

gramme, but a recording does not quite impress the gladsome intimacy that his glorious voice conveyed in singing to an audience in our own Town Hall. It has been usual for New Zealand to hear the world's great artists when their qualities are waning, but Mr. Brownlee is at the height of his career, and we are thankful that the Paris

Opera has a vacation, and for the Broadcasting Board's enterprise. Miss Rita Millar's flexible voice and style charmed us all, and we joined with the audience in recording our approval. Mr. Raymond Lambert is quite an old favourite whom we have frequently heard from Australia, and whom we hope to hear on many other occasions.

The Southern Stations by "Proton"

THAT astute and wonderful person, the Empress Dowager of China, who is to-day regarded as one of the great rulers, was the subject of Dr. Winifred Haward's most informative talk from 3YA. In appraising the Empress's real worth, Dr. Haward emphasised the fact of Chinese revulsion to women participating in politics, and in making due allowance for this attitude, the career of the Empress is therefore the more remarkable. Another fact which Dr. Haward stressed was that in considering all the circumstances, it should be remembered that for 2000 years the Chinese had not come in contact with any people as powerful as themselves. The Empress was the daughter of a Manchu general, and while acquiring some education in the Chinese classics it seems probable that she assisted with the housework at home before she entered the Emperor's palace. The relation of the sexes among the Manchus was rather more free than among the Chinese, and her early training no doubt stood her in good stead when she acquired power in the palace. She was vivacious and practical, and after giving birth to the Emperor's first son, the most desirable event that could happen in an ancestor-worshipping nation—she quickly rose in favour until she was made Western Empress, an innovation which marked a change in the immutable East.

IT would seem that the little lady who was eventually destined to control China for two generations lived amiably with the first Empress right up till the latter's death, and it may be assumed that her force of character permitted her domination without causing dissension in the household. China had for years been pressed by European countries for trading rights. Also there had been much internal strife, notably the Taiping rebellion, during the Dowager's lifetime, and when her nephew and adopted son, Kwanghsu, gained the throne, reforms could no longer be withheld. Kwanghsu was no half-reformer, and his edicts would have modernised China within a short period but for the importunities of Western Powers. As his reforms multiplied, European importunities became more insistent, and eventually led to wars. It is remarkable that the Chinese, who are so tolerant of differing religions, were unable to abide in peace with Christians, and no honest observer would accuse the Chinese of unwarrantable bigotry. Foreign military operations played into the hands of the reactionaries, and an appeal was made for the Empress to assume control again.

CHINA was so beset by internal and foreign-provoked troubles that dras-

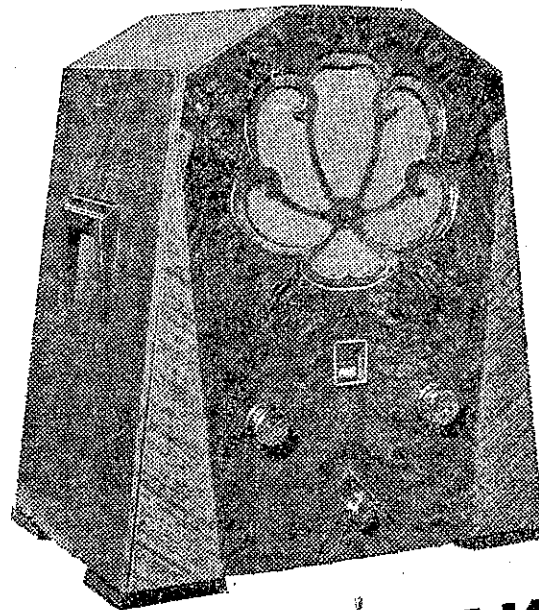
tic action became necessary, and the Empress cancelled reforms wholesale. Whether Kwanghsu submitted because of filial duty, or whether his aunt and mother by adoption dominated him by her forcefulness may never be known, but China slipped back to that peaceful lethargy to which she had long been accustomed. Foreigners, however, still pursued unwilling China, and the Empress, after witnessing a display in which the Boxers demonstrated their inviolability, she concluded with the reactionaries that the way to peace lay in the expulsion of the European barbarian. After her disillusionment, when the combined European forces entered Peking, the Empress promptly recognised that times had changed, and there can be no question of her zeal for reform. Of all the world's women rulers she was one of the greatest, and history cannot but account her so.

A TALK entitled "African experiences" should be a guarantee that every listener's interest would be excited, and when Mr. Patrick L. C. Bell-Syer said he intended speaking of his twenty-one years of Africa, which he knows from the Cape to the Zambesi, from Walvis Bay to Kenya Colony, we then knew that 3YA was to give us something special. Numberless speakers may describe the towns of Africa, but few are able to speak authoritatively of the wilds of half the continent. In these days when our lives are ruled by the clock it was pleasing to hear of the unpunctuality of trains, twenty hours late, and reflect that the thief of time also stole a great deal of our freedom. Mr. Bell-Syer's stories of the "boys," native and Irish, were capital yarns, and one longs for the wide spaces where men become natural and it is not considered unconventional to unpretentiously display human failings. The word pictures of the game—in herds of thousands—which sportsmen shoot only for food or hides or ivory, and not just for slaughter, as do some in civilised countries, in emulation of the maniac let loose with a gun, were creations that touched the heart of all. Fundamentally we are bushmen, each and every one of us, with just the thinnest of veneer of civic feeling, and we shall be glad to hear Mr. Bell-Syer resume his talk on the "Wilds of Africa."

IT would seem that the B.B.C. has taken notice of the complaints about applause from studio audiences during vaudeville performances, and these are now no longer permitted. The theory that a humorist requires atmosphere is probably quite sound, but to be a radio "star" it is necessary for him to employ microphone technique without aids, to satisfy the radio listener.

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