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said Mrs. Dorothy M



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HOUSEHOLD DETERGENT

<p>'MY SILKS' AND LINGERIE RINSE BRIGHT AS NEW, CRISP AND CLEAN, WITHOUT RUBBING OR TWISTING, SAYS BARBARA B.</p> 	<p>'BLISS WASHES WOOLLIES SOFTER, FLUFFIER THAN NEW, SAYS ELIZABETH</p> 	<p>'I FIND BLISS WIZARD AS A CARPET SHAMPOO; I USE IT TOO, FOR CUSHIONS, CURTAINS AND GREASE SPOTS ON CLOTHES, SAYS M.D. OF BROOKLYN</p> 
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## RADIO REVIEW

# Element of Surprise

**STRANGER THAN FICTION** is a new programme from the ZBs, but a close follower in the footsteps of *Famous Frauds*, *Surprise Endings*, *Believe It Or Not* and those other attempts to wear away by constant dripping that capacity for surprise which a pre-radio, pre-digest generation was permitted to indulge in peace through the pages of fiction. But our generation, brought up on Ripley and that feature programme which is, we are assured, a product of careful research, would be surprised indeed if life did not exhibit the startling qualities of old-time fiction. This explains, perhaps, our modern tendency to exclude the element of surprise from our stories and novels, to eschew denouement, and to laud those writers whose work reflects most nearly the sort of thing we thought life was before we knew how much stranger it is than fiction.

## Of Famous Women

[T was Compton Mackenzie, wasn't it, who in that excellent series *The Half Century* dwelt with such communicated joy on the first 14 years of it? He deals with much the same period in his talk on Ellen Terry in the series *As I Knew Her*, and even more lovingly, warming to his subject in a way that makes the past seem very near and human emotion very durable. Listening to him I was conscious that a gossip talk (given by the right person) has a direct appeal which a fussier, more elaborate presentation so often misses, that a tribute implicit in the reminiscences of a contemporary is far more convincing than the best-produced end-product of a script-writer's conscientious pen. I hope the fact that the three talks on famous women, *As I Knew Her*, are being broadcast in the Women's Session in the mornings, and the parallel series *As I Knew Him* in the evenings has no connection with the traditional New Zealand custom of segregation—for neither Ellen Terry nor Marie Lloyd (nor for

that matter Virginia Woolf) would feel happy about an audience composed almost entirely of females.

—M.B.

## Poets Confer

[MAGINATION, experience and ability combined to make a discussion on the reading of poetry by Charles Brasch, Basil Dowling and J. K. Baxter a memorable programme. It was, I felt, a masterpiece of planning. F. H. Rogers's intelligent reading of Stephen Spender's remarks, which apparently inspired the programme, led to a discussion by the poets on the place of "interpretation" in the reading of poetry. Interpolated recorded poems illustrated the various points raised. The programme, which was in two parts, flowed smoothly, and was of sufficient length to cover its subject adequately, while the illustrative poems provided moments of unforgettable beauty.

## Unsentimental Biography

*DIVA, DIVA, 4YA's* new series on the lives of early English opera singers, gives us something rare in radio biography—stories which spring from the head, not the heart, in place of the more common heart-rending stuff which sobs are made of. Sparkling, witty and quite cynical, these programmes are totally unsentimental. Such treatment of human tragedy and comedy has its disadvantages, however, and I felt a sneaking pity for "Poor Robinson," the series' first victim, resurrected from the oblivion of centuries to make a butt for lively wit. And yet how consummately well it was done! Richard White has a quick eye for comedy and a sure touch, and the ideal manner for putting it over the air.

—Loquax

## Theme and Variations

THE idea of broadcasting a bracket of songs on similar themes promises to lead into all kinds of fascinating highways and byways of popular singing. The first I listened to some time ago, *Variations on Two Themes*, dealt with "Irene" and "The Thing," and those songs which were provoked by the monotonous repetition of the first and the mysteriousness of the second. More recently 3YA simply listed a small session *Shoe Shine*, a good provocative title which whetted my curiosity. It turned out to be a session of four bright and breezy songs dealing with footwear; "Put Your Shoes on Lucy,"

## I KNOW WHAT I THINK . . .

### AUNT JENNY'S AGE

ARE Aunt Jenny's real life stories fiction or fact? Is it always necessary for them to end up with the "and they lived happily ever afterwards" theme? They are typical stories for the non-imaginative human being who likes an ordinary cup of tea. Two guesses, and you know what is coming in the next instalment. Even the baby goes to sleep in the middle of them. Couldn't we have one where he or she does the opposite to what we expect them to do?

In real life every other person has a headache or a tragedy, but none of them is ever worked out according to any of Aunt Jenny's theories. Even the octopus has a life story, but turn him inside out and he hasn't a hope of getting out of his dilemma. What a change to listen to something like that! Actually we are living in the atomic age, not Aunt Jenny's age.

—H. Murray

(Readers are invited to submit comments, not more than 200 words in length, on radio programmes. A fee of one guinea will be paid after publication. Only one paragraph can be used each week. Contributions should be headed "Radio Review." Unsuccessful entries cannot be returned.)