

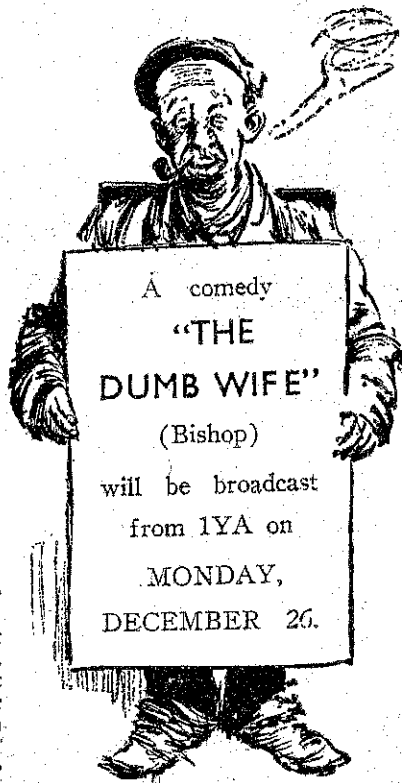
STATIC

by
"SPARK"

THE peep into the future from 2YA by Mr. F. O. Chichester, pioneer of posterity's busy aeroplane route from New Zealand to Japan, set everyone's imagination working at high speed. The day when five thousand-ton air argosies ply between England and New Zealand, leaving at noon and following the sun, arrive at noon, while luncheon proceeds uninterrupted, seems near at hand. The speaker thought that the motive power of the future giant planes would be the steam turbine, with its even and regular turning impetus. Steam generation would be by a heavy fraction oil, less inflammable than spirit, to avoid the danger of fire. With a turbine, no insignificant-looking piece of sparking plug wire would be present as a potential cause of accident, and it might be added that the disappearance of the sparking plug and its appurtenances would see the elimination of man-made static that might worry the wireless operator. Mr. Chichester foresaw the day when travel between two defined centres would be by huge bullets, ballistically propelled from a Big Bertha tube into a conical hole in the target, perhaps hundreds of miles away. The reception tube would be sealed at the bottom, and the compression of the air would bring the bullet to rest. The probable mechanical contrivance that would keep the projectile at rest and prevent its return was not described, although one might suppose that a device operated by a photo-electric cell would be employed. The human equation being faulty, perhaps another cell would be needed to see that the exit door was always closed when the bullet arrived, so that it couldn't be turned into shrapnel. Mr. Chichester does not think run-about planes will replace the motor-car for proceeding to business—especially in Wellington—for landing on the roof of the office would be hazardous when the usual freshening breezes were blowing, and more so should the staff be unpunctual. But why rely on the staff in an H. G. Wellsian era, when a mechanical octopus automatically operated might be devised to welcome the bird-man manager who should set an example by clocking-in first?

ON Christmas night the 1YA Chamber Orchestra is to play "A Children's Overture," by Roger Quilter. In spite of its name, this is a full-sized orchestral overture, although its themes are all favourite nursery rhymes. The music is throughout bright and joyful. It is as a song writer that Roger Quilter is best known, particularly by his melodious settings of many Shakespearean songs. He has more than once made it clear that he is no less a master of the craft when dealing with the orchestra. The same natural melodic quality can be heard throughout this light-hearted

overture as in Quilter's songs. The old nursery rhymes on which it is built are:—"Boys and Girls Come Out to Play," "Upon Paul's Steeple Stands a Tree," "Dame Get Up and Bake Your Pies," "I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing By," "Sing a Song of Sixpence," "There Was a Lady Loved a Swine," "Over the Hills and Far Away," "The Frog and the Crown," "A Frog He Would a-wooing Go," "Baa Baa Black Sheep," "Here We Go Round the Mul-



berry Bush," and "Oranges and Lemons." These simple melodies are known to everyone, and Quilter's orchestration will intrigue the musical fancy of all.

THOSE who accompanied Mr. J. E. Strachan on his recent radio journey through the southern counties of England will look forward with keen anticipation to his Christmas Night "travelogue" from 2YA. On this occasion I understand Mr. Strachan proposes to take full advantage of the license accorded radio travellers, and will transport his listeners to various spots of interest in the Old Land, entertaining them with song, story, and anecdote during the course of the tour. The programme is entitled "Christmas Time in Merry England," and will have a distinctly Yuletide flavour. However, it is realised that listeners will probably have had a surfeit of Christ-

mas music by the time Christmas Night has arrived, and so most of the musical numbers in the programme will be of general or topical interest, forming an appropriate accompaniment to the remarks of the "courier" in charge.

THE series of talks on "Famous British Trials" by Mr. C. A. L. Treadwell from 2YA came to a conclusion on Friday, and many will miss this racy feature of the weekly programmes. It would seem that Mr. Treadwell originally intended the Jack the Ripper case to be his climax—undoubtedly a fitting one—but many will agree that from commencement to conclusion of both series, Mr. Treadwell became progressively more vigorous and forceful, and that the trial of Dr. Pritchard was made the most absorbingly interesting. Dr. Pritchard, son of a captain in the Royal Navy, himself later became a naval surgeon. He married Mary Jane Taylor, daughter of a silk merchant, and lived apart a good deal from his wife, owing to his seafaring vocation. The doctor had no brilliant attainments and in fact possessed the warped imagination of a limited intellect, as exemplified by his vain boast of an apocryphal friendship with Garibaldi. After some years at sea, Pritchard practised on shore, and the death of a maid-servant in his household, by its suspicious features, prompted caustic comment in the Press. Had the true nature of the man been known at this period, his later crimes might have remained uncommitted.

DURING recurring attacks of illness of Mrs. Pritchard, which were contemporaneous with the doctor's purchase of poisons, other medical advice sought. This resulted in various diagnoses, possibly based upon suggestions made by Pritchard himself, but one medical friend suspected the presence of antimony. Subsequently Mrs. Taylor, mother of Mrs. Pritchard, came to attend the invalid, and although the mother was not the best of nurses, nor the most observant, her presence may have allayed some suspicion. Coincident with the frequent purchase of poison by the doctor, both women of the household had attacks of violent illness. Later Mrs. Taylor died, and her death was followed, shortly afterwards, by the daughter's death. Suspicious circumstances prevented the scrupulous attending doctor issuing a death certificate, and at the subsequent inquest an anonymous letter was received by the coroner in which the circumstances causing death were remarked as being at least suspicious.

DR. PRITCHARD was charged with murder, and was most ably defended. The doctor whose suspicions were aroused, but whose conception of the conventions of professional etiquette

disallowed him to make known his suspicions, was accused of malign motives in subsequently pronouncing his views, and public feeling was in favour of Pritchard. The doctor's ostensible regard and love for his wife, his outward show of affection, when he demanded the coffin to be opened so that he might kiss his wife a last farewell, pointed to a lack of murderous motive, which counsel made impressive. When, however, the analyst's discoveries were handed in, and the maid-servant admitted her relations with Pritchard, a changed attitude came over the people. While awaiting execution Pritchard confessed everything, but his overweening pride caused him to stipulate that his confession should not be published until after his burial. Dr. Pritchard's was the last public execution in Scotland, and a crowd of 100,000 persons were present to witness the departure of a conceited, hypocritical fiend.

MR. A. W. TUCKER'S very interesting description of Malta, and his excursion into its history and mystery (3YA), was one of the good things of the week. This rock islet which supports a population of nearly a quarter of a million, is one of the impregnable fortresses of the world. On it the prehistoric exists side by side with the latest devised by science. Although known to all travellers, it is explored by comparatively few. Many voyagers by the P. and O. steamers have the opportunity to give Valetta, the capital, a cursory glance, or perhaps run as far as the end of the island to see the walled cities of the ancients, the Phoenician remains of nearly four thousand years, and the still remaining objects of a prehistoric race, which makes the arrival of the Phoenicians appear almost an event of modern times. The hurrying traveller often dismisses Malta as the "Island of Bells, Yells, and Smells," and while first impressions are lasting, for noise and effluvia certainly exist there, Mr. Tucker convincingly claimed that a prolonged visit of exploration amply repays the traveller. Much history has been written in Malta since St. Paul was wrecked upon its shores, the anniversary of the date of which event has since become the occasion for Malta's most important festival. After expulsion from the Holy Land, Malta passed into the possession of the Knights of Jerusalem, who successfully resisted many attacks from enemies until Napoleon rather easily captured the island during his Egyptian campaign. Britain ejected the Corsican, and for 130 years has added to a wealth of ecclesiastical architecture left by the Crusaders.