



WOMAN, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they'll be. This does not seem true of the B.B.C."

It certainly does not seem true if we are to judge by the effect of a steady campaign in certain quarters of the Press to belittle the work of the British Broadcasting Corporation ever since it was changed from a company into a corporation. I read in some organ the other day that the programmes of the B.B.C. had never been as bad as they had been lately, which seems a most perverse reply to the consistent beating the programmes have been getting from their critics.

If a prominent member of the staff leaves because he has been offered a larger salary elsewhere, his resignation is accorded as much publicity as might be the abdication of a monarch. If a new transmitting station is opened and obliterates the ambiguous reception of Budapest in a Notting-hill drawing-room, the complaint of the injured owner of some obsolete receiving-set is given as much space as though the new transmitting station at Brookman's Park had blown him and his whole family across the road into the drawing-room opposite.

Stately Amenities of the B.B.C.

Influence of the Dinner Jacket on Broadcasting

(By COMPTON MACKENZIE, in the "Morning Post.")

LIFE must be one dam' thing after another at Savoy Hill, to judge by the number of interviews that the officials there seem to spend their time in granting to representatives of the Press. who, it may be added, never seem to derive the slightest satisfaction from these interviews, being evidently always thwarted by the urbane discretion of the interviewed.

The sad thing about this irrational and promiscuous criticism is that it tends to make it impossible for anybody to criticise the B.B.C. rationally and particularly. Once you get into people's heads that the B.B.C. is always wrong, you will find it difficult to get them to pay attention when it would serve a useful purpose to demonstrate that it very often is wrong.

I, for instance, might personally wish to suggest that the spirit of compromise which animates the pro-

grammes is not an entirely admirable spirit. But I should hesitate to do so, because I should feel I was attacking one of those particularly British traits which makes the B.B.C. the typically British affair it is.

Indeed, if I wished to go boggy-hunting I could draw a splendid boggy at once by putting forward the theory that the campaign against the B.B.C. was being worked in the interest of pan-Americanism, to whose ambitions the existence of the B.B.C. must present itself as a perpetual menace. Certain it is that the attempt to Americanise our culture will never succeed so long as the B.B.C. holds out against it.

IT may not be generally known that the announcers have to wear a dinner jacket and a black tie in the evening, and I think that it ought to be generally known, for if it were generally known it would have a reassuring effect on the listening public.

The Englishman who always dresses even when he is alone has had a great influence on the destiny of civilisation; and it seems pathetic that so many Englishmen who do dress for dinner should still be supposing that wireless is an amusement confined, so far as they are aware, to the servant's hall. It is really time these gentlemen woke up and realised that exactly the same convention which leads them to change for dinner every evening rules the life of an announcer of the B.B.C.

It must no longer be assumed by what, with a certain rashness, I will call the educated classes that radio is a new toy to amuse what, with a rashness equal to my own, they consider their inferiors.

It is going to be a difficult task when the present charter of the Corporation expires in a few years' time to keep it from becoming an unscrupulous weapon in the hands of those who have realised only too well its baser potentialities.

FOR some time now I have been sadly but surely driven into thinking that the University of Cambridge represents better my notion of what a University should be than my own University of Oxford. But the other day I heard a story that made me suppose Oxford has not changed so much as I was beginning to fear it had.

A prominent official of the B.B.C. recently visited his old college, and on being asked by one of the dons what he was doing now, replied that he was interested in wireless. "Oh!" was the comment, "next time you come up I suppose you'll be telling us that you have something to do with roller-skating."

This was reassuring. Oxford could not yet be quite such a Detroit of Europe as I had been supposing.

Still, while it is pleasant to reflect that the abolition of compulsory Greek, the disastrous effect of which on my

University I have the painful gratification of remembering that I prophesied as an undergraduate in my own magazine, did not succeed in dispelling the very last enchantment of the Middle Age, it is not so pleasant to find a habit of mind suitable enough for dons being maintained in the world of unenchanted existence.

I should like to suggest, if I may do so without impertinence in these true-blue columns, that the handling of the microphone by leaders of the Conservative Party during the last election campaign might have been less inefficient and less ineffective if they had given themselves the trouble to study its peculiar psychology.

MY own belief is that, within a comparatively short time, we shall be finding that, however mightier than the sword the pen may remain, the voice may prove mightier than either. At any rate that is a proposition which should be pondered by thinking men and women before they dismiss it without a moment's consideration as fantastic.

The B.B.C. is only a matrix as yet, but it is the matrix of what may be a wonderful gem. The cutter and the polisher must work upon it and give it the significant form it lacks at present. It has the power to be, as I think it was Mr. J. H. Squire who first observed, a real Ministry of the Fine Arts.

Will it become that? Or will it slowly degenerate into a mere hive of industrious bureaucrats trying to extract honey from artificial flowers? Either of these developments is possible in its present state.

The business of the educated public is to give it intelligent support, and most imperative of all it is the business of artists and scientists and men of affairs not to appear before the microphone like self-conscious grown-ups at a children's party.

Broadcasting in Europe

A Frequency Check

IN view of the increasing congestion of the European ether and the consequent necessity that transmitting stations should not depart from their allotted wave-lengths, it is essential that means should exist for their exact calibration. For some time past the German high-power transmitter at Koenigswusterhausen has broadcast at regular periods calibrated waves for the benefit of Europe in general, and of its own country in particular. At the beginning of each transmission a short tuning signal is sent out, and is followed by the call-sign in Morse. In the

ed by the call-sign in Morse. In the event of any unforeseen interruption taking place, in order that the time schedule should not be completely upset, the "missing" signals are specially broadcast at the end of the transmission and an announcement made to that effect. As these signals are accurately measured, the broadcasts are regularly used by both German telegraphy and telephony transmitters to check their wave-lengths, and should also prove of use to amateurs for the calibration of medium and long-wave wireless receivers.

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