. Where a poor serial lasts until its exasperated but hypnotised listeners plead through the correspondence columns of *The Listener* for it to end, the poor short story is over and done with in a few minutes, and when a lot of short stories are being broadcast it is hard to imagine them reaching the consistently poor level of certain current serials.

—Westcliff

1215 and All That

I'M afraid that Keith Sinclair's two talks from 2YC on *The Middle Ages* are aimed at subverting—by a process somewhat the opposite of muckraking and yet not quite the same as white-washing—all those good safe accepted notions of history imbibed from 1066 *And All That*. Mr Sinclair's method seems to be to sow little tares of doubt in areas of the mind which we once thought safely sown once and for all with the buffalo grass of schoolday history. He suggests, for example that King John might be interpreted

as anti-privilege rather than anti-liberty and thus, by modern standards, a Good Thing; that the mediaeval schoolman who strove to know all about eternity has more to his intellectual credit than the modern scientist who actually does know all about electricity; that spiritual values pursued by the few may be as beneficial to the community as material standards pursued by the many. It is not Mr. Sinclair's deliberate policy, I gather, to make us feel that all these centuries we've been getting nowhere fast, but his are terribly ventilated radio talks that leave you with mind wide open and definitely feeling the draught.

Strong Meat

GATHERING STORM, by Reyner Barton, was a good solid meaty play interpreted by a thoroughly adequate cast, and so full of thunderous human emotion that it scarcely seemed to need the extra rumblings of sound effects. A résumé of the plot would sound dismayingly Starkadder—the old old story of a man's savage hunger for the land and for a girl incapable of sharing it, the aged scripture-quoting grandmother and the half-witted younger brother. But convincing, powerful, and, in spite of its determined rurality, very close to the listener. And particularly memorable for the superb playing of Frankie by John Schlesinger, who succeeded in the very difficult task of conveying Frankie's loveliness enhanced rather than tainted by his subnormality.

—M.B.

Praise in Three Voices

"COLETTE: a feature on France's greatest woman writer, prepared by the French Broadcasting System in

Paris." proved to be one of the most successful literary talks I have heard from 4YC. Designed, as are, I suppose, all literary talks, to appeal to the widest possible audience, the feature on Colette differed from others of its kind by its ingenious and highly successful construction. It consisted of a swift dialogue for three voices, one eulogistic one judicial and the third patiently enquiring for information. This was an ideal method for conveying background and the resultant picture of Colette and her work was satisfyingly complete, with, in addition, critical opinion for the connoisseur and facts for the uninitiated. And perhaps quite as praiseworthy was the playing-down of the drama of Colette's own life—literary prisoner music-hall artist and great writer—which in different hands might have become horrifyingly soap-operatic.

The Digest Touch

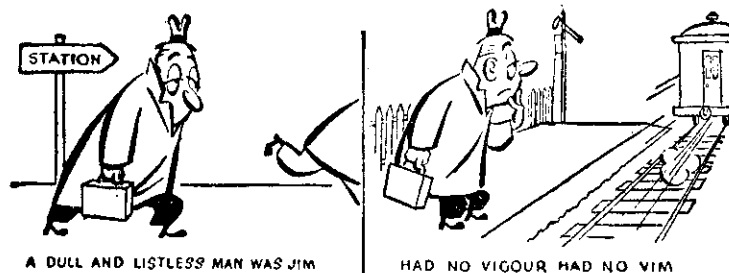
THE anniversary of Schubert's birth was marked by a special programme lasting an hour and a half from 4YC. This consisted of the A Minor sonata, a pleasant enough sonatina, the Tragic Symphony, and seven selections (apparently random) from *The Winter's Journey*, including

such well-known songs as "The Linden Tree" and "The Sign-Post." *The Winter's Journey*, in its entirety is, from local stations, one of Schubert's rarer works, and its performance might have given the anniversary programme some distinction. As it stood this "special" programme, in its lack of cohesion and its digest touch, barely measured up to the normally high standard of 4YC's ordinary programmes.

—Loquax

Portrait of a Flyer

THE central figure in the BBC's *Trans-Atlantic Pilot*, an hour-long programme to be broadcast by 2YA at 9.30 p.m. on Sunday, February 24, is George Campbell, a Canadian Scot and one of the youngest airline pilots on the Trans-Atlantic route. This is a professional portrait and is based largely on actual conversations with him recorded in the cabin of a Trans-Canada North Star Skyliner flying two miles above sea level. To collect the material, Archie Lee, the producer, and Chris Angell, the recording engineer who went with him, unshipped the recording gear from their car and plugged it into the plane's radio system. Thereafter when the crew spoke among themselves, called up control stations on the ground, or picked up the navigational beacon marks, they were able to capture on discs what was said. On and off the plane Lee and Angell worked with Captain Campbell and the crew, and they built this programme on the recordings made during that time. The result is an intimate, living portrait of a representative of the type whose calling demands exceptional qualities professional and personal; a man who in the course of one week may have to make himself at home in the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Western Europe.

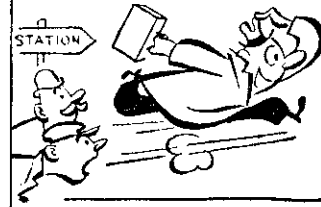


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