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TALKS ON ATOM ARE NOTABLE EXCEPTION

AS a general rule, those who are best qualified to speak on matters of science seldom possess the ability to treat of the subject in terms that the layman can understand. A notable exception to this rule is the Rev. Pius Walsh, who is at present giving a series of talks on the atom, from Radio Eireann. On Wednesday, he discussed the place electrons hold in atoms, and left me with the pleasant feeling, possibly delusory, that at last I began to understand a little about the matter which may affect me very nearly if certain well-known statesmen decide to include me in their quarrels.

Fr. Walsh has a friendly and intimate manner at the microphone, which almost convinces one that his task is simple, and which adds greatly to the pleasure of these broadcasts. Next week, he invites us to "Meet the Proton," and I am looking forward to the meeting eagerly.

SCOTT'S EXPEDITION

A rewarding programme from the B.B.C. this week was "Fire on the Snow," broadcast on the Home Service on Monday. This was a radio play in verse by an Australian writer, Douglas Stewart, and it told the story of the final stage of Captain Scott's expedition to the South Pole with his four companions, and of the way in which they perished on the return journey. This is a familiar tale, but the author endowed it with a freshness and significance by using it as a means to explore the semi-mystical urges that prompt men to undertake such terrible trials of endurance.

It was seldom apparent that the play was in verse, except during the narrative passages, but the dialogue had a terseness and economy that brought the characters before us vividly, and introduced us to the heart of the matter. The production, by Tyrone Guthrie, who has himself made some distinguished contributions to radio drama, had the same incisive quality as the play, and was uncluttered with unnecessary musical or other effects. The cast, headed by John Mills as Scott, also served the author well, building most convincingly to just the right level of intensity.

SCHOOL "QUIZ"

The popularity of radio "quiz" programmes in their various forms shows no sign of waning. "Trans-Atlantic Quiz" made a welcome come-back on the Light Programme some weeks ago, and proved itself to be as entertaining as ever. At the same time a new series in the excellent school "quiz" programme, "Top of the Form," was launched on the same programme. This new series presents a contest in English between children from co-educational schools in Britain, Northern Ireland and Scandinavia. Last week's contest was between chil-