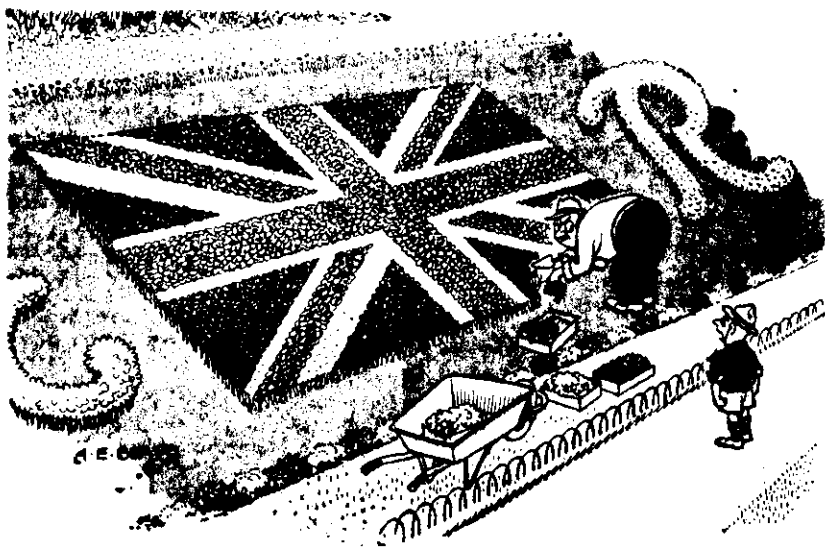




"You realise it's upside down?"

(C) Punch

neglected to read the newspapers and found himself in Germany on the eve of the 1914-18 war, whence he had gone in a largely forlorn effort to concentrate on Aristotle, Hobbes and Maine. The academic turn of phrase and the classical allusion certainly have an odd ring when set alongside, say, Mr. Burdon's fervent desire not to turn a wayside station into a second Thermopylae, while all that he had garnered from Hobbes, namely, that man's life is "nasty, brutish and short," underlined the absurd.

—Westcliff

Magic Casements

THE programme *Poet and Child* (a young girl's discovery of the works of Walter de la Mare) had a sort of magic: in fact, I don't think I have ever come so near to being transported by a radio programme. The child was Dorothy Baker, who wrote the programme, and who managed to let us hear the poetry of de la Mare with the heightened sensitivity of adolescence, as though we were hearing it for the first time. (To be quite frank, in the early part of the programme I was, but even when we came to the familiar de la Mare of the anthologies, horns of elfland blew and magic casements opened.) The child was played by Marjorie Westbury, though till programme's end I was convinced it was Pamela Brown—there was the same suggestion of breathless wonder that Pamela Brown brought to her playing of Jennet Jourdemaine.

The Long Voyage

JAN SERRAILLIER'S *Ballad of Kon-Tiki* is a welcome indication that as long as there are heroes we'll produce poets to celebrate them. This was a fine, stirring piece of work, recreating the exuberance of the voyage and of the six who made it, blessed with sinewy imagery and a strong vein of humour, as in the delightful patter song of the Peruvian Minister of Marine (with its refrain about Signing on the Dotted Line). My only criticism is in the deference accorded the god Kon-Tiki, the weight given his repeated pronouncement that he has guided the Kon-Tiki as he guided the islanders' forefathers

from Peru to Polynesia 15 centuries ago. After all, this was originally a schools broadcast—and are we being quite fair to Dr. Roger Duff and his boys of old West-East brigade? But then one can scarcely expect a balladeer to be sternly non-partisan.

—M.B.

The Hangman's Rope

LISTENING to the NZBS production of Eden Philpotts's *The Gentle Hangman* makes one wonder what sort of audience could enjoy such a play. It had no subtlety of insight into character; it was not noticeably well written; the theme was hackneyed, and too much inessential dialogue destroyed any saving grace of suspense the bare idea of the plot may have appeared to have. Nellie, the belle of the village, courted by two men, marries one who is "framed" by the other, and it is the eve of the execution. With consummate daring, Nellie steals the hangman's rope, the villain confesses, Nellie's husband is given a golden guinea by the hangman, says "God bless 'ee, zur," or some bucolic equivalent, and they all live happily ever after, even the hangman who departs to hang a wife-murderer the next day. Since Eden Philpotts is presumably still in copyright, this must have been an expensive play to produce, and the production was carefully done. Because of the quality of the play, however, both time and money were wasted.

For Younger Children

THE newest, and perhaps most attractive, request session from local stations is the 4YA Children's Request Session, which proved to be a succession of nursery rhymes—a whole session of them, to the delight of the smaller children who have been rather overlooked in the recently changed and improved children's sessions. Names were mentioned, and the occasional friendly comments, and the repetition of very short requests gave this session a pleasantly informal atmosphere. It will be interesting to see how it develops. If the present standards are maintained, the session on Tuesday evenings should prove one of the most popular.

—Loquax

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