

known fact that medical memoirs sell like hot cakes, whereas it takes a Benvenuto Cellini to sell reminiscences of the finer arts.

—M.B.

Poets for Kings

PROFESSOR GREIG'S *Poets Laureate*, now being heard from 3YC, explores the highways and byways of literature, thus bringing to the ordinary listener fresh, interesting and amusing material. The figure of Skelton, for example, becomes something more than a ghostly name, and excites more than passing interest. The forgotten satires of Byron or the liveliness of Southey's humorous verse made me see these poets much as one sees the contemporary "Whim Wham." The poems were well read, too, and the choice of a deep-voiced, short-winded gentleman to read some of the more pompous tributes to dead kings or to speak for the aged Johnson was a dramatic touch scarcely to be rivalled. One thing comes as a surprise—the comparative freedom, or courage, of other days. Or was it that the Crown and private persons then possessed such a sense of security that they felt no need to quieten by law the mocking railery of satirists? Like Sir Walter Scott, I very much like "Song for St. Cecilia's Day," but it is a poem which needs to be beaten out as though by cymbals. Only then is the curtain rent and the inspired prospect revealed.

Mastering the Earth

THAT the contrast should have been between a tractor and "the man with the hoe" rather than the "man with the shovel" or "spade" surprised me very much in the only 3YC talk on *Man and the Soil* that I have been able to listen to. Literally, then, the tool whose potentialities for controlling a large area I have only just discovered has been the one most used down the ages? Professor Blackman made an interesting reference to the reclamation of "dust bowls," confirming an earlier article attacking *Road to Survival*. My knowledge of Inca, Mayan and Aztec civilisations is very sketchy, nevertheless, I was surprised that when the Professor dealt with the Inca practice of burning wood on the land for manure he did not cite the theory advanced to account for the rapid decline of one of these civilisations; namely, that it burnt its way around America and declined suddenly when it had thus exhausted the accessible arable land. At the very end of his talk, and dealing with the possibilities of opening up land with the tractor, Professor Blackman said it was a

question of "how far you can go in pushing nature in the face," a phrase that is extremely unfitting, and which we can only hope does not really lie behind our modern attempt to master the earth.

—Westcliff

Portrait of a Jurist

PORTRAIT of Sir Edward Coke, a BBC feature by H. A. L. Craig, proved to be a well-constructed impression of the great English jurist, rather than a biography. We were cleverly introduced to Coke by his wife, the chief witness and a hostile one; but as the programme proceeded we were given a very different picture of the man, which stood out vividly against the background of domestic disharmony. The language of this feature was less successful, I felt. The use of verse by a master is a pleasure; but in the hands of anyone less gifted, every limp, every strained-for rhyme becomes so glaringly obvious that one's mind receives a jolt for many lines.

Newspapermen

STATION 4YA has been out after local colour again, and this time the catch proves to be a lively bunch of newspapermen, a nice chummy band of boys—all assiduous in the use of Christian names (those interested in the present controversy, please note), energetic, honest, intent only on absolutely true and unbiassed presentation of the news. Since our minds have been so influenced by the wise-cracking reporter, hat turned up in front, complete with blonde loves and bottles of Bourbon, and all the other trimmings that Hollywood and overseas fiction give the journalist-cynic, this new picture commanded only reluctant belief. Another romantic stereotype gone, but it took an interesting and amusing programme to do the shattering.

—Loquax

More Music of the People

MUSIC OF THE PEOPLE, a new series of a BBC programme of traditional music which was very popular after the war, will start the rounds of National stations with playings from several stations next week. This series contains some of the most popular and characteristic melodies of countries in every part of the world—tunes that have been played and sung for generations past. Gilbert Vintner, who was responsible for both the present and the earlier series, lavished study and research upon them, and members of the BBC's foreign services helped him with their knowledge of the music of their homelands. In his arrangements, however, Mr. Vintner has aimed at the "feel" of these traditional and well-loved melodies rather than attempting to "dress" them in the style of the countries concerned. The first broadcasts of *Music of the People* will be from 2YA on June 15, 4YZ on June 17, and 4YA on June 21. New programmes in other BBC musical series, *BBC Concert Hall* and *Time for Music*, will also be heard from National stations during the next few months.

SONG COMPETITION

It was announced several months ago from London that the New Zealand Music Society was offering a prize of 10 guineas for a song or song cycle. The closing date for the competition was March 31, but this has now been extended. Entries should reach the Hon. Secretary, New Zealand Music Society, 415 Strand, London, W.C.2, not later than June 30.



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