

# Mikes Don't Bite

B Y H E L E N S I O U S S A T

*With an Introduction by Elmer Davis*

*Illustrated by Jack Hoins*



L . B . F I S C H E R · N E W Y O R K

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TO AUNT BERTHA

*Whose sustained faith in me  
made all things possible*

*You may be feared of tigers,  
Of snakes and lions, too,  
But there's a monster in the studio  
Not shown in any zoo.*

*It doesn't run or crouch or spring,  
Yet there never was a scare  
Like the first time you're before it  
And you know you're "on the air."*

## P R E F A C E

A room high up in a Manhattan midtown skyscraper. One of the country's foremost political spokesmen is waiting to go on the air. A polished orator, about to talk on some great national issue. Thoroughly at home with his subject. Has carefully prepared his address. "Timed" it in advance to the length of his period on the air. The announcer finishes the introduction. The speaker commences. Voice strained, timid, unnatural. Raises it in loud oratorical flourishes. Lowers it out of hearing. The radio engineer frantically attempts to regulate volume. The speaker digresses from the prepared talk, leaving too little time to complete the address. Gallops through the closing paragraphs, finishes lamely, out of breath and with obvious relief.

Election year or no election year, air waves are and will be assailed by myriads of voices. Some good, some fair, some poor, others just plain awful. Many speakers—polished, poised, at ease on the platform and dais—will be self-conscious, strained, unnatural, when they face the microphone. Others, whose quiet unostentatious platform

appearances have hitherto doomed them to political mediocrity, will shine because of their friendly, personal microphone manner.

For—whether we like it or not—we, as a nation, are radio-conscious . . . overwhelmingly so. We turn to the radio for our political campaigning and our business. Civic, social, religious, patriotic, charitable and other organizations reach out through this medium as a means of touching the great rest of us. The war has increased this radio-consciousness to a degree where now radio supersedes all other forms of communication as an instrument for enlightenment and entertainment.

H. J. S.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is true that mikes don't bite; but the citizen who faces one for the first time is not likely to believe it. There it stands—a small thing, but loaded with the deadly potentialities of modern science; shining with the ominous glitter of a surgical instrument, and an instrument capable of inflicting the most exquisite pain. For what can compare with the anguish of making a fool of yourself before millions of listeners?—and that is what the average man is afraid of when he is about to make his first broadcast. He may talk without self-consciousness in a lecture hall and still be threatened with paralysis when he looks at that glittering gadget and realizes that any slip or blunder he may make is going to become public property all the way from Boston to San Diego.

For some of us, at least, it is a long time before that terror passes; before we can get over the conviction that some day we shall go suddenly insane at the microphone, and fill the air with treason and blasphemy before the attendants can drag us away. Others may recover more rapidly; but rare indeed is the man so sure of himself that



he can approach a microphone the first time without alarm. To hundreds of men and women, in that ordeal, Helen Sioussat has been a ministering angel. I am myself indebted to her more than most, for she thought I could be a broadcaster before anybody else thought so, including me; but almost all the people whom she put on the air for the first time remember her gratefully as the person who pulled them through the crisis. The malevolent fascination of that glittering gadget fades in her presence, for you don't look at the microphone any more than you have to when Helen is there to look at, too; and the most jittery of apprehensions are soothed by her firm but sympathetic "mikeside" manner.

Maybe her side of the job is not so much fun. To try to pass around a limited amount of air time so that she can satisfy, not everybody, but as many people as possible—that is not so easy; especially as a good many of those who ask for time are irate and excited persons who not merely ask for it but demand it, and demand lots of it, so that they may warn the nation against what they think is a Menace. Maybe it is a Menace; but the world is full of menaces and there is just so much time available on the air for people who want to talk, and nobody on earth could satisfy everybody. But Helen seems to satisfy about as many as humanly possible; and when they go on the air she is with them in that dark hour, and generally pulls

them through without loss of self-esteem. By what magic art she does it this book may reveal, or maybe not; maybe it is a trade secret. At any rate, by the time you have finished this volume you will know a good deal about radio, and about broadcasters both professional and amateur. It is here set down with malice toward none, with charity for all; and heaven knows most of us need it.

ELMER DAVIS

*Washington, 1942*

MIKES DON'T BITE

## CHAPTER ONE

### DON'T BE SCARED



Not everyone is nervous confronting a microphone for the first time. I wasn't—until a kind soul whispered to me not to be scared. This helpful remark made me lose my place in the script and brought on a sudden feeling of panic. But I wasn't the only one. Even people who have for years appeared before crowds and cameras quake when they first stand face to face with a little metal instrument lovingly called the "mike."

Edward G. Robinson, actor of stage and screen, and Bob

Burns, who for years had been in vaudeville, made their "air" debut on a Rudy Vallee program in 1935. Their reaction is a study in contrasts.

Robinson went on in a short skit. He left the stage and dropped into a chair beside me, his knees trembling, his face soaked in perspiration.

"I'll never do that again," he told me, shivering at the thought of what he had just gone through.

Meanwhile Burns was on. He was his natural, easy self and the studio audience warmed up to his humor.

As he left the stage, his eyes popped when he saw the wreck that was Robinson.

"Ain'tcha feelin' well, Buddy?" he asked. Bob had thoroughly enjoyed the crowd and had "sorta forgotten about the microphone."

Both of them have by now taken their place among the headliners in radio. I have not since seen either of them in a studio, but I understand that the microphone still holds some terror for Robinson.

Years ago, when only a few people knew anything about talking over the air, the speaker, called upon to "say a few words," was frequently so scared that special devices had to be employed to put him at ease. Sometimes a microphone was worn in the lapel of the announcer's coat who was conducting the interview, or a tiny microphone was put into the speaker's own button-hole.

Once a piece of camouflage was employed, similar to that used today on the "People's Platform." Before Guy Lombardo started announcing his musical numbers, he was interviewed on a broadcast at the Pavilion Royale where his orchestra was playing. He was nervous at the thought of speaking over the air and the program director, wishing to put him at ease, concealed the microphone in a bowl of flowers which he placed on a near-by table.

The broadcast was at 5:30 in the afternoon, and the waiters were preparing the dining room for dinner. Guy and his interviewer sat down and started to talk. Thinking that Guy and his friend were just passing the time o' day, one of the waiters, with a grand flourish, swept the bowl from the table. Frantically the master of ceremonies yelled: "Hey, wait a minute. Put that back . . ." and—well, a lot of things not quite as polite, before the waiter came to and understood. In the meantime, the microphone had picked up all the excitement and the listeners were treated to a kind of broadcast not heard before or since.

The first time that Claudette Colbert sang on the radio she was terrified. After her first song, she broke down and cried while on the stage. Fortunately it was inaudible over the air. The announcer, to help her regain self-control, went out to her and raved about how wonderful she was. Finally she pulled herself together and was able to sing her next song.

When it was all over, she said that knowing she was not a singer had been a sufficient strain upon her, and that the added one of going before a microphone had proved the last straw.

I have heard that those who display the greatest physical courage in normal life, such as explorers, adventurers, men in the armed forces, are most nervous before the microphone.

On the anniversary date of the first flight by the Wright brothers, C.B.S. asked Orville Wright to make a special broadcast. In the invitation wired to him they said: "You were the first man to fly through the air. We would now like to have you make your first speech on the air over C.B.S." He replied that flying in the air held no fear for him, but that he was not brave enough to talk on the air. I believe, indeed, that he has never yet spoken on a broadcast.

Many actors, musicians and singers develop a complex when it comes to speaking "out of character" over the radio, no matter how familiar they may be with the microphone.

Walter Pidgeon was once called upon to act as master of ceremonies (emcee) of one of the Treasury Department broadcasts. Although thoroughly familiar with acting on the radio, he told me the next day of his case of jitters. I had not caught the program, which was broadcast over

N.B.C. As he wanted to know my opinion, I sent over for a recording of it.

The show carried a tremendous cast and was composed of skits, musical numbers and interviews. The rehearsals had gone quite smoothly, he told me. However, when the program went on, practically the entire format of the broadcast was changed. As emcee, he went through the tortures of the damned, not knowing who was next to appear. The production man spent his time grabbing the parts of the old script out of Pidgeon's hand and substituting newly written pages with which Pidgeon was not familiar. But, hearing the recording, I would never have guessed this. There were no hitches in the continuity and Walter's beautiful voice betrayed neither bewilderment nor anxiety.

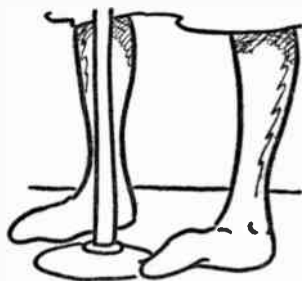
Arthur Pryor was so nervous the first time he broadcast, that he couldn't play his trombone. It was estimated that he had done some ten thousand trombone solos before audiences, but, that night, with the microphone before him, his lips just wouldn't behave. After a few futile attempts, apologies had to be made to his listeners.

Anne Shirley has never been able to get over her "mike-fright." Whenever she goes on the air, she keeps tiny ammonia capsules in her hand which she sniffs to help sustain her during the "ordeal."

Joan Crawford finds comfort in removing her shoes



when speaking on the air. She says that this keeps her from getting nervous and fidgety.



If you've heard this one before, don't stop me. It was in Buffalo and the year was 1935. Alice Cheney, the co-founder of the famous Jitney Players, and Doug Rowland, who is now a prisoner of war captured on Bataan by the Japanese, were broadcasting the murder scene from "Murder in the Old Red Barn." They had spent years behind the footlights, but this was their first time on the air. There they stood, scared as a couple of novices—Doug's fingers firmly clasping Alice's trembling wrist.

Alice, as Maria Martin, had just been done to death, and Doug, who played the part of the villain, William Corder, launched into his famous soliloquy. He was experiencing great difficulty in confining his portrayal of the murderer to his voice alone. So, all the emotion that he couldn't express in action, he put into his grip on Alice. On and on he went, waxing more powerful as his eloquence increased. Poor Alice, writhing in pain, could finally stand it no longer.

"O-o-o-w," she screamed, completely shattering the illusion.

For the microphone frequently appears to the novice broadcaster as an enemy which, if it does not distort his voice in transmission, remains a solid, cold, unresponsive bit of metal giving no indication whatsoever as to the reception of his cherished message.

When Gilbert Seldes, Director of Television for C.B.S., was one of my commentators on "Headlines and Bylines," he had a severe case of nerves each week just at the time he was supposed to go on the air.

Gilbert, a recognized authority on the living arts, discussed what was new in the art world. His part of the program came after Bob Trout and H. V. Kaltenborn had spoken. Up and down the studio he went until the time came for him to go on the air. Then he would make a bolt for the door. I'd run after him, steer him to the microphone and then sit facing him, smiling, nodding, encouraging him to continue . . . And he would continue . . . only then would he get warmed up to his subject and completely forget the existence of the microphone.

About the worst case of "mike-fright" I have ever seen was on the night the Museum of Modern Art opened in New York City. Edsel Ford, one of the nation's foremost industrialists, was participating in the dedicatory broadcast. There was an impressive array of speakers on the stage of the auditorium, with Mr. Ford among them. He stood there, talking with Jock Whitney, waiting for the program

to begin. Then he saw me down in the audience. His face lit up and he came hurriedly forward. I was surprised at the warmth of his greeting, since I knew him but slightly.

"May I sit down a moment," he said, "just . . . sit down—and . . . talk with you?"

As he dropped into the seat next to me, he continued:

"You see, standing up there on the stage I was afraid that people would see my knees knocking together."

In a moment I was all sympathy and, during the short time that remained before the broadcast, I did everything in my power to talk him out of his fear. He knew there was nothing in the world to be scared of, yet to save his life he couldn't quite communicate this to his legs. They just refused to behave. I asked him if he thought it would help, now that I knew his little secret, if, when he returned to the stage for his broadcast, he would let me represent his audience. I promised that by my expression I would show him how the talk was going. He seemed pleased with the suggestion and said that he thought it might work.

When he was introduced on the program, however, the microphone was turned in such a way that Mr. Ford had to stand with his back practically toward me. Trying to overcome this, he kept turning away from the "mike." But each time the announcer would turn him back again. With one eye on the announcer he gradually eased him-

self around until he was in a position to see my nod of reassurance. And once more the baffled announcer steered him closer to the microphone.

"After years," sighed Mr. Ford, telling of it afterward, "the broadcast came to an end."

Pierre Bedard, Director of the French Institute, had lectured for years and had run a lecture bureau, but he had never spoken over the air until he was engaged by Ed Murrow, at that time C.B.S. Talks Director, to give for European consumption a weekly news commentary in French. Before he came for his first broadcast, Ed left for London to take over his new assignment as Chief of C.B.S. Foreign Correspondents. Therefore, when Pierre arrived, he reported directly to me.

He didn't say anything about not having been on the air before and it did not occur to me to inquire. After many months, he confided in me that he had had no fear of the microphone that first time until after he had come off the air. As he described it to me, he then had such a sense of panic, that he "went all sick and wobbly inside" at the mere thought of sitting in a studio in New York and having his voice heard in Paris.

Not knowing just what was required of him; he had paid little or no attention to his timing, but, as luck would have it, he came off the air on what we, in broadcasting, term "the nose."

Atmosphere and surroundings mean a great deal and explain the preferences of speakers for various studios.

Monsieur Henri de Chatillon, the celebrated French couturier, was scheduled to broadcast for me upon his arrival in New York. Women will remember him especially as responsible for open-toe shoes and, if my memory serves me correctly, the "Empress Eugénie" hat, so popular a few years back.

It was the first time that he had spoken over the air and he was timid about speaking English. The interview was to be from script. So, in order to capture his delightful manner of speaking, I had my very clever little secretary, Miss Ganz, sit in a secluded corner of his Waldorf suite and take down our conversation on her Stenotype machine. In this way, after the script was typed and edited, there still remained the spontaneity of the spoken, rather than the written, word.

Next day when Monsieur de Chatillon arrived for the broadcast, he was shown, through some oversight, to one of our regular studios instead of to the one which I usually prefer for my speakers. When I was told where he was, I dashed upstairs. There I found him, seated on the edge of the only chair in the bare room, his knees emulating Gene Krupa and his drums.

"Miss Sioussat," he moaned, "thees place—she is like a prison. I am too frighten to speak."

I took him by the hand and we ran down one flight of stairs to the beautiful, luxurious "Blue Room," the studio designed for my speakers by Mrs. William Paley. The minute he entered this room, done in soft blues with blending tones of grey and green, and with large comfortable chairs drawn up before the open fireplace, my poor, frightened, little Frenchman relaxed.

"Voilà!" he said, "now ze fright—she goes from me."

And, without a quaver in his voice, he went through the broadcast like a trouper. When I saw him the following summer in Paris, and he enthusiastically showed me the plans for his new château, I noticed one room marked "Blue Room."

"That," he told me, "eez where I shall go to find relaxation when I feel ze urge to create."

Another year, another night, another speaker. This time it was the Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins. She had made hundreds of broadcasts, yet that evening in the "Blue Room" she turned to me just as she came off the air.

"I wonder if you would mind letting me speak from one of your regular studios in the future," she said. "This lovely drawing-room makes me forget the business of the day."

One of the most important jobs in radio is handled by Paul White, the able Director of the Public Affairs division at C.B.S. He is responsible for the broadcasts of

C.B.S.'s news analysts in this country and its foreign correspondents throughout the world. It gives him no qualms whatsoever to sit in his office on the seventeenth floor of C.B.S. in New York and talk over the cue channel to England, Australia or Africa. Yet, the few times I have seen him broadcast, he has been as jittery as a beginner. His face flushes, his hands get cold and clammy and his voice shakes.

When Bob Taplinger made his radio debut, he was asked, before coming off the air, to read a bulletin that had just come in, on the progress of the initial trip of the "Graf Zeppelin." Nervous and shaky, Bob turned back to the microphone and read the report. A page rushed into the studio and handed him another. Without stopping to glance over the second, he put it on the air. It was an exact duplicate of the first!

Often people ask me if I am myself always calm, cool and collected. To which I reply, "I have to be."

I shall never forget the first real broadcast I made. It was in the form of an interview. I had never been on the air except to read a line or two in one of Phil Lord's scripts. I was so careful in preparing my part of this interview, that every word was written, counted and rehearsed—many times over.

The big day arrived. Because an important sports broadcast had run over its time, our talk had to be postponed

for half an hour. We were sitting in the studio, chatting gaily, when suddenly someone announced that we were going "on" immediately. We rushed to the "table mike" and spread out our manuscripts. As we took air, the production man whispered to me:

"Can you kill two and one-half minutes?"

There I was—my first broadcast and he was asking me riddles. Somehow I managed to cut the interview and it still made sense. Somehow we finished on time. The confusion was nightmarish, but I was too busy to be scared.

And what causes all this fright? For a diagnosis, I turned to one of the nation's leading psychologists, Dr. Richard Hoffmann.

"What's the trick name you call it?" he asked, and for a moment I thought he was shocked at the slang.

"'Mike-fright,'" I repeated. "People get it when they go on the air."

"Do they spell 'mike' m-y-q-u-e-?" his eyes twinkled. "They should, you know, then there'd be more reason for it."

After explaining its various symptoms, citing specific cases and showing him "where it seems to hurt most," I asked if I could send him my secretary to take down his findings.

"No," he said, "I can't do it."

"You won't take the case?" I asked.



"Oh, yes, I'll help you."

"Then . . .?"

"I've got 'dicta fright,'" was his laconic response.

It was my turn to gasp. "What's 'dicta fright'?"

"Same principle as 'mike fright.' I get scared when I dictate."

"I'll wait while you make out your report," I told him and he glanced over the 'patient's' chart.

"'Mike fright' or 'air sickness,'" mused Dr. Hoffmann, "well, let me see. . . . I think I'd explain it this way:

"Words have been called 'things.' In reality, however, they are merely the names of things. They are the two-dimensional shadows by which things are recognized.

"I may be contradicted in this concept. There will be those who will argue that some words have depth. In my many years of listening to the radio, I have heard many words that were long, statements that were broad, but very few of either that were deep. I still, therefore, submit that words are shadows.

"There is a time-worn adage that man has frequently been afraid of his own shadow. Why not, then, of his own words? To be sure of your words, one must own a bomb-proof factory in which to create them. This factory, called the human brain, must be well-nourished, well-integrated, free from annoyance and disturbing things. This, it rarely

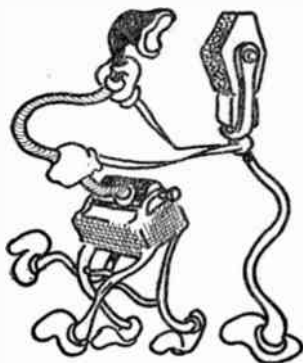
is; or why all the headache powders and nerve tonics so widely advertised?

“The physiological and psychological processes of creating language spontaneously are most complex. They include concept, receipt, memory, judgment, association, selection and projection. All these dictate, through the nerves, to a muscular slave called the tongue, and two fibrous strings known as the vocal cords. Now slaves have been known to rebel and strings to break. Nor is this all. There are the emotions. Words must subordinate themselves to these ever-varying currents of destiny that flow beside or push against the coasts of reason.

“So we see that speaking is a very complex mechanism. It is one thing to speak in a room with a few friends present, or before an audience, where one may pause and relax; and when a cerebral blackout occurs, even borrow light from those about him. One can walk around to relieve his tension, should there be any; one can wave one's arms giving emphasis or modulation to his words; or one can even make faces—for grimaces and gestures are often as expressive as locution.

“Before the ‘mike,’ however, there is always tension. One is a slave to the calendar and the clock; one has to read and speak at the same time and in time. No interpolative thought, however sparkling, may interrupt the rigid

routine of words appearing on the trembling sheets. An error in enunciation may not be corrected; an interrupting cough is a minor tragedy. These, and many more pitfalls are known to the speaker before he begins, and, unless he is thoroughly experienced, he is always entering an arena of endeavor beset by uncertainty.



“No wonder that he has ‘mike fright.’ The thought of facing this rather newly contrived, cold, mechanical contraption and using it as an instrument for projecting ideas and thoughts is like walking into the silent night in an unfamiliar neighborhood—‘a bush will look like a bear,’ and the primordially inher-

ited instinct of fear, with its accompanying symptoms of agitation expressed in innumerable instances of nerve caprice, overcomes the victim and calls for a restraint of more than moral courage. To my mind, it connotes a certain conceit and egotism to be able to manifest assurance and ease the first time before the ‘mike.’

“There are three types of human beings who may be considered under the term ‘mike-phobic’: Those who never have it; those who always will have it; and those

who will or will not have it, depending upon the chemical and physical balance of their nervous system. In this third group, we, as psychologists, are interested. I believe that medical science has reached a point where these willing, but faltering radiophiles may be helped to don their 'mike' robes and face the air waves."

Someday I'll ask him for the remedy, in clinical terms. For the present I'm hoping you'll take my word for it that

bark they might,  
but "mikes" don't bite.

## CHAPTER TWO

# WE WANT AMERICA—FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES



Who wants America for fifteen minutes? No one—that is—except senators, club women, politicians, statesmen, ministers, doctors, industrialists, labor leaders, propagan-dists, child psychologists . . . They all come clamoring for time on the air.

The thousands of letters that stream across my desk, year in, year out, the ceaseless calls that come over my three telephones—are from people with a message in every business and profession and from every walk of life. From people who want to tell America how to win the

war; how to win the peace; how to change the Constitution; how to balance the budget—and how to dispose of every other conceivable problem.

They all ask for fifteen minutes—or more: for campaign speeches, controversial issues of the day: for talks on literature, science, medicine, labor, industry, pending legislation, new patents—everything.

Until I came to radio I had no idea of the number of days, weeks, and months that are set aside each year for special observance. There are Child Health Day, Citizenship Day, Father's Day, Mother's Day, Foreign Trade Week, National First Aid Week, National Sharecroppers' Week, Be Kind to Animals Week, Nationally Advertised Brands Week, Safety Month and Retailers' Month. These and more like them are in addition to the national holidays and anniversaries which appear on the calendar.

Always with us are Congressmen, political hopefuls of the Democratic, Republican and other parties, patriotic, welfare and relief organizations—local, national and international—and visiting royalty.

The most democratic instrument in the world is a microphone. Over it speak diplomats, governors and mayors, retail dry-goods men, Supreme Court Justices, dentists, osteopaths, officers of the Army, Navy and Air Corps, nurses, members of the Cabinet, authors, artists, fashion

experts, Junior Leaguers, people of all races, colors and creeds.

There is hardly an issue of national or local importance that is not fully aired by local broadcasting stations or the nation-wide networks. The increasing public interest in controversial issues may be due to the gravity of our times, but radio has been credited by many as contributing largely to that development. No other instrument can so promptly inform a whole continent as a nation-wide broadcasting system. The history of network broadcasting has demonstrated its ability to present fairly all sides of important controversial questions, an essential requirement if the people are to act wisely on the issues they are called upon to decide.

Many important programs are initiated by the broadcasting companies themselves. Yet, one of the most important problems of a radio talks department is keeping people off the air—in other words—declining requests without losing good-will. It is obviously impossible to grant more than a small percentage of the thousands of requests received. There is not that much time available. A newspaper can add another sheet, but when the hours of a radio day are used up, that's that!

These requests come from defense and war committees, peace groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Y.M.C.A.,

Y.W.C.A., Y.M.H.A., Y.W.H.A., fraternal organizations, university presidents, other educators, lawyers, representatives of various federal agencies and governmental bureaus, tax experts, the Red Cross, social workers, poets, writers, philosophers, youth organizations, small businessmen's associations, prohibitionists, chambers of commerce . . . and all ask for time on the air to speak from their conventions, their meetings, their forums, or from our studios.

And people want to talk on "how to do," ranging from beauty culture to cane chair manufacturing. Yet, haven't I been asked, and many times, too:

"How are you able to get enough speakers to fill in the time?"

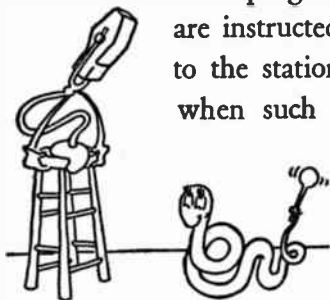
If everyone wishing to broadcast were given just thirty seconds on the air, instead of the usual fifteen or thirty minutes, there would still not be nearly enough time to grant all requests.

Immediately after each legal holiday requests begin to come in for time to speak the following year. For Lincoln's Birthday, Washington's Birthday and Labor Day we have the largest number of such requests.

A constant stream of requests comes from "pressure" groups, which instruct their members throughout the country to write letters to broadcasting companies, critical or complimentary, depending upon the disposition that



has been made of their suggestions. Furthermore, when their program is broadcast, the members are instructed to communicate their praise to the station that carried it. Many times when such a broadcast has been scheduled and for one reason or another canceled or postponed at the last moment, this fan mail has poured in just the same.



These are the normal requests; radio also gets its share of the freak and unusual. Take, for instance, that of the snake charmer who had read about the performance over the air of a baby giant panda. He immediately called up and wanted to have his snakes put before the microphone. When I asked him how they could be heard, he replied: "They can hiss—can't they?"

Then there was the woman who wanted to put on the air a neighborhood animal show with all its grunts, barks, and meows. And the man who wanted to broadcast his singing mice . . . He succeeded, too!

Pleas have come to radio for help in locating children who have run away from home and for finding lost dogs and valuables.

The prize request came from a man who claimed that he had been conversing with William Shakespeare, and

found him to be very dissatisfied with the present-day interpretations of "Hamlet." He insisted on doing a program for C.B.S. under the title "Hamlet in Heaven," professing that he would get "heavenly direction" from Shakespeare.

He became a daily visitor at our offices. Finally Stu Wells had the inspiration to give him one of our regular releases for program ideas.

"You see Shakespeare often?" Stu asked.

"Nightly," came the rejoinder.

"Well, get him to sign this release and your troubles are over," said Stu. He hasn't returned—yet.

The policy of American broadcasters with regard to cultural and educational programs can be summed up in this sentence: "The people shall have free access to the truth."

The stations feel that it is their technical job to see to it that all important subjects are accurately and interestingly presented. Otherwise, a twist of the dial will render the attempt useless. They do not consider their own likes and dislikes, their own ideas or habits. They are satisfied to give their listeners the freedom of choosing what they can use and rejecting the rest.

Over a period of years broadcasters have built up staffs with background, skill and experience in the basic prin-

principles of good public service policies. The thousands of broadcasts presented each year have all done their part in spreading among Americans the knowledge of the way men live, work, fight, think and play. The air has become one of the greatest, if not the greatest, media of public information and, subject to the limitations of program balance, must ever remain so.

It is the policy of radio to present as many important and varied viewpoints as possible on developments of outstanding public interest and significance. Prejudicial weighting of one faction or viewpoint against another is avoided. In its attempt to achieve fairness, it does not hesitate to resist improper pressures. Radio endeavors to present a balanced program in the entire field of human relations.

On the sustaining side, programs are devoted to outstanding music, adult education, children's interests, civic affairs, welfare, religion, international, national and public events, news, drama and sports, as well as popular entertainment, including dance bands.

William Paley, C.B.S.'s President, has defined policy in these terms:

"A common criticism of broadcasting schedules is that we give the public what it wants, when in the critics' opinion it ought to want something else. But this implies several fallacies. In the first place, there is no 'public';

there are 'publics.' Listeners to the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra are probably not, for the most part, the same as the listeners to broadcasts of baseball games, although plenty of people like them both. A properly balanced broadcasting schedule would take care of both groups and of many others; each one a radio 'public' for the particular broadcasts which enlist its interest; and many members of each one are likely, once they have acquired the habit of listening, to hear something which they had not deliberately intended to hear but out of which they may possibly get some unexpected information, some unexpected entertainment, some broadening of interest.

"This phenomenon of the many publics is not, of course, confined to radio. We share it with newspapers, movies, magazines, books and all other media of either information or entertainment . . .

"This is not meant to imply that we organize only programs that we know are wanted by the public, or that we necessarily limit the extent of certain types of programs because they begin with a small following. We have constantly sought to discover large audiences whose existence we strongly suspected beforehand, or to create large audiences on the basis of what we offered being acceptable to the public. . . ."

Broadcasters are the custodians of a great means of mass

communication. Broadcasting functions democratically in harmony with the American pattern and, in so functioning, has become an essential part of our democracy. Broadcasting in the dictator countries has been owned by the State and used by the State to mold the people to its will. The people are compelled to listen only to what their rulers want them to hear. In America, however, things are different. With the advent of the radio, "frontiers melted like mirages; cold type turned into the warm voices of real men; ideas, good and bad, traveled farther and faster."

In speaking of radio education and the war, Dr. W. W. Charters, former Director of the Ohio State University's Bureau of Educational Research, said:

"The radio has blitzkrieged provincialism and insularity. It is making world citizens of every national. No single agency is so powerful in education as the radio when it is used for the enlightenment of the people. Education is carried on in blocks of millions. . . . More powerful than the press, more all-pervasive than the pen, radio stands as the greatest instrument for education in a democracy . . ."

Our ancestors had their statesmen to clarify the issues of the day, and there were the famous debates such as the Lincoln-Douglas series to which people traveled many a mile to hear. But only those fortunate enough to be able

to make the trip heard what these men had to say. Now, we have the radio which brings into our homes the debates and public addresses of this generation.

American radio recognizes its responsibility in maintaining and bettering our human relations. It does not intend, however, to become self-satisfied with its own contribution to human relations. It remains alert to well-founded criticism, to changing needs, to expanding opportunities for service. To fulfill its public trust, it must scrutinize its critics and their criticism to determine whether they are motivated by an interest in the general welfare, or whether underneath lies the aim of self-promotion of an individual, or a class.

But radio must remain non-partisan. About this Mr. Paley says:

“By non-partisanship is meant that broadcasting, as an instrument of American democracy, must forever be wholly, honestly and militantly non-partisan. This is true not only in politics, but in the whole realm of arguable social ideas. To put it another way, it must never maintain an editorial page nor seek to maintain views of its own on any public question except broadcasting itself. Moreover, it must never try to further either side of any debatable question, regardless of its own private and personal sympathies. This does not mean, of course, that any broadcaster, as an individual, may not on occasion express

his own views on controversial issues like any other citizen.”

No discussion must ever be one-sided, so long as any qualified spokesman wishes to take the other side. The party in power must never dominate the air; nor any majority monopolize it. Minorities must always have a fair opportunity to express themselves.

“Freedom of the press means the right of the publisher or the editor to express any view he happens to hold on any public question, and even to refuse to publish the utterances of those who seek to controvert his views,” Mr. Paley continued. “He may even use the whole publication for the sole purpose of furthering his own ideas.

“Why may the press be as editorially partisan as it pleases, while we may not? For the reason that there can be an unlimited number of publications devoted to countless purposes, whereas the number of broadcasters is rigidly limited for physical reasons, and, therefore, an editorial attitude on the part of broadcasters would always carry with it the danger of one side of a vital argument being maintained preponderantly or exclusively. If an editor’s views are stodgy or unpopular, or if he rides hobbies that bore most people, he pays the penalty of dwindling circulation, but he has violated no public obligation.

“If you accept my definition of freedom of the press, let me define freedom of the air as nearly all of the broad-

casters understand it: Freedom of the air means the right of the speaker to express any views he may hold on any question of general interest. He must be guarded, and he is guarded, in that right, regardless of how the operators of the network or stations may, themselves, feel about the thing he discusses. If he is not libelous, or not otherwise unlawful, if he is not obscene, if he does not seek to provoke racial or religious hatred, he may say whatever he pleases over the air. I admit the ordinary questions of good taste or good manners sometimes arise, but virtually always they can be satisfactorily settled by consultation with the prospective speaker." . . . And, of course, in wartime nothing should be said to give aid or comfort to the enemy.

At C.B.S. time is sold to sponsors solely for the advertisement of their goods and services. It is not sold for propaganda. (Propaganda is defined here as any attempt to influence legislation, taxation and the like.) We believe it is a public obligation to provide time for the free discussion of controversial issues.

A compelling reason for not selling time is that otherwise the side with the most money would win the argument. It would become possible for special interests to drown out the voice of the public.

The sole exception that is made to this policy is the sale of time to political parties during the actual election cam-



paign, after the candidates have been duly nominated. This exception is made because the political parties wish to use and are entitled to use more time than the broadcasters can afford to give away. But this exception, too, has its safeguards.

To sum up: "It is a major premise of democratic theory that when the people are fully informed, understand the case, and know what the argument is about, they will make the right decision or at least choose the right representatives to make it and execute it for them. If the people will not always be right, at least they will be right more often than a self-perpetuating tyranny, and just so long as the people remain free and thus compel their chosen leaders to be responsive to their will, the importance of their being exposed to the news of what is happening in their world, and the arguments as to whether it should or should not happen, cannot be exaggerated."

During the past ten years, American broadcasting has developed faster and extended further than anywhere else in the world. It has created an important industry of radio receiving sets and equipment. It has given a new and indescribably effective voice to business in general. It has furnished rich entertainment without cost to the American public. It has attempted to serve with fine equality our political welfare, and has laboriously striven to meet and advance public taste.

The average cost of a modern radio receiving set about ten years ago was between one hundred and fifty and three hundred and fifty dollars, but the performance of those installations was probably equivalent to equipment costing twenty to twenty-five dollars today.

Dr. Orestes H. Caldwell, editor of *Radio Today*, tells us that for one or two cents, the cost of operating a receiver for a night, one can listen to programs which involve production expense of over \$300,000. Yet officers of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company were originally opposed to network broadcasting because they believed it wouldn't pay.

In 1930 the Columbia network had sixty-one stations and provided primary coverage of 7,680,000 radio homes. In 1940 it comprised one hundred and eighteen stations with coverage of 27,552,000 radio homes, an increase of 159% over 1930. In 1942, with one hundred nineteen stations, it provides primary coverage of 30,300,000 families.

What used to be called the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company, and is now identified as N.B.C., had in 1930 thirty-five stations with an approximated coverage of 10,000,000 radio homes. It jumped to one hundred thirty-two stations in 1940, with a coverage of 23,000,000 families. In 1942, the network increased to one hundred thirty-six stations and their coverage, to 29,000,000 families. I do not have the figures for the Blue

Network which has only recently become independent of N.B.C.

It must be remembered that on all receiving sets the dial permits the tuning in of the four major networks. This, in a way, accounts for the similarity in these coverage figures. Of course, some stations may cover a given area better than others. Wave-lengths, power and locations have to be taken into consideration.

Obviously good productions create their own listening audiences. Numerous surveys have indicated that programs can build up a listening audience at almost any reasonable hour of the day or night.

Here are some unusual examples of this: King Edward's abdication speech received a Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting rating (known in the profession as CAB) of 45.0. This was broadcast, as you may remember, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, New York time. President Roosevelt's famous "stab-in-the-back" speech from Charlottesville, Virginia, had a rating of 45.5. Up to 1938 this rating had been topped only once, by the Louis-Schmelting fight which had a rating of 63.6. The highest rating of all times was attained on December 9, 1941, when from 10:00 to 10:30 P.M. New York time, President Roosevelt made his report to the nation, two days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It was 83.0. This percentage was equaled again at the same hour on February 23, 1942, when the President discussed the state of the nation at war.

As John Karol, Market Research Counsellor for C.B.S., puts it:

“The analysis of program ratings raises the question ‘What makes a program popular?’ It is something like the question ‘What makes a girl pretty?’, and just about as difficult to answer adequately. It is not so much the type as the excellence of the program itself which determines its success or failure. Radio research can indicate trends and produce data of real value to the intelligent program builder, but it is still no substitute for creative genius and brilliant showmanship.”

Many people have asked how these surveys are made and how the program ratings are obtained.

The CAB is sponsored by the Association of National Advertisers, and the research work is conducted by Crossley, Inc.

The technique involves telephone-recall interviews in thirty-three cities in which there are triple networks. Telephone calls, covering four periods of the day, are made to determine when the set was in operation and what programs were heard.

Mr. Karol gave me this example: In New York calls were made at 12:15 P.M. covering programs heard that morning; again at 5:15 P.M. covering listening between noon and 5:00 P.M.; again at 8:15 P.M. covering programs heard between 5:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. and the following morning covering programs heard after 8:00 P.M. the

previous evening. Calls were made during two weeks out of each month and ratings were assigned to each program, expressed in terms of all radio homes.

In other words, if the Major Bowes broadcast has a rating of 25.0, that means that 25% of all the radio homes which could have heard the program in the thirty-three cities actually did hear it, which, if projected over the entire United States, would mean about 6,500,000 radio homes.



"Crossley" is an intimate by-word among broadcasters, but few people outside of radio know that to many it spells joy or doom. Scoops Daly, columnist for *Radio Daily*, tells us that now even the censor in Miami knows what the Crossley Rating means.

It appears that a short time ago, while Nancy ("Big Sister") Marshall was talking on the over-seas telephone to her husband in Caracas, she was given the usual warning not to make any mention of troop movements or other information that would give aid or comfort to the enemy, including, of course, the state of the weather. At the completion of the call, the censor phoned Miss Marshall:

"I hated to interrupt your conversation," he said, "but I should like to know what 'third place in the day-time Crossley' means?"

The actress was happy to explain that it meant that her program was doing very well in the popularity pool. She added that, although this information meant a great deal to her, she was quite sure it would not be of the slightest interest to the Nazis.

Another technique employed is the so-called coincidental telephone survey. This, as the name implies, simply means making telephone calls while the program is actually on the air and determining if the set is in operation and what program is being heard. At that time additional information on sponsor identification is obtained.

The C. E. Hooper organization conducts regular coincidental telephone surveys in thirty-three cities one week each month, covering day and night-time programs.

Mr. Karol says that both of these program-popularity types of surveys have their limitations from a research point of view, as they are confined to telephone-homes in large cities, whereas there are more than twice as many radio-homes as there are telephone-homes. Furthermore, we know that there is more listening in small cities and towns, that programs rate higher in cities where there is no triple-network and that the average non-telephone-home listens even more than the telephone-home.

One of the most interesting developments in market research is the so-called audimeter, an automatic recording device which can be attached to any radio receiver. It provides a continuous record of the times that the set is in operation and of the stations listened to over a period of a week or even a month. It will also provide information regarding the point where the listener tuned out certain parts of the program and thus enable the broadcasters to gauge the preferences of their audiences and to learn whether objectionable features exist either in the program itself or in the commercial announcement. Frank Stanton, C.B.S. Vice-President, designed, constructed and used the first automatic recording device to determine accurate records of radio set operation, and, with Dr. Paul F. Lazarsfeld was co-developer of the Lazarsfeld-Stanton Program Analyzer, an instrument for analyzing audience preferences for program content.



I was interested, in looking over some of the favorite programs of 1930, to see that head and shoulders above the rest were Amos 'n Andy, who have exceeded their rating only once since that year. Other leaders, in approximate order of their popularity, were the Squibb Program

with Will Rogers, the Fleischmann Hour with Rudy Vallee, the Palmolive Hour with Olive Palmer and Paul Oliver, the Collier's Program, the General Electric Hour with Floyd Gibbons, the General Motors Program with Don Voorhees, the Lucky Strike Hour with B. A. Rolfe's Orchestra, the Eveready Hour, Real Folks, Maxwell House, Cities Service, Atwater Kent, Armstrong Cork, A. and P. Gypsies, Clicquot Club Eskimos and the Interwoven Pair with Jones and Hare. Others famous in 1930 were Seth Parker and Show Boat.

Many of the sponsors of these early favorites are still on the air, but only two of these programs are still in substantially their original form, Amos 'n Andy and Cities Service, and the latter has been cut to half an hour.

Some of the latest comprehensive reports of the Co-operative Analysis of Broadcasting indicate that now these programs are among the evening leaders in popularity: Bob Hope, Fibber McGee and Mollie, Jack Benny, Major Bowes, Fred Allen, One Man's Family, Kate Smith, the Aldrich Family, Kay Kyser, Charlie McCarthy and Lux Radio Theater.

Time marches on!



## CHAPTER THREE

### FAMOUS FIRST TIMES



A lot of people are playing the game now. It is very simple. Everyone puts up twenty-five cents. The winner of the pool is the one who comes closest to guessing where Wendell Willkie will make his next speech and on what topic he will speak.

It is a very interesting game because no one, not even Mr. Willkie, is sure where next he will be or just which subject he will discuss. Compared to him, William Jennings Bryan seemed a sphinx with an impediment in his speech.

Wendell L. Willkie burst upon the listening public with much the same abruptness and force that sent the delegates to the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia in June of 1940 spinning. No candidate for public office, for that matter, no man in public life, has received more free and well-meant advice on how to speak clearly and influence voters. No man in public life has appreciated the spirit and warmth behind such friendly advice more—and paid less attention to it.

A nation of radio listeners from rising to retiring, whose ears had been caressed by the most cultured and cultivated voices in the world, considered itself the last word where good radio technique was concerned. In addition, that nation had had a President who recognized immediately the splendid medium radio offered for a mass approach to his countrymen and made the most of it. His "Fireside Chats" had become international events and his soft-spoken, neighborly "my Friends" had been the signal for a half-hour or more of government chit-chat, delivered in admittedly one of, if not the, finest voices radio has known.

It was only natural, therefore, that many of the followers of Wendell Willkie, conscious of the persuasive effect of a smooth radio voice, should have become alarmed when they heard their champion blast the loud-speakers out of their radios. Here was no caresser of microphones, but a fighter against the delicate instrument, who forgot its

presence as he became aroused to his subject. The visible audience was unquestionably moved, but the radio audience, not seeing the fire in the speaker's eyes, was a little startled.

Add to this unorthodox radio delivery the fact that his voice still retained a decided mid-western accent and twang—the result of a youth and early professional life spent in Indiana and Ohio—instead of a well-modulated and correct Groton intonation, and the stage was set for what happened.

Willkie was not a newcomer to public speaking when he was nominated for the Presidency that night in Philadelphia. True, he hadn't had anywhere near the forum he was to have as the Presidential candidate of a major party, but he had been on the stump throughout his life.

He was on the platform in the early twenties in his fight against the Ku Klux Klan, then at the peak of its influence. He spoke up for American participation in the League of Nations—a battle that began soon after his return from France as a Captain of Infantry, and involved about one thousand speeches. Eventually he left the Democratic Party when in 1932 the League of Nations plank was dropped from the party's platform and he "no longer had faith in its leadership." He spoke again and in behalf of one of his idols in public life, Newton D. Baker, a

fervent advocate of the League, in early battles for labor unions and in his fight over the TVA.

All of these involved speaking before the public. But the thousand and one forums that are open to Wendell L. Willkie, titular head of the Republican Party, were not open to Wendell L. Willkie, Elwood, Akron and New York lawyer. He was trained, as a result, in that school of speaking which addresses visible audiences, and he moved them by



the force of his personality, sincerity and logic rather than by the turn of a phrase or the skillful wooing of a microphone appeal.

Even before Mr. Willkie's nomination, ardent supporters, who had heard him on the radio, began offering suggestions as to how he could improve his delivery. There was real concern expressed in their letters and a warm friendliness that could not be misinterpreted. He was a hero to these letter writers, and they wanted to see him win. They were worried, however, about his radio appeal. They suggested that he drop the Indiana accent and adopt a reasonable facsimile of that which comes out of

Groton and Harvard. They seemed to ignore the fact that Wendell Willkie with anything but a mid-western accent would not be Wendell Willkie.

Innumerable voice teachers offered their services. They explained patiently in their letters that Mr. Willkie "talks with his vocal cords instead of using them as reeds." They suggested singing lessons. They advocated Yoga breathing exercises. A few hoped to benefit personally by their help; the remainder sincerely wanted to see "the great crusader succeed."

Mr. Willkie read the letters, was moved by the spirit evident in all of them, thanked them for their thoughtfulness and then promptly went out to make another talk "with his vocal cords."

During his stay in Rushville, Indiana, an elaborate recording set appeared. It had been sent by a group concerned that Mr. Willkie change his style of delivery. The intention was that he would record a speech and have it played back to him while an instructor in radio speaking pointed out errors in delivery. That equipment followed Mr. Willkie back and forth across the country on the campaign train, and the only time it was ever used was on those occasions when newspapermen aboard decided to record their own versions of popular songs—parodies on the campaign.

Mr. Willkie was content to talk as he always had and

let the chips fall where they might. There wasn't anything dogmatic about his attitude, but he felt that any attempt to change his style at this late date would be a sham.

On Friday, September 13, 1940, Willkie began a grueling seven-week tour of the nation. That Friday the thirteenth lived up to its tradition. Through Chicago and its suburbs raced the motor caravan. There were a dozen speeches scheduled in all parts of the city. At all these spots loud-speakers had been set up, which relieved the strain on the candidate's voice. In addition, those arranging the tour had expected Mr. Willkie to follow the usual procedure and make only brief remarks. They were quick to learn that he did not follow the old formula. Instead, he spoke sometimes for as long as half an hour, by turns hammering the Administration and pleading with his listeners to understand those principles in which he sincerely believed.

But that was only the beginning. The motor caravan at one point moved through the stockyards district of Chicago. The large packing firms had let their employees out to watch the caravan pass. Those planning the trip had meant to have Mr. Willkie wave as his open car went by. But he had other ideas. He realized that these were the people who had been supporting the New Deal wholeheartedly since its inception. These were the people he particularly wanted to reach, so he stopped the cara-

van a half-dozen times to talk with groups of them, without benefit of loud-speaker and over the din of passing traffic.

At his last stop, there was an obvious hoarseness in his voice. He was advised to take it easy the next day; to speak briefly at the dozen or more stops planned as the campaign train moved westward. He agreed that night, but the next morning the old, fervent desire to put across his ideas got the best of him. He again began to make twenty- and thirty-minute talks. But not for long—by noon his voice was almost gone. Late afternoon found him able to say to a crowd of fifteen thousand in Davenport only:

“The spirit is willing, but the voice is weak!”

This experience was publicized throughout the country and brought in an additional flood of letters. However, he went on through the campaign without further incident, despite the fact that he continued to speak fully on all occasions. He asked, when the trip was outlined, only that he be taken into the normally Democratic sections of the cities he visited, referred to by political leaders as the “tough spots.” These were the people to whom he wished to speak. These were the people to whom his message was directed.

Some of the crowds were obviously hostile. Apparently they came prepared to freeze him with their silence. Many stayed to applaud.

All of this was a great strain on his voice; but the voice held out, even though he didn't "play it as a reed."

At least once a day it was necessary for the candidate to read a formal, prepared speech. Newspapers demanded copies in advance and this was the only way that it could be accomplished. Many of these formal talks were given over the radio. Such speeches were carefully timed in advance so that they could be read in the allotted period, if the speaker stuck to the script. But Mr. Willkie didn't stick to the script. As he explained one day:

"After writing and working over a talk and polishing it, I somehow lose interest . . . feel that it isn't as lively or interesting as I thought it was. So I try to pep it up a bit."

This practice of "pepping up" talks played havoc with radio time. He was continually running over into other shows. The stations were reluctant to cut him off before he had finished. On one occasion, during the stop at Akron where he had lived for a number of years, Willkie apologized for having to read a speech to his former neighbors. When he finished, he laid the manuscript aside, removed his glasses, and, leaning forward on the speaker's stand, said:

"Now I really want to talk to you." And then, extemporaneously, he made another twenty-five-minute speech.

The heavy schedule that marked each day of the last



six weeks of the campaign frequently left him far away from the site of his evening radio talk. Train managers were in a sweat figuring out how they could reach the given spot in time for the broadcast, while at the other end radio officials chewed their nails frantically as the time approached, wondering what had happened to their speaker.

On one occasion, the candidate was to speak at the New York State Republican Convention in Yonkers. His train was coming in from the West, and en route had developed a "hot box" between Chicago and Buffalo. As it was, the schedule called for the trip to be made in the same time that the Twentieth Century takes. The three-hour delay ruined that schedule.

When it became obvious that the train would arrive much too late for the broadcast, two planes were sent out to meet it. They followed the train patiently from Syracuse to Schenectady where Mr. Willkie and reporters boarded them and flew to New York. Even so, there was very little time to make Yonkers from the LaGuardia Airport. Motorcycle escorts and cars were waiting, the candidate and his party were rushed into them and the caravan set off. During the drive, the leading car carrying the candidate made a wrong turn. The driver tried to correct the mistake. Those in the following cars saw the

machine swerve and shoot up the side of an embankment, almost turning over.

From then on, an additional effort was made to see that there was more time between engagements.

Mr. Willkie did not believe in letting an attack go unanswered. As a result, arrangements had to be made at the last minute for unexpected broadcasts on several occasions. In one instance, he prepared a reply in the evening, and arrangements were made to broadcast it the following morning from a small town in Pennsylvania. Again, however, the campaign managers had been over-optimistic about how fast the train would be able to make the trip. As a result, radio engineers had to set up their equipment and tap a telephone wire at a siding some distance away, in order that the speech might be broadcast at the announced time. It was delivered by Mr. Willkie from his private car and relayed by telephone wire to the nearest radio station.

Major controversy during the campaign was whether Mr. Willkie should stick to prepared speeches or depend exclusively on extemporaneous talks. Cautious minds urged the prepared script which could be gone over in advance for any flaws. Backers of the extemporaneous school, however, insisted that Mr. Willkie was at his fiery best when he spoke "off the cuff." They pleaded that he

never read a speech. Letters poured in from both sides.

Since the campaign, he has continued to speak out whenever he feels that he has something to say and the time has come to say it. His radio talks are prepared in advance. The first drafts are written in long-hand by Mr. Willkie on yellow legal paper, either at home or in his office. This draft is typed and gone over again with pencil until he has his thoughts in the form in which he wants them.

Despite the time taken to prepare these talks, Mr. Willkie continued to interpolate additional thoughts, throwing off the timing of the script completely. This practice caused an understandable consternation among radio people. But of late Willkie has stopped ad-libbing. Only the other day after he had completed a broadcast for C.B.S., which he had read word for word, he remarked to my surprise—and pleasure:

“You know, I’ve been thinking over this business of interpolating remarks, and I’ve come to the conclusion that a talk is more effective when I stick to the script.”

I heard a sigh of relief from radio directors throughout the country.

Elmer Davis is one of those rare individuals you hear about but seldom, if ever, see. He is modesty personified.

I shall never forget the first time I met him. His name, among several others, had been suggested to me as a pos-

sible filler-in for H. V. Kaltenborn, during the latter's absence from "Headlines and Bylines." On this series, Kaltenborn acted as commentator, Bob Trout, as news reporter, and Gilbert Seldes discussed the happenings in the art world. "H. V." was on a lecture tour and I needed a pinchhitter.

When I reached Elmer at his home in Mystic, Connecticut, I discovered that he had seldom spoken over the air and, what's more, had no desire to do so. He knew his limitations; broadcasting was not for him.

"I'm strictly a writer," he told me, "by profession and by preference."

However, being the kind-hearted chap that he is, he finally gave in and promised to help me if I did not succeed in getting anyone else. As luck would have it, I did need him. So, rather apprehensively, he arrived at the studio that Sunday night and in his simple, direct manner, with which probably every man, woman and child in this country is now familiar, he delivered his first broadcast for me.

It was a voice new to radio—unpolished and natural. But, as we were to learn later, a diamond in the rough. I could not decide whether it was pleasing, as I listened to it in the control room. I soon learned how Elmer felt about it, though. When he came off the air he looked at me with such an apologetic expression in his eyes. Hum-

bly he begged forgiveness for having driven away our listeners. He said that he had become so voice-conscious while he was speaking, that it had been difficult for him to concentrate on what he was saying. I told him that I didn't agree with him. True, it was a new type of voice, but, somehow, I had found it refreshing. It would be interesting to see how others felt about it.

Nevertheless he was so upset over what he called his "sour note" in the program, that I had great difficulty in making him accept the check for his services.

"Oh, please, no," he said, "wait and see what the audience's reaction will be. I feel that I have done you more damage than I can ever pay for."

Curious to hear him once more, I besought Elmer to take Kaltenborn's place the following Sunday. He marvelled at my "bravery" in trying him a second time, but he felt that his conscience would not allow him to accept. Again his final decision was put off until the last minute and again I persuaded him.

He was still critical of his voice after the second appearance on the air, but I was beginning to like it. His frank and succinct manner instilled confidence. Here was no folderol, but straight-forward statements.

Several Sundays after that, when I purposely faked inability to get another commentator for my show, Elmer obligingly came in and took over.

Finally I lost Bob Trout to a commercial program and I offered the job to Elmer. He was grateful for my confidence and very courteous. All the way from Mystic he came to explain to me that, although he had been very happy to help me out in my hours of need, radio was definitely not his forte. In vain I tried to support my argument by showing him his fan mail. He was incredulous at first that people should send him complimentary letters. He looked them over and then remarked skeptically that "there must be a mistake," that these were "obviously meant for somebody else." When I explained that he had met with phenomenal success in his first few broadcasts and that he very definitely had a place in radio, he turned a deaf ear.

So back to his writer's haven he went. That was in the summer of 1939. When war broke out in Europe and the C.B.S. news department was in need of more commentators, Elmer Davis again came to mind. He did not let me down. At C.B.S. News Chief Paul White pressed him into service and soon he was broadcasting day and night the horrible happenings of those first few months of the war. He lived and slept in the little cubby hole next to Studio 9 on the seventeenth floor. My office was close by and I saw a great deal of him in those days. Frequently I would comment on his good work.

"Is my prophecy coming true?" I would ask.

And shaking his head, he'd always reply:

"Can't understand it . . . their letting me stay here, I mean."

Never in my life have I seen a person as hard to convince that he was good. To this day I believe that he has his doubts—he, who became America's leading commentator and, in recognition of his incisive thinking, was given the important post of Director of the Office of War Information.

A master of understatement, typical indeed were his closing words on his final broadcast. With all the acclaim that attended his appointment, he said merely:

"This is my last broadcast, as I have been called into the Government service."

One of my most valued possessions is a picture of Elmer taken at a C.B.S. microphone. There he sits, as he so often did—during the hectic days that followed in the wake of Germany's attack upon the civilized world—in his shirt sleeves, his collar open and his silver head thrust forward. The inscription reads:

"To Helen Sioussat, my Columbus—Elmer Davis."

It was a sad day at C.B.S. when he left. I was sitting with him as the last reporter pleaded for an interview. He had been under a constant bombardment of questions,

shot at him from every possible source, from the moment his appointment was announced. A little tired, but courteous as always, he was trying to answer the question:

“What,” repeated the reporter, “is your philosophy of propaganda?”

With a weary gesture, Elmer turned to me:

“Helen, you know me. In a word what would you say was my philosophy of propaganda?”

“The strategy of truth,” I answered.

Radio in its day has had some good stories to tell. It has created some good ones too—stories born at the “mike.” There is one that goes back sixteen years, a very long time ago in radio. Had reporters been able to break this story on an October night in 1926, it might have made the front page.

Her Majesty, Queen Marie of Rumania, had just arrived in New York to begin her American tour. Broadcasting was only six years old. To have a queen grace the microphone would be a triumph on the air—royal recognition for radio. Why not invite the Queen to broadcast her first greeting to the American people? She could talk of her admiration for the beauty and talent of American women, stress their independence, earning power and ability to dress.

That was the idea that captivated the enterprising program department of Station WJZ, at that time operated



by the Radio Corporation of America. Then someone in an advertising agency got the idea of "selling" the Queen to a sponsor. Here was a celebrity whose arrival to America's shores had been greeted with fanfare. Public curiosity was whetted. Millions of listeners would want to hear what a queen sounded like on the air. Never before had one spoken into an American microphone.

The alert advertising agents saw a spectacular opportunity to "sell" her to the Royal Typewriter Company. What could be a more natural tie-up than Royal with royalty! Contracts were signed and glamorous Queen Marie was to broadcast for \$8,000.

Station WJZ prepared to roll out the red carpet. This was to be a regal occasion. The auditorium, a few floors below the radio studios in Aeolian Hall, was made festive for the great reception. It was red-carpeted, smilaxed and flower bedecked from entrance to exit. White ties and gloves were the order of the day—no radio staff ever before had dressed up like that for a broadcast. Every gadget, switch and microphone was tested and retested. Nothing must go wrong.

The program and announcing staffs were on deck much ahead of time. Everyone was rehearsed. To David Sarnoff, President of R.C.A., went the honor of introducing the Queen to her radio audience. Joining the members of WJZ's staff in the studio headquarters, Mr. Sarnoff

waited, as did the others, for the signal of screaming sirens which would herald her approach. At that instant the radio folk were to leave for the auditorium. Scouts along the line would give the cue of the Queen's arrival, probably five or ten minutes before the broadcast hour.

A half-hour before the expected arrival, amazing, stunning news reached Mr. Sarnoff and his staff. The Queen had come, slipping in ahead of schedule. Why, the Queen was in the auditorium! Mr. Sarnoff and the radio reception committee rushed to the elevator, donning white gloves and straightening ties as they descended. Sure enough, there in the center of the auditorium was Queen Marie and her lady-in-waiting for the evening.

Mr. Sarnoff, somewhat flustered, extended greetings and with utmost diplomacy explained that there had been some misunderstanding. Tactfully he pointed out that while he was distressed at the need for the Queen to wait for the scheduled hour, it was nevertheless impossible for her to talk before the appointed time. But before the Queen had an opportunity to reply, her companion haughtily exclaimed:

"Your Majesty, let us be gone."

And with that, both ladies wheeled and swept into the elevator. Down they went—and down went the hopes of the broadcasters.

"What a night! What a night!" exclaimed the dejected

program director. All their plans were shattered—and what a disappointment was in store for their listeners!

“I’m not going to give up,” said Mr. Sarnoff, rallying his staff. “There is a big audience waiting and we’re not going to let them down.”

He and two of his assistants rushed to the street. On the way out they saw the Queen and her social-directress sitting on a loveseat in a show window, awaiting their motor. The chauffeur, not expecting them until a half-hour later, had gone for a walk. A great crowd had already gathered to catch a glimpse of the Queen and was pressing against the window.

Mr. Sarnoff approached:

“Your Majesty,” he pleaded, “please let me explain. No discourtesy was intended. You arrived ahead of time; we’re sorry . . .”

The “lady-in-waiting” interrupted and indignantly announced that he should not address the Queen directly. Sarnoff said that such etiquette did not hold in America, and continued in his attempt to explain that running away from a scheduled broadcast was no way to win the good will of the American people.

The crowd gazed in wonderment at the little drama enacted before them. At that moment the Queen’s car arrived and, as she and her attendant rose to leave, Her Majesty turned and said:

"Some other time, some other time. I'm sorry."

Away they went. But Mr. Sarnoff was not one to be brushed off so easily. Jumping into a taxi, he pursued them. There was yet time to save the day; twenty minutes remained before the Queen was scheduled to take air. Rushing up to her apartment, he found the American grand dame still on guard. Mr. Sarnoff was determined to make things clear. For several minutes he talked to her and those who watched from a distance saw her face turn white. At that time they didn't know what password he used, but later they learned that he had told her of the need for the Queen's fulfilling her part of the contract if the \$8,000 was to be paid. Quickly he was admitted to the Queen's suite. In a short time he came out and hurried back to Aeolian Hall.

An orchestra playing Rumanian melodies was "filling in." There was still hope that the Queen might return. It was Mr. Sarnoff, however, who went on the air. He, who never before had extemporized over the radio, stood calmly and without script brought the listeners a message from the Queen. He explained that on the advice of her physician she would be unable to speak that evening; a slight case of laryngitis . . .

Shortly after Mr. Sarnoff made this explanation on behalf of royalty, the Queen showed up at a public dinner sponsored by the late Elbert Gary of the United States

Steel Corporation. The speakers at this dinner broadcast over another station, and Mr. Gary took advantage of the opportunity to present the Queen who addressed the radio audience! Following this, angry calls poured into WJZ from its disappointed listeners and Mr. Sarnoff says that he is still busy explaining it all.

"Who ever heard," said Bill Shirer, "of an adult, with no pretensions to being a singer or any other kind of artist, being dependent for a good, interesting job on his voice? But that was my predicament.

"Ed Murrow, European manager for C.B.S., wired me to meet him in Berlin; to pump me, I thought, for information about a radio talk that he had to make.

"We met and walked into the bar at the Adlon.

" 'Martini,' I told the waiter.

" 'Same here,' said Murrow.

"The cocktails came. We discussed friends in common. I kept wondering why he had asked me to meet him.

"I invited him to go sailing with me the following day.

" 'Swell,' he said, 'I'd like to.'

"The waiter gathered up the empty cocktail glasses and handed us menus.

" 'Just a minute, before we order,' Murrow broke in, 'I've got something on my mind.'

"That is what it was. He had something on his mind.

I learned that he was looking for an experienced foreign correspondent to open an office for C.B.S. on the Continent. He asked me if I were interested, and I said I was.

“‘How much have you been making?’

“I told him.

“‘Good, we’ll pay you the same.’

“‘Fine,’ I said.

“‘It’s a deal, then,’ and we reached for our drinks.

“I ate my dinner with a special zest that night. We talked of home, of Europe, and then it was getting late.

“‘There’s one little thing I forgot to mention,’ he said.

‘The voice.’

“‘The what?’

“‘The voice.’

“‘Bad,’ I said. ‘As you can see.’

“‘Perhaps not,’ he said. ‘But it’s a factor in broadcasting.’

“Then he told me that numerous directors and vice-presidents back in New York would want to hear my voice. So a transatlantic audition was arranged.

“Just before I took air, I had a severe case of nerves, thinking of what was at stake and that everything depended upon what a silly little ‘mike’ would do to my voice. In my mind’s eye I could see them sitting at their radios and raking me over the coals.

“Everything went wrong at first. Just a few minutes before the start, my announcer discovered that she had left the copy of her introductory remarks at a café where we had met. She dashed madly out of the studio and returned just before we went on the air.

“At the last minute the microphone, which apparently had been set for a man at least eight feet tall, would not come down.

“‘It’s stuck, Mein Herr,’ said the German engineer.

“He then advised me to point my head toward the ceiling. I tried it, but it so constricted my vocal cords that only a squeak came out when I started to talk.

“‘One minute to go,’ shouted the engineer.

“I protested that I couldn’t go on with that microphone and then I saw some packing boxes in the corner of the studio.

“‘Boost me up on those,’ I cried, and in a second I was atop the boxes, my legs dangling nicely and my mouth just at the level of the microphone. We laughed and that broke the tension.

“‘Quiet,’ the engineer shouted as he gave us the red light.

“I had no time to get nervous again.”

A fuller account of Bill Shirer’s radio debut appears in his “Berlin Diary,” but I have reported it here as he told it to me.

"How did you feel the first time you went on the air?" I asked Hendrik Willem van Loon. For this story I had trekked out to Nieuw Veere, his home in Old Greenwich.

"My Gawd!" he said. "The first time I went on the air? Well, that's a long, long story."

And so we went to sit on a little balcony that overlooks the Sound. Noodle, his dachshund, jumped into my lap and promptly went to sleep. But I didn't fall asleep as Hendrik, in his own fascinating manner, started to unfold his story. It happened many years ago when he was still in his native Holland.

But let Hendrik tell it . . .

"I was in my little village in Zeeland where nothing of any importance ever happened and where, therefore, we had that leisure which is necessary to meditate upon the wisdom or folly of the events that shake the outside world. And then one day Amsterdam called me up and asked me whether I would be willing to talk to America. They were making experiments with short-waves and since, as they so guardedly expressed themselves, I 'enjoyed a certain reputation' in the country of my adoption, I might be the right person to start this new service. I heartily accepted the invitation. It is always flattering to be chosen as the first person to do something new for the first time, and early in the morning of a foggy day in December (Christmas Eve, to be exact) I took the first train to



Amsterdam. I lunched with friends who had the best private collection of Italian primitives, and thus having been put into exactly the right frame of mind for my high adventure, I proceeded to the studio where the great experiment was to take place.

"It was a large, bare room in an old house. A few rugs were hanging from the walls to deaden unnecessary noises. There I was made to stand before something that looked for all the world like an old sardine box and I was coached in the technique of 'radio speaking.' I was asked to talk in a loud tone of voice, as the 'mike' in those prehistoric days was none too sensitive and needed harsh treatment. I was also admonished not to let myself be too greatly impressed by the thought that my voice was going to carry all the way across the North Sea and the Atlantic, for that might interfere with my 'usual mode of expression.' For the rest, I merely had to watch the director who would give me the sign when I must begin and when the time had come for me to stop. Five minutes of my oration were to be in English. The next four minutes were to be spoken in Dutch and during the last minute I had to switch back to English so that the boys at the other end of the world would know that the time had come for them to sign off. And now—'good luck! . . . fifty more seconds to go . . . thirty more . . . ten more . . . ssh . . . we are on the air!'

"Thereupon a phonograph, placed in front of the 'mike,' was set into motion and the solemn strains of *Wilhelmus* (the oldest of national anthems and one of the loveliest, too) resounded through the studio and were on their way to the West. After about a minute and a half, the *Wilhelmus* grew dimmer and dimmer until it finally melted into the clanging of the bells of one of Amsterdam's oldest churches. At least that was what the announcer told his transatlantic public:

"Immediately after the *Wilhelmus* you will hear the bells of the New Church.' The New Church, by the way, was built in 1389 and it was called the New one to differentiate it from the Old Church which had perished in a fire in the year 1367.

"Today radio would have tapped the real bells of the real church. Nothing to it. But when radio was young, Big Ben was the only bell that was really taken seriously, and on this occasion the chimes of Old Amsterdam consisted of a long row of iron bars which were struck by a young man in a green and purple sweater (he must have been an artist in his spare time) who used his hammer so deftly that the effect was quite genuine.

"As a matter of fact, the show had been arranged quite intelligently, and hundreds of letters reached us from all parts of the United States and Canada, telling of how the listeners, many of whom had been away from the old

country for thirty or forty years, had wept into their luncheon coffee when they heard those sounds which unexpectedly reminded them of the days of their childhood. Then came my little oration and that, too, seemed to have made a deep impression. From remote hamlets in Wyoming and Saskatchewan we heard of lonely farmers who had almost forgotten the sound of the language of their homeland and who now (often in a pathetically halting kind of Dutch) expressed their gratitude to us for having let them hear 'the beloved tongue once more before they died.'

"The whole experiment, therefore, was a great success and it made me feel what a wonderful invention radio was. Space had been annihilated and we had been able to enrich the lives of thousands of humble folk who would never forget the day when their voices had choked with emotion as they listened to the familiar sounds of what would forever remain 'the old home.'

"When I left the studio, the director gave me a sealed envelope.

" 'You know,' he said, 'all this is still an experiment and it may never lead to anything. We can't pay you for your services, but this is for traveling expenses.'

"Later, in the train back to Middelburg, I opened the envelope and found a ten-dollar note.

"Rumors about the successful experiment must have

spread throughout the States, for six months later I received a polite note from a radio agent in New York asking me whether I was willing to repeat the experiment for a commercial concern. This commercial concern represented an industry which was closely connected with Amsterdam. 'Why not arrange for a short-wave broadcast direct from Amsterdam to the United States? The expense for arranging for such a transmission' (which at that time was considerable) 'was nothing compared to the results that might be derived from connecting American business with an ancient and honorable craft of the picturesque and liberty-loving Low Countries.'

"It seemed a noble idea. I cabled an enthusiastic 'yes,' and went to the library in Middelburg, collected all the books I could find on the subject and within five days had condensed them into an eight-minute script.

"Ten days later I had a courteous cable from New York which read:

"'As all this is so new, you have perhaps not quite caught the spirit of this broadcast as we see it. Therefore, we have had an experienced writer in our office do a substitute piece for you, more in conformity with our policies. Please disregard your interesting historical essay and use our substitute.'

"The 'substitute piece' reached me one day before the planned broadcast. It was Hans Brinker and—molasses.

To the average Dutchman, Hans Brinker is something almost too dreadful to contemplate. It is as far removed from reality as Hitler's conception of a desirable new world. All the inevitable and familiar details were there—the windmills (which today have become historical curiosities, carefully preserved in open-air museums), the strange and colorful costumes of the natives (worn in our times as you would wear the blankets, feathers and beads displayed by the Indians) and the inevitable wooden shoes completed this cozy word-picture of the quaint land of my birth. It bore a very close resemblance to one of those preposterous 'Dutch Villages' which one is apt to find at a world's fair, where Greek and Armenian maidens, dressed in pseudo-Volendam costumes and lacy Brittany caps and Swiss bodices will serve you German leberwurst and Belgian beer at Park Avenue prices.

"The thing made me shudder. I read it to a few of my Dutch neighbors who were sufficiently conversant with the English language to appreciate the fine flavor of the noble piece of prose. They needed bottled restoratives after listening for only five minutes of the ten I was supposed to devote to my aerial subject. After they had been brought back to life, they went down on their knees and implored me not to read it.

"'How are we ever going to live it down?' they asked

me. 'Our country has experienced floods and plagues and foreign invasions. It has survived them, but never will it overcome this. Cable your American friends that it won't do! Tell them that it may lead to public riots and the Queen may lose her throne!'

"I did as they bade me do. I duly cabled to New York that a broadcast like that might imperil the safety of the Royal Family and since it never, with a single word, mentioned the particular trade in honor of which it was supposed to be spoken, would it not be a better idea if I were to stick to my original little exhortation which was at least historically and geographically correct.

"The next morning I had my answer:

"'Stick to script sent you. Everybody over here considered it brilliant résumé of life in Netherlands and of peculiarities of its people.'

"It was then too late to do anything about it. I could, of course, have refused to broadcast, but so many and such complicated and costly measures had been taken to assure safe conduct for my talk through the air (then much more difficult than today) that it would have meant a severe loss to all concerned had I gone on strike. And so I spoke that piece and for several years afterwards I was an object of polite ridicule to my Dutch neighbors who were apt to ask me when I would favor

them with a little broadcast from America in which 'the President of the United States went buffalo hunting in the gardens of the White House and was scalped by the Secretary of State on account of an ancient feud which had arisen when both of them were trappers and had tried to win favor in the eyes of the same squaw.'

"As for the broadcast, from a technical point of view, it was a brilliant success and ten days later the boat from New York brought me a letter. This letter contained a check for one thousand dollars."

Among the compensations for all the hard work my job entails are the friendships I have made. Two of my dearest friends are Fay and Linton Wells. Before they flew to Africa on a war assignment, I called Lint in Washington and asked him for a story.

"Since I am probably retiring from radio for the duration," he told me, "I really don't know what to say. I'm afraid there's nothing new . . . that is, nothing that hasn't already been told many times."

"Wait," I said, "do you remember the first time you were on the air?"

"Do I?" he laughed, "I'll never forget it . . . and that's a story that has never been printed, at least, not until now."

His letter reached me the following day:

August 15, 1942

Dearest Helen,

You honor me by asking for the story of my first broadcast:

Well, memories are revived by the card before me. Signed by Stanley W. Barnett, Program Director, and dated Davenport, Iowa, January 16, 1925, it certifies that I appeared on the program of "Radiophone Station WOC, Where the West Begins," and in the "State Where the Tall Corn Grows," which program was broadcast to "countless thousands of radio listeners." Therein lies a story.

The year before (1924), I had covered the United States Army's First Flight Around the World, and, during the stretch from the Aleutians to Baluchistan, had gained the dubious distinction of "First Aerial Stowaway." Subsequently, I was attached to the suite of the then Prince of Wales during his trip from England to and through the United States and Canada. Later, I was assigned to tour this Prohibition-afflicted nation and, not only find out what our citizens were drinking, but how quickly I, a stranger, could buy a drink. This took me to Davenport, among four hundred and two other towns and cities of the country.

That night, my journalistic friend, Ralph Cram, and other estimable Davenport citizens, including high civic officials, threw a party. I was the excuse for it. Amidst memorable wassail, I was summoned to the telephone and asked if I would make a broadcast about my travels and experiences. I declined with thanks and a short time later the town's first



citizen was persuaded to bring pressure to bear. He became so insistent that I finally consented, with the proviso that the entire party adjourn to the studio with me. I needed their moral support.

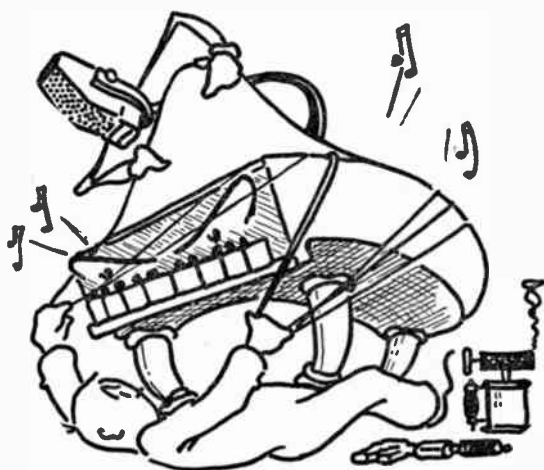
WOC was located in the Palmer School of Chiropractics and looked like a mountain cabin built out of rough-hewn logs. Mr. Barnett, the program director, greeted me cordially, and tendered a copy of the station's "Instructions for Broadcasting," which, after eighteen years, seem to me to be worthy of repetition:

Broadcasting is as simple as talking to your neighbor over the phone, but to keep the program up to the high standard of efficiency for which WOC is noted, it is necessary for all to observe certain details. Kindly note carefully the following:

1. If in doubt about anything, ask the program director or musical director.
2. No one but artists [which would seem to exclude me] and those in charge of programs will be allowed in the studio during broadcasting. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS RULE.**
3. Remain in the reception room until notified by program director that your number is next. Enter the studio quietly and be seated, being careful not to distract attention of artists who are broadcasting.
4. When their number is finished, take your place quietly while your announcement is being made, and be ready to start

upon signal from the announcer, so that the program may continue without interruption.

5. When necessary to tune with the piano, time will be allowed after the announcement, but please tune as quickly as possible and nod to the announcer when you are ready.



6. While in the studio avoid all unnecessary noises. Sounds, almost inaudible to the human ear, such as the rustling of paper or whispering, the microphone will pick up and broadcast very distinctly.

7. The program director will instruct you where to stand for your number and will explain the signal lights.

8. In *singing or speaking*, direct your voice squarely toward the microphone. Do not turn to the side. For vocal numbers,

if necessary, make a copy of the words, rather than try to look on the pianist's copy.

9. When you have finished, leave the studio quietly.

10. Be sure your name is registered in the Artist's Log before you leave.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

After realizing that I was expected to stand alone in a studio and ad-lib for twenty minutes into an unresponsive "mike" for the doubtful edification or entertainment of an unseen audience, I decided to bow out. But the program director finally persuaded me to go on by agreeing to violate the rules and permit my party to sit before me on the other side of the microphone. They provided a visible and rather noisy audience. Chairs were installed and the gang—twenty strong—filed in, armed with bottles and glasses. I was placed before them and the "mike," handed a glass of Iowa "corn" and signaled to start talking.

In those years, precision broadcasting, as we know it today, was non-existent. When my allotted twenty minutes were about up, I was handed a fresh glass and told to keep talking. For fifty-five minutes, I refought wars, waded through rivers of blood, roared across stormy skies, jumped from aeroplanes with and without parachutes, and fraternized with royalty. I took my listeners on the first flight around the world and, among other thrills, related to them the experiences of Lieutenants Erik Nelson and Jack Harding. They were flying in the Douglas Cruiser "New Orleans" over low foothills

which rise toward the mountain range that separates Karachi, India, from the Sind Desert. I was nearby in the "Boston" with Lieutenants Leigh Wade and Hank Ogden, when the engine of the "New Orleans" began to disintegrate. Erik *glided* that sluggish plane across seventy-five miles of mountains to a safe landing at Karachi. It was a magnificent exhibition of flying skill and the wonder of it was that the ship, with its wrecked engine and tattered, oil-covered fuselage, survived the punishment it endured. Later on, I asked Jack Harding what he was doing in the rear cockpit besides ducking steel fragments and hot oil.

"Well," Jack grinned, "for a time I sang 'Nearer, My God, to Thee,' and then I changed to 'Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me.'"

"First time I've ever been called Jesus," Erik grunted.

Several weeks after I was back in New York, the station forwarded me more than eighteen hundred letters and post-cards, "representing a part of the mail received from your listeners." All were gratifyingly laudatory. Among those which I kept is this from an Illinois minister:

"I just got in on the tail end of your talk on the World Flyers as they crossed the desert when one of the pilots, Jack Harding, I believe, stared death in the face with four of his pistons shot to pieces. I have never listened to anything more beautiful in my life than when you told the story of asking him what he thought of at the time of his trouble and he responded, 'Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me.' It was a thrill for me, and I want to thank you for those words."

That taught me a lesson: never try to put over a gag on the radio unless you're a comedian.

There was a letter, too, from Minnesota. "I am a girl of fifteen and I have long curls. I am quite tall. I was tuning in and I heard your talk from WOC and it was very interesting. Our radio is a six tube Enla set. We have had it three years last Christmas. I hope I hear you again over the radio."

Well, during the next twelve years, I made perhaps a hundred gratuitous broadcasts, including the first short-wave transmission from Russia in 1933, but it was not until 1937 that I turned professional. Then I abandoned foreign correspondence, and Bertha Brainard gave me a break on N.B.C. This led to my becoming radio's first "Roving Reporter," and indoctrinated me with the conviction that radio is the greatest medium ever created for the dissemination of information. Everyone on earth can be reached and influenced by the *spoken* word, whereas widespread illiteracy militates against the effectiveness of the *written* one.

My regret is that I did not realize that in 1925 instead of 1937. However, I have the satisfaction of knowing that my broadcasting tour of Latin America in 1938, and my report on the radio situation in Pan America at that time, which you, my dear lady, put for me into the proper hands, subsequently inspired C.B.S. to adopt my recommendations and to create the first Latin-American network for the re-transmission of North American programs. Later, N.B.C. and other broadcasting companies fell into line. As a consequence, we are today dissipating old suspicions and hatreds and

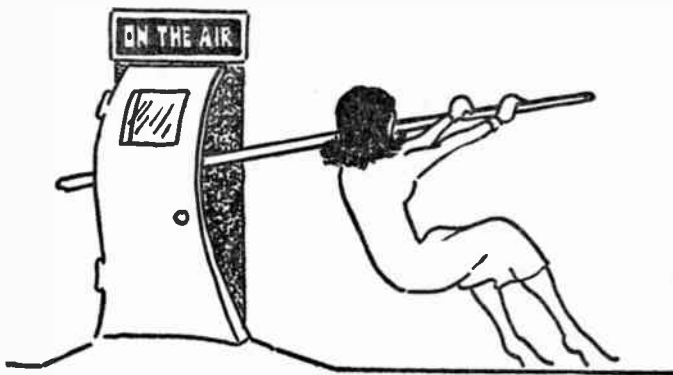
molding President Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy into a mutually beneficial hemisphere faith in Democracy which shall resist all onslaughts.

May you and your book enjoy grand success, darling. We're off at dawn tomorrow, but we'll be seeing you when it's over over there.

Affectionately,  
Lint

## CHAPTER FOUR

### HOW I "GOT IN"



It is a long, long time ago since I was in Baltimore. Or perhaps it just seems that way; so much has happened in the intervening years.

I used to sit and dream that some day I would write a book . . . not just an ordinary book, but one about my favorite pastime, "the sport of kings." Of course, it would be written with the flavor and in the vernacular of the race-track and, heaven willing, after the thrilling and

heart-squeezing style of Gerald Beaumont. My heroine would be a chestnut filly, "Dixie Girl" by name, whose valiant equine spirit and nimble legs would, at the crucial moment, carry her into the winner's circle and save for the Kentucky Colonel his "mortgaged-to-the-hilt" plantation.

This lofty ambition was never realized. But in a way it was instrumental in my casting precedent aside and becoming the only woman in my very strait-laced family to take a business course and to get a job. I felt that knowing typewriting and shorthand would be of assistance to me in writing my book. It proved to be the turning point in my life, and opened the way not to authorship but to another career.

My Dad was surprised the day I asked him to lend me \$50 for a business course. Aside from his scruples against young ladies working in offices, he had a feeling that he'd just be throwing money away. The course I had planned to take promised to turn you out as a full-fledged secretary in thirty days. At that time, regular courses in shorthand and typing usually took from six months to three years.

"But," I wheedled, "all the other 'debbies' are getting jobs. It's . . . well, it's being done this year—that's all."

Still unconvinced that an office was the place for his darling daughter, Dad finally agreed that being fit for



an unforeseen emergency could do no harm and I got the loan.

I was discouraged, the first day I reported to school. I had been assured that the course was for thirty days, but I found in talking to the other pupils that most of them had already been there from four to fifteen months. However, due largely to a sound educational background and a stubborn will to learn, I landed a job at the end of twenty-eight days.

It happened to be the first one I applied for, and in my inexperience and naïveté I saw nothing unusual about that. I was naïve again when the personnel director asked me what salary I wanted. Greatly embarrassed, I told him I would much prefer not to talk about such matters. Amused, he then asked what I thought I was worth; to which I hastily and frankly replied, "Oh, I couldn't afford to work for that."

I was not being coy or modest—just honest—as he no doubt learned to his sorrow, when I came to work the following day. Since that time I have completely overcome my distaste for discussing salary matters . . . Mr. Paley, please note.

I shouldn't dare bore anyone with the details of that first job. But I am certain that the names of those patient souls who put up with me day after day and signed my pay check at the end of each week will be recorded in

the Good Book along with other martyrs of the past.

Finally I found out that a retentive brain and a knack for letter composition would have to substitute for make-shift stenography. And, just as people who do not possess physical beauty develop sweet dispositions or learn to cook, I endeavored to cover up my inefficiency with a willingness to do more than was required of me. I stayed long hours, cut short my lunch-time and accepted gratefully suggestions made by colleagues, as well as by my boss. I was rewarded, to a certain extent, by never being fired, and by receiving good recommendations when I went on to new jobs. Gradually, among other things, I added two very important adjuncts to my business education:

One: I succeeded in making up my own brand of shorthand (and with such success that I once took down, word for word, a highly technical thirty-minute speech on preventive dentistry).

Two: in my desire to be helpful, I acquired invaluable knowledge of the work of others around me.

As opportunity knocked, I went from one position to a better one . . . to Goucher College, in Baltimore, as secretary to its Dean; then assistant to a dentist, in Philadelphia; bookkeeper and office manager of two commercial firms, in Kansas City; a brief interlude from business-as-usual when I, as the feminine half of a head-

lining Spanish adagio team, trouped to the tune of "El Choclo," in the Middle West, followed by three years as business manager of the Buschman Company and, later, of the National Professional Bureau (making money in my spare time by writing poetic ads for a dress manufacturer and composing verses for a greeting card concern) and finally back East, representing one of the oil tycoons in Washington during the last year of the NRA. Sensing the imminent demise of the Blue Eagle, I got my first job in radio, that of assistant to radio's colossal producer, Phillips H. Lord, better known at that time as the famous Seth Parker and now for such programs as "We, The People," "Mr. District Attorney," "Gang-Busters," "Johnny Presents" and a host of others. He was then in Washington getting his radio series "G-Men" under way. I was a little timid at starting in a business about which I knew so little. At that time it probably would have been difficult to find a less likely prospect for radio than I was. I never voluntarily listened to it and I didn't even have a radio set in my home.

My distaste arose from some unfortunate experiences. Invariably, when trying to concentrate on a game of poker or contract bridge, my enthusiastic host would turn the radio on full blast . . . and people wonder why so many bridge murders are committed.

Radios in automobiles were the special bane of my

existence. Trying to carry on a sensible conversation over the blare of music or a confused jumble of words tried my nerves to the screaming point. I did not realize then what I afterwards learned—the fault lay with those radio abusers it was my misfortune to know and not with radio, itself.

In my career, I had taken two other jobs for which I had had no previous training. I had held both during the rather hectic years I spent in Kansas City, Missouri. I arrived there at a time when it was practically impossible to get any job unless you were what was then known as "Kansas City's Own." I, an importation from the East, was taboo.

For the first time in my life I turned for help to the employment agencies. No luck there. They were more concerned with collecting their fee than with securing a position for me. By sending me out for a job, they stood to lose the good will of their client or the opportunity of filling the vacancy or both. I couldn't fake my background, either, as I knew nothing of the city and—horror upon horrors—I spoke with a decided Eastern accent.

One morning, while I was waiting to see the manager of an agency, I overheard him talking on the telephone. From his side of the conversation it was evident that there was a client on the other end . . . and an irate one, at that. He was desperately trying to placate her, and,

at the same time, explain that it was impossible to get her another girl. Apparently she had been trying them all and had either fired them herself, or they had left after a few days of their own volition.

I tiptoed past the grim receptionist and stationed myself at the open door of the manager's office. He glanced up and saw me.

"Let me go," I whispered, "I'll . . ."

"What—excuse me a moment—what?" he asked me, as he put his hand over the mouthpiece of the 'phone.

"I said, 'I'll take the job' . . . Tell her."

"Well, who are you?" he demanded.

"Does that matter?" I asked. "You're looking for another sacrifice, well, here I am."

A bit dazed, he picked up the receiver. "All right, Mrs. Harshman," he said, "I have just the person for you. She'll be out at once."

And thus I broke into the "heart of America."

I understood the reason for the quick turn-over of employees when I arrived at the big apartment house and encountered Mrs. Harshman, the manager. Obviously the term "battle-ax" was coined with her in mind. Later I was to learn that a heart was not included in her anatomy. But she did have a job open, and I gratefully accepted this opportunity to work again.

"So," she said as she read the letter I had brought with

me from the agency, "PBX . . . and efficient." Her eyes, penetrating and cold, sought mine in verification.

"Yes, indeed," I said and wished that I had read the letter before giving it to her. "PBX" was a new term to me, but it obviously meant something complimentary for she seemed well pleased.

"Where is my office?" I asked after it was settled that I was to start working the following morning. I winced when she told me 7 A.M., but I didn't comment on this inconvenient and unusual hour. To my dismay I found that my "office" was behind the desk in the lobby.

"And my duties?"

"PBX operator, of course," was her irritable reply and she pointed to a big piece of furniture behind me which, I was to learn, was a switchboard.

"But isn't that where the telephone girl sits?" I faltered.

"Naturally . . . where else?" and she gave me a suspicious glance.

So, that's the meaning of PBX!

"Of course," I said quickly, but with a sinking feeling in my middle. "It was just that it . . . looked so large," I ended feebly.

"Ninety-four units," she told me, with a malicious gleam. "Mr. Ramsey says here," and she tapped the letter in her hand, "that you are an experienced PBX operator."

"I am," I weakly replied.

"Hm-m," was her sour retort. "We'll soon see about that."

At last I was out of her presence and slightly ill in the suffocating heat of a typical Kansas City summer day. Never once had it occurred to me when the whirlwind arrangements for the interview were being made to ask what type of job I was to do. When I had given it any thought, I had decided that it would be secretarial work.

A job at last . . . and what a job! And how could I possibly hold it? Downtown I went and into the Hotel Muehlebach.

"Will you ring Mr. Jones?" I said to the little, blond operator.

"Which Mr. Jones?" she asked.

"Are there so many?"

"About twelve."

"Well, I don't know his initials," I told her, "but it is frightfully important that I talk with him. I have an urgent message."

"If it's an emergency," she said, "I suppose I could try them all. Who should I say is calling?" she asked dubiously.

"Cousin Maude," I replied quickly. "It's from her." And she plugged in the first hole.

Apparently this Mr. Jones was out, for nobody answered. She unplugged and plugged in a new one.

"Why do you move that little gadget?" and I pointed to the object on which her hand rested.

"That's the key I ring with," she answered. "... Oh ... Mr. Jones, have you a 'cousin Maude'? ... a 'cousin Maude' ... M-a-u-d-e."

He replied at length. Apparently she had gotten him out of the bathtub and he was dripping wet.

"Excuse it, please." And turning to me, she said simply, "He hasn't."

She began again. Finally all twelve holes had been "punched." Fascinated, I watched her manipulating the keys and "pluggers." These, she later told me, were the trunk lines.

We never did find a Mr. Jones who had a "Cousin Maude," but I learned enough about the elementary workings of a switchboard so that I was able to bluff my way through the following day. True, several of the guests came down that first morning and threatened to check out if the telephone service did not improve. But when night fell and I expected my walking papers, I was told gruffly to report to work a half hour earlier in the future.

Can I ever forget the feeling I had that first morning as I sat before the switchboard and saw the lights come on? It reminded me of nothing so much as an evening sky when all the stars are out. I was busier than the one-



armed paper-hanger. Whenever I plugged in, some irate soul, instead of telling me what he wanted, told me what I was.

And what I learned about people in the weeks I labored there! It was a side I had not seen before. On the whole, it was not a pleasant one, but it was another rung in my climb.

In a short time I got to be quite good at the work and soon I landed a job as assistant manager of an apartment hotel in a fashionable neighborhood. I kept this job for several months and at the end of that time I was able to qualify as one of "Kansas City's Own." Then I secured another position more in keeping with my background and experience.

It was not until later that I discovered why I had been successful in holding that first job. What I thought was due to my cleverness in covering up my inexperience was actually due to the fact that the old slave-driver knew that if she lost me there was no one left in Kansas City who would work for her.

There was another time I went to work without knowing the job I was to do. The firm for which I had been business manager had just closed its Kansas City branch and I had declined its offer of a similar position in St. Louis.

It was during the depression and jobs were at a premium,

especially in "KayCee," so I answered the only ad in the help wanted columns, something I had never done before. The position available was for a bookkeeper at a brokerage house. The one important thing my business education lacked at that time was a knowledge of bookkeeping, and the securities business was a totally strange one to me. But, with jobs so scarce, my conscience wouldn't let me pass this up. I was comforted, however, by the thought that letters, written in answer to newspaper ads, never brought results.

The next day's mail brought a reply. Apparently I had spoken too well of myself. I was in for it this time. The salary was decent, surroundings pleasant and there wasn't another job in the city. I had to take it.

What I hadn't known, when I made my application, was that the company was on its last legs. For this reason its nervous president had me make a daily profit and loss statement; each time a transaction was made, he wanted me to whip up a trial balance. This could make even a seasoned bookkeeper turn gray.

Despite my penchant for mathematics, I knew nothing of the intricacies of bookkeeping—double or single entry—and this new world of stocks and bonds was becoming more baffling every day.

It was soon apparent that I wasn't going to be able to bluff it through. Fortunately, my worried boss attributed

my lack of speed to the mediocre set of books I had inherited and I seized upon this as an opportunity for my salvation. Desperately he told me that if I thought it would help, I could buy new books and put in my own system.

Up I went to Remington Rand and made a deal. With business at its lowest ebb, they were only too eager to work with me. I promised to throw them the business of setting up the books, provided that in the evenings one of their accountants taught me bookkeeping. We struck a bargain and thus I kept my job. The long hours of burning the midnight oil, followed by days of confusion, at last made a bookkeeper of me. But it was learning the hard way.

Poetry has played its part in my career, too. I once wrote a letter of application for a position in rhyme. The employer didn't respond in kind, but I got the job.

And, way back in the second job I ever had, the manager of my department used to make me stop work every day an hour before closing time. Then, there I'd sit and write poetry about the office. No serious verses these, just rhymes and jingles which good-naturedly poked fun at the staff. Generally he bore the brunt of them, but, for some unknown reason, he enjoyed it. At first, the others resented having my work passed on to them as their

busy day drew to a close. But gradually even they became interested and eventually scrap-books were kept of the results of my unusual assignment.

But to get back to my job as Phil Lord's assistant: I started with the hardest task-master in the business, the kind of man who grows lean and gaunt when there is little work and plenty of rest, and sleek and plump when slaving under pressure twenty-four hours a day. But he was a good teacher and I am very grateful that I had the opportunity of breaking in the "hard way." One thing: it made all jobs in radio seem easy by comparison.

As the "G-Men" series was broadcast in cooperation with the Department of Justice, G-Man J. Edgar Hoover gave me an office next to his in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in Washington, so that I might get from their files the factual résumés around which the scripts for the broadcasts were written. I practically commuted to New York by airplane during the months "G-Men" was on N.B.C. Later, when we were fortunate enough to have sponsors for several weekly shows and were broadcasting over the networks of both N.B.C. and C.B.S., I had to move to New York to handle the output of this young radio genius, Lord.

Phil was and is the most prolific idea man in the industry. He had so many new ideas popping in and out of

his head that it almost made a wreck of me just trying to remember them. He has a genius, too, for selling as well as creating them.

When I first went to work for him he was a one-man show. He had the feeling that nothing could be done correctly unless he did it himself.

"Never," I told him, "are you going to be completely successful until you learn to be more of an executive and build up around you a competent staff of writers and producers."

He just could not let go at first, and then he started to experiment with me. Once the commercial announcement for a broadcast didn't arrive in time and, instead of writing it himself, he gave me the job. Then I wrote a script for "G-Men" and one for his beloved and very personal "Seth Parker." I did re-writes, too, on his other programs, casting and direction of rehearsals. Despite my ignominious start as a guinea pig, almost overnight I found that I'd become an "expert." What's more, I was beginning to love radio!

Phil sold more series. He, his partner, John Ives, our one and only extremely competent and extremely over-worked secretary, Dorothy Levy, and I moved into larger quarters—two rooms. However, though Phil by this time was giving me free rein with all of his precious brain children, and I was busier than the proverbial "old

woman who lived in a shoe" ever could have been, he did not change one whit.

The pressure of work and responsibility was beginning to tell on me. I no longer took pride in being called for advice on some new program idea at four o'clock in the morning. It was not that Phil was unkind; he just couldn't understand. Thriving on work, he toiled all day and thought up ideas all night; but I, of softer clay, was weakening under the strain. Each time I'd speak of leaving, he'd suggest a cruise, but always, before the boat pulled out, some emergency would arise that postponed my sailing.

And the show always went on, though I can still too clearly remember the times I sat up all night rewriting a script that in rehearsal had failed to click.

Phil's ideas sold as if he had a Midas touch. In the middle of this new prosperity, this colossal confusion and deluge of work, our boy genius decided that "we" would write a book. Not one that he would have to take time from his broadcasts to write, but a book composed of the homely philosophy, the sage advice and sly wit of Seth Parker, sprinkled with anecdotes . . . a Seth Parker Scrap Book. And that was the name it finally bore.

I had never published or edited a book, and had not the first idea of how to go about compiling the huge mass of material that was dumped on my desk into any

sort of readable continuity. Bids had to be gotten from publishing houses, too, binding and paper selected and the various kinds of typography considered.

But this wasn't something to be learned gradually. Phil had decided that "we" would publish "Seth Parker's Scrap Book" by Christmas . . . then not quite a month away. Even now I can't reflect too long on the nightmarish details. Many a Christmas tree that year bowed a limb with the weight of a bright red book held together by a golden tasseled cord. And I, too, was bowed and bent.

So it went . . . until one day I walked out into the April sunshine bound for N.B.C. and another job. I felt a little sad at the thought of leaving, for, despite the many hardships, Phil was a generous, a wonderful person. However, I had reached a point where the jingle of the phone could throw me into hysterics. N.B.C., for whom we had broadcast so many programs, would seem a bit like home. I had come to look upon the previously despised radio as the most fascinating work in the world.

I remember setting out from our offices at 501 Madison Avenue, determined not to return until I had that other job. I crossed Fifty-second Street and started down the Avenue toward Radio City. I had gone only a few steps when I found myself in front of C.B.S. That gave me an idea. Being rather a systematic person, I suddenly decided to check this possibility off my list first. I never got

to N.B.C. Instead, I had a most amazing interview.

The new Talks Director, I was told, was rapidly becoming inundated by the work that had descended upon him. He needed an assistant—he needed *five* of them! Maybe I had better not become too inquisitive, I thought. This sounds like just the sort of thing I'm running away from. However, I went in to see him. "Only for a minute," they warned me as he was then overdue at the Astor for the Award Luncheon of the Women's National Radio Committee. I crossed the threshold and there before me stood one of the handsomest creatures my eyes had ever beheld. Usually job-seeking is easy going and it is only after I have landed it that any sort of "stage fright" descends upon me. This day my rather glib tongue froze to the roof of my mouth and there I sat like an overgrown school girl while Ed Murrow spoke of the benefits and inadequacies, and presented me with as graphic a picture of what the job entailed as the few minutes would allow.

His secretary looked in to remind him that the luncheon would soon be over. Grabbing his hat, he asked if we could continue the interview in his cab. I nodded and off we went to the elevator. By that time, I had more or less come to, and what he had told of the position interested me tremendously. He turned to me going down in the elevator.



"What do you do in the evenings?"

My heart sank. So I can't take the job after all, I thought. What a pity! With dignity I replied:

"I dance, go to the theatre, to . . ."

"No, no," he broke in, "newspapers, periodicals, worthwhile books . . . reading, you know. Important for your work."

I relaxed—he really was all business.

"I read a lot," I said.

"Good."

And then we were in a cab, careening madly toward Broadway.

"Perhaps I had better tell you something of my background," I ventured. But I had no sooner started than the taxi came to an abrupt stop at the Astor's side entrance and out we jumped.

Thus it was that I came to C.B.S. and found the kind of work for which I unconsciously had been searching since first I entered the world of business. Soon I became the Assistant Director of the Department and then in 1937, when Ed left this country to become chief of C.B.S.'s foreign correspondents with headquarters in London, I was made as well Associate Editor of *Talks*, the quarterly, pocket-size digest published by C.B.S.

At the time Sterling Fisher, formerly of the New York *Times*, took Ed's place as Director of the Department,

broadcasters were having their hands full to combat the criticism from educational groups throughout the country. Their boycott of radio and contempt for what it was trying to do were proving serious stumbling blocks in the path of broadcast officials who, in their conscientious effort to operate to the fullest in the public interest, were endeavoring to make an important contribution in the field of education.

Our department, known as the Talks Department, had within it two small divisions: the "Church of the Air" and the "School of the Air." The former was going along smoothly; the latter, to put it mildly, was being stunted early in its growth. Try as they might, the broadcasters were unable to get respect, cooperation or even recognition from the educators.

I was familiar with all of this even before coming to C.B.S., as I had been forced to try a little missionary work along that line with a few of the educational groups while associated with Phil Lord. My interest, however, lay in the Talks end of our department, so I left Sterling a clear field to batter away at their closed door as long as his optimism lasted.

But I hadn't reckoned with Sterling! A pioneer from 'way back, this big, fighting Texan hadn't the word "can't" in his dictionary. He, a former educator, was able to tell them "in their own language," what they were

missing by their stubborn attitude which kept them ignorant of radio's far-reaching potentialities. He it was who "took them to Sunday school" and successfully emerged with converts.

C.B.S. gladly put facilities at his disposal, and before long the educational portion of the Talks Department became sufficiently important to warrant adding its name to the title of the department.

It reached such proportions in January 1942, that, when Sterling went to N.B.C. as Assistant to its Public Service Counsellor, and Lyman Bryson, eminent educator, came to C.B.S., Talks and Education was split into two entirely separate departments, Bryson heading the latter, and I the former. It was at that time, too, that I became Editor of *Talks*.

People are curious as to what is meant by the Talks Department. Briefly, its function is that of a public service. The Talks Department of C.B.S. schedules the speaking programs for the network or any portion thereof, and during ordinary times may originate broadcasts from any place in the world.

To this department come requests for free time on the air, called "sustaining" time. (Commercial time is paid for by sponsors for the advertising of their services and products; "sustaining" time is paid for by the broadcast-

ing companies.) These requests come to me from people in all walks of life and fields of endeavor.

The business of the Talks Department requires, for one thing, keeping in touch with current events; it includes the issuance of invitations to speakers, or the granting of requests made of us for time; working through the details of each broadcast; the reading of scripts before they go on the air and attendance in the studio. Along with the departments of News, Sports and Special Events, it is a division of the huge Public Affairs Department headed by Paul White.

Several people recently have suggested that I write a book. T. V. Smith, when he was Congressman-at-Large from Illinois, came all the way from Washington one day to urge me to write a "text book" on "how to speak over the air." It was just before the 1940 Presidential campaign and he cited the tremendously important part radio was to play in it. I was too busy then to do more than thank him for the compliment. By the time the inauguration was over I had succeeded in working myself into a breakdown, without benefit of this extra "chore."

Then came the summer of 1942 and with it, of course, the job of editing the July issue of *Talks*. Week-ending in Old Greenwich at the Hendrik Willelem van Loons' found me busy trying to meet my dead-line. What free

time I had went to reading "Lives," van Loon's wonderful new book, which has since been published.

"When are you going to write that book?" Hendrik's question burst like a bombshell on my startled ears. I hadn't even thought of such a thing since my chat with "T.V." over two years before.

"I have no time, nor desire, nor intention to write a book," I replied with finality. "Besides, Hendrik, I'm not an author."

"You don't have to be," he parried. "All you do is write down what you've learned. That's what people want to know."

"Please," I said, "I'm not interested."

That night we had guests for supper, a Mr. and Mrs. Fischer. At table Mr. Fischer was placed next to me. No sooner were we seated than he asked politely how my "book" was coming along. I looked at Hendrik at the head of the table. His face wore the sweet, innocent expression of a babe.

"I am not writing anything," I explained carefully, "merely editing *Talks*."

"But," and he smiled so kindly, "I really would be interested in your book."

It was only then that I found out what Hendrik had done. Mr. Fischer was a publisher!

I was beginning to feel weak. Here was something I

had set out to do when first I took my business course.

"What kind of a book?" I murmured.

"Your life—radio—amusing incidents—do's and don'ts; factual, but light."

So, no galloping of hoofs, no thundering of grandstands as "Dixie Girl" swept by . . . the winnah!

A bit timidly I confided my thoughts to Mr. Fischer. He didn't laugh.

"Others," he said, "can write of the race track. Only you can do the job I've outlined."

Thus, at last, I was to become an author. True, not as I had once dreamed. No fiction—this. But a chance to answer the questions all people ask me as soon as they find out I'm in radio.

Before I quite realized it, I had become enthusiastic, the contract was signed, Miss Ganz was hired as my secretary and my memory was being robbed of its store.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THIS IS MY DAY



“Elmer Davis wants you to call him at O.W.I., Senator Pepper is asking if he may change the date for his broadcast, Secretary Perkins wishes to speak from New York instead of Boston, Mr. Willkie says he’ll meet with you and the Greek Minister at 5:30 tomorrow and Washington is on the line,” Miss Cross, my secretary, greets me as I breeze by her en route to my office.

The Washington call is from the Treasury Depart-

ment and, while I'm still busy with it, Miss Cross sticks her head in the doorway to say that W.P.B. is requesting time for Donald Nelson to broadcast.

Then there's a lull and we settle down to the pile of wires and mail before me. First, I tackle the telegrams: one from the C.I.O. regarding Philip Murray's broadcast; two from Averill Harriman and former Ambassador Joseph Grew granting permission to use excerpts of their addresses in a forthcoming issue of *Talks*; a cable from Ed Murrow in London confirming General de Gaulle's participation in a transatlantic broadcast; a wire from our Chicago station asking for details about the American Medical Association's conference and a request from our Washington office for time for General Brett.

Now come the letters. The Boy Scouts are having an important luncheon; the Daughters of the American Revolution are meeting in Washington; the President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union is speaking in Chicago; Congressman Celler wishes to present his views on pending legislation; the Council for Democracy is having a meeting and Freedom House is offering an anniversary program. Here are also requests for information, an application for a job, two requests for advice on how to speak over the radio, an invitation to address a meeting of the Pan-Hellenic Association in Philadelphia,



four invitations to other banquets and an actress is asking for an audition.

My replies to these are punctuated by telephone calls. In the middle of dictating the last letter, three of my phones ring simultaneously, and Bonnie, the receptionist, comes in to announce Princess Alexandra Kropotkin, who has no appointment. "Sasha" Kropotkin, I soon learn, is thinking of including something of my work in her "To the Ladies" page in *Liberty* magazine.

"This time," she tells me, "I haven't come for a social call, so prepare to be interviewed."

Miss Cross is trying to talk with three people at once when the fourth phone rings. I pick it up and so Sasha has to content herself with catching one side of the conversation as the first part of the interview.

But now it is time to dash to the studio for my first broadcast of the day. James G. Blaine is speaking on Civilian Defense. I have read his script, so, after okaying the announcements and chatting with him about the C.D.V.O. I hurry back to Sasha.

The eleven o'clock C.B.S. news bulletin has arrived. I glance over it while the interview continues. Sasha, ever the good reporter, goes sublimely on, gets her material and leaves just as I tune in our speaker from St. Louis.

While the program is on, Clark Eichelberger, who has just returned from a trip throughout the West, comes

in to discuss his report for the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace.

As he leaves, a representative of the Russian War Relief drops by for a chat.

Later, I get my first opportunity at the *New York Times*. I rapidly scan the front page. (Newspapers, periodicals and our own press releases are required daily reading.)

Miss Cross, who has been busy with notations regarding the disposition of all requests and other transactions, returns to my office with more mail. Besides letters, this time there are scripts for future broadcasts. We plunge into this new batch of letters amid continued frequent interruptions from the telephones.

While still at it, Leo Heatley, the cream of our publicity department, comes in to get news of broadcasts which have been arranged this morning.

With the final letter dictated, I am alone at last and can start reading the scripts.

"If you don't hurry, you'll be late for lunch," warns Miss Cross, as she walks in with mail to be signed. So, here I am in a taxi en route to the Waldorf and the luncheon of the National Association of Manufacturers. I eat, I talk with tycoons, I listen to some of their speeches, and now I am on the 17th floor of C.B.S. and rushing past Miss Cross again.

"Los Angeles wants you to call," she greets me. "It's about the broadcast of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; the Post-War World Council is requesting time for Lin Yutang to answer Stanwood Menken's broadcast on India and you're due at a meeting in Paul White's office in five minutes."

"Get me L.A.," I say and fly into my office.

As usual the meeting with Paul White is a short one, so I return in time for an appointment with Miss Riley, of *Good Housekeeping*. She has come to discuss women's voices and what to do about them. There is an article she's writing in which she wishes to advocate certain controls.

"Please tell them to do nothing," I beseech her and for a few minutes her shocked silence is my reply.

"But shouldn't they even try to change their level?" she inquires, disappointment heavy in her eyes.

"Far better to urge them just to be natural on the air," I advise.

While we are discussing the pros and cons of voice culture, the Netherlands Legation phones regarding my invitation to Queen Wilhelmina to broadcast, and my Los Angeles call comes through.

As Miss Riley leaves, more wires and letters are brought in. Two of the requests for time are on such short notice that it is impossible to grant them. I refer one to Adelaide

Hawley as a possible feature for her regularly scheduled "Woman's Page of the Air," and send information regarding the other to Margaret Miller in the hope that she can use it on her afternoon news program.

Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg is announced. Her Royal Highness has come for me to coach her for a broadcast she is to make. I work for an hour with this gracious lady.

I glance at the clock—time to listen to an audition. As it's being piped to our offices through master control, I reach over and turn up the volume on my receiving set. While I'm listening a recording is brought in. I read the note that accompanies it:

"Will you please play this today and criticize my diction? I have an important address to make at a banquet in Des Moines."

I buzz for Miss Cross:

"Please reserve the 18th floor audition room for fifteen minutes this afternoon."

"Certainly," she replies, "and Mr. Rennie, of the British Information Bureau, is on line 3."

I pick up the phone and, as usual, he has something interesting and worth while to tell me:

"Wing Commander Hall has just arrived in this country. I thought you'd like to know of his availability. He's here to discuss training for air cadets."

Miss Cross is standing before me. She is holding a sheet of paper for me to read: "Henrietta Harrison of the Y.M.C.A. calling on line 2 . . . says very urgent."

"Thanks a million for telling me about Wing Commander Hall, Mr. Rennie. I'll call you back just as soon as I get a time for you to offer him" . . . and I punch in line 2.

Henrietta wants to have Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek broadcast from Chungking on World Service Day. I give her a time and suggest that she have Madame Chiang do the English interpretation on the broadcast.

The afternoon news bulletin is brought in. It contains information about a possible trip to this country by President Rios of Chile. I dictate a cable, inviting him to broadcast upon his arrival in Washington.

The phone again!

Mr. Dewey is calling to discuss the radio angle of his campaign.

Miss Cross brings in my afternoon grapefruit juice. Her usually smiling countenance is a bit clouded.

"What's the matter?" I ask.

"Mayor LaGuardia has decided that he is too busy to come up town to our studios for his broadcast this afternoon."

I drop everything, including the grapefruit juice, and

hastily make plans for piping the program from his office.

The engineer, production man and announcer have already left for City Hall, when I finally dash out of C.B.S. and hail a taxi.

"I have a long trip for you," I tell the driver, "and in nothing flat."

"Right," he replies and off we start on the maddest ride I have ever taken through the streets of Manhattan. I sit back and relax. We will surely get there in time at this rate. Through half-closed eyes I watch our hair-breadth escapes as we swing about in the snarling traffic. With my feet against the front seat, I brace myself for the sudden stops and starts. In and out we weave, turning corners on three wheels, barely grazing fenders on all sides. What an expert, I marvel! Nowhere in this country could you find such precision driving as among the cabbies of this great metropolis.

I reflect on the time when I had just come to New York. How frightened I had been during those first wild rides through traffic-clogged streets. How bitterly I had complained that these taxis were not driven like the ones in other cities. In those days I used to sit on the edge of the seat, cling to the window strap and glue my eyes on the terrifying scene before me. More than one abrupt

stop had thrown me to the floor and I usually arrived at my destination physically as well as mentally disheveled.

But that was long ago. I watch my cab careen down the wrong side of the street and head for the stream of cars speeding toward us. What miraculous thing my driver does to avert this seemingly unpreventable disaster, I don't see, for I turn to catch another fleeting glimpse of a dress in one of the shop windows whizzing by.

"Whew," from my driver; then cautiously, "Are you scared, lady?"

"Not at all," I answer serenely. He must think I know nothing of New York taxis.

"Well, you got something on me," is his startling rejoinder. "You see, this here's the first day I ever drove a cab!"

The broadcast is soon over and I am speeding back to my office. Letters and telephone messages have piled up during my absence and there is more mail to sign. Miss Cross is deep in the multitudinous details that attend each scheduled broadcast, and the phone is ringing. She buzzes for me:

"Barney Yanofsky, of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, is calling from Kansas City."

As I hang up, she rushes into my office to say that one of our vice-presidents has just requested a list of programs we carried in 1939.

We work like mad to finish the last bit of work for the day, check over fan mail for the department and for *Talks* magazine and listen to the "diction" recording, making notes of my criticism.

The phone!—Dan Lundbergh calling from Mexico City. We discuss arrangements for President Avila Camacho to speak on a special broadcast.

Again I sign letters, answer wires and make last-minute telephone calls. Miss Cross comes in to say good night.

"Here's the last script you have to edit for the next issue of *Talks*," and she puts a copy of Vice-President Wallace's address on my desk.

"I'll take it home and do it tonight," I promise—and she is gone.

I hurry downstairs to my Spanish lesson. I'm afraid my mind isn't on the intricacies of learning the tongue of our "Good Neighbors," but I'm trying hard to concentrate. Professor Blanco is patient. The beautiful language flows from his lips like liquid music. Parrot-like I answer with the rest of the class and soon the hour is over.

"Buenas noches, Señor Profesor, señoritas y caballeros. Hasta mañana."

Homeward bound, I fight my way into a loaded Madison Avenue bus. Luckily, I take up my stand near a woman who gets off at the first stop. I sink down into



the seat, pull out the 4,860 word script and start condensing it to a 320 word article.

In no time I am home. I look over the evening paper, while running the water for my bath. My ever-thoughtful Aunt Bertha is fixing something in our tiny kitchen.

"I won't have time to eat until after the theatre," I call, but she goes right on with her preparations.



I get into the tub. Ah, how good it is to relax in its sweetly-scented warmth. The alarm of the telephone shatters this brief moment of serenity.

"It's the office," calls my aunt, rapping on the door, ". . . says very important."

I say a few things under my breath about the office, start to get out of the tub, slip on the soap and finally, dripping and shivering inside an inadequate bath towel, stand for twenty minutes at that disturber of the peace—the telephone.

First, our Communications Department reads wires to me, then I am transferred to the Production Department, then to the Publicity Desk and finally back to Communications where I dictate replies to three of the wires.

I rush through my bath, dress and for a few minutes practice “sending” on my wireless key. I am starting to play one of the International Code records when Aunt Bertha brings in such an appetizing snack that I cut short my “receiving” practice to gulp down a sandwich. And now it is time for the theatre.

“I’ll have to leave before the show is over,” I tell Harry, as our cab turns west on 44th. “Mrs. Roosevelt’s broadcasting from here tonight.”

“I’ll go when you do,” is his gallant reply.

“Please don’t. Stay and see it through, so you can tell me how it ends. Pick me up at my office after the broadcast.”

And so I have my way and he’ll have his money’s worth.

“It’s five past ten,” he whispers just as Sergeant Rough is about to divulge the name of the murderer in “Angel

Street," and I have to ponder in the cab all the way to C.B.S. on "who dunit."

Charlie, the elevator man, greets me with the information that he has just taken the First Lady up to the Blue Room. She is having a test for "voice level" when I walk into the studio. Afterwards we sit and chat until air time, while the cameraman takes flashlight pictures.

Her fifteen-minute broadcast over, I go down to my office to meet Harry. He is looking at the clock as I enter. Its hour hand points to eleven. His face wears a thoughtful expression.

"Tell me," he pleads, "just when *does* your day end?"

"Right now," I reply optimistically, "so come on—I'm starved."

We hurry across the street to the Barberry Room.

"A thick steak for two . . . rare," he tells Carlos, "lettuce with Roquefort dressing . . ."

". . . and chocolate soufflé with whipped cream," I conclude.

"No dancing tonight," I yawn, so we drive home.

I tiptoe into my apartment. On the table is a message from Aunt Bertha:

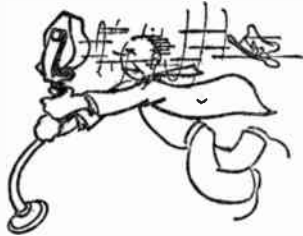
"Communications wants you to call if you come in before one."

I look at the clock—a quarter to. At C.B.S. Andrew reads me two wires. Only one requires an answer.

I slip off my clothes and crawl in between the cool, fresh sheets. What a nice, full day, I think drowsily. Just like all the rest—and tomorrow will be the same. Not the same people, perhaps, nor the same circumstances. The time will be filled, though, to overflowing—and the tempo will be as hectic. Tomorrow I will . . . I will . . . will . . . Sleep is a wonderful thing.

## CHAPTER SIX

### I GIVE 'EM THE AIR



The radio in the corner grocery was going full blast. Krum, the grocer, was leaning on a sack of potatoes, listening to a local orator hold forth. He shook his head, reached up on the shelf, and gave the dial a quick, brutal twist.

“Why don’t he talk natural, like—oh well—like the President? I can do better, myself.”

“Maybe you could,” I said.

Grocer Krum beamed. “Sure I could. All a feller has to do is talk. Now take me . . . I talk all day long, so I oughta be able to do it pretty good on the air.”

That is what they say—until they get in front of a microphone.

Bob Trout, ace news reporter for C.B.S., received a letter from one of his fans which sums up in a few words the secret of a radio speaker's success. She wrote:

"Every time I hear you broadcast, I feel as if I have been listening to a friend."

A listener from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, wrote to Tony Wons, way back in 1931:

"When you come on the air, I make the cat stop purring, so I can hear everything you say."

Radio is a peculiar sort of medium; probably more powerful and more intimate than any other system of mass communication in history. Serving as a direct individual contact between the speaker and listener is the microphone, but the technique of speaking into the microphone is different from that of any other means of communication.

A radio speech can be heard by millions of listeners, but these listeners are seldom part of an audience. In most cases a listener has only you, the speaker, in his living-room, and, if you give him something he wants to hear, something that is of importance to his life, he becomes your friend.

The average listener—you, I, all of us—is chiefly interested in himself. Therefore, your problem is to make him

feel your fear, or comfort, or anger. The listener becomes your friend simply and solely because you make him see and feel as you do.

For this reason, invariably, an address written expressly for the unseen audience and delivered from a studio in a radio station has a better reception in the home. Addresses before public gatherings, in hotels, banquet-rooms, meeting halls and the like are seldom as effective. The appeal to the small group assembled before you overrules consideration of the broader interests of the unseen listeners.

In a studio there is no need to raise your voice above conversational level and the perfected acoustic equipment permits transmission of your voice without distortion. Still, some speakers stubbornly prefer to make a public occasion the background for their remarks.

Although "Talk" is my business, figuratively speaking I rarely say a word. When I do, however, it is much easier for me to talk before a microphone than without one, and to an unseen audience than before a visible one. I have so often told new or timid speakers how to use the microphone and explained away their fears through a bit of applied psychology, that I have probably finally convinced even myself that "mikes don't bite."

The most important thing to remember about broadcasting a speech is to be completely natural, relaxed and informal. Let simplicity be your guide. Forget that you are speech-making and try not to sound as if you were

reading. Don't merely say words. Speak meaning into every line. Sustain your own interest in what you say if you would instill it in those who hear you. To speak sincerely and convincingly, you yourself must first believe what you say.

Try to pace your talk as you would in a face-to-face conversation. Follow the meaning of your remarks rather than the actual commas and periods. Leave your audience always wanting more.

In the studio I generally ask new or timid speakers not to think of a large audience while they are on the air, but to let me typify the group they are hoping to impress. Otherwise, they unconsciously wonder during the broadcast whether their talk is being well received. With no visible reaction, they become nervous. When I am at the other side of the microphone, nodding reassuringly, this tends to prevent their thoughts from becoming diffused and allows them to concentrate on their talk instead of on the unseen audience. So, nervous speaker, aim your talk at one person . . . perhaps the technician in the control booth; speak conversationally and naturally. You'll feel much better.

The most common fault of those who go on the air for the first time is imitation; trying to sound like Boake Carter, H. V. Kaltenborn, Raymond Gram Swing, or Dorothy Thompson. But they soon find that their charm lies in using their own natural voices.



Several years ago a well-known industrialist was being interviewed on a broadcast by Edwin C. Hill. Evidently he admired Hill's delivery . . . as who doesn't? However, the program became almost a farce, as his imitation of Hill was so good that for a while it sounded as if Hill were asking himself questions and then answering them. Finally, toward the end of the program, Hill changed his mode of speaking in order that the listeners might differentiate between the two voices.

Proper voice production is more important in radio broadcasting than in conversation or in a platform address, because on the air the voice becomes the full medium of expression. In conversation or on the platform, facial expressions and gesticulations assist in clarifying and emphasizing what you wish to say. You have only your voice to do the full job when speaking over the air.

The first rule for the use of the voice is:

Relax the throat, keep the muscles of the jaw and mouth at ease and let all the resonant cavities around and above the vocal cords be open and comfortable. This is their normal condition for natural speech.

Mrs. Elizabeth Ferguson Von Hesse, well-known speech instructress, says:

"There are three fundamentals for good speech: breathing, throat release and tone placement. Direct the voice into the head cavities and you get resonance. I call it the 'velvet' tone.

The natural sounds of the human voice are singing sounds, so hang on to your singing sounds if you want to have a lovely voice. I believe that more inhibitions are laid aside if a man learns to speak freely, and feels that his pleasant voice falls on welcome ears. He learns self-confidence and gains a serenity of mind that he could never have otherwise."

In addition to rehearsing at home, broadcasting companies always plan for the speaker to have a microphone rehearsal. For that reason a speaker is asked to come to the studio at least half an hour before air time. Occasionally this is not feasible, however, and there are many hair-breadth arrivals.

Several years ago Ginger Rogers was appearing in "Top Flight" on Broadway. At the same time she was scheduled to broadcast from somewhere in Brooklyn. She had only ten minutes to get from her theatre to the broadcast and as broadcasting time waits for no man—or woman—Bob Taplinger conceived the idea of using an ambulance to transport her to the studio in record time.



However, barring unforeseen or unavoidable interference, a speaker should arrive early enough to have his

voice tested over an "open" microphone and to have a final timing of his remarks by the production man assigned to the program. From this test of the tonal quality of the speaker's voice, called "getting a voice-level," his proper distance from the microphone will be determined. Every effort is made to have the speaker's voice reach the listener in a natural, friendly, cordial tone.

At the microphone the speaker should take the position and maintain the distance relative to the microphone which has been indicated during rehearsal. He should avoid weaving back and forth and turning away from the microphone, as such actions prevent the transmission of uniformity of sound and exaggerate and fade the voice alternately.

Breathing should be silent, deep, deliberate and relaxed. The normal pitch of the voice should be used. The normal middle or lower registers, however, are the most pleasant. A high-pitched voice sounds thin and ineffectual on the radio. Sudden unexpected changes in the voice volume make the sensitive microphone difficult for the engineer to handle. The normal speaking level should be maintained to the completion of all sentences. The not-uncommon habit some speakers have of letting their voices trail off at the end of sentences makes the listener's reception very difficult indeed.

When "Believe or Not" Ripley talks to you, it is difficult to understand him. Even over the telephone his voice trails off, so that you don't know when he has finished his conversation. On the radio, however, probably because he is such an astute showman, he takes great care to make himself understood.

Generally speaking, women are much more cooperative than men in preparing for their broadcast. They seldom arrive at the last minute, or with an untimed script and are tireless in rehearsing before the microphone. It seems a rank injustice that so frequently a man, who has gone to no such trouble, sounds far better over the air. The main reason is that many women are inclined, even when talking over the telephone, to raise the pitch of their voices. This is deadly! Contraction of the muscles of their throats tends to produce this, and the result is a tone of affectation.

Not that men's voices are always good; quite the contrary. Often they sound nasal or even thunderous. However, unless very frightened, the man's voice comes over the microphone as his own voice and, whether good or bad, at least is natural. In a case of so-called "mike-fright" he generally lowers the pitch of his voice, rather than raises it and mumbles or reads too rapidly. This may be hard on the ears, but the average listener senses the reason and is not too unsympathetic. Fright in a woman

produces a high, affected tone, creating an effect of "talking down" which causes resentment on the part of her audience.

The two women who possess the most beautiful speaking voices in broadcasting are Jane Cowl, the actress, and Lisa Sergio, WQXR's brilliant commentator. In them are found all the qualities essential for good radio reception.

To anyone dissatisfied with the way he sounds on the air, I usually suggest practice at home. Reading aloud articles in which he is interested, using his natural voice, regardless of how good or bad that natural voice may be, is bound to prove helpful.

Especially do I suggest this to women who feel that their normal voices lack culture or quality. Working with their voices scientifically and systematically before stepping up to the microphone may prevent forcing them into strange and unnatural registers. Sometimes people think that the microphone will act as a glorified strainer through which their tight, affected voices will flow soft and golden. Unfortunately, it won't.

Radio and telephone engineers refer to a microphone as "a device for converting the energy of the sound waves that a speaker produces into electrical energy that has similar vibrations." The sound of the voice is translated into electrical energy and back into sound without distortion. Improper production of voice sounds is therefore

becoming more noticeable, faults in speech more apparent. The necessity for improving vocal production is obvious.

The most successful way of correcting faulty diction or delivery is to have a recording made of the voice as it is broadcast. That will tell you what you really sound like to the other fellow. Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., when he was Chairman of the United States Steel Corporation, employed this method, and upon occasion sent me the recordings for criticism.

I shall never forget the first time I listened to my own voice over the air. I was with Phil Lord then and working on the series, "Thrills." To test the voices of the actors in order to cast for the new thriller which we had written around the adventures of Sasha Siemel, better known as "Tiger Man," I had recordings made of my interviews with the aspirants. Sasha, the vital and colorful personality, because he was not an actor, could not take part in the actual dramatization, so I was anxious to select a voice as near his own as possible from the group of actors I was testing.

When the recording was ready I went into the control room to listen to the "playback." The first voice I heard was that of a woman. She sounded as if she were speaking with a mouth full of mush.

"Wait a minute," I cried, "there must be some mistake. "You haven't got the right record."

The engineer signaled to the production man, the production man waved to the announcer and the announcer, with a few actors in tow, rushed to the recording machine, took off the record and started hunting around for another one.

Soon the whole studio was in a state of confusion and I was about to lose patience at their negligence in misplacing the record, when one of the actors timidly came up and said he believed that the record we had played was the right one—he had been able to recognize some of the words. Although I thought this improbable, I directed them to start the record over again and once more returned to the control room.

Again a very thick and affected voice came through, but this time I waited a little longer and soon a second voice was heard. This we all quickly identified as belonging to one of the actors present. In a wave of embarrassment and incredulity I realized that the “hot-potato” voice was mine. From then on I wasn’t satisfied until I had mastered the art of being natural on the air.

When Bob Taplinger, now executive assistant to the President of Columbia Pictures, decided to act as master of ceremonies on his radio series, “Meet the Artist,” in 1931, he gave himself eleven auditions before he was satisfied with his own voice. Despite the fact that he had taught many people how to talk over the air and was

himself an experienced radio executive, he went through the same rigorous tests to which he would have subjected any outsider applying for a similar job.

When Alf Landon came to New York on his way to Lima, Peru, to attend the Pan American Conference, I arranged for an interview over C.B.S. by Mel Allen. There was a great deal of interest surrounding President Roosevelt's choice of Mr. Landon as a delegate to this conference, and members of the press were scattered about the studio, notebooks and pencils in hand. Landon was eager for the broadcast to sound spontaneous and natural and even a bit "folksy," so he asked me if he might smoke his pipe while on the air to get into the mood. I granted this request, little realizing what it was to mean.

The broadcast began. Landon, slouched in a comfortable chair, relaxed before the microphone and read his script in a thoughtful, conversational manner. It sounded more or less as if he were extemporizing. Between sentences he puffed on his pipe.

Halfway through the second page of his script, Landon, right in front of the microphone, struck a match. The effect was electric! Mel, who had been looking down at his script for the next question, jumped fully six inches off his chair and the engineer grabbed wildly at the controls . . . Then the broadcast continued. Suddenly, he



struck another match! This time Mel not only jumped, but there was a perceptible break in his voice and I feared that he might crack—hysteria was gripping him. In the control room the engineer was slowly going mad. The expressions on the faces of the members of the press were of unanimous bewilderment. They saw no reason for our staff to go suddenly berserk and their curiosity was aroused. They attributed our excitement to Mr. Landon's remarks and thought they had missed certain punch lines, for there was nothing in what they heard to cause such commotion.

Once more, sssccccrrrrrrratch, but, fortunately, the broadcast was just about to end. Off the air, Landon turned around to me, beaming.

"How did it go?" he inquired.

"Fine," I said, "but just as a suggestion, the next time your pipe goes out on a broadcast, signal to someone to light it for you at the far end of the room; even give it to me and I'll light it."

He looked dismayed.

"But my pipe didn't go out," he said, "I just put that in for the 'homey touch.'"

How was he to know that the "homey touch" sounded like ripping the tin roof off a barn and that he was constantly in danger of blowing himself off the air entirely.

The microphone which picks up your voice in the stu-

dio is a very sensitive instrument. Its improvement from year to year tends only to make it more sensitive. The slightest sound, even one inaudible to the speaker, may be picked up by the microphone and amplified greatly in transmission. Clearing one's throat or coughing next to the microphone may be borne to the audience as a growl, or the roar of a jungle mammoth. The mere rustling or crackling of pages of a script will sound like thunder. Therefore, one should never use a script which is clipped together. To eliminate the shuffling and rustling noises, let each page drop to the floor as you finish reading it.

Some of the old-timers of radio tell of the man who came into a studio and asked how big a network was carrying his talk. When told that it was coast-to-coast, he said:

"Well, then, I guess I'll have to speak pretty loud."

No radio speaker is as naïve as that nowadays, but there still are many who do not know enough about the microphone's idiosyncrasies when they step before it.

For a brief period before you begin speaking, and after you finish, the microphone may be open. If so, it will pick up all sounds, whether meant for the audience or not. During this period the "mike," its standard and the cables leading to it should in no way be touched. The production man will notify the speaker when the microphone has been closed and the studio is definitely off the air.

There is also a standing rule in radio that, at the conclusion of a broadcast, everyone in the studio must remain silent until the next program from another studio, or a remote, has begun. Usually the microphones are switched off at the completion of a program. At the end of a Fred Allen broadcast some time ago, however, the microphones remained open after the announcer gave the station identification. Fred, not cognizant of this, thought he would present a gag for the benefit of the studio audience. So, as soon as he heard "WABC," he added, "D, E, F, G, H . . ." continuing through the alphabet. All of this went out over the air!



Another story that comes to mind is one from Gerald Stopp, producer of "Moonshine and Honeysuckle," an N.B.C. sketch. It is a tale of near catastrophe that threatened to shatter that network's moral fibre.

Stopp was the round-faced, affable gentleman who sat behind the control room window and blasted to bits an actor's faulty interpretation of his role. He had recently cast an actor who had not appeared in a studio since the days when the "carbon mikes" were used. The "condenser mikes" in use now are much more sensitive than the "carbon mikes."

During the performance the actor spotted another actor against whom he apparently had a grudge. He stepped over to him and cursed him roundly. His half-whispered cussings, which would have been lost to a "carbon mike," were broadcast to the outside listening audience.

Stopp blanched, for it is a sacred rule that nothing not pure and proper may be sent out on the air. With a hollow feeling inside, he waited for the protest mail he was sure would follow. One letter arrived. It was from a radio engineer, who explained what had happened technically.

To demonstrate the sensitivity of the microphone, Orestes H. Caldwell, former United States Radio Commissioner, once made an ordinary fiddle become a giant violin and drown out the sound of a forty-piece brass band. He mounted a tiny microphone on the string instrument and amplified its volume a thousand times.

Another time, he made hash of music and a nursery rhyme in a C.B.S. studio. He tore them to tatters, jumbled the bits together and then let the listeners hear the

conglomerate noises. It sounded like an Eskimo trying to explain the Einstein theory.

What he had set out to prove was that, unless a listener had an accurate loud-speaker, he could not hope to hear a program with anything approaching the clarity with which it was broadcast. To drive home his point, he used an ingenious method to demonstrate how radio entertainment should *not* sound. He employed an American Telephone and Telegraph "scrambler," that pranksome instrument by which transatlantic messages are scrambled so that only the listener with a parallel "unscrambler" can understand the words. He sent the rhyme, "Mary had a Little Lamb," through the gadget and it came out something like an early morning gargle. Then he asked Emery Deutsch to lead his orchestra in the "Wedding March" and the music that emerged reminded one of a Chinese theatre.

By use of filters he cut off the low frequencies and overtones, just as a lot of inadequate loud-speakers do, and the resultant music was shallow and monotonous. The program which was of such general interest was not sponsored commercially.

It produced a fan letter. A listener wanted to know who published "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Paul White, radio's No. 1 news editor, has this to say of the qualifications of news commentators:

"In the first place there is little thought given to the voice quality since it is obvious that in these days of such important news the emphasis should be upon content rather than upon the manner of delivery. On the whole, C.B.S. is satisfied with a good work-a-day brand of English and sets no special store on polished diction. The one thing we have insisted upon above all else is as complete and objective a reporting job as can be mastered."

Some of the most praiseworthy news broadcasts have intrinsic literary quality. From the Finnish Front, on Christmas Day, 1939, came a broadcast which won for William L. White the Atlantic City Headliners' Award for the outstanding broadcast of that year, and inspired Robert E. Sherwood's successful play, "There Shall Be No Night."

Another broadcast in this class was Edward R. Murrow's excellent account of a Conscientious Objector Tribunal in London, during the early days of the war.

Some of the broadcasts are distinguished simply because of their newsworthiness, such as William L. Shirer's interview with the German submarine commander who had been previously, and erroneously, announced as captured by the British.

This category includes the flying visit of Miss Breckinridge to Norway, where she attended the funeral of the

"Altmark" victims and saw for herself the damage inflicted by the British Navy.

Still other broadcasts have been memorable because of their extraordinary timeliness; such as the "London After Dark" program of August 24, 1940, which was scheduled as a routine demonstration of the behavior of the world's largest city during a blackout, and which featured within its first few minutes an unexpected air-raid alarm.

Foreign correspondents of radio often work at the peril of their lives. Leigh White, covering the war in Greece, was dangerously wounded when a German plane machine-gunned the train on which he was riding. Cecil Brown was sunk with the battle cruiser "Repulse," off the Malayan coast, and narrowly escaped drowning in the oil-covered waters. His account of the sinking of the "Repulse" and the "Prince of Wales" by the Japanese in the China Sea has been the most quoted news broadcast of World War II.

William J. Dunn, who escaped from Java in a small freighter, was frequently under attack from Japanese planes until he reached a small Australian port. Ed Murrow, Larry Le Sueur and Charles Collingwood worked all through the blitz winter in London and since then Larry has been at the Russian fighting front. Air raids were also an old story to Bill Shirer, Harry W. Flannery and Howard K. Smith in Berlin, to William L. White in

Helsinki and to Eric Sevareid during the tumultuous retreat from Paris to Bordeaux and thence to London.

Lest we think that only foreign correspondents tell thrilling stories, on this side of the Atlantic we have had the on-the-scene description of the "Hindenburg's" crash. The men who were supposed to do a routine job of recording its arrival at Lakehurst saw the ship suddenly burst into flames. Amid the panic that followed, with burning fragments raining down around them, the men stood by their posts to record this historical event.

To the American public also was brought the tragic plight of the submarine "Squalus," which crashed in a practice dive off Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1939. For days broadcasters stood at their microphones and reported to their anxious listeners each time the giant diving bell, with its pitiful cargo, was raised to the surface.

Floods, hurricanes, sinkings—all have been covered "at the front" by the army of broadcasters who keep the nation informed in spite of all hardships and dangers.

Regarding the reporting of news to a radio audience, Elmer Davis once said:

"Unlike newspapers, radio has nothing but a front page. Therefore, any piece of news you hear must seem the most important news while you are listening to it and, accordingly, the increased emphasis which newspapers can give by putting a story on the first page can

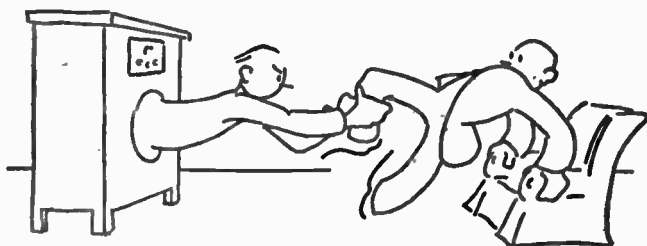


be achieved in radio only by beginning the broadcast with it and treating it at greater length than the other items.

“Newspapers are further able to emphasize the relative importance of news items by headlines and the distribution of stories on each page—means which are not available to the broadcaster. Some broadcasters have used and continue to use spoken headlines, but the practice seems to be dropping out of favor, which is a good thing. Headlines are necessary in newspapers, but even there, they are likely to be seriously misleading by over-simplifying a situation; and the danger is quite as great in radio. Broadcasters must rely on the position of the information in the broadcast, the amount of space they give to each item and, in the case of controverted or variously reported news, on some endeavor to assess the credibility of the diversions.”

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### HOLD THAT LISTENER



First,—a dozen do's and a dozen don'ts:

#### *DO*

Select subject that is timely,  
interesting and important.  
Speak from prepared script.  
Carefully time script in ad-  
vance of broadcast.  
Write as you talk.  
Use vivid, meaty phrases.  
Make talk alive with things of  
homely interest.

#### *DON'T*

Extemporize.  
Run over into the other  
fellow's time.  
Use formal, literary speech.  
Use statistics or abstractions.  
Make direct statement that  
you're going to prove  
something.  
Digress from subject.

*DO*

Use simple, readily understood vocabulary.

Use short sentences and concise statements.

Speak in conversational tones.

Believe in what you say.

Sustain interest.

Stop before they want you to.

*DON'T*

Make long, pedantic speeches.

Try to be funny if you're not a natural humorist.

Be breathless.

Poke along.

Change normal pitch of voice.

Make your first meeting with "mike" a blind date.

Whether you are a polished orator or an average citizen who may be called upon to address a gathering whose proceedings are being broadcast, don't assume that there is nothing to it. When you first face the microphone, you meet an entirely new kind of personality, a powerful ally, but also an inexorable critic. It is the most valuable instrument for introducing and endearing yourself to those who will hear your voice. Therefore, don't make your first meeting a blind date. Prepare for it by preparing your script.

The appearance of the script is important. It may be typed a few sentences at a time on white 3" x 5" cards. Some people prefer to use special non-rustling paper. I believe it was Clarence Francis, President of General

Foods, who used for his broadcasts the best paper I have ever seen. It was a white rice paper which, though pliant, had ample body for stiffness and was totally free from the rustling produced by other papers. The usual method is to type the speech double-space on standard-size white bond paper with a two-inch margin on all four sides. This not only makes the script more legible but makes it easier to approximate timings.

Much of the effectiveness of the radio talk depends on the preparation. A great many speakers like to talk over their ideas with someone before putting them on paper. It is a fair warning that it's high time to stop talking when friend listener begins to wriggle in his chair or cross and recross his legs. It may be necessary for the speaker to revise his approach completely.

It is seldom realized by the lay public that few speakers can hold a radio audience for more than fifteen minutes and fewer still can sustain interest for half an hour. A bid for attention should be made at the start. Then the speaker should make the listener travel along with him in search of the answer to his proposition.

The successful speaker will write as he talks and make his talk alive with things of homely interest. He will develop his subject in terms that everyone will find familiar.

Narratives, illustrations, human interest stories and references to events and things familiar in his every-day

experience help make a radio talk vital. Better avoid statistics or abstractions as you would the plague. Wherever they are necessary, simple illustrations by word pictures are best. Abstractions that may be perfectly understandable when read on a printed page miss fire when spoken. As one commentator phrased it:

“Inflation, as an economic term, means little to people; as pork chops at a dollar a pound, it means a lot.”

The listener prefers a simple, readily understood vocabulary. English as it is spoken in well-bred groups everywhere is the most acceptable and is much more effective than formal, academic speech. Never “domicile” when you can use “home.” Short sentences and concise statements are more acceptable than long, pedantic speeches. Many speakers limit their sentences to twenty words and exceed this only when a longer sentence seems to make their meaning clearer. Terse simplicity and clarity should be the foundation of every address.

One of the most important things to observe in the preparation of a talk is the timing. The ideal way is to use a stop watch, because even the fraction of a second over the stipulated broadcasting period can either cut off your important closing remarks or, if you are allowed to continue, throw the entire network facilities out of gear. The actual time allotted to a speaker for a fifteen-minute broadcast is thirteen minutes; for a thirty-minute pro-

gram it is twenty-eight minutes. The remaining two minutes are utilized for the opening and closing announcements by the station announcer and for the thirty-seconds "system" which is used in each instance for technical network operations.

Some speakers find it helpful to set an arbitrary number of words for their scripts. Of course, this will differ according to the rapidity with which the individual talks. Some deliver as few as one hundred and twenty-five words a minute and others as many as two hundred and fifty. A delivery that is too slow may make an audience restive. Too fast a delivery may be difficult to follow. A speaker can determine the rate of speed he wishes to employ by rehearsing at home.

It may prove helpful to underscore the words that are to be emphasized. A great many experienced speakers use the method of writing at the bottom of each page the number of minutes and seconds remaining for the delivery of the following pages. Then, during the actual broadcast, they refer occasionally to a watch or glance at the ever-accurate studio clock to make certain that they are pacing their talk so that the correct timing may be maintained.

A speaker should never make the direct statement that he is going to prove so-and-so. This tends to make a listener antagonistic.

Humor should be handled with care. It takes a natural humorist to tell a funny story.

Of course, it is not possible to establish iron-clad rules. The dynamic speaker can break all of them successfully.

There are many more considerations in preparing a script for someone else to read, such as the speaker's background and own phraseology. Some find it hard to read a script that is not written in their own vernacular. As one man described it to me:

"It's 'most like making a left-handed golfer play with right-handed golf clubs."

One of my pet stories deals with ghost-writers.

It was at the premiere of "Gold Is Where You Find It," in a small, backwoods village in northern California about fifty miles from the nearest town. This desolate place, with a population of about four hundred souls, had once been a thriving gold mining center. The premiere was to be broadcast from the bandstand in the town square. The producers had worked diligently with the natives in order to secure the most interesting local stories for the program. The writers had spent hours listening to fascinating tales and more hours writing the material into script form. The "old-timers'" vernacular was maintained throughout, not only for its picturesqueness, but to make it easier for them to read. Written against time, this portion of the program was not ready for the rehearsal. How-

ever, as the broadcast got under way, the completed scripts were hastily shoved into the hands of the participating natives.

With a great deal of fanfare the announcer presented the first "old-timer" who, clutching his script in his right hand, proudly stepped up to the microphone; the second "old-timer" was introduced and then the third. The producers and writers leaned forward in anticipation. Their socko stories of the gold-rush days were about to be unfolded. But, at the microphone nobody said a word. Unfortunately, no one had thought to ask the old men if they could read.

We do not permit our network announcers to use the salutation "Ladies and Gentlemen," except in presenting the President. In a sense, this is considered "corny." Before using this salutation consider that there are very many individual audiences which collectively make up the total, certainly all ages, male and female, of all races and creeds. In some homes there may be many listeners; in others but one. The personal appeal is lost when a lone listener hears himself addressed as "Ladies and Gentlemen."

Maybe I should stop a moment and try to define "corny," just in case you haven't your own word for it. In the trade, there are many varied definitions, such as unsophisticated, hammy, provincial, etc. The one which



I think the most descriptive is Paul White's. "When a thing is 'corny,'" said Paul, with a serious expression on his face, "any resemblance to art or literature is purely coincidental."

So be it.

Of course, there are some speakers who use salutations to identify themselves as an orchestra may use a theme song, or a commercial house a trade name. For example, "My Friends" would instantly identify President Roosevelt; "Fellow Amahracuns," Wendell Willkie; "Good evening" is used by H. V. Kaltenborn at the beginning of his talk and "Good night" at its conclusion; "Hello Everybody" is a Kate Smith special and so is her sign-off, "Thanks for lis'nin' and good night,

folks." "This is London" is so completely tied up with Edward R. Murrow, that it was used as the title of a



collection of his broadcasts on World War II. There are others as well known.

Whenever I am called upon to make a speech, I always prepare it in advance, whether it is for a lecture or a broadcast. Because I am in radio, the timing problem is paramount in my mind. For many years I have been drilling the necessity of speaking from script into the heads of those who would use the air-ways. It may be just a case of practising what I preach, but I find that going over my talk in advance of the actual time of delivery, enables me to touch upon all the subjects I wish and in the manner in which I believe they will be most impressive and acceptable to my listeners. Even lecturing before the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, I carefully prepare my script beforehand and read it rather than trust to memory. As the topic of my lecture is radio and its important do's and don'ts, I like to set them a good example.

Many public speakers prefer, at first, to speak extemporaneously over the air. In broadcasting we call it "ad-lib." Sooner or later, however, they see the wisdom of speaking from prepared script. Some of the things that bring about their conversion are worth recalling.

A former United States Attorney General, who had lectured all over the world, came in one day and asked for a job as news commentator. This was back in the days

before the war had begun and the C.B.S. news department was not set up as it is today. I agreed to give him an audition and suggested that he prepare a thirteen-minute script. He indignantly told me, however, that he had never spoken from script and never intended to. I patiently explained the reasons why I thought it might be wise, especially in this case, as a failure would mean that he would lose the job. Although he was perfectly polite, he nevertheless tried to laugh away my fears.

The time for the audition arrived. Various vice-presidents and directors sat listening at their sets. As is frequently done with auditions, I had ordered the speech "piped" for recording. The engineer gave the recording company the "go-ahead" and "threw the air" to the announcer.

After a brief introduction, my extemporaneous speaker talked for seven minutes and I have rarely heard a more eloquent flow of language. He was at ease and his continuity of thought superb. The incident he was relating had happened while he was in India. He was saying:

"Some natives told me to go to the little town of . . ."

And then he stood dumb before the microphone. Minutes ticked by, the machine went 'round and 'round, recording nothing but dead air. The officials, throughout the building, fussed over their sets and wondered whether they had blown a fuse or the speaker had dropped dead.

But the speaker had not dropped dead, though he said afterward he was wishing that he could. With crimson face he turned from the microphone and walked all the way to the end of the studio, wringing his hands, completely unable to go on with the broadcast. As he later explained to me, had this occurred while he was on the lecture platform, he would merely have walked up and down and thought for a while, or said in an off-hand manner that at the moment he could not think of the name of the town, that it would probably come to him later.

However, the fact that he knew that there would be dead air while he was thinking so disconcerted him that he was completely broken up. As he realized, the listener is so accustomed to getting his program continuously without any breaks whatsoever that when they do occur, he thinks he has lost the station and immediately twists the dial to recover it. Generally, he winds up with another program.

The two outstanding ad-libbers of radio are Bob Trout and H. V. Kaltenborn. The latter, with a few pencilled notes can speak endlessly on important news of the day, giving its historical background as well. The former, with no notes but a keen reporter's eye, a lack of self-consciousness and a genius for flowing continuity, has never been surpassed. I have seen him handle the strangest and most

complicated assignments, such as having to take air at a political convention without previous warning. Undaunted, he starts talking, and, despite the fact that the air may be taken from him on little or no notice, he manages somehow to keep up a steady flow of conversation which not only makes sense, but invariably is interesting and colorful.

Kaltenborn and Trout represent two different fields of ad-libbing. "H.V." is the type of commentator who relies upon his memory for names of people and places, for dates, historical and geographical backgrounds and for quotations. Bob, the on-the-scene reporter, describes what he sees and hears. He, too, has to draw from a background of knowledge and fact. His type of broadcast falls into the same category as that of sports announcers, man-on-the-street interviewers and spectator reporters.

Bob, as some of you may remember, married on July 4, expressly, he said, so that he would be sure to remember his wedding anniversary.

"Now," he explains, "every time I hear a truck backfire, I go out and buy a present for my wife."

There are many stories about this versatile member of the radio industry who honeymooned with Kit aboard the Presidential train.

When Trout was C.B.S. announcer for the President, he traveled on all of Mr. Roosevelt's official trips. One day

he had an exceptionally difficult assignment. The President, then in the Middle West, was to participate in a program originating in New York. Although there was an array of speakers on the program before him, C.B.S. was carrying only the President's remarks. Trout, with his earphones on, held the air with rapid comment while he listened for the presentation of the President. It was necessary for him to synchronize with this announcement in order to get the President on the air at the proper time. For, although this speech was for national consumption, it was specifically directed to the meeting in New York.

He did such a superb job of ad-libbing that, when the presentation had been made, the President was so absorbed in watching Bob, that he had to be reminded to start speaking. When the broadcast was over, Roosevelt remarked that his one ambition was to be able to do a comparable ad-lib job some day.

One incident had Washington press circles in stitches for months. The official train had stopped in another small town in the Middle West where the President was to broadcast from the station. Bob, who was already out on the platform, was doing a beautiful job of ad-libbing as he held the air until the President should alight from the train. Minutes ticked by. Bob anxiously scanned the coaches and continued to talk. On he went, speaking of this and that, telling interesting stories about the Presi-

dent's trip and describing his present surroundings. He could not wander too far from the subject, as at any minute the President might appear and he would have to present him to the radio audience. After an unbelievably long period, the President descended from the train.

It was not until several days later that Bob learned what had caused the delay. Nearing the door, the President had heard Bob hold the air so expertly that he had sat down to listen. Fully conscious of the spot in which he was putting Bob, he had chuckled gleefully.

One of the finest impromptu jobs in the history of radio occurred several years ago during a fire in the Ohio State Penitentiary. C.B.S. received a wire asking if they were interested in broadcasting an eye-witness account. Fortunately, its Columbus affiliate happened to have lines already installed for the prison band concerts, so they telegraphed their acceptance. Several hours later an unknown convict broadcast a thrilling, graphic description of the holocaust. He did an ad-lib job that was dignified and exciting. This splendid piece of reporting was done amid the screams of convicts and the sound of falling debris. On the air he was merely identified by a number. Two days later it was learned that he was a Negro, a graduate of several religious schools, serving a life sentence for having hacked his wife and mother-in-law to death.

Most experienced radio entertainers recognize their inability to extemporize and never take air without a script. The script is carefully checked and double-checked, numerous rehearsals are held and programs are timed to the split second. Yet, despite these precautionary measures, occasionally something happens to detour the program from its intended path.

Several years ago Albert Spalding appeared on an interview program. He had played the violin on the radio many times, but he had never had an opportunity to speak. When he heard his own voice he became so excited that he kept repeating phrases over and over. He said afterwards that he wanted to make certain that he was actually being heard.

Later in the broadcast, when he was to play his violin, something fell from the stand, and everyone took it to be his music. However, when Albert returned to the microphone there was no script and he had to ad-lib for the remainder of the interview. That was the beginning . . . He was so pleased with this vocal debut that ever since he has announced his own musical numbers.

There are times when composure and a knowledge of stage technique see veterans through difficult ad-lib moments. Several years ago, when Fanny Brice was broadcasting, she started to sing without her sheet music. After singing a few bars she stopped abruptly. The orchestra



stopped playing and everyone looked quizzically at Miss Brice.

"Let's start all over again," she said, "I made a mistake."

She actually had, but her utterance was so nonchalant that many listeners thought it was a gag that belonged in the show.

I am sure that Herbert Hoover's dislike for ad-libbing dates back to the night he appeared with Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt on a broadcast. Each of them had a copy of the prepared script, which had been written in the form of an interview. During the timing rehearsal that preceded the broadcast, both men stuck to script. But as they took air, the General, who prides himself on being an expert ad-libber, tossed the script aside.

"Thought I'd liven it up," he told me later, "make it sound more spontaneous."

I think the pixie in him came out when he started shooting questions. Mr. Hoover vainly tried to find the answers in his script. However, without cues it was impossible for him to keep up with Roosevelt, who obliged with a steady flow of conversation while Mr. Hoover, beads of perspiration on his forehead, frantically searched for his place.

Despite the many who think they can safely ad-lib, I can count on one hand the number of people who really

can extemporize on the air. All too frequently they get into serious trouble.

Such was the case of the mayor of one of our larger cities. Once he had an urgent message to broadcast, which did not deal with just a local matter, but was of national importance. I happened to be in the studio when he arrived and I chided him for not having prepared a script. He became indignant, claiming that he spoke his own thoughts and therefore needed no "ghost writer."

With him had come members of the press, as well as several politicians who were interested in the project for which he was to urge support. He had a number of things to talk about that day and only thirteen minutes in which to cover them. He took air and made a most impressive speech. However, as the time of his broadcast drew to a close, I could tell by the astonished and disappointed faces of his friends that he had entirely forgotten to mention the subject which had brought them to the studio. Now? . . . Oh yes, now he speaks from script.

So, a really most important rule for all broadcasters to follow is to write their scripts and not trust to memory. When there are several subjects to discuss and a speaker is limited to a stipulated time, if he relies upon his memory, he is likely to find at the end of his allotted period that he still has many things to say. To quote Elmer Davis:

“To go on the air without a script would incur the risk of spending too much time on one topic and not getting around to some of the others.”

There used to be, and perhaps there still exists in some quarters, a misunderstanding as to why we at radio stations ask to see scripts in advance of the broadcast. We do not wish to use the red pencil. We are exercising the right of every good newspaper and magazine when we request to see a script. We must have this information if we are to maintain a balanced program schedule, filled with diversified subjects for various tastes, interests and types of listeners.

Controversial issues are full of difficulties. Broadcasting stations do not have to give time for the discussion of any particular controversy. However, should they present one side, they must give the other side an equal opportunity.

Letters are received daily from critics of talks on controversial issues; many have their own version of freedom of speech. They write:

“Freedom of speech is very important in a democracy, but I can’t understand how you would be willing to pollute the air by allowing such abuse of this privilege. The speech by John Doe advocating more lend-lease was shocking . . .”

To cite another example. A supposedly objective speech was delivered on the Far Eastern crisis soon after the out-

break of the Sino-Japanese War. Several days after the broadcast, when asked about his fan mail, the speaker replied:

“Quite satisfactory. I received some letters accusing me of being pro-Japanese and others berating me for being pro-Chinese, so I guess that’s a fair indication that I’m neutral.”

Most of the talks handled by my department are of a political nature. Because they are controversial, serious complications may arise when scripts are not submitted in advance.

Let me tell you of the Senator who called me one day and asked for time on the air to discuss the Wage and Hour Bill. I gave him a fifteen-minute spot. Later, I allotted a similar period to a member of the opposition. The first Senator, who spoke from Memphis, was late in sending me his script, and because of an appointment I was unable to listen to his talk when it was broadcast.

The next morning I received a request from another Congressman for time to reply to a speech he had heard the night before over our network on the subject of child labor. I explained that he had evidently made a mistake in networks, because C.B.S. had not carried such a talk. He was indignant and asked me if we were uninformed as to what we broadcast or if we were just using this as a ruse to avoid granting him time. He seemed so positive

about the matter that I checked up immediately. I found that my Senator of the night before, while talking about wages and hours, had devoted several minutes to a discussion of child labor. Naturally, I then granted time for a reply.

Aside from avoiding difficulties of this nature, we need an advance copy of the script for release to the press, because all connected with the broadcast desire to get as much publicity from it as possible.

In carrying out our responsibility to the listener scripts are carefully read before the broadcast to make sure that they do not contain offensive material. To be avoided, of course, are statements containing libel, treason, profanity, blasphemy and obscenity. They have no place on the air. In wartime we must be careful that they do not include anything that could be construed as giving aid or comfort to the enemy.

In rare instances, where objectionable matter is found, the practice is to call it to the attention of the speaker for his own appropriate action. Of course, we always hope that he will remain within the rather intangible boundaries of good taste. But, all too frequently, if he oversteps and it is brought to his attention, he hollers "censorship."

Speakers who broadcast on sustaining time operate under considerably less restriction than news analysts and commentators. Of the latter Elmer Davis once said:

“The news editor who reads my script has full authority to call my attention to anything that he believes inaccurate in fact or mistaken in emphasis or interpretation and to suggest alterations if he believes they are desirable.

“If it came to an irreconcilable conflict of opinion, as the authorized representative of the network he would have the power to compel such alterations as in his judgment were necessary to give the public a correct picture of the news. Actually, this situation has never arisen. There are sometimes suggestions and once in a while differences of opinion, but never anything which has not been ironed out in discussion and issued in agreement. This is the only censorship, if it may be so termed, to which I am subject, except, of course, that which the Government imposes in the interest of military secrecy. It is less than the similar editorial supervision imposed on newspaper stories which must ordinarily pass the scrutiny of two or three editors before they get into print. This condition applies not only to me, but so far as my experience and observations go, to all news commentators on the C.B.S. network.”

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ' 'MIKE' ' MANNERISMS



They all have 'em.

Some speakers like to hold a watch in their hands while they broadcast. Others like to sit facing the studio clock. There are many who like to play with a pencil, twirl their watch chains or firmly grasp either end of the small microphone table.

Then there is the speaker who takes every precaution against huskiness. Such a one is Will Hays. The first time he came to broadcast for me I was curious to meet this movie mogul.

After we had exchanged greetings in the studio, he started hunting through all of his pockets with an anxious look on his face.

"Lost something?" I asked.

"No," he said, "but I've come to the broadcast without any ammunition."

"No script?"

"Oh that," he said, "here!" and he handed me a much crumpled copy.

Suddenly his face beamed.

"Perhaps that young man over there would be kind enough to run down to the drug store and get me some lozenges."

His dollar produced the most complete array of cough preventives. Very generously he offered some to the announcer and to me. When he went on the air, stacked before him were three brands of cough drops, packages of chewing gum and assorted Life Savers.

His talk was extremely interesting, but, as he progressed, I noticed he was experiencing some difficulty in reading his script. An impediment in his speech, that I hadn't observed before the broadcast, was becoming more



noticeable with each word. From where I sat I could see first one cheek and then the other bulge, as if he were shifting a wad of tobacco. Then it dawned on me! He had gone on the air still chewing his gum. In order to speak, he moved it about in his mouth. Quickly I grabbed a sheet of paper, held it under his chin and with my lips motioned for him to spit. He looked chagrined and a little hurt, but finally he gave up the troublesome wad.

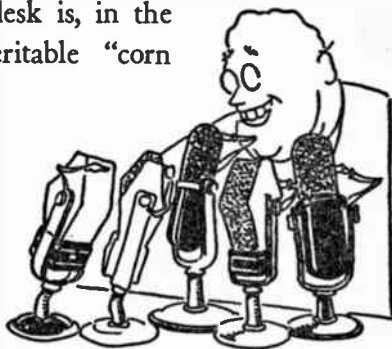
Next time he spoke from our New York studios, he came with another speaker. I waited for him to unload his pockets, but, when nothing was forthcoming, I told him that, remembering his last visit, both the announcer and I had foregone our lunch in anticipation of the "goodies" we expected him to bring.

"Fooled you this time," he remarked. "You were too stingy to let me keep my chewing gum before. Today, I've brought only one lozenge and if you try to take *it* away from me during the broadcast, I'll swallow it!"

There is actually a fireplace in the room where most of the "Fireside Chats" originate. At the far end of this oval room, from a microphone-laden desk, the famed "radiogenic" voice of President Franklin D. Roosevelt goes out to the United States and to countless millions throughout the world.

Despite the fact that, of all the Presidential broadcasts,

the "Fireside Chat" is the most informal, it is one of the busiest scenes anywhere. Two "mikes" are supplied by each major network, as standard equipment for the President's use; the second one against the possibility of line failure during his broadcast. Thus, with a minimum of six microphones and appurtenances, the top of Mr. Roosevelt's desk is, in the radio vernacular, a veritable "corn field." In front of the President stands the equipment of a dozen or so newsreel cameramen — cameras, sound devices, lights and a maze of cables.



Each of the major networks has an announcer present. Carleton Smith, the N.B.C. man, stands in a little doorway on the right hand side of the oval—facing the President's desk. Halfway down the length of the room, almost directly across, is another tiny niche which houses Walter Compton, of M.B.S. The closest to the President is the C.B.S. cubicle, where John Charles Daly stands. This doorway is in the deepest part of the oval, directly behind the President and about six feet to his left.

Each of these three booths is covered with a heavy, red

plush curtain, which has a one-foot square "window" in the middle, so that the announcers can watch their respective engineers.

The networks agree before the broadcast how much time is to be taken for the preliminary announcements. This is worked out so carefully that the three announcers, making differently worded announcements in their three separate booths, frequently finish simultaneously.

The President is never "introduced"—always "presented."

Usually about ten minutes before the broadcast, an attendant simply announces: "The President." All preparatory work stops and everyone rises to attention. Mr. Roosevelt enters, waves a jovial greeting to those of us assembled and takes his seat at the desk. Immediately the tinkering and last-minute checking on the equipment resumes.

As "air time" approaches, the announcers go to their posts in the booths. No hand signal is given to the President. He can hear the hum and mumble of the announcers through their cubicle curtains. When these sounds cease, he knows they have completed their "presentation."

And then the nation hears the familiar "My Friends—."

I asked commentator John Charles Daly, who for several years has been Presidential announcer for C.B.S., to

tell me how it felt to announce the foremost program of the air.

"Well, as you know," he began, "of all the Presidential broadcasts, the 'Fireside Chat' is the most informal. Especially for those of us who cover the White House on a permanent basis, these broadcasts present the only opportunity to really chat for a few minutes with President Roosevelt. He knows and takes a deep interest in the men who travel with him and generally takes these occasions to ask them about recent promotions, or to kid them about things that may have come to his attention.

"When the President enters the room, there is a moment of formality as everyone stands, but, as soon as he is at his desk ready for the broadcast, everyone relaxes. The only restriction that remains is that, although the President smokes and perhaps his secretaries smoke, nobody else does.

"Mr. Roosevelt is a good workman. He always makes a very thorough preparation of his speech and has his own system for checking on the speed of his delivery. On his script he marks the passage of each five minutes and, when he comes to one of these spots, he glances at a watch, usually borrowed from one of us, and adjusts the speed of his delivery accordingly.

"Sometimes, in the summer, bugs fly through the open windows of the room and are attracted to the strong light

that the President uses on his desk. But, let the bugs fly as they may, they never seem to disturb the President, although some of the rest of us have spasms.

"Occasionally, Mr. Roosevelt brings his dinner guests to listen to his 'Fireside Chats,' and they run the gamut from motion picture stars to statesmen and economists.

"Be calloused and experienced as you will, but, despite the informality of these 'Fireside Chat' gatherings, it is here that the microphone often takes on the appearance of a monster with teeth. Despite all the fun that goes on just before we take air, during the deathly silence of the fifteen seconds to 'air time,' in the proximity of the President of the United States, the complete importance of the occasion descends upon you and produces a state of high excitement.

"As you know," Daly continued, "it is necessary to synchronize the opening announcements of all the networks. The President is sometimes vastly amused at this anvil chorus. In fact, on Labor Day, 1942, he said that he thought we had the makings for a fine barber shop quartet.

"Outwardly, the President is always completely calm, but when he is due to make an extremely important speech, there are some slight signs of the tension under which he is working. Usually it is little more than perhaps a nervous twitching in his hands and, with the ex-

ception of those who are very close to him, it is not at all noticeable.

"Of course, the bugaboo of those who put him on the air at a 'Fireside Chat' is the possibility that something will go wrong at the start of the broadcast and they will have to spend seemingly endless minutes talking about this and that, describing the room, etc., until the President is ready to speak. When such situations do arise, he always listens carefully and with a slight grin to what is being said. If you haven't done too bad a job of it, he congratulates you later.

"Normally, after one of his speeches, especially if it is an important one, he asks what you think of it, as well as of his delivery.

"Almost without exception, the President has a merry twinkle in his eye. His 'My Friends' is a sincere salutation, for, although he is the biggest man in the world today, he is one of the friendliest." And how right you are, John Daly!

There are others with whom it is a joy to work. Most considerate of these are Wendell Willkie, Herbert H. Lehman, Director of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation, British Ambassador Lord Halifax, Herbert Hoover, Dr. Lena Madelin Phillips, President of the International Association of Business and Professional Women, and André Michalopoulos, Greek Minister of Information.

These speakers invariably submit their scripts on time and they produce no heart failure when read. In the studio, they are always agreeable to and thoughtful of those with whom they work.

It is a little difficult to know Herbert Hoover. His reticence and shyness in public have caused him to be generally misunderstood. When I first used to see him, it was at large gatherings—banquets or rallies—where a great many people crowded around him. He always seemed brusque and either ill at ease or annoyed. I got to know and to like him when he and Larry Richey, his right-hand man from the White House days, started coming up to the “Blue Room” at C.B.S. for broadcasts. I’d sit and chat with them before air time and many are the amusing stories he has told me.

From being an abrupt and seemingly curt individual, Mr. Hoover turns into an interesting and thoroughly human companion when he doesn’t feel that he is in the spotlight. The moment other people enter the room, his smile leaves his face and he freezes.

Over the air he speaks deliberately, at a moderate rate of speed and seldom if ever without script. Then, too, he is of the old school of oratory which considers length of an address an important factor. Rarely will he accept a period of less than thirty minutes.

Another Hoover, J. Edgar, refuses to make a broadcast for more than fifteen minutes. His contention, widely applauded by most radio officials, is that it is impossible for a speaker to hold the full attention of his audience for a longer period.

Thomas E. Dewey is very meticulous about the writing of his script and its delivery. He is one of the few speakers who rehearses his talk over and over again, not only for the correct timing, but so to familiarize himself with its word sequence that his voice inflection and emphasis may be carefully marked and remembered.



Frequently he arrives at the studio sufficiently in advance of the broadcast to re-read his script several times. He prefers to do this in a room apart from the studio and to have me there to criticize his delivery. Sometimes he paces the floor as he rehearses. More often he stands before me, gesticulating as he talks.

Whereas some speakers, notably Wendell Willkie, feel that over-rehearsing may deprive a talk of its spontaneity, Governor Dewey believes that only when a speaker is fa-



miliar with his material, almost to the point of memorizing it, can he speak with sincerity and conviction.

A bad radio habit, that he overcame, was "weaving" before the microphone. As he applied emphasis, he leaned forward, and straightened to his normal, upright position as he toned down his vehemence. This, as I have previously pointed out, tends alternately to increase and decrease the voice volume. It takes a good engineer to anticipate these changes in adequate time to handle the controls and maintain uniformity.

Unless speaking before a public gathering, Dewey prefers to have no one but those actually responsible for the broadcast in the room with him when he takes air.

Eleanor Roosevelt, on the other hand, doesn't mind how many people are in the studio. She rarely speaks from script, or even notes. Her eyes are generally kept on the wall opposite and sometimes she smiles into the microphone before her.

In no other speaker is poise so manifest. She is never at a loss for words, takes direction well and, when given the one-minute-to-closing signal, unhurriedly continues in her deliberate, evenly paced manner, ending on the split second.

I have seen her come to the studio completely unprepared for her broadcast, knowing only the group for whom she was to speak and believing in their cause.

"How much time am I to have on the air?" she asks.

Then in her gracious, smooth way, she gathers sufficient information about the occasion so that, when she finally takes air, her talk sounds as if it has been rehearsed and prepared well in advance of the broadcast. With all her unflurried manner, I have never known her to be late.

Rarely is there a dull moment when Al Smith comes to broadcast. A colorful personality, he brings with him the charm of little old New York. More punctual than most, he arrives at the studio, generally with friends, in ample time for six rehearsals if need be.

When he broadcasts he speaks slowly and even when he becomes excited he does not hurry, merely increases the volume of his voice.

At the time when he was having his troubles with Father Coughlin, he was scheduled to speak over C.B.S. I was tipped off ahead of time that Coughlinites intended to picket the building and to create a scene when Smith arrived. Secretly we arranged for the broadcast to originate from another studio, blocks away. While the pickets were milling around the entrance of C.B.S., Smith had circumvented them and was speaking from this other studio.

The chief of those last-minute arrivers is the fabulous Mayor of New York City, Fiorello H. LaGuardia. Furtive glances at the studio clock, anxious peerings from the

window, telephone check-ups with the first floor to make sure that he has not been waylaid en route and finally the welcome sound of the siren announces the arrival of "Hizzoner." Many times—two minutes before "air," the rotund little figure bursts into the studio, hastily shoves his late script into my hands, asks a few whispered questions, plumps himself down before the microphone and gives it the works.

Although he is a man used to having his own way, he takes direction like a trouper. He prides himself on his versatility in ad-libbing and timing. Occasionally, when there have been misunderstandings or failures in transmission in pick-ups from abroad on his program, the Mayor has valiantly jumped into the breach and carried on ably.

His quick thinking was demonstrated to me in a way indelibly stamped upon my memory. The night before the LaGuardia Airport was officially opened, he spoke from our studios. In talking with him I happened to mention that William Allen White was due here from Emporia, Kansas, the following day.

"Bring him out to the Airport," he said.

I threw up my hands at the mere prospect of being in the crush that would attend the ceremonies, as certainly all New York and the surrounding counties would turn out for this grand affair.

"We'd never get through the stream of traffic," I groaned.

"You would in my car with an escort," he said . . . And we did!

Mr. and Mrs. White and I lay back in the luxurious comfort of the Mayor's official car and, with sirens screaming, saw the congested highway open for us as the Red Sea did for Moses.

Following the dedicatory ceremonies, we tried to push through to the room at the other side of the Airport in which the Mayor had provided refreshments for some of his friends. A band was playing in the foyer, and people were packed like sardines throughout the entire building.

Mr. White had me by the arm and behind us the Mayor was piloting his wife and Mrs. White. Of course, as soon as the Mayor appeared, the milling crowd completely jelled, and it looked as if it would be impossible for us to get through.

"Make way for the Mayor!" someone shouted, and, pushing through the solid human mass, came two of



"New York's finest," the miniature figure of the Mayor between them. We looked around frantically for Mrs. LaGuardia and Mrs. White, but they were lost to view. Magically the music seemed to fade into the distance and suddenly the place was clear. We made our way to the reception room and, in a short while, the two ladies followed, well escorted by hefty policemen.

Then, amid the confusion of greetings, the Mayor popped up.

"Where on earth did you go?" I asked. "I thought you were heading here."

"Oh no," said the Little Flower, very much satisfied with himself. "When I saw that sea of people, I sized up the situation immediately. As fast as I could I made my way to the band-leader, whispered into his ear, 'Have your men follow me,' and, taking his baton, I led them from the building."

Our eyes opened wide in astonishment.

"So that's why the crowd melted!"

"Sure," he grinned. "Ever hear of a crowd that wouldn't follow a band?"

One of the quickest thinkers on his feet and one of the wittiest speakers I have ever had on the radio or television is Norman Thomas. Whether people agree with him or not, I have found that they are generally interested in hearing what he has to say and in watching the way in

which he says it. He gets extremely excited, speaks with vehemence and his intensity increases as he talks. A very vigorous speaker, his eyes flash and his nostrils dilate as he thrusts with rapier-like rapidity and skill at his opponents. And he never loses an opportunity to broadcast . . . on any subject.

I remember one time when he had asked to have the announcer tell the listeners that a copy of his talk would be sent them if they wrote to the Socialist Party Headquarters, and the announcer unintentionally gave the wrong address. Mr. Thomas darted back to the microphone as the announcement was being repeated, and, synchronizing with the announcer, in a tone loud enough to drown him out, made the correction.

The incorrigible Levant brings hilarity to the studio whenever he appears. The first time I met him he was acting as announcer-supreme for Alexander Woollcott who was campaigning for Roosevelt. Unlike most political talks, this one was to open with Woollcott's identifying "Old Town Crier" theme and Oscar Levant, instead of the announcer, was to ring the bell and shout the familiar "Hear ye! hear ye!"

The details escape me at the moment, but what I do remember is Levant having to announce his own musical numbers and then dash from the microphone to the piano. Before we took air he practised this sprint for the

timing and his antics had us in hysterics. Woolcott, however, was anything but hilarious for, as usual, he was taking himself quite seriously.

"A little soft music, Oscar," he said, "to get us more into the mood."

Levant obligingly sat down at the piano, but a mischievous gleam came into his eyes and from his fingertips came the hottest bit of swing this side of Harlem.

Frantic gestures from the production man warned us that we were taking air, so, with one last resounding discord, Oscar leaped to the microphone in time for the clanging of the bell. The announcement finished, he emulated Ty Cobb in his slide from microphone to piano-stool. Quick as a flash, before his hands touched the piano, he spread them in the manner of an umpire indicating "safe."

The attractive and capable editor of *Harper's Bazaar*, Mrs. Carmel Snow, has just a trace of the delightful accent of old Erin in her speech. Several years ago, when she began broadcasting the Paris "Openings" for C.B.S., it was difficult to understand her on the air, and the fact that she spoke over short-wave, of course, did not add to the clarity.

One time, after she had returned to New York, I gathered enough courage to talk with her about this. Her attitude was very intelligent. Then she asked if I would

help her. She came to the studio religiously and I worked with her on perfecting her microphone manner. She would speak over a "live mike," and I would listen in the control room and criticize her work. Her gravest mistake was that of most women—changing the register of her voice. Not only was she unconscious of this, but it seemed impossible for me to make her realize it. Finally I put her in the control room and I sat before the microphone. Making my vocal cords taut, I read her material in the exact same tone she had employed and then over again in my normal, speaking voice. With this illustration she was quick to see her mistake and soon rectified it.

Another fault she had to correct was one which is common to all new speakers. The "s" sound at the end of her words was too pronounced and produced a hissing noise over the air. Announcers go through grueling training to overcome this one speech imperfection alone. What seemed to help her most of all were the instructions I gave her for pacing her talk and marking her script for emphasis. Always a smooth script writer, she now is able to present her material to her listeners so that it can be clearly understood.

When Sir Stafford Cripps was in India in May, 1942, and all the world was waiting to hear the outcome of his mission, Lord Halifax for an hour addressed a huge crowd at the Town Hall Club on India's critical position



in the war. The last half-hour of his talk was to be broadcast. As other speakers who preceded him ran over their allotted time, it soon became apparent that the timing problem would be a difficult one. Before he went out on the stage, I talked this over with him. Halifax, who is unusually thoughtful of broadcasters and did not wish to take the chance of running over his scheduled period, discussed the possibility of my signaling to him from the wings. George Denny suggested that I use the lights, which were controlled at the side of the stage and flashed on the speaker's table. On examining them, I found that they read "faster," "slower," and "cut." I told Halifax and he readily agreed to be guided by them.

"But," he whispered as he stepped onto the stage, "how will I know when I am all right—in other words, when I don't have to do *anything?*"

"We'll use the 'slower' signal for that," I suggested, "as it's doubtful if tonight you'll ever have to take that direction literally."

"Righto" . . . And that's how he gave his speech.

"Faster, faster, slower, faster, faster, slower, cut," pleaded the lights. He followed directions to the letter and came off the air "on the nose."

The body of distinguished men on the stage rose to pay him homage for the excellent speech he had delivered, but Halifax broke away and came over to where

I still stood by the lights-control. Shaking my hand warmly, he said,

"By Jove, what a topping team we made!"

I always look forward to those far too infrequent visits to our studios of former Governor Lehman. Mrs. Lehman generally comes with him and we sit and talk of Nantucket and the happy hours we've spent there. No hustle or bustle attends their arrival; it is as if they have come to pay a social call. Here are no script troubles nor last minute changes. Ever the perfect executive, he remains serene throughout.

And then there's big Jim Farley, with his genius for remembering names. Even in the studio, he doesn't relax. His genial smile and handshake make those who come in contact with him appreciate the super-politician that he is. His cordiality is not worn as a glove, to be taken off at will, but emanates from a real liking for his fellow-man.

Usually, in presenting speakers with widely divergent viewpoints on highly controversial subjects, I have them speak from separate studios. Many times they may broadcast days or even weeks apart, but in the case of such famous debates of the past as Corliss Lamont *vs.* John Dewey and Norman Thomas *vs.* Mayor Hague, I nearly had heart-failure trying to be in both studios at the same time. This was nothing, however, compared to the nerv-

ous prostration I had at the thought of their meeting in our corridors or elevators. For such was the feeling between them at that time that fireworks would have been sure to result.

Before our entry into the war, when the bitter fight between the isolationists and the realists was at its height, I brought together in one studio James P. Warburg, of the Fight for Freedom Committee, and John T. Flynn, New York Chairman of its opponent, the America First Committee.

Both speakers were extremely serious about the subject under discussion, but Warburg, with his spontaneous good humor and ready wit, was trying to make the best of a rather embarrassing situation. Mr. Flynn sat shrouded in deep thought, a scowl upon his face and didn't join in the light conversation which Warburg and I kept up.

Just before the start of their program, the production man tuned in the broadcast that was signing off. The rhythmic strains of a Viennese waltz floated out into the room, shattering its tense atmosphere. With an engaging smile, Warburg turned to his adversary: "May I have this waltz, Mr. Flynn?"

Apart from the maelstrom of those who would use the air-ways on the slightest provocation Bernard Baruch stands alone. Many are the times when this able statesman has assisted in the creation of important policies of

this country and has been offered the facilities of C.B.S. to discuss them. Always he made his acceptance tentative; with the provision that, should sufficient have been said regarding the subject before his broadcast date, he would not speak. Contrary to this attitude is that of thousands who, despite what others have said, feel that their particular viewpoint and manner of presentation is the all-important one.

Baruch, who in the summer of 1942 headed the three-man committee to study rubber control, gave me the most concrete example of his elusiveness, a little over a year ago; that, and his considerateness toward others.

He had made one of his rare requests for time to broadcast and the period I had reserved for him was a week distant. No publicity had been released on the program, as it never is until a broadcast has been definitely scheduled.

I was sitting in my office early one afternoon when my secretary rushed in greatly excited.

"Mr. Baruch is outside," she announced. "Is his broadcast on this evening?"

"Heavens, no!" I gasped, "but perhaps he thinks it is. Ask him to come in."

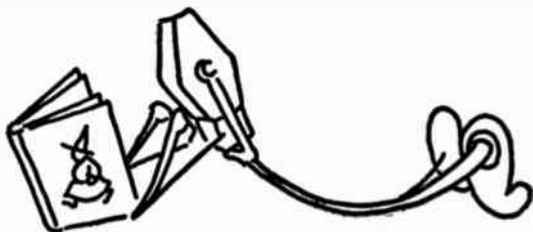
In a few moments a tall, aristocratic figure entered my office. Snow-white hair framed an astonishingly youthful face.

"I have come," he said, "to tell you that I can't broadcast next week."

And that was his method of declining time. Where others who were unable to accept our invitation have written, telephoned, or occasionally even ignored us, this busy man had the courtesy to come up personally to explain.

## CHAPTER NINE

### ONCE UPON A TIME



It is impossible to go back very far in radio anecdote, because radio was built more or less in a day, and that day not long ago. But even broadcasters like to sit around sometimes and exchange stories of the "early days."

Long, long ago in the year 1934, a program for children was being broadcast. Somewhere in the action of the script it called for the reproduction of the sound of a rattlesnake. In the interest of fidelity, the director of the show hired one Hawaiian Joe, an itinerant snake-man, to bring to the studios one of his "pets" to produce the real thing in rattles. At the proper moment the snake rattled, but, quick as a flash, he wriggled free from Joe's clutches

and onto the floor. Fascinated, the cast kept one eye on the script and the other on the snake, as its slithering form drew near the microphone. The fright of "Little Red Riding Hood" had never seemed so authentic. The unseen audience, however, had no way of knowing that it wasn't the wolf this time, but a rattlesnake which produced the terror in her voice.

As the owner strove to retrieve it, the snake struck and bit him on his forearm. Fortunately, its poison sacs had been drained and Joe suffered only the pain of the bite.

In their dealings with anything from announcers to drummers and free-verse poets, broadcasters have found many freaks, but nothing so fantastic as this discovery of twelve years ago:

The soul of P. T. Barnum, in the abundant flesh of Uncle Bob Sherwood, last of the Barnum and Bailey clowns, had been rekindled through the magic of William Burke Miller's broadcasting. The mythical P. T. squeezed his way from the pullman at Grand Central Terminal and, after marching to the Boys' Club, Sherwood spoke an energetic piece into the microphone.

At that moment in Newton, Pennsylvania, a housewife, who was somewhat back in her reading, or had a divine faith in her "wireless," happened to tune in. She never doubted that the exploiter of the Siamese twins and

the two-headed calf was not actually speaking. She heard his voice, which was proof enough for her. From her later came this letter, carefully addressed:

"Mr. P. T. Barnum, c/o Station WJZ, Please Forward.

"Hearing that you arrived at Grand Central, I was certainly glad to hear you speak over the radio. I have something very interesting for you to take along with your circus and would be glad if I could show it to you. It is a police dog with six legs and two tails, double neck and two heads. It stands on all six legs, the most perfect freak that has ever been born as far as the museums have told us."

They tell this one on Nellie Revell, who was known in 1931 as "The Voice of Radio Digest." She christened a dear listener "Queen of Hearts," after receiving the following telegram:

"You mentioned an old couple, seventy years of age, who came down in their night robes to listen to the radio. Well, I am an old lady of eighty-six years and you interrupt my poker game every night at eleven o'clock. The playing stops while you are talking, but it is okay with me. I play for three hours afterwards, anyway."

In that same year, Dr. Leon Levy, of Philadelphia, rigged up a microphone amplifying system over the crib of his two months old son, Robert. By recording the



sounds of the baby's crying it saved unnecessary visits to the nursery.

A radio wag, upon hearing of this unique arrangement, said that all that was needed now was an electric light socket and a small loudspeaker. He suggested that the radio man around the corner could rig up the whole thing in no time and it could then be made all nice and pretty with bright colored paint to match the nursery and a rattle could be placed over the crib to keep the youngster amused. He foresaw a number of excited telephone calls coming in to broadcasting stations asking them to keep an eye, or at least an ear, on baby.

Dorothy Krauss, who at that time was with the Jenkins Television Laboratories in Passaic, suggested that if parents wanted to save their steps to the tune of \$35,000, they might add to all this a television apparatus beside baby's crib. She predicted that the mother who "simply can't bear to let my child out of my sight" might have her wish granted. If she went to a ball game, the theatre, or away for the week-end, as long as she kept within a radius of a hundred miles, she could carry along with her a portable television transmitter and keep tabs on her infant at home.

I never heard of the television plan being put into use. But during the month of June, 1931, people became excited over this so-called "baby alarm system." At least a

dozen sound amplifying systems were in use by Chicago mothers and fathers to enable them to go out to bridge parties or shop and still "mind the baby."

One couple went so far as to have a microphone and loudspeaker device rigged up in the home of a neighbor, so that their friend could hear if the child cried while they were out.

The most fabulous tale of this kind, though, was of the man who attached a microphone to the baby's crib and set up a lifting device on his phone so that every time it rang the receiver went up. When both he and his wife were out and baby was alone, they would call home frequently. Up would go the receiver and they'd listen a minute for baby. If quiet reigned, they would blithely go on with their shopping or bridge game.



Several years ago Frank Crumit was vacationing with a doctor friend who was also a golf rival. Frank prides himself on having a retentive musical memory and his companion, after having listened to Frank's exuberant boasts, bet him fifty dollars that he could not sing eight hundred songs without looking at the music. Frank took

up the challenge. He began singing early in the morning and collapsed from exhaustion by night-fall, having sung one thousand and ten songs. In addition to winning the bet, he got a twenty-five dollar bonus for having passed the thousand mark.

Afterwards, however, his voice was paralyzed. For days he couldn't speak and his concert had to be canceled. The concert, by the way, would have netted him several hundred dollars.

While the Byrd Expedition was at the South Pole, the men made several broadcasts to the United States. To expedite arrangements, conversations with them were held by radio officials over the cue-channel. Down in Little America, Byrd's men were split up into various cabins. Once, because of the elements, it was impossible for the group in one of these cabins to communicate with those in another part of the camp. The former group asked the radio people in New York to relay the message for them. From this remote corner of the earth the message came all the way to New York via the cue-channel and it was immediately transmitted back to Little America by radio. It was estimated that the message traveled some twenty or thirty thousand miles to reach its destination; yet sender and receiver were only twenty yards apart.

Many were the tricks played with microphones in the early days of broadcasting.

WOR once scheduled a broadcast of a dance band from some roadhouse and at the last minute canceled it for a special events program.

The boys in master control thought they would have some fun with the remote engineer who had not yet been told of the cancellation. The music was coming through his remote control board but, unknown to him, was not going out on the air. Into the microphone back at the studio the boys let go a string of epithets and off-color remarks. The engineer, thinking the program was on the air, glared at the couples that were dancing by the band "mike" in an effort to discover the guilty person.

He rang up master control:

"Did you hear that cussing?" he asked excitedly. "I've got to get that guy!"

Just then a couple danced by . . . He was a big fellow . . . Having a swell time! As they neared the "mike" he threw back his head in song. The engineer saw only his movement and thought he had spotted his man. Leaving the controls he pounced upon the suspected culprit—fists swinging. The dancer squared off and let fly a right to the button!—One cold engineer.

They tell this on Bill Vernon who used to be an announcer in Washington. On one occasion he was sitting in master control at WJSV, listening to the speech of President Roosevelt coming from the White House. He

was doodling as he listened—running his fingers carelessly over the keys on the control-board, his attention centered on the eloquence of the speaker.

Click, click, click went the relay switches, as he absent-mindedly snapped them back and forth and suddenly the President, who never before was at a loss for a word, was pausing and then coming through with disconnected sentences.

“Take your hands off of those switches, you doper!” cried an angry voice, as the control engineer, who had been frantically hunting for the trouble, saw what Bill was doing. “So, you’re the guy who’s been cutting the President off the air!”

And have you heard this story about Ted Husing? In his own inimitable fashion he had described a Schuylkill River boat race. The day was a scorcher and the intense excitement of the contest had made Mr. Husing an extremely warm gentleman. But, what really burned him up, said Ted, was when, with perspiration dripping from every pore, he was calmly told by the engineer that there had been trouble with the antennae and his half-hour broadcast had not been on the air. “It’s a-ma-a-zing!”

On one of her early broadcasts, Fanny Brice, that grand comedienne, was speaking before a microphone that was a little low for her. Her predicament was discovered too late and the helpless staff could only stand by and hope

that she would know enough to stoop down to talk into the "mike." Suddenly, off came her high-heeled shoes and she was level with the microphone.

"Did you ever see such quick thinking?" whispered the relieved engineer.

After the broadcast the staff rushed up to congratulate her on her great presence of mind.

"Forget it," she said, "my dogs hurt."

Way back in the days when Louis Dean was an announcer at C.B.S., he was assigned as announcer for Edwin C. Hill.

One evening as the program was about to take air, Hill reached into his pocket for his glasses. Not finding them in their usual place, he felt for them in another pocket. The opening announcement was being read as he jumped to his feet and excitedly started turning his pockets inside out. Dean, reading the announcement, knew that Hill couldn't see a word without them, so he tried to assist in the search with wild gesticulations for him to look in his briefcase and under the table. But Hill was introduced and still no specs—thirty seconds of dead air—then the words, ringing loud and clear. Hill looked up from the floor. Dean, simulating the timbre of Hill's voice, was reading his script.

Forever after, Mr. Hill has worn around his neck a black cord to which are attached his glasses.

Dickie Skinner, who directs the summer theatre at Princeton, made his radio debut in Boston. He and the rest of his repertory group had been playing the Straw Hat circuit and finally landed upon Back Bay.

The show they were giving was a one-act play entitled "The Loan of a Lover." Some enterprising radio official brought the whole cast into town to re-enact it before the microphone.

Dickie, as Percy Spyk, had been in the habit of drawing out his part for all it was worth; even to the point of "hamming" it a little. This evening when he took air, the rest of the cast stood by in amazement as he raced through his lines and then darted into the control room.

After the broadcast they found out the reason for his mysterious behavior.

"I thought I had to be fast," explained Dickie a bit chagrined, "I wanted to catch my voice as it came through."

If the best sense of humor belongs to the man who can laugh at himself, Lowell Thomas missed his calling and should have been a comedian instead of a reporter. For it was back in 1931 that he chose this epitaph for his tombstone:

"Here lies Lowell Thomas who spoke nightly to millions of radio listeners . . . who were waiting to hear Amos 'n Andy."

What wouldn't they give for *his* "Crossley" now, though!

Bob Taplinger, the publicity man par excellence, was the builder-upper of such stars as Bing Crosby, Morton Downey, Stoopnagle and Budd and the Mills Brothers.

Before Kate Smith worried about getting the moon over the mountain, she was providing the laughs on Broadway in "Flying High" as the fat girl of the show, wore socks and danced the meanest Charleston ever seen in these h'yeah parts. A little-known record salesman, by the name of Ted Collins, became interested in her as a radio possibility. Not knowing the intricacies of broadcasting, he sought the help of Taplinger.

"First we cut the comedy," said Bob. "No more laughing at a fat girl. We'll show her as the fine human being she really is . . . Build up her generous spirit and humanitarian feelings. Her rich voice will float out over the ether in—I've got it!—in memory songs. She'll bring back to the people the music of long ago. So that then, when her listeners say, 'big,' they'll be talking about her heart."

But that was not all Bob did for Kate. Her new personality must have a name and one that would catch the imagination of a romantic nation. Thus she became "The Songbird of the South."

Here, however, he ran into difficulties. Washington, the scene of her birth, was below the Mason-Dixon Line to



be sure, but was not generally conceded to be a southern town. He and Ted, pouring over a map of Virginia, hit upon a happy solution to the problem in the sleepy little hamlet of Greenville. This innocent bit of deception, which may be excused as "publicity license," has always been a delicate subject with Kate.

"Until this very day," she complains, "I get mail from folks in Greenville, who claim to remember me as a little girl playing in their back yard. They even send me pictures of the house in which I was born and carefully mark the window of the very room. Why, I've never even been in the town!"

At the time Kate was singing her "Memory Songs," the New York Police were having their hands full with the "numbers" racket in Harlem. Finally the Radio Commissioner came to Kate and asked her to change the make-up of her programs. The songs, he found, were serving as the basis for one of the biggest games.

She had been accustomed to singing the songs one night and, on the following one, to tell the dates that the songs were written. In Harlem the numbers game was based on the dates she announced.

Another embarrassing moment proved to Kate that it does not pay to forget things—even when they are little things.

When she came to the studio for her program one

evening, her throat was a bit husky. She took a cough-drop and, forgetting that it was still in her mouth, stepped before the "mike" for her song. Just as she hit high "C," the pellet, taking advantage of the situation, slipped down her throat. "Gulp, gulp, gu-lulp," went poor Kate, as she stopped singing to catch her breath. The orchestra continued the number without her.

Immediately following the broadcast, she received an anxious call from her mother in Washington.

"Thank heaven," she said with relief when Kate's voice answered, "I thought you were choking to death."

"For a moment I thought so, too," replied her daughter.

Since then—no more playing "chokes" on the air for Kate.

Bradley Barker is radioland's official menagerie. Studios send for him whenever an animal part is called for in the script. He has been a roaring lion, a stork, a kangaroo,



an elephant and a teeny, weeny mouse. During his radio career, he has made every animal sound there is, including a few that never were. The first "sound-effects" job he did, professionally, was that of an egg frying. His bow-wows and woof-woofs, his growls and barks are so natural that thousands of listeners have written in for pictures of the animals.

He portrayed so realistically the agonized yelpings of a pooch, which, in the midst of a terrific storm, with rocks crashing down mountainsides, had been caught and crushed in the debris, that next day, from morn 'til night the phones of the network kept ringing and telegrams poured in by the hundreds. The tenor of all was the same:

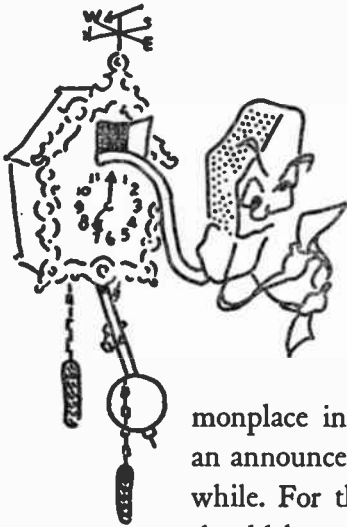
"Why did you allow 'Bones' [the dog] to be hurt in the landslide. It was a mean trick to play on such a lovely, intelligent animal. We were just as fond of him as if he were human. Don't let him die."

Those were the good, old days!

And so it came to pass that radio and its listeners lived happily ever after . . . and almost single-handedly supported the aspirin industry.

## CHAPTER TEN

### FROM MY NOTEBOOK



Famous boners of radio have already been reported. I tried to remember some not so well known. Tongue-twisters which are responsible for most of them are commonplace in the studio. There is hardly an announcer who does not slip once in a while. For that reason, announcer's copy should be, and generally is, submitted to

him quite some time before the broadcast takes air.

Here are a few whose tongues were twisted:

Andre Baruch, in referring to the Marine Roof of the Hotel Bossert, called it the "Maroon Reef."

Ted Husing, telling of his return from Miami said, "I came into New York with a dirty linen suit and no trunks."

Robert Stevenson announced, "This concludes the broadcast of the New York Philharmonica."

David Ross had been announcing Kaltenborn's news program for a number of years in this manner:

"We now present H. V. Kaltenborn, who has been on the lecture platform for twenty-five years."

One evening, perhaps because he was tired and his inhibitions less restrained, he made the announcement as follows:

"We now present H. V. Kaltenborn, who has been on the lecher platform for twenty-five years."

On a Rinso program the announcer referred to "That anti-sneeze soap, Anso."

A dramatic actress whose line was, "We'll give the bell a pull," said instead, "We'll give the bull a pill."

Over C.B.S. a few years ago, a political speaker started to say:

"Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking."

He actually said, "Unaccustomed as I am to public speakeasies" . . .

A broadcaster at WLA dramatically misquoted:

"I'll leave no turn unstoned."

A political speaker once referred to Iowa as "the State where the torn call grows."

Phil Lord, when he was depicting Seth Parker on N.B.C., once made a slip. I was in the control room at

the time, and had then my first opportunity to observe what occurs in a studio when a radio performer gets twisted.

A large cast was grouped about the "mike" for the sad and sombre episode they were enacting. One of their townspeople had died and the news had been brought to their Sunday night meeting. Old Seth had spoken well of the so-recently deceased, and, still in a mournful tone, had announced that they would "all lift their voices in singing a chorus of 'Iceland's Greasy Mountain.'"

There was a silence that you could have cut with a knife; the music started, but no one sang. The hysterical cast was busy stuffing scripts into their mouths and doing everything to regain self-control. Finally Seth, himself, in a more quavering voice than usual, sang the first chorus of "Greenland's



Icy Mountain." By the time he reached the second, a few of the cast were able to join him.

Habit also plays its part in creating tongue-twisters. Announcers frequently slip up in giving the call letters of stations. Before there was a completely separate network of the "Blue," it was not too unusual to hear an

announcer say "WEAF" when he meant "WJZ," or vice versa. The confusion arose from the fact that both stations were part of N.B.C. and the announcers could work on either net.

When announcers change jobs, it is sometimes difficult for them to get out of the habit of giving their old call letters. Thus, listeners have been surprised upon occasion when tuned to WABC, or WOR, New York, to hear "WBZ, Boston," or "KDKA, Pittsburgh" come over their radios.

I remember a slip by an announcer that had rather dire consequences. It is the only example I know of where sticking to the script caused trouble. Due to a typographical error, the announcer gave the time as 9 P.M. instead of 8 P.M. In so doing, he threw many New Yorkers out of gear. Immediately the telephone switchboard at C.B.S. was overtaxed with calls from listeners who questioned the announcer's accuracy. However, there were many who applied the rule: "If you see it in print, it's true," to radio, "If you hear it, believe it."

They dashed from their dinner tables to catch trains, left cocktails to hasten to theatres and scrambled to keep that 9 o'clock appointment. One irate restaurateur threatened to sue C.B.S. for ruining his business that evening.

Years ago, before there were specific news periods, regularly scheduled programs were frequently interrupted,

without warning, to give important news bulletins. This often proved embarrassing.

Once, to announce the death of an important leader in Rochester, they cut in on a musical. As they switched back to the program, after the announcement, the orchestra was innocently playing: "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You."

Another time, they announced that the Lindbergh baby had been found, and returned to the interrupted musical program just in time for: "Of Thee I Sing, Baby."

Sometimes statements contain confused double meanings. During the broadcast of a dance band from a hotel, an announcer in all seriousness remarked:

"Distasteful as it is, we must bring the program to a close."

Here's an announcement that deserved a prize of some kind:

"Del Monte, packed in cans or glasses and now Eddie Stone with 'The Pity of It All.'"

Edwin C. Hill once said:

"Weber and Fields, who caused their audiences to split their sides for more than a quarter of a century."

Back in 1931, an announcer, in introducing a singer, remarked:

"Once again Elinor steps up to the microphone. This time to sing 'Take Me Away' from Earl Carroll's Vani-



ties." (She may have had designs on Flo Ziegfeld.)

My favorite of them all, however, is the remark made by Evans Plummer, at the end of his interview with a guest:

"Now," he said, "if you'll just say goodbye to the folks, I know they'll appreciate it."

How often have I been tempted to say just that!

Frequently, embarrassing moments are caused by giving the wrong name of a person or place.

In July, 1942, Bing Crosby was doing a skit with the motion picture actor, Brian Donlevy. The skit ended with a speech by Brian calling on the American people to look to their cherished democracy and to give "an Australian paperhanger" what was coming to him.

Kate Smith pulled a beauty in 1931 on one of her programs. She interrupted her announcer toward the close of the broadcast.

"Excuse me," she said, "there is something I have always wanted to do, but as long as I have been on the air I have never been allowed to."

"What's that, Kate?" asked the announcer unsuspectingly.

"I want to say 'This is the Columbia Broadcasting System,'" said Kate.

Unfortunately, when the engineer, who had been paying little or no attention to the dialogue, heard these

words, which are always used at the end of a broadcast, he immediately threw the switch and the studio was off the air.

Here's a boner to end all boners:

John H. Hewlett, of New York, sent the following telegram to Jack Foster, in May, 1931:

"Corn Bread Stokes, sixty-five-year-old Kentucky bonecracker, will crack his bones at 3 o'clock Wednesday afternoon in his first audition for the press, before joining the Rex Cole Mountaineers as a permanent feature. You are cordially invited to attend Stokes's performance in the offices of Mr. Cole, at 285 Madison Avenue, where the picturesque hillbilly will demonstrate this passing art in the true manner of the hills..."

Going back a few years, there was something that happened to me that had all of us laughing at C.B.S. One day three prominent ladies were scheduled



to broadcast. They arrived in the studio in plenty of time to go over the script before they took air and, despite the fact that the usual staff was present, asked that I come up

and give them advice on their voices during rehearsal. I sat in the control room and from time to time used the "talk-back" to make suggestions.

The more impressive of the ladies was putting the finishing touches on her talk and paid little attention to the other two. One of them timidly asked her if she was ready for her turn before the microphone, but, with a rather withering look, was told that broadcasting was no novelty to her, that she needed no rehearsal.

The time arrived to take air and my two little women, one after the other, sat before the microphone and read their portions of the script. Being new at it and a little apprehensive, they stumbled here and there and were obviously relieved when they were through.

Then the third, a tall, handsome woman, was introduced. She favored her predecessors with a superior glance and, with queenly mien, stepped up to the announcer's standing "mike," instead of to the table "mike," from which the other two had spoken.

"How do you do, ladies and gentlemen," she said in a typically "radio-cultured" voice, "it is so very nice to be speaking to you today."

Then she looked into the control room where I was sitting, and, still in front of the microphone, boomed in her natural tone:

"Say, is my voice coming through all right?"

I gulped and hastily nodded "yes." The frantic engineer groaned and asked if I thought she would do that often. As for the two ladies, well, I shall never forget the startled and mystified expressions on their faces!

Before the war we had time for some of the more frivolous things, and many of them made interesting broadcasts. I remember when Bob Trout interviewed Lucien Lelong, the famous French couturier and originator of fine perfumes.

Lelong, who spoke English as I speak French, had carefully studied his script well in advance of the broadcast and had marked certain words phonetically to help him with his pronunciation.

But the script had been written for too short a time and the interview came to an end before their broadcast period concluded. Trout tossed aside the last page and, smiling across at Monsieur Lelong, asked that he tell him something of his favorite sport. Lelong, with an expressive gesture toward the script, remarked with much dismay:

"But, she eez finished."

Bob then told him in his easy manner, although that portion of the broadcast had been completed and he had told his listeners of his work, that now he, Trout, would like to know how he spent his hours of recreation.

"I hear," continued Bob, "that you are quite a sculptor."

"Ah, mon Dieu," whispered Lelong, leaning confiden-

tially toward Bob, "I shall confess to you, yes, but please, you must never tell another soul."

Naturally, Bob promised faithfully that he would never tell, but he added as an after-thought that he could not guarantee secrecy for the thousands listening in. Lelong's face blanched. He had completely forgotten the "mike."

Practical jokers came in for a dressing down by Kathleen Goddard of N.B.C., not so long ago. Because of the so-called wit of one of these jokers, she pulled a first-class boner.

Frequently she was called upon to answer the telephone for Margaret Cuthbert and often in recent weeks the call had been from a prankster friend of Margaret, who, in giving his name, used such obnoxious aliases as Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Count Ciano, etc. She was getting a little fed up with this when one day she answered the phone and after explaining that Miss Cuthbert was out was told to say that "her Eskimo friend, Mr. Nutchuk" had called.

"Oh yes?" she said sarcastically, "and how's your little frozen pie?"

Dead silence greeted this sally and when Margaret returned, Miss Goddard learned that the caller had actually been Mr. Nutchuk, a very important Eskimo from the Aleutian Islands.

When I was planning this chapter, I thought I should

like to season it with some of David Ross's interesting experiences. I asked him if he would give me a few anecdotes. Here is his reply:

"Indeed I would feel honored, not just because radio has so much of the twilfer, but, considering that it is a most important avenue of education, I would be doubly traddle-fast. As Boswell said of Johnson, 'Not only is he flaint, but magistans whenever in the company of his peers.' And so may your book prosper and hurk . . . wherever tordle meets with flafferole."

David, as you may have guessed from the above, is the best non-professional "double-talker" I know. Possessor of the most beautiful, melodious speaking voice in radio, he announces classical music programs and recites poetry over the air. This serious-looking little man, with the great big heart-throb in his voice, always greets me with the same salutation:

"Ah, Helen, is that the face which launched a thousand ships?"

From that point we usually drift into a normal radio conversation; discussing our various programs. If my attention wanders, he will lapse into "double-talk" in the same sonorous tone. Absent-mindedly I continue at intervals to say the expected monosyllabic "yes" or "no" until suddenly I start checking my thoughts and find that what he's been saying sounds like a page from Lewis Carroll.

The first anecdote he gave me had to do with the magnitudinous and lovable Heywood Broun. Broun had been doing an editorial column-of-the-air for a long time and David was assigned as his special announcer.

In those days, announcers felt that by winning the Gold Medal Award for Speech on the Radio, offered by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, they had reached radio's pinnacle. David told me, with a little humility, that he was at that time being considered for the Award.



On this evening, Broun's talk was devoted to the diction used in radio and he took most of the announcers to task for their over-precise manner of speech. As far as he was concerned, he liked

the southern drawl and the frosty dryness of the Down-Easters' accent; he found something pleasant in the western twang and thought that these varied regional intonations gave to the language an elasticity and color. He was particularly incensed against those females who teach elocution. Without naming names, he also paddled a number of the outstanding announcers of that time for certain academic usages of English and voice culture.

"I felt rather annoyed," said David, "on hearing Broun's laceration of announcers and so, as he kept lashing away at us, I quickly formulated in my mind an appropriate closing announcement for his program. When he concluded, I took my stand before the microphone and, out of the corner of my mouth, simulating as nearly as I could the combined accents of a longshoreman and a gangster with a smattering of Brooklyn's Greenpoint, I made my closing announcement. It went something like this:

" 'Ladies and gents, ya jest hoid a few cherce voids by me good pal, Haywood Broon. If any o'youse guys would like ta lissen ta him agin, make a pernt of tunin' in this here station at da same time Toisday. As fer me, well, I'm jest a guy what announces. Me moniker is David Ross. Dis is da Colum'ia Broadcas'in' Sys'em.' "

The second story David told me was about Ramsay MacDonald's visit to New York. He was then British Prime Minister, and naturally a great deal was made of his trip to America.

David was sent down to City Hall to describe his formal arrival. All the networks had microphones set up to broadcast the colorful welcoming ceremony.

This was David's first "remote" assignment and he confided to me that he was terrified, "literally petrified with fear." The announcers were supposed to take air at 3 o'clock. When this time arrived, however, there was



nothing of interest to report; no sign of activity which would signal the approach of the Prime Minister.

"But," said David, "I would continuously get buzzes from master control frantically complaining that WOR and WJZ were on the air with a description and asking: 'Why don't you get on?'"

"'There's nothing doing here,' I'd reply, 'no sign of any arrival. The boys are merely describing the local scenery, the houses, the trees, City Hall . . . There's really nothing to report. Let's wait until something happens!'"

"And so I waited and waited and waited and still they continued talking on WOR and WJZ and still I received buzzes from master control:

"'David, for heaven's sake, get on the air. They're scooping us!'"

"Suddenly I heard music.

"'Quick, give me the air!' I said, and they heaved a mighty sigh of relief.

"I began to describe the bands coming down the street, the policemen, the horses—the horses with their wonderful manes, glistening in the sunlight, the lovely sheen of their bodies with the light playing upon them and the white ticker tape falling lazily through the windows and, again, the wonderful horses—I could see them champing at their bits, the riders a little unsteady—the wonderful flanks of the horses.

“‘Hell’s bells, when are we going to hear something about the Prime Minister?’ shouted master control into my earphones.

“‘Not here yet,’ I blandly replied over the air.

“At long last the cortège arrived and I started my description of this.

“‘Here is the Prime Minister! The automobile has stopped . . . the door is being opened . . . Ramsay MacDonald emerges from the car. What a beautiful man, what a poetic profile, what a prophetic profile!’ . . . (It began to sound as if the needle was stuck.) ‘I can’t see his eyes . . . merely the outline of his face. The tall forehead . . . a most prophetic look . . . and those wonderful horses, champing at the bit—horses prancing in the sunlight . . .’

“And then they had escorted Mr. MacDonald into City Hall and he was lost to view.

“My work was over. I returned the program, short, to the studio for ‘fill’ and ‘sign-off.’ The closing musical theme floated out upon the ether: ‘Horses, horses, horses, crazy over horses . . .’”

Among the many programs for which Paul White is responsible, “Report to the Nation” is perhaps my favorite. On this interestingly informative broadcast each week, is dramatized the national and international news. And, despite its serious tenor, the material is never heavy. Paul sees to that. Take for instance this excerpt from the

September 25, 1942, program wherein this versatile virtuoso turned poet to inject the light touch:

"Just as the attention of a nation at war is to be diverted somewhat next week by the World Series between the New York Yankees and the St. Louis Cardinals, so does 'Report to the Nation' now pause to chronicle a minor catastrophe. We call it 'The Rise and Fall of the Dodger Empire.' And, for the benefit of the fans in Brooklyn, we should point out that an Empire is not the guy what calls the balls and strikes. Wid apolochies to Ernest Lawrence Thayer, what wrote 'Casey at de Bat':

"Dem Bums."

"De outlook sure was brilliant for de Brooklyn club dat year,  
De fans who watched dere champions play, had naught to  
do but cheer,

De other clubs all looked like dubs—dey couldn't even bunt,  
Durocher's boys supplied de noise and pounded to de front.

"By May de pennant seemed a cinch, by June dere was no  
race,

De Cardinals, who might compete, was deep in second place,  
July was just anudder month, de schedule ran its course,  
De Dodgers led by ten full games, so powerful was dere force.

"But, as de end of August came, de Cardinals got hot  
And proved demselves a ball team, which de enemy was not,

September saw de League upset—de Cards went sprintin'  
past,  
De dear, old Dodgers blew dere lead—and boy, dey blew it  
fast!

“Oh, somewheres in dis favored land de sun is shining bright,  
De band is playing somewheres and somewheres hearts is  
light,  
And somewheres men is laughing and somewheres children  
shout,  
But dere’s no joy in Flatbush, for dem bums has just struck  
out!”

It was during the Munich crisis before the smooth running C.B.S. News Department had been set up finally. Commentators and announcers had been working day and night to keep the American public fully informed of every history-making move. Cots were brought in for the weary men; sandwiches and hot coffee appeared at odd moments and the seventeenth floor resembled alternately a scene from “Front Page” and a convalescent home. Haggard, and for the most part unshaven, the usually sartorially correct announcers waited in Studio 9, the emergency studio, for news bulletins and flashes; ready to take air at news chief Paul White’s signal.

At 5:45 A.M. on one of these days, John Tillman, announcer, with Ed Scovill, production supervisor, waited

for time to take air. John was to read the news at 6 o'clock. Usually, he would have utilized this waiting period to look over his copy, but he had been up all night and for one brief moment his head sank upon his arms, as he sat there before the microphone.

Minutes ticked away and then the second-hand came close to the zero hour. Ed cleared his throat and gave the usual warning, "Thirty seconds to air time." As the words left his lips, John got to his feet, walked to the door of the studio, turned the doorknob and calmly strode out and down the hall. Ed, who at first had thought that he was just getting up to stretch his legs, desperately called after the disappearing form and then dashed to the microphone as the control engineer gave the cue that the studio was on the air. Seizing John's script, Ed read the unfamiliar words. And John . . . well, he didn't wake up until the broadcast was over.

"You may sit in the fish bowl," was my introduction to radio "slanguage." The words were uttered by Phil Lord, the first time I was ever in a studio.

"Ah, can't I stay for the rehearsal?" I asked.

As it turned out, a "fish bowl," in radio's complicated vernacular, means the client's booth in a studio.

On my next visit, I was permitted to go into the control room with Lord, and there I heard such bewildering

phrases as: "No 'noodling'—we'll open 'cold.' Then fade in 'walla walla.'"

In plain English this means: No tuning up of instruments before the program begins; we'll begin without a musical theme or background and gradually open the amplifiers for the ad-lib mumble of the mob scene.

A short time later, while waiting for an elevator, I heard one announcer remark to another that the woman in Studio 5 had lock-jaw. I rushed to my office, grabbed my first aid kit and breathlessly dashed back to the studio.

"What's the hurry?" an actor asked me, as I ran past him.

"There's somebody in there with a case of lock-jaw," I said.

"Sh, not so loud," he whispered. "You're perfectly right, but don't let her hear you. Anyway, what's the idea of going in? I'm trying to get away."

"Your remarks are anything but sympathetic," I said indignantly. "Take me to the poor sick woman at once."

"Sick!" he fairly bellowed. "That's too good to be true." Then, seeing my embarrassment, "'Lock-jaw' is a term we apply to a singer with an uninspired voice, my dear young lady."

That decided me. Never again would I go through another moment as crucifying as that one. Paper and pencil in hand I accosted everyone I knew in broadcasting

and got from them the queer words and expressions and their meanings that go to make up radio's vernacular.

Here are some of the things I learned:

Dog house—	Early morning announcing duties.
Dog watch—	11 P.M. to 2 A.M. shift for announcers.
Gaffoon—	Sound effects man who does two or three sound effects at the same time.
Mike mugging—	Very heavy dramatics, known in the theatre as "chewing the scenery."
On the board—	Engineer on the control board.
Inter-fleet studio—	Studio 9 at C.B.S. (Every show on the network passes through this studio.)
Pedal pusher—	Organist on a serial show.
Cushion—	Flexible factor in the timing of a program, usually a musical theme at the beginning or end of a show.
Tight—	Program that is running too long.
Slide whistle—	Transition between scenes in a dramatic program, usually a musical or "sound" bridge.
Bugs—	Trouble in equipment which is working imperfectly.
Bite it off—	Cut the music abruptly.
Scooper—	Vocalizer who slurs ends of sentences or phrases.

Crawk—	Animal imitator.
Creeper—	Performer who moves in toward the microphone.
Drool—	Unimportant talk.
Eighty-eight—	Studio piano.
Fairy godmother—	Easy-going sponsor.
Gelatine—	Tenor with a thin, quavering voice.
Madam Cadenza—	Flighty female singer.
On the beach—	Unemployed.
West of Denver—	Engineering difficulties which cannot be traced.
Wood pile—	A xylophone.
Two-in-hand—	Radio sketch that centers about two characters such as "Amos 'n Andy."
Town crier—	Vocalizer who sings too loudly.
Oh Henry—	Tag line to a dramatic sketch.
Corn on the cob—	Harmonica.
Dead book—	File of material that has been used on the air.
Old cow hand—	Experienced staff member called upon to escort important guests about the studio.
Lady Macbeth—	Heavy tragedienne.
Madam LaZonga—	Performer who dances nervously in front of the microphone.
Out in the alley—	Out of microphone range.
Spell a line—	Read a line in the script, carefully accenting every word.



Pull a beard—	Mispronounce a word; an accidental slip of the tongue. Also called "muff," "fluff," "bust," or "glitch."
Clam—	Poor dramatic show.
House canary—	High soprano.
One shot—	One performance on a program.
Strictly from hunger—	Poor musical show.
Play-back—	Recording of a rehearsal, which is played in the studio for the cast to hear and criticize.
Corn field—	Show requiring six or more "mikes."
Stick a pin in it—	Final rehearsal; perfect; no changes before the air show.
Strip show—	Serial show.
Mike hog—	Performer who crowds out members of the cast from in front of the microphone.
Weaver—	Performer who alternately leans toward and then away from the microphone.
Dead air—	Absence of sound, either speech or music, on the radio.
Emcee—	Master of ceremonies.
Talk-back—	A switch in the control room which, when thrown, permits the director to talk to his cast in the studio.
Woof—	Is used by announcers and engineers in testing equipment.

Many a startled speaker has thought that the announcer had been bitten by a mad dog, the first time he heard him "woofing" into the microphone.

The short staccato tone makes the volume indicator on the meter show a definite amount of energy going through the equipment. It is then possible for the technicians on both ends of the circuit to check the meter reading and adjust the equipment so that the same amount of energy is indicated on the output of the circuit as was used into the microphone.

Later, I learned the sign language of the air. By its use, directors and producers give instructions to announcer and cast while the program is being broadcast.

Speakers seldom react well to signals. The only two that are safe to give them are "speed-up" and "stretch." The former is given with the index finger describing a circle; it is a warning to the speaker to hurry. For the latter, one goes through the motion of stretching a rubber band and this means that the speaker should slow down.

The placing of the right forefinger on the palm of the

left hand is a signal to the performer to come in faster and to speed up the show.

One left finger up, with the right hand swinging in an arc, means that the program has stretched one minute over time and the remainder must be speeded up.

Running the index finger across the throat means "cut"; in other words, end the program, but at once! Programs should end exactly on the split second.

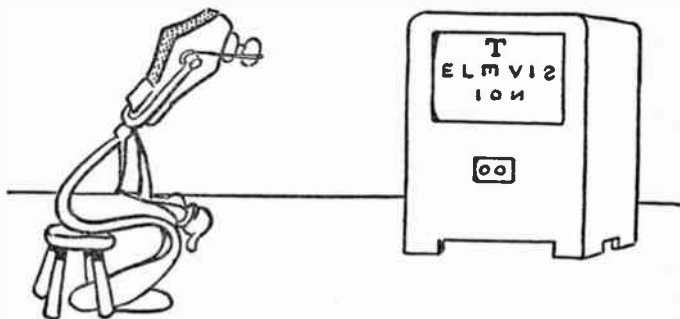
The forefinger of the right hand pointing to the nose means that the program is "on the nose," or on time. This is the most welcome sign in the whole realm of radio and the least understood by the novice speaker. Once when a speaker noticed his production man give this signal, he took it to mean that he thought the speech was putrid, which so disconcerted him that he had great difficulty in continuing.

The hand held toward the face, as if blowing on the palm, is interpreted, "come closer to the microphone."

The thumb and forefinger of the right hand forming an "O" means that everything is okay and that's a mighty nice signal to get—believe you me!

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### OH SAY, CAN YOU SEE



There are over five thousand television sets in the New York area, yet television is still in its infancy.

Dramatic programs are, at the present time, difficult to handle, but various forms of participation programs are quite successful. Brief interviews proved to be among the most interesting of London's programs. A spelling bee was one of the few recurrent features of the National Broadcasting Company's television programs. C.B.S. found quiz programs good audiovis-er (or how does one describe a receiver of a telecast?) bait. The face of a con-

testant trying to remember how to spell "reminiscences," or recall who was the fourteenth President of the U.S.A. is worth watching.

Television brings a high pictorial interest to many amateur efforts, adding dancers and caricaturists, for instance, to the musicians and singers of radio. As Gilbert Seldes, the Director of Television for C.B.S., explained to me, television is not the transmission of a photograph. It is the instantaneous and complete transmission of actuality. Sometimes it is an event, such as a parade, a fire or a ball game. It is not a newsreel, but the transmission of the image of an event while that event is taking place.

The program which I conducted over C.B.S. for a year, under the title "Table Talks with Helen Sioussat," brought a new kind of show to television. The program was unrehearsed and was conducted extemporaneously each week over the coffee cups. Usually my guests included four men and a woman. They were selected to represent important divergent viewpoints on the controversial issue up for discussion.

After our invitation had been accepted, each guest received the following instructions in a letter of confirmation: They were to come to the studio forty-five minutes before air time; no hats were to be worn in the studio and they were to dress in light-colored, but not white, clothing.

The worst colors for transmission are black, white and red; all dark shades are bad. I remember the day I arrived in the studio for my program in a red dress. Gilbert tore his hair! Red comes over the television set as black and is difficult to transmit.

When I met my guests at our television studio on the third floor at Grand Central Terminal, we chatted briefly about the subject to be discussed on the air. Here again instructions were brief: They were told not to move their chairs, as they had been placed in certain positions for picture groupings, that is, getting more than one person in a camera shot, and to make it easier to photograph them. I'd explain further that the program would be conducted in the same manner as this preliminary talk, that we would sit around the table and animatedly discuss the subject between sips of coffee.

I had more than one guest ask me if we were advertising coffee on the program. Unfortunately, we were not, because, had it been a commercial, we no doubt would have received good salaries for the time and energy devoted. The beverage, whether hot or cold, tea or coffee, was placed at our disposal not only for the enjoyment of the visitors, but to create additional animation for the pictures.

My guests could smoke while they were on the air, refer to any material they might have brought with them,

or make use of the maps and charts which were occasionally available on the set.

Although scripts were not used, time didn't lag, nor were there any periods of silence. My guests could interrupt each other or me, instead of waiting for my nod to start speaking. In my preliminary pep-talk, I would tell them that they could speak as often as they liked, but not as much. Too often I had been taken in by those who professed a feeling of timidity or even terror at the thought of going into the studio, only to find that, after the debate became heated, they completely forgot they were on the air and monologues ensued.

It was interesting to notice that fear that the other fellow might get too much time to talk drove many of them practically to filibustering.

What enabled even the timid ones to get over their "mike-fright" was that the microphone, instead of being constantly before their eyes as it is in radio, was suspended over their heads and therefore out of sight.

I believe that only one guest was unable to overcome his nervousness during the program. His teeth chattered till the very end. But that didn't stop him from talking. With a very red face and determined mien he continued to interject questions and answers, not wishing to let his adversaries get ahead of him. Speaking between clenched or chattering teeth made it difficult to understand him. To

clarify, I repeated practically everything he said. He told me afterward that he kept having a sinking feeling that someone would ask him to repeat. "This," he said, "would have been the last straw."

Another speaker had her troubles, too, from a reflex action. Her teeth didn't chatter, but, as she held her saucer in one hand and her cup over it in the other, she unintentionally kept beating a tattoo throughout the program.

Our informal discussion was "faded in" after the announcer had introduced us and the same procedure was used at the close. Many times it was all I could do to get a speaker, such as Norman Thomas, the fiery head of the Socialist Party, and Major George Fielding Eliot, the equally fiery military expert, to stop talking at the end of our program. Even after they knew they were off the air, they carried on their debate. This was unfortunate, for the program that followed from the same studio was devoted to children. My one fear was that in the opening greeting to the kiddies, the angry voices of my excited speakers would blare forth.

This actually happened the time we were discussing whether the United States should withdraw from the Pacific. Rex Stout, famous writer of detective stories and an authority on the Far East, became quite violent when Mrs. Katherine Larkin, member of the former America



First Committee, expressed her views on American isolationism. As our program left the air he was too aroused to pay attention to the frantic signals from our floor manager that all must be quiet. So, while the story-telling lady was beginning to unfold the tale of "Jack the Giant-Killer," Mr. Stout's angry words brought a premature "fe-fi-fo-fum" to the broadcast and gave an added thrill to little Mary Jane and Dickie listening at home.

My guests on these programs were authorities in or representatives of their respective fields. Among the better known were: William L. Shirer, Linton Wells, Michael Strange, Louis Adamic, Elmer Davis, Dr. Frank Kingdon, Philip LaFollette, Jan Struther, Harrison Tweed, Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, Betsy Blackwell, Madame Elsa Schiaparelli, James P. Warburg, Stanley High and Pearl Buck.

I don't know what area the program covered. I do know, however, that before the death of Mrs. James Roosevelt, the mother of the President, she had received it both visually and aurally at Hyde Park, some ninety miles away from New York City.

Everywhere I found a tremendous interest in television. For a month before my program took air, we rehearsed to perfect its format. Even during these rehearsals, such busy people as Major George Fielding Eliot, Norman Thomas and Madame Schiaparelli came

and sat with me under the hot klieg lights (though Gilbert is quick to tell you that they are cool, since they are not quite the scorchers used in Hollywood) to help us work it out. There they would sit before the cameras and chat, or argue the parts of several speakers. I divided my time between sitting with them, directing the discussion, and in the control room watching them come through the visio. I am indebted to them and many others for their real assistance.

A most embarrassing incident occurred the time a distinguished woman from Switzerland appeared on one of my programs. Before taking air I had, as usual, explained to my guests that should any of us not speak audibly, our floor manager would hold up a sign reading "speak louder." From this we were to take our cue and regulate our voice levels. Obviously, it was not necessary to reply.

We were on the air but a short time when the floor manager raised the sign and pointed to me. As I was the culprit, accordingly I raised my voice. However, the woman had seen the sign and noticed that I did not acknowledge it. So, instead of answering the question I had put to her, she started nudging me and giggled.

"Look," she said, "see what the man is doing!" and pointed out at the cameras.

It must have been rather startling to the man sitting at home before his television set . . . suddenly to have

someone on the screen poke her finger at him and say, as she did, "Look, see what the man is doing!"

A highlight in my year of television was the day a friend of mine flew down from Canada to be on my program. Late, she trailed into the studio with her two Siamese cats, Lily-Poo in her arms and Tony on a leash. Anxiously I glanced at our director, Gilbert Seldes, for signs of wrath. Instead, he made straight for the cats, picked them up in his arms and said that for his part the show was over for the day. He just intended to sit there and play with them.

However, when the program went on, I held Tony on my lap and my friend held Lily-Poo. There were three other guests with us and soon we were engrossed in a most controversial subject. The cats behaved like angels and the cameramen were so lost in admiration of them that I am sure the rest of my guests got a very poor showing that day.

In the midst of the program two guests became incensed and expressed themselves rather vigorously. At the crucial point in their heated debate, Tony, who had become restless, looked over at Lily-Poo and, in the typical hoarse voice of the Siamese cat, gave a plaintive but raucous meeeooow. My guests took the hint.

I am fond of another cat story, and for me, a lover of all things feline, there can never be too many:

Two very famous pugilistic cats, which had previously been the one big lure for me at the New York World's Fair, came to do a few rounds before the television camera. The sleek, black one was named Joe Louis and



the rather pudgy orange and white one, Tony Galento. At the beginning of the show they sat on their stools in their respective corners of the ring with their ears back, looking very bored. In sonorous tones the referee announced:

“In this corner, weighing 130 ounces, the contender, Tony Galento.”

Tony's right paw was raised.

“In this corner, weighing 120 ounces, the champeen, Joe Louis.”

Up went his paw.

After the trainer had put on their gloves and they were taken to the center of the "square circle" for instructions, a certain spark of interest seemed to ignite them and their tails began to wave slowly back and forth.

"Remember," admonished the referee, "no hitting in the clinches . . . and now, back to your corners."

Joe started to return to his corner, but Tony, with a quick lunge, had him around the neck. Only the referee saved him from a premature knockdown.

Back on their stools and suddenly the bell! Springing to their hind legs, nonchalance blown to the four winds, the two cats went for each other, hammer and tongs. But Galento soon tired and kept throwing his weight upon Joe. There he would hang, looking to his corner for instructions. After sufficient booing and cat-calls, he would pull himself together and again they would go to it.

At a most crucial moment, Tony looked up and saw the over-hanging "mike." Punch-drunk, he took a swat at it. This left him off guard and gave Louis a chance for the upper-cut that felled him. With a long, low hiss, Tony slowly sank to the canvass and there he lay for the full count. The referee, holding Joe's paw in the air, cried:

"The Winnah!"

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# SO YOU WANT A JOB IN RADIO



Radio needs new talent. You hear that cry constantly. Thousands of people besiege the networks for auditions as announcers, singers, actors and masters of ceremonies. They storm the studios where amateur try-outs are held and for 99.44% of them nothing ever happens.

Why? It is certainly not because radio turns a deaf ear to neophytes. They couldn't afford to do that. Networks spend a great deal of valuable time and effort appraising

those who come to them of their own accord. But it is not surprising that only a relatively small proportion of the number who seek any measure of radio money or fame ever attain it. Radio requires very special qualifications.

The worst mistake made by a tyro is the belief that he can get a better reception imitating a popular celebrity. Therefore, instead of developing his own spark of individuality, he bends his efforts toward that imitation. And broadcasters seek only that which is new.

There are three important requisites for *anybody* contemplating entering radio in any capacity whatsoever:

A strong physical constitution that can endure grueling rehearsals and night work.

A thorough knowledge of and ability to handle the English language. Mastery of the meaning of words is equally essential, whether one is talking or singing on the air, writing for the air, or sitting quietly in the control room with a pair of headphones. Words are the tools of the profession.

And above all—showmanship!

Talent, in broadcasting circles, refers generally to those performers who are actually heard on the air. Roughly, this group may be divided into musicians, singers, actors

and those who simply talk, such as announcers and news commentators. Behind the scenes, radio makes use of other talent, technicians, directors, producers, writers and so forth.

We may as well begin with musicians. The prospect in serious music is not rosy. The instrumental soloist has but a small place in radio's daily fare. However, there is some comfort to be derived from the fact that during the past few years leading conductors have made an effort to introduce young artists as guests on their programs.

An interesting exception is Jesse Crawford, the well-known organist. He is the man, who, some years ago, took the organ out of the church and put it into the theatre. Now he is busy making records of hymns in order to get it back into the church. It was Crawford who first composed "mood" music to suit the radio personalities of those for whom he played.

An instrumentalist clicks if he can develop into a specialist, for instance, a "hot" trumpet player or a "mean" drummer. With an individual style worthy of solo spotting, he is sought after by the big-name bands. However, these bands usually have long waiting lists and an aspirant must be a top-notch to make the grade. Maestros or band leaders have their place. But, to be a success, they must generally be a combination of musician, business



executive, actor, haggler and publicity expert. Their success depends on the development of a unique style of arranging and by publicity "build-ups." As many as two hundred bands may be auditioned for a single New York dance spot.

Though the big-timers' work is usually spread over the entire week, there are many who confine their labors to a few nights. Al Goodman is an instance. Instead of toiling six days and resting on the seventh, he rests week-days and labors on the Sabbath . . . But he's doing all right.

Of those who crowd the amateur try-outs, singers are by far the most numerous. There is an almost limitless group of people who feel that their voices are suitable for radio.

A beginner has two choices: he may go to work as a sustaining singer on a small station for no salary, with the dubious compensation of using it as a permanent audition, or "show-case," while he batters away, hoping for a commercial. But he often gets quite hungry before he succeeds in attracting a sponsor. Frances Langford got her start this way, though, and no doubt many others too. Or, as most singers who have made the grade have done, he may hold out for a commercial contract from the beginning. Many feel that this gives them a certain prestige. Even here, however, they can starve.

Advertising agencies that hold frequent auditions are good points of contact. The popular amateur-talent contests offer another opportunity.

Middle-register voices seem to have the best chance on the air. Tenors, basses, and coloraturas have the cards stacked against them from the start. Some, of course, come through, but it's an uphill pull for them.

Perhaps, though, you want to be a radio actor. Well, so do thousands of other lads and lassies, as well as those old enough to know better, including some four or five thousand veteran performers of the legitimate stage. Oddly enough, even though you haven't studied elocution or dramatics, your chances are likely to be as good as those with stage training. In fact, some of the best actors in broadcasting have never seen the brighter side of the footlights. A drawback to such a career is that radio deprives one of the chief reward, applause, so dear to the heart of an actor. And for the most part, the radio actor remains anonymous. Only the big names, from the theatre or Hollywood, and a handful of top-notchers developed by radio, such as Don Ameche, Kate Smith and Ralph Edwards get billing on the air. Yet, some of the actors, whose names are never mentioned, earn \$20,000 a year by rushing from program to program. Many of them speak as little as one line of a script. Their chief requirement is versatility.

The only father, mother and daughter team I know of in radio is the Mead family. Dwight writes the serial script and Dorothy, his wife, types it. The story is built around their lives and that of their little girl, Doris. On the air, the three of them play their true-life parts.

It is perhaps truer of the announcer than of any other branch of the profession, that he must get his start at a small station. He should always plan to begin with very little salary. Later, when he has proven himself sufficiently valuable to be put on the station's regular payroll, he is eligible for the better paying commercial programs.

Jobs at such stations are usually interchangeable. An announcer may be pressed into the work of a singer, production man, engineer or ad-lib entertainer. A short period of such experience is valuable, for it gives the beginner an elementary knowledge of what radio is all about.

Radio is a rapidly expanding industry. But thousands of hours of effort, and thousands of heartaches, too, would be saved if those who turn yearning eyes toward it would reflect on what is needed for a career. Instead of allowing themselves to be dazzled and blinded by the income figures of the fortunate few who have reached the top, they should think of the long, hard fight and the obstacles hurdled in their rise to fame.

Now for those behind the scenes of radio. First, con-

sider the writer. Probably more effort is spent in trying to get in through this means than through any other. A countless number of scripts are brought to broadcasting offices, some of them laboriously written in long-hand.

Although conscientiously read, most of them have to be rejected, because the writer has not the remotest notion of the mechanics of radio writing. Frequently the scripts contain nothing new and are only an imitation of a program already on the air. Radio needs new ideas, but writing for the air, which is writing for the ear, is a highly specialized technique. Write a page that looks great on paper, then hear it come through the loud-speaker. You'll be surprised.

In broadcasting there is no such thing as a bad idea. Every idea is good; only the execution of it may be bad. You may think that you have an original idea and complain that you can't get it on the air. Whereas it is a development of the idea that renders it unacceptable. An idea may sound good, but many times something wrong happens to it by the time it is put on paper.

The radio writer's job is akin to that of the writer for pulp magazines. He must produce in quantity, and he must have a definite flair for writing "action." The curse of radio, from the beginner's standpoint, is the sample script that must be written for auditions. Too often he gets writer's cramp with nothing to show for it.

The man who produces radio shows is in a loose and variable category. He may be the man who holds the stop watch, or he may be a "name" director, like Norman Corwin. Advertising agencies pay huge sums to men capable of producing smooth air-shows, but the route to these salaries is a long and arduous one. Of all the jobs in radio, it probably takes the greatest physical toll. One must have nerves of steel to withstand the wear and tear, the constant worry and, not least, the long hours it entails.

Those who work in radio are not necessarily confined to the job in which they start. Take, for instance, the career of Ed Gardner. Ed, a producer of radio dramatic programs, came to C.B.S. to direct "This Is New York."

In creating the part of "Archie" the East Side "Slap-happy," he, without success, auditioned actor after actor. None seemed to "feel" the role.

"No, no, no," he stormed in exasperation through the "talk-back," "be more 'dead-pan' about it. 'Archie' is a 'fall guy.' A goof! This isn't 'Ah Wilderness'!"

But they couldn't get it.

"Suppose you show us," finally suggested one of the harassed actors.

So, Ed took the "mike." A burst of laughter greeted his characterization. He didn't act; he *was* "Archie."

"Do it that way," he grinned, and returned to the control room. Again they tried and again they failed.

"Guess you're elected," said the tired engineer, and he turned to Ed.

It was thus that Ed, the director, became "Archie" the actor; that likeable dope who later traveled on to "Duffy's Tavern"—you know, "where the elite meet to eat."

Although there is little unemployment among radio engineers, and in war-time they are at a premium, this technical field offers but limited opportunities, as the number of stations is fixed by federal regulation. Owing to the important nature of this work, the industry can use only men who, besides being well-trained technicians, have a good general background, a musical ear and an ability to think fast in tight places.

But what really make the broadcasting wheels go 'round is the management with its highly trained staff of experts, who sit behind their polished mahogany desks and decide what goes on the air. This rarefied sphere should be entered only by those who still believe that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." For, considering the responsibility invested in them for maintaining the very life of the industry, they are, except for the few at the top, all too frequently underpaid.

Finally, there are the junior executives, salesmen, auditors, secretaries, stenographers and clerks, without whom no business is complete.

Even for these jobs, a knowledge of radio, which may be acquired through working at small stations or in advertising agencies, is invaluable. The other requisites are similar to those imposed by other employers: conscientious work, constant attention to the job without prodding from supervisors, punctuality, a proper attitude toward authority in following orders and in accepting suggestions. With this is associated the proper attitude toward fellow-workers, an attitude of helpfulness and cooperation. The desirable worker, from the employer's viewpoint, is one who has formed the habit of looking for new and more effective ways of doing his job, who considers it his responsibility to show resourcefulness in his work. In general, the business man as an employer requires not alone proficient workers, but workers who are willing to use their ability and energy. He asks that his employees display the will to work as well as the capacity to work.

Important, of course, are a pleasing appearance and manner, tact, reliability, conscientiousness, industriousness, initiative and ability to sell one's self. There is no room for temperament.

In 1936, C.B.S. instituted a plan of taking apprentices

into the organization. It was the first training course offered by a broadcasting company. It was originated in their Program Department, and the responsibility for securing outstanding candidates was given to the Director of Personnel.

During the first year, letters were sent to the placement officers of the leading eastern, middle-western and southern colleges, outlining the qualifications and needed aptitudes. As a result, approximately two hundred and eighty applications were received and one hundred and eighty-seven persons were interviewed by their Personnel Department in New York City. Out of this number, thirty-two were thought to be of such caliber as to warrant further consideration by the members of the Program Department.

Each of these thirty-two candidates was interviewed by the Director of Programs, the Assistant Director of Programs, the Directors of Program Service and Market Research, the Operations Manager and the Personnel Manager. Each interviewer filled out a rating scale for every candidate. After this information had been secured, there were assembled the applicant's scholastic record, the application for employment, letters of reference, the record of extra-curricular activities and the rating scale which had been scored. From this point C.B.S. proceeded to make its final selection on the basis of the written in-



formation, plus personality and personal appearance.

Although this apprentice plan was terminated in 1941 and, no doubt, will not be reinstated until after the War, I list here some of the questions used in constructing a rating scale for recording the impressions made by the various candidates who were considered. My reason for so doing is that the qualifications sought here are indicative of the basic requirements for many of the non-artist beginners at C.B.S., and the method of training is practically identical:

1. How does appearance of the applicant impress you, especially the facial expression, physique, carriage and neatness?
2. How do you rate his physical fitness?
3. How intelligent is the applicant; are ideas grasped readily?
4. What degree of imagination does the applicant seem to possess? What college courses demanding imaginative ability have been taken?
5. Is there a wide command of language; does the applicant speak good English? Talk easily?
6. What is your opinion of the applicant's character and integrity?
7. How large a fund of general knowledge appears to be at applicant's command?

8. Is there evidence of initiative?
9. What is the attitude toward the interviewer?
10. Does the applicant know why he or she wants to work for Columbia?

A planned curriculum lasting twelve months was used for the Program Department in which the apprentices were paired. The course was divided into: three months in the Production Division, three months in the Script and Continuity, three months in Program Service and three months in the Market Research Division.

The departments that had need for the apprentices were the Program, Sales, Radio Sales, Sales Promotion (including Market Research), Station Relations, Engineering, Television, Accounting, Publicity, Construction, Building and Operations, and the other stations of the C.B.S. network.

Extreme care was used in setting the quota in order that those selected might be readily absorbed by the organization upon completion of their training. The salary was \$25 per week during the course of training. The sources from which the apprentices were selected were colleges, C.B.S.'s own organization and outside applicants.

Only outstanding persons who had the potential qualifications for steady development were desired. The

number was relatively small and only those having high scholastic records and histories of extra-curricular activities were interviewed. The applicant with a flashy record of campus activities, unsupported by other evidence, was considered only after study and investigation.

Each applicant had to have:

1. The appearance and personality to mark him as a future representative of the company, including good physique and health. He should have demonstrated his future promise by a successful record of real scholastic achievement.
2. Sincere interest in getting into broadcasting work, and a logical reason for this interest.
3. High grades in the courses related most closely to his field of specialization, and in difficult courses requiring analytical ability.
4. Proof that he was willing to work hard for long hours, and that he could adapt himself to the concentrated effort necessary in radio business.
5. A bachelor's degree, completed normally in four years at the maximum age of twenty-two.

Within its own organization C.B.S. has a number of young men and women who are developmental material. An annual nomination was made by department heads as

to who should receive consideration along with other candidates for this training course. Their nomination was based on their work for Columbia, aptitudes and interests, educational background and their own estimate of their latent abilities and future possibilities.

After college graduates and company candidates were selected, the applications were considered of those who kept pleading for a chance in radio—whether they had formal education or not—simply because they were so sure that their future lay in radio that it was impossible to discourage them.

The training of the new employee was the immediate responsibility of the department head, with such assistance as he desired from the Personnel Department. At the conclusion of the regular placement routine, the successful applicants were taken into a given department for the purpose of preparing them as soon as possible for actual training on the job. The methods of training may be briefly classified as:

1. Routing through departmental positions.
2. Personal coaching.
3. Special problems and formal reports.

After the completion of the training course (normally twelve months) assignments were made to specific posi-

tions for which the aptitudes they had shown in the training course seemed best to fit them. These positions were either in New York or other stations of C.B.S. A substantial increase in salary was given at the time of the trainee's assignment to a regular position within the company.

This plan was successful and many valuable new people have been added to Columbia's permanent staff in this manner. Several of their most capable production men, a few announcers, script-writers and junior executives were developed from these apprentice groups. Best of all, it gave an opportunity to so many young people eager to get into radio, who, because of lack of experience, would ordinarily never have been considered.

But, after they once get in, people rise rapidly in radio. Men have started as pages and in an incredibly short time became executives.

As a general rule, girls start as stenographers and—end as stenographers. There is very little chance for them to receive the recognition of radio officialdom. Lucky is the girl or woman who crashes the gates of this male-dominated industry.

During war-time, when the shortage of men is acute, there are obviously more opportunities for the so-called weaker sex. Already three girls are apprentice engineers at WABC, key outlet of C.B.S. So far as I know, none

has been hired at the other networks. I understand that the possibility was considered, but in each instance, the men now employed there objected.

Columbia has relaxed its policy with regard to hiring women as assistant directors to produce shows and is, in general, employing more women throughout its organization.

Among the few women pioneers of broadcasting who have made the grade, four come to mind. At N.B.C. both Bertha Brainard and Margaret Cuthbert have played an extremely important part in the development of the industry. Margaret is probably better known to women's groups in this country than any other person in radio. Bertha, who has watched presidents of the company come and go, has carved for herself an enviable niche in that organization.

At C.B.S., Lucile Singleton and Nila Mack, in totally divergent jobs, are responsible for much of the good talent on the air. As head of Singers' Auditions, Lucile has given many a star his first opportunity. Nila, the lovable Director of Children's Programs, has delighted us with such miniature masterpieces as "The March of Games" and "Let's Pretend."

"Twelve years of being with a group of youngsters—seeing them once a week or oftener—is as close to being a mother as I'll ever get," is a typical Mack-ism.

Despite the fact that such jobs as cooking, making beds and sewing are usually considered "woman's work," a great many men excel in them. When they succeed in invading this domestic scene, they're looked upon as accomplishing no tremendous feat. Neither does the world gape in wonder when they "make good" in the stenographic field. For they are men and to them all doors are open—high or low. But when a woman "jimmies" the lock and finds herself doing what is popularly considered "man's work," there is a howl that would put Tarzan to shame. In the eyes of most men "woman's work" should be confined to those jobs which the males can't or won't perform.

The secretarial field is an honorable and an important one in the business world. Heaven knows, a good secretary can be a pearl beyond price! But, unless you wish to make stenographic work your career, don't admit to any man that you know short-hand. In most cases it won't be necessary, for he'll credit you with it, anyway. They really believe girls are born with pencils and notebooks in their hands.

This attitude may be a natural one. But, upon occasion I have seen it cause a serious stumbling block in the path of a girl's career: some men, suffering from inferiority complexes, use this as an excuse to "put her in her place."

I've been spared this unfortunate treatment but I have observed it around me in most of the numerous companies for which I've worked. It is not as prevalent in New York as in the rest of the country.

A glaring example of this male attitude was revealed by something that happened when I was attending an executives' meeting in Philadelphia. There was another girl, a Miss Langner, besides myself, in the room, and eight men, one of whom had been a court stenographer.

For some time we thrashed out our problems before deciding what action to take. One of the more aggressive men present offered to dictate his suggestions. With a worried frown, he let his glance travel over those assembled until it lit upon Miss Langner. Then he relaxed.

"Take a letter," he said.

"A letter? Sorry, I don't know the first thing about short-hand," she laughed good-naturedly. "Why not ask Bob? He's an expert."

The man's expression went blank.

"I really don't know," he confessed. "It—well, it just never occurred to me to ask a man. Come to think of it—I used to know a little short-hand, myself."

It was obvious that he had not meant to belittle his female colleague, nor had he any intention of being rude. He had singled her out merely because she was a woman.



A psychological something in a man's make-up that refuses to let him think, even sub-consciously, of a woman in business as anything other than a stenographer.

And, strangely enough, men are not alone in this notion.

I had gone with quite a distinguished-looking man to the President's Birthday Ball. He, in tails, and I, in a white evening gown, were sitting in one of the boxes. A man and his wife, drifting by, were called into the box and introduced to us by a friend who had stopped to chat. The wife, hearing that I was with C.B.S., hastened to tell me that they had just met one of our officials downstairs. I asked her his name, but, when she told me, I had never heard it before.

"Perhaps he is with N.B.C.," I said.

She was quite sure that it was C.B.S. and turned to her husband for verification. Yes, she was right. Maybe I hadn't been there long?

"Six years," I told them.

They didn't know what he did, but they were confident that he was an executive . . . "so young, too! But then radio is a young industry."

Shifting her interest to me, she inquired, "Whose secretary are you?"

Before I could reply to this \$64 question, the chap, who was responsible for this little quiz contest, broke in:

"Henrietta, don't be absurd. Helen is the Director of a department there."

But she didn't hear, for at that moment, leaning over the railing of the box, she had caught sight of the "executive" whose name I didn't know. Nudging me excitedly, she pointed him out. There he was—a nice-looking fellow . . . a nice fellow, too. One who was bound to go places . . . some day.

"So you know him?" she asked, as she saw my look of recognition.

"Yes," I replied, "I know him."

He was the page on my floor at C.B.S.!

So, you've got to "show 'em," girls. Not by affecting low-heeled shoes and masculine garb, by acting self-important or bossy. If you have the stuff of which executives are made, don't be tactless or step on other's toes or over the boy ahead. Swaggering females are even more intolerable than swaggering males. Be modest and natural; never fluttery, hysterical nor late. Win respect for your abilities rather than demand it. Men can be your most valuable guides, as well as your powerful foes. In most cases it's up to you to decide.

Too often it is the fault of the woman when a man remarks: "Female executives, ugh! Deliver me!"

I have more than once had this same feeling, myself. Women can do much toward changing this sort of think-

ing. Not by fighting the men but by proving to them that all the aggravating little habits and traits attributed to the fair sex are missing in their particular make-up.

It isn't easy, I know, as there'll always be "sisters-under-the-skin" who'll do exasperating things that will make it hard for the rest of us.

And it isn't as if it were something that once done will stay "put." When you have finally convinced your colleagues that you rate to be one of them, they're all right; however, a woman must go on proving it to each male newcomer who enters the firm. The sooner women realize the truth in this and stop fighting or dodging it, the quicker will be their rise in the field of business.

I am no defeatist, but neither am I in the strict sense a feminist. If I were either, perhaps I'd take a different attitude. I like to be happy in my work; do my job and let others do theirs. Certain sacrifices have to be made in attaining most things we want in life. If handled with intelligence and patience, these need not be too great. I, for one, rather like this male-dominated business world of ours and enjoy my place in it, small though it may be.

"Success is getting what you want.  
Happiness is wanting what you get."

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THIS ONE'S ON ME



We have had our laugh on other people. In this chapter the joke's on me.

To begin with, I shall probably never live down the prank played on me by a "pupil." I had been lecturing on radio at the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, and had given, as an assignment for the next lesson, the job of writing a script for a ten-minute broadcast. I left the choice of subject to the individual student.

When the scripts came in, they were, for the most part, amateurish. There were several, however, which rivaled those written by many of our experienced politicians. One, in particular, caught my eye:

A young man had written about his favorite game, in the manner of a sports commentator. I had never heard of this game before, so the names for the paraphernalia used, the various plays and the scoring were unfamiliar to me.

"Phundra is a fascinating game once played in Egypt. It was known only to the priests and played outdoors on a sort of tennis court called a 'tutman,' which in the Egyptian language means hard surface or sand that is smooth and packed solid. A curtain made of papyrus, very much like a tennis net, was stretched across the tutman. This smulka held 3 yabish, and it was the aim of the two contestants to see which one could throw the greatest number of gulbs into each yabish. Each contestant was blindfolded and allowed 3 gulbs for each receptacle.

"The game of Phundra was played either with large nuts or oranges. It was no easy task to walk onto the tutman, arrange the smulka and start throwing your gulbs into the yabish—considering you were blindfolded and had the twufts in your hand. Those who have studied the origin of games are of the belief that Phundra may

very well have been the forerunner of our own game of tennis.

"However, any game, whether ancient or modern, develops in man a sense of fairness and makes for the building of strong mental *fliftem* and a sense of *twutch*."

So it began.

I took it in to show Paul White.

"Here's a chap," I said, "who shows promise of becoming another Mel Allen. He has fascinatingly described some new game. In fact, though I've never heard of it before, he has made a fan of me, already."

Paul took the script, glanced over a few pages and then roared with laughter.

"You're not serious?" he said. "Why, this is one of the best examples of double-talk I have ever seen!"

Occasionally I have to go to Washington on business. Several years ago I was there and, as usual, stopped at the Carlton Hotel. Cordell Hull, our brilliant and gracious Secretary of State, was living there at that time. As I was leaving one morning, he joined me and we continued our conversation for a few minutes after I was seated in my taxi. As he left, I instructed my driver to take me to the Pan American Union. When we arrived there I told him that, if he cared to wait until I had completed my business, he could drive me to the FBI. He agreed to wait.

Considerably later, when I left the head G-Man, I hailed a cab to take me to the White House. While en route, the driver looked around at me.

"Gee, lady," he said, "I bet it's interesting going 'round like this."

It was only then that I realized that I had taken the same taxi for the third time. I remarked upon the coincidence and he confessed that he had waited for me on purpose.

"Y'know," he flung back over his shoulder, "I always did want to see a lady spy operate. With all these here places you've been visitin' and the Secretary, h~~i~~sself, puttin' you in my cab, I bet you're collecting information for some foreign country."

It took a lot of talking to convince him that the so-called "information" I was collect~~ing~~ing was for broadcasts. Later I was sorry I'd bothered, for he became more interested than ever and promptly asked for tickets to "Major Bowes."

This one goes without names. The scene . . . the ballroom of one of New York's largest hotels. The occasion . . . the presentation of awards to broadcasters. Not only New York dignitaries were present. From Washington had been imported famous statesmen, writers, personalities . . . The banquet hall was crowded to overflowing with "handsomely gowned women and smartly turned

out men." All four networks stood by to broadcast the series of speeches that were to come after the sumptuous dinner.

The gracious lady who was presiding had had no experience with radio. The first part of her address was to be delivered to the audience present. Then, after a short interval of silence, she was to broadcast the presentation of the awards. She began by introducing the celebrities, and it seemed to me that practically every one there must have fitted into that category.

As time drew near for the broadcast, she looked to the cluster of radio men at the side of the dais for her signal to take air. An over-zealous production man, seeing her anxious expression, held up three fingers, meaning "three minutes to air-time." She took this, however, as her "go-ahead" signal and barged into the introduction leading up to the actual presentation.

Panic ensued in the radio group. Hoarse whispers of "somebody stop her!" could be heard amid the groans and ineffectual gesticulations. But nobody seemed to want to mount the dais. Sizing up the immediacy of the situation, I swept up to the podium with the voluminous folds of my white gown billowing behind me.

"And to the network that produced the . . ." her measured tones ended abruptly.

"You aren't on the air, yet," I said softly into her ear,



and the whisper floated out through the loud-speaker.

"What?" she asked.

"You aren't on the air yet."

"Oh," she beamed. "Ladies and gentlemen, here's someone I forgot to introduce: Helen Sioussat, the charming and distinguished Director of Columbia's Talks Department."

Astonished stares and a smattering of dubious applause greeted this amazing interruption in her address. My face turned crimson. Many must have thought I had come up purposely to remind her to introduce me. I bowed and quickly held up my hand for quiet, for at that moment the program took air.

The old, old adage, "Do right and fear no man; don't write and fear no woman," was evidently not bothering the gentleman from Havana who entered into a most unusual bit of correspondence with me over so prosaic a subject as a mailing list.

It all began in a very innocent way . . . He wrote a letter to C.B.S. asking to have his name added to the *Talks* mailing list. In reply I thanked him for his interest in our publication and expressed regret that for the duration of the war we were unable to grant his request.

Imagine my surprise, therefore, when, in reply to my formal note, the following letter arrived:

"Dear Miss Sioussat:

You can't imagine how glad I am with your kindly letter of June 8th. You have a very charmy spirit and a beautiful stile of writing.

I would be very proud if some day I could be your friend because I need to have relations with a person just like you, who knows the hopes and ideas of a young man that wants to win his own life.

My English is very poor because I am now learn it, but some day, maybe very soon, I'll tell you in a good English all de emotions that your letter bring to me.

Thank you very much for add my name to TALKS. I understand the reason for what you have discontinued sending TALKS.

With my best wishes for you, I remain

Very truly yours,

Jose"

But that's not all! I sent the letter in to Leo Heatley, who handles the publicity for my department. On it I wrote:

"So you think I don't get any fan mail!"

He returned it with the following note:

"Miss S., this man is right. You have a 'charmy' spirit and I recognized your beautiful 'stile' cons ago. You're pretty, too. Hasta Mañana, Heatley."

I'm now studying Spanish.

The Northwest Mounted, as the saying goes, always gets its man. J. Edgar Hoover gets his man—and woman.

He was speaking for the Boy Scouts on their Founder's Day and he came to the New York studios of C.B.S. The honor to interview him on the broadcast was conferred upon an Eagle Scout. Before they took air, I asked him if he would have his picture taken with the Scout, who, dressed up within an inch of his life, appeared shy and nervous in the presence of the great man. He readily acquiesced, and after they had posed together for several pictures, Hoover, looking over at me with a grin, said:

"You're next. Come on, pose with me."

"Oh, no," I said. "... not photogenic . . . wouldn't risk the camera."

He was insistent. Running across the studio he grabbed my arm.

"When we had you at the FBI we didn't fingerprint you, so now we're going to 'mug' you."

The picture, when printed, showed captor and captive shrieking with laughter.

It was during a mayoralty campaign and political speakers had been swarming over C.B.S. like seven-year locusts. From morning 'til night I ran from one studio to the next, greeting them and reading their scripts. Late one afternoon when I was just about to go home, the production

office called and told me that there was a speaker up in Studio 10.

"Heavens," I said, "how could I have forgotten. It must be Judge Mahoney."

Without checking my schedule, I hurried up to the studio. I saw David Ross with two other men, upon entering the room. Rushing up to the first man, I held out my hand.

"I'm so glad to see you, Judge Mahoney," I said.

He drew back.

"My name is Emerson," he replied. "I'm the new production man."

"Of course." I smiled and turned to the man behind him.

"Judge Mahoney?" I said again.

"Is *he* expected, too? I'm Carson. I'm here to speak for Mayor LaGuardia—*not* his opponent!"

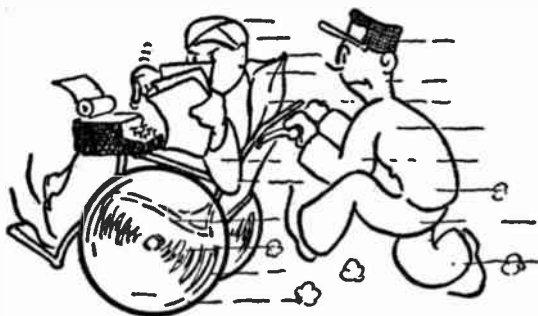
Bewildered, I turned to David.

"And—this is the Columbia Broadcasting System," he said solemnly.

I have always thought that few enjoy broadcasting more than the veteran commentator, H. V. Kaltenborn, but, after what happened one Sunday, I decided that nothing less than death and his, at that, could keep him from a microphone.

He had been quite ill. Both Olga, his wife, and his physician had told me that it would be unwise for him to risk coming to the studio for his weekly participation in "Headlines and Bylines." Accordingly, I made arrangements for a substitute.

I was in the studio that night writing headlines for the show, when Bob Trout arrived.



"Hans is coming this evening," he remarked casually.

"Oh, no, he isn't," I gently contradicted. "I told him he mustn't. He isn't well enough."

I continued to write headlines. The sound-effects man wandered in.

"I hear 'H. V.' will be here tonight," he beamed.

"Sorry—he won't," I said serenely. ". . . Told him he mustn't."

The phone jingled. An anxious fan inquired whether Kaltenborn would be on the program.

"Not this evening," I told her, "still ill."

Headlines written; the cast, including three announcers and three commentators, assembled; we were about to take air when we heard confusion outside the studio. The door burst open and in came two men slowly wheeling a stretcher. Hans had arrived! There he lay, pleased as the proverbial cat that had swallowed the canary. He had indeed circumvented me.

Hasty adjustments were made to include him in the script, and then we were on the air. Cupping his hand over his ear, he spoke into the "goose-neck" microphone, suspended over the stretcher.

Oh well, it's hard to decide whether it's more trouble when they're expected and don't come, or when they come and are not expected.

You can count on it that I came in for a lot of kidding at C.B.S. on this last story.

Many were the kind and complimentary letters I had received about the article in the March, 1938, issue of "Good Housekeeping" in which I was named "The Girl of the Month."

Herbert Hoover, Marvin McIntyre, Mayor LaGuardia, Hendrik Willem van Loon and even the governor of my native state, Maryland, were among those who wrote to

congratulate me. Nearly a year later, I was both surprised and pleased to get a letter about it from a little school girl in Idaho.

As I read her rather breathless account of how her teacher had assigned her class the task of writing a composition around some "outstanding personality in public life" and she, having months back read the story about me in "Good Housekeeping," kept it, dug it out and used it as the basis for her theme, received the top grade and was asked by her teacher to read it before the class . . . a warm surge of pride came over me.

I turned to the last page of her letter:

"It must be wonderful to be an important director for a big radio network," wrote my little fan, "but, personally, my ambition has always been to be a good-mushball player."

Will I ever live that down!!! And I didn't even know what "mushball" was at that time. I've learned since . . . a lot of things.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### HAPPY LANDING



One minute to closing . . . but before the “sign-off” I have something more to say about “mike fright.” Take it from one who knows, it has nothing on author’s ague.

How do you overcome that fear? If ever my teeth stop chattering, I’ll explain.

It has been fun, though—writing. Most of my time has been spent in this charming old house in Madison, visiting Nickie and Dick Vischer, my angels of mercy. In New York the thoughts and words never would have come so readily as in this delightful Connecticut town.



Here, on sunny days, Miss Ganz and I have worked in the quiet seclusion of the flower garden, with nothing to disturb our serenity but Filibuster, their half-grown kitten, chasing butterflies like a glistening black shadow in the sunlight. When the cold rains drove us indoors, we toasted ourselves before the open fire in their cozy living room.

Then, there have been all-day trips to the beaches. For, didn't my own gay and youthful Daddy make this suggestion:

"When it gets too dry or hot," he said, "take to the water."

Could he have been referring to the text?

And Miss Ganz! A very patient secretary, indeed. There were times when she qualified as an understudy for Job. Without her encouragement and excellent assistance this manuscript would never have gone beyond the first chapter. From various disapproving looks she has given me from time to time, I fear that it is on her conscience.

This morning, the last day of my writing, a letter came for me from London. It was like a voice from out of the past. I had not heard from Stella Mead, B.B.C.'s talented writer of children's programs, since the time when, returning from New Zealand, she had stopped in this country for a week. How different things were in those days before the war when people discussed such subjects as the

weather and propaganda had not yet been disguised as education.

A note of fatality ran through the pages . . . that, and English courage.

"Life in London seems so different now that we have no 'current blitz,'" she wrote. "I had my share of those terrible experiences. And yet, in these days, one seems lifted above and beyond any sense of fear.

"A refugee friend told me about one night when he went back to the A. R. P. post which still stood in the midst of chaos. Two Cockney women, who were on duty there, were discussing the price of onions and where they could be bought.

"'My God,' he said, 'at any moment a bomb may blow us to "Kingdom Come" and there you stand talking of onions.'

"'Well,' philosophized one of the women, 'if we are blown up, we shan't want the onions, but if we do live till tomorrow, they'll come in rather handy.'"

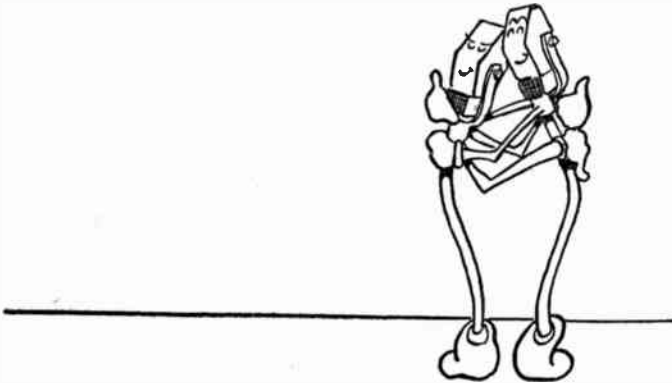
And over here we worry about the do's and don'ts of radio! But, war has caused us to become more conscious of what an important role radio plays in our lives. As a democratic weapon of a free people it can aid in preserving the kind of world we love and can help to create the kind of world we want for the future.

In times such as these, when practically everybody is

potential radio material, I thought that some of the ABC's of broadcasting might prove useful. Who knows? You may be the next one to take air. When you do, I hope you'll remember—"mikes" don't bite—and it will carry you through to a happy landing.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN  
SUPPLEMENT

MAKING MICROPHONE  
FRIENDS



A bewildering phenomenon is the vast amount of time people spend trying to get "on the air" and the little time they spend in the actual preparation for their appearance before the microphone. Why make your first meeting a blind date? Prepare for it by preparing your script.

I have selected the following scripts as examples of out-

standing talks. Not that they are great masterpieces of literature, nor for their subject matter; but because they are illustrative of good writing for radio speeches. Several are excerpts from scripts which have already been quoted in *Talks* magazine.

On June 2, 1942, Clare Booth, playwright and author, spoke on "The Importance of China." She had just returned to this country from a visit to India, China and Burma where she had talked with government and military leaders of the Allied Nations, including Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, General Brereton, General Stilwell, and Pandit Nehru, leader of the Indian Congress Party. That evening she said:

We are here tonight to talk about China. But first we ought to find out who cares about China, and why. Do you really care about China, or what happens to China in the next six months—or a year? There's another way to put that question. Have you a son, a brother, anyone dear to you who is fighting, or flying, or sailing now in the Pacific? Tonight like last night will you turn sleepless on your pillow asking yourself, "What are his chances, oh, what are his chances?" Well, then whether you know it or not, you are a person who cares about China. . . . But maybe you haven't got a boy fighting any longer in the Pacific. Maybe he stopped fighting in Bataan.

Yesterday we read the last free message tapped out on the wires from Corregidor, by a signal corps kid from Brooklyn.

He wired: "Arms weak from pounding key long hours . . . no rest. . . . Just made broadcast to Manila to arrange meeting for surrender . . . terrific damage . . . too much for guys to take. . . . I can't say much. . . . Can't think at all. . . . They're piling dead and wounded soldiers in our tunnel. . . . I know how a mouse feels. Caught in a trap, waiting for guys to come along to finish you up. . . . Corregidor used to be a nice place. It's haunted now. . . . The white flag is up. Everybody is bawling like a baby. . . ." And the Brooklyn kid signed off.

Do you care how long the kid from Brooklyn and his pals stay in the barbed wire traps the Japs have got them in now? Do you care, in short, how long this war lasts before Pearl Harbor and Wake Island and Guam and the dear ghosts that haunt Corregidor are avenged—or how many American lives are sacrificed before the ultimate day of victory over the Axis? You do! Then you care terribly about China today and above all you care what happens to China tomorrow.

For there is not a military expert, nor a geo-politician nor an economist nor a diplomat, nor statesman who will not tell you this: If China is knocked out of the war, China, with its still great man-power and vast potential land and air bases, then the war in the Pacific will become immeasurably longer and more costly to win. In Burma, General Joseph Stilwell said to me:

"Every day, every hour the Chinese armies continue to resist takes that much pressure off the Philippines and Australia."

And to keep the Chinese permanently in the field, he said,

was our best assurance for keeping the Japs out of Hawaii and getting ourselves quickly to Tokyo.

But it's not only because of today and tomorrow we ought to care about China. We ought to care about China because of yesterday. Now, since the beginning of the so-called Chinese Incident, the Japs have just so many guns, so many tanks, so many planes, so many bombs, so many bullets and bayonets, which they have been able to produce and which once spent, they were able to replace at a given rate. Well, for almost five years now, the breasts of Chinese soldiers and civilians have been absorbing tons of the cold steel and hot iron, which, along with falling cherry petals, have made Japan so famous. In the so-called Chinese Incident, the Chinese have died in untold millions. But now at last we know that the Japanese would have much preferred to let Americans absorb all their ammunition. One reason the Japanese don't care for the Chinese at all, is that the Chinese have whittled down that pile of steel and bombs, earmarked for our sons, very considerably. To be sure the Chinese people have not suffered two thousand days of Japanese butchery to spare us. China was not the Arnold Winkelreid among the nations. You remember, perhaps, the great Swiss hero, Arnold Winkelreid? And how, at a critical moment in the great battle of Sempach, when the Swiss had failed to break the serried ranks of the Austrians, a man of Unterwalden, Winkelreid, came to the rescue? Commending his wife and children to the care of his comrades, he rushed towards the Austrians, gathered a number of their spears together against his breast, and fell pierced through and

through. At the price of his own life, he opened a way into the hostile ranks of the enemy.

No, the Chinese have gathered no bayonets to their breasts all these long years because they were fighting for us, or loved us particularly. (Though strangely enough they like us very well, and trust us, too.) They fought because they loved their own land and their own freedom. But whatever their motives so far as Americans are concerned, they have taken the Japanese spears into their breasts, and are still keeping open a path for us to Victory.

At this point you must all be asking, since it is so important to us in terms of lives and material, now with Burma gone and the Road closed, what are the chances of further Chinese resistance? Well, that was the very question I asked Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Gissimo in Lashio in April. I think they knew quite well, oh, very well, then, that Burma was doomed. But when I said:

“What will China do if Burma goes?”

Madame Chiang said quietly:

“What we have always done. See to our fronts. And go on fighting.” And then she said, with a fierce and splendid pride: “In five years of a war, fighting always with inferior equipment, no Chinese army has ever surrendered to the enemy!”

But you and I know, and for all her own splendid words, Madame Chiang and the Gissimo know, there often comes a time on the field of combat when further military resistance is impossible. It was that way with the gallant Poles, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Greeks. It was that way with us, too



—on Bataan. Will it be that way now with China? I hear some military experts say today it will be, it must be. Well, over and over again, military experts have been saying in the past five years that the Chinese had at last reached the point where it was no longer possible to go on fighting.

Indeed, the Japs have repeatedly announced in their own press either that the China Incident was closed—or would soon be. They tell the story in Chungking of not one but several visits of the Japanese agents bearing “peace terms” to the Gissimo. And they tell how the Gissimo always receives them. It is a great story:

When the messengers of Hirohito walk into the room, the Gissimo says:

“Gentlemen, I am told you have come with peace terms?”

And the messengers pull out their documents. Whereupon the Gissimo says:

“One moment! Does your proposal say simply this,—the Japanese Government *unconditionally* agrees to withdraw every Japanese soldier from Chinese soil at once?”

The enemy agents say:

“No, it does not say that. It says . . .”

And the Gissimo replies:

“Gentlemen, you have taken a lot of trouble for nothing. No other proposal from your Government has the slightest interest for me.”

The Chinese have a proverb: “It is better to be a broken piece of jade than a whole piece of tile.” And though China

has been shattered time and again into thousands of pieces by the enemy . . . they are all jade. The whole piece of tile they have never captured. Yes, it is this bright, jade spirit overcoming every handicap in equipment and training, which has kept the Chinese "in there" fighting.

I received a letter today from a friend of mine, who is an instructor in gunnery out west somewhere. He is teaching some Chinese boys aerial gunnery. They begin, it seems, on a skeet range. He wrote to me:

"Some of the instructors were having a rather bad time getting these Chinese kids to pull sharp on the targets as they came out. They couldn't seem to get their timing down as well as our boys. But I found out how to do it. Instead of having them call *pull* and *mark* when the target comes out of the trap, I let them yell *Jap!* My Chinese boys are as good shots as any on the range."

Incidentally, the prodigious appetite of the Chinese for Japs is another cogent reason we ought to care about China. And still another was their decency and forbearance in the face of the world's apathy to their long and heroic struggle.

In all those hideous five years they have not, you will remember, complained much. They have never threatened, never bargained with their honor. And abroad they have made almost no propaganda. The civilian aid sent to them from here, the plea for sympathy for China, have been spontaneously American. But not all Americans have yet responded to this American appeal. Have you?

Everybody in America is for the Chinese and against the Japs. The trouble is that we have not always matched our words with our deeds. Before Pearl Harbor we, as a nation, were for China—but by our national policy we sent far more war-materials to Japan than we ever sent to China. Today, you are for China—but have you, personally, given a dime yet—or a dollar? What about you? Will you do your part? Or will you be too little or too late?

I'm not saying very pleasant things, but they've got to be said so we can really see why we should care—an awful lot, about China *now*. Besides, Americans, bless them, can still take unpleasant truths. How gladly we took the honest, tough words of General Stilwell when he said: "I claim we got a hell of a beating in Burma. . . . I think we ought to find out what caused it, and go back and *retake* it!"

Well, the main thing that caused that beating is now so obvious that none of us can duck it. We failed, as a nation, to give to China the things she needed—and has needed increasingly for five long years—to fight our enemies with.

Perhaps tonight you are saying, all right, now we do care desperately about China. But we are private citizens. We can't rush bombers, planes, guns, ammunition to the Chinese; can we? That's the government's job, and we think they are doing it.

Well, there is something we as civilians can do. We can fortify the spirit—the pure bright jade spirit of the Chinese people—which is, after all, what has kept them in the field of

battle. We can give not only the support of public opinion, but the support of private funds to China Relief—and, by giving generously, present a solid testimonial of our faith in, and affection for, a country that has fought a tough enemy four years longer than we have. That money will be used for the countless orphans, the wounded, the sick and the shelterless civilians who have endured, as we, God willing, shall never be called upon to endure, the horrors of a hundred Nankings.

Over a long period of years we Western Nations have somehow gotten the idea that because the Chinese have suffered so much, they probably don't mind suffering as we do. I wish I could take you to Chungking or Burma. Have you stand beside the bed of a badly wounded Chinese soldier and hear him murmur through gritted teeth, "Mama—Oh Mama—Oh Mama!" And that means, in his language, just what it means in ours, "Oh, Mother—" And a Chinese baby, believe me, left lying alone in the ruins of a bombed house wails and screams in terror, in exactly the same way my baby or your baby would in similar awful circumstances.

I once talked to a famous newsreel cameraman who had photographed many of the horrible bombings of Chungking. He said:

"Whenever I tried to get a shot of a bombed-out bunch of Chinese sitting in the ruins of their homes, one of them always spoiled my shot of grim tragedy by suddenly turning around and smiling at me."

I asked, "But why did they smile at a time like that?"

"Oh," he said, "someone always smiled when he found out I was an American."

# 亞美利加

## AMERICA

In China the word for America is "Meigwa." It means "Beautiful Land." The Chinese think, as we do, America is very beautiful. The Chinese like us and in some respects they want very much to be like us. They want just the kinds of railroads and movie theatres and hospitals and schools and radios and cars that we have.

But they like us for another reason. They understand us better than we understand ourselves, really. They know that although we value our mechanical civilization, there are other things we cherish even more deeply. They know that, cracked and chipped though they are, and covered with the dust of years and these days a little lost in the fog of battle, our true patron saints, Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln, are still enshrined in their revered niches. They know we are people who believe in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—and in equality. They know we are a people of great good-will, first, and a smart people only secondarily. But because we are people of good-will and because we are smart, the Chinese have always known we must sooner or later come to China's

aid, because China deserved it—and because it was to our own self-interest. That was the logic of both our character and our condition. The Chinese knew it and were patient. They know something else about us, too. They know we have as much courage as they have, and that if this war also takes us five years, we'll stick with it. But it won't take that long, nor nearly that long, if the Chinese can militarily and spiritually survive the last desperate all-out onslaught the Japanese are making on them today.

We think they will, and we want to help them do it. Besides, after it's all over, we Americans will feel a great deal better about everything, and everything will come out a great deal better, if we can honestly say as a people—*we cared* about China, not only for our own sakes, but for China's.

Larry LeSueur, C.B.S. correspondent in Moscow, said the following on "The News of the World," June 3, 1942:

Red Square is a military camp where life begins before six A.M. When I draw the black-out curtains in the morning, I hear the Red Armymen, singing as they march to war. At eight the green trolleys and big buses are filled with workers on their way to the war factories. These are mainly women. Gone are the drab, shapeless clothes of winter and spring that made them look like so many robots. They now wear flowered print dresses and gay blouses. From noon thereon housewives

shop. Sometimes they carry their kids with them, wrapped up in heavy blankets like a papoose.

School children invariably wear little embroidered caps that give them a decided oriental aspect, especially the little girls who wear pigtailed down their backs.

During the afternoon I sometimes see strange sights from my window; a parade of wobbling balloons being led along the street like a string of big sausages conducted by Lilliputians. These are the gas bags they use to fill the silver barrage blimps. This morning they were followed by soldiers marching in white gas masks that covered their whole heads. They looked grotesque! . . .

I watched some kids digging near my hotel. One of them was digging straight down.

"Where are you going?" I asked, and the smudged-faced five-year-old looked up at me seriously and said:

"To America."

On August 10, 1942, at a meeting of The Minute Men of America which commemorated the first anniversary of the signing of the Atlantic Charter, S. Stanwood Menken delivered this talk:

On this first anniversary of the Atlantic Charter—a World Charter—supplementing the Magna Charta, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Emancipation Proclamation, and Mr. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, it is proper to

summarize the eight clauses of this important document. They outline international standards for all nations.

The First and Second clauses are pledges against territorial expansion at the expense of the defeated.

The Third is a pledge to respect the rights of all peoples to their own form of government, and to see that sovereign rights and self-government are restored to those forcibly deprived of them.

The Fourth bespeaks equal opportunity in trade.

The Fifth calls for economic collaboration to improve labor standards and social security.

The Sixth is an expression of hope for peace, and release from fear and want.

The Seventh relates to freedom of the seas.

The Eighth outlines the spiritual benefits of the abandonment of force.

The Atlantic Charter merely states the expected aims of any peace conference, designed to build a new world of opportunity. With the exception of the Third clause, there should be no ground for difference of opinion as to the principles of the Charter.

The Third clause states "that England and the United States respect the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them."

The term, "forcible deprivation" of sovereign rights, broadly interpreted, means deprivation not only through conquest and



occupation, but also by appropriation following colonization. If this view be accepted, the Charter of the Atlantic becomes a Charter of Liberty, not only for the victims of the Axis powers, but also for the colonies of England, France and Holland, wherever situate, provided self-government is sought by thoroughly organized representative majorities qualified for self-government.

The relevancy of this clause to India and its 388,000,000 people is immediate.

To understand the Indian question, we must realize that its territory is about the size of all Europe, except Russia—its greatest width 2,000 miles and length 1,800 miles. To quote Sir Valentine Chirol, a qualified writer, "its people, one-fifth of the population of the globe, are split up into a multitude of peoples, differing more widely from one another in national features and complexion and language and even to a great extent in religion than do all the peoples of Europe, and most of them in differing states of development. They speak no less than 222 distinct languages and countless dialects." Thirteen percent are literate in their own tongues, two percent in English. There are innumerable principalities, about 540 Princes, of whom 108 sit in the Chamber of Princes. Its civil service is well organized, with a total of British officials, other than the military, of less than 600. Britain evidently believes with our Jefferson that the least government is the best.

There are great strata of the population without the slightest idea of the meaning of democracy and tolerance. The caste system, and the Princely powers, survive to plague Mr. Gandhi,

while he awaits the spectacle of the Brahmins going hand-in-hand with 50,000,000 Untouchables to the ballot box.

Nonetheless, Nationalism is a stirring force with most Indians.

They demand an independent sovereign state, though there is sharp divergence of ideas as to ways and means. Protesting groups of Moslems, Orthodox Hindus, Sikhs, and some of the Princes, are antagonistic to the All-India Congress Party, dominated by Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Nehru and their associates. The Moslems want a separate state.

In March of this year, Mr. Churchill made a promise in Parliament that, as soon after the war as possible, India should have full dominion status and full equality with the other dominions, under a constitution to be framed by the Indians, by agreement among the Indians themselves, and acceptable to the many elements of Indian national life. He required merely protection of the minorities, including the depressed classes and fulfillment of England's treaty obligations to the Indian states. He expressed the hope that the plan would work, and release the full thought and energy of India toward winning the war. A draft of a constitution for discussion with Indian leaders was prepared, providing for full dominion status, *with the right of secession by India*, and free government of non-acceding provinces and protection of religious minorities—it has 77,000,000 Moslems and 6,000,000 Christians. India was to have membership in the Defense Council and the Pacific War Board. This proposal was an expansion of a definite design for Indian autonomy presented by the British

Government in 1935, following discussions for over a decade.

Such were the conditions under which Britain was ready to carry out the purposes later expressed in the Atlantic Charter.

Mr. Gandhi, who has done much to educate and rouse India, supported by the All-India Congress Party, replied, when Sir Stafford Cripps brought the message to India, that while India was opposed to the Axis Powers and ready to make armed contribution to world freedom, it could not do so while "suffering the degradation of denial of sovereignty." "India could only fight for freedom, when free." He demanded that there be a free India at once. This would require the enactment of a Constitution, national unity to ratify it, and full provision for the maintenance of British obligations and good faith to minorities.

A stirring resolution adopted by the working committee of the Congress Party on July 17 enabled Mr. Gandhi to present his position. It is an eloquent appeal to lovers of liberty.

Mr. Gandhi, though unwilling to accept our endorsement of Britain's pledge, asked for our opinion on his presentment. Any official reply is, of course, a matter for our great statesmen, Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hull. Yet, on this occasion, when we hope for the forging of the words of the Atlantic Charter into acts, it may be justifiable for a private citizen to express individual views.

I believe in a free India, but history tells me that those who seek freedom must be prepared to preserve it.

I would say to Mr. Gandhi that, with all his enthusiasm and his anxiety for quick accomplishment, he has failed to create

any basis for a stable government. He has not united his people or assured lessening of the opposition of the Moslems, the Depressed Peoples, the ruling Princes or many other divergent groups. He has not qualified his followers to exercise the franchise of democracy. He has not comprehended the elemental difficulties of the organization of a great state, though no doubt he has many trained minds to help him.

The period of gestation for national birth is long and painful. This is shown by the history of all existing great democracies and we do not believe that Mr. Gandhi is prepared with a constitution, or with treaties, or has any definite plans of administration, or is ready to deal with national economics, finance, education and defense.

Government is a complicated affair which, if tangled, may easily bring disaster ending in chaos and revolution, all conditions which, with Japanese chicanery, would be far worse than any of which India complains.

Freedom is a double-edged sword.

The acceptance of sovereignty imposes the obligation on the people of India to build foundations for all time. It is only when this is done by experienced and skilled men that Mr. Gandhi will realize the India of his dreams. His recent performances shatter confidence in his ability. To do his work, to placate and end differences and create a lasting future for India, Mr. Gandhi and his followers must be not alone enthusiastic and learned, but strictly honorable. Otherwise, their diplomacy will fail because of distrust of them.

I would go far with Mr. Gandhi to uphold the idea that the

world cannot exist half free and half slave, and that no country is good enough to be another's keeper; but if I were an Indian, I would only wish to see my country enter the family of democracies with clean hands.

With civilization in peril, Mr. Gandhi is vacillating—one is tempted to say double dealing—between threats and bribes of armed aid—one moment speaking of passive resistance, of strikes and the next of parleys with Japan, the world's worst "Untouchables." He is willing to be protected by the Allied Nations from Germany and Japan, so long as he can be a "Free-rider," giving nothing in arms or men. Civil disobedience will be a wanton drain on Allied power and definite aid and comfort to the Axis.

Our men on land, sea and in the air are fighting for the civilization of which India is a part, and I say to Mr. Gandhi that it is his duty and that of his followers to measure their responsibilities to the common cause, to weigh India's obligation to mankind.

Nothing counts today except victory over the Axis. Special interests, be they of state or person, must await the outcome of battle. With full appreciation of the sentiments and the labors of the lovers of freedom in India, I ask them to be great enough, noble enough, to stop now and retrace their steps with absolute confidence in the good faith of the Allied Powers.

The chain of democracy in a world that is a unit will be no stronger than the weakest link. It is as vital to the people of England, the United States, Russia and China that there be

a free India, as it is to the citizens of that country. We need India and India needs us.

Let us pray in the name of all humanity she will work with us and not against us.

Alvin C. York, the famous "Sergeant York" of World War I, addressed the 82nd Division of the Army on a "What Are We Fighting For?" broadcast, May 7, 1942. Among other things, he said:

Being here with the 82nd again gives me a peculiar feeling. It's like living something all over. Here you boys are training to finish the job we thought we had done for all time—the job of keeping our country's freedom from going under the heels of the dictators.

Last time, after the Germans hung out the white rag and we sailed home, we thought there'd never be another war. We doughboys didn't realize then, and some of the men in the high places later didn't realize that freedom is not a thing you can win once and for all. We never owned freedom; we only got a lease on it. A payment came due in '17 and '18; now another one is due. But this time we're going to make such a big payment that it'll be many a year before another one is demanded of us.

Although Clark M. Eichelberger, Director of the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace and of the

League of Nations Association in the U. S., dealt with the same subject as Mr. Menken, "The Atlantic Charter," I purposely selected it to illustrate how two writers, discussing fundamentally the same subject, can produce good scripts despite their different styles of writing and methods of approach. This address was delivered August 8, 1942:

On August 14 of last year the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain met somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean to draft "certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world." This document has become known as the Atlantic Charter.

At that moment the United States was not yet engaged in hostilities, but it was already clear that the American people, their prosperity and democracy were objects which the Axis wished to destroy. Then the attack came on December 7 when, without warning, and with characteristic German technique in the midst of peaceful negotiations, the Japanese armed forces struck at Pearl Harbor. When the smoke of burning boats and buildings had cleared away, it was evident that this country had suffered a severe loss. But it had quickly become a united nation, in the face of a threat so clear that no one could fail to understand it. A few days later the Germans and Italians showed their contempt for American strength by also declaring war upon us. As usual, the Germans guessed wrong. They underestimated American strength and unity, just as they did in 1917. Now a tremendous parade

of American soldiers, planes, tanks and guns is going forward to stem the tide of those who would destroy us.

Throughout the country during the coming week there will be many meetings to commemorate the first birthday of the Atlantic Charter. It is important to consider how this Charter of freedom has grown in influence.

On January 1 of this year in Washington the representatives of twenty-six belligerents signed what President Roosevelt named the "Declaration by United Nations." In June two additional nations, Mexico and the Philippines, joined our allies. In the Declaration of the United Nations, the allies agreed to fight together until victory is won and they subscribed to the eight points of the Atlantic Charter. These twenty-eight nations represent at least two-thirds of the population, wealth and raw materials of the world. They are united to win the war; they are united to win the peace.

Every American and the citizens of every free country fighting together should at all times, in every waking moment, keep two pictures before them: What the world would be like if the United Nations lost and what we intend to make the world like if we win. In other words, we must be constantly aware of what we are fighting against and what we are fighting for.

Some of our allies know only too well what the world would be like if the United Nations lost the war. Practically all of Europe, from the Russian lines before Moscow to the English Channel, knows the cruelty, hunger and slavery which the Axis inflict on the territory they conquer. The Chinese



know in their coastal areas which Japan has temporarily occupied. It is estimated that the Nazis have destroyed a million Jews, hundreds of thousands of Yugoslavs and Greeks, taken millions of peoples as slaves to Germany, killed off the intellectuals in many countries in the hope that the people will be more docile, have left hundreds of millions to starve, and have stolen their industrial and cultural possessions. They hope to reduce the world to intellectual apathy and physical slavery so that the Germans and the Japanese will rule a world of slaves. This is what we are fighting against. This is what the Declaration of the United Nations meant when it spoke of the nations being "engaged in a common struggle against savage and brutal forces seeking to subjugate the world."

In comparison with the brutality and cruelty of our enemies, the courage and nobility of the United Nations stand out in bold relief. For illustration, the Greeks defeated Mussolini's armies. Then Hitler decided that he must subdue the Greeks to please the Italians. Despite overwhelming odds, the Greeks fought until their country was overrun and their army destroyed. In retaliation and through utter callousness the Germans and Italians have stripped Greece of her food, her fishing fleet, her animals that produced food and every possible means by which the people could eat. In some districts about one-fifth of the Greeks have already starved and unless help can come to them quickly enough the entire Greek nation may die of starvation. The Greeks, who several thousand years ago lighted the torch of civilization, had the honor not to surrender to twentieth-century barbarians.

The Yugoslavs could have had peace had they permitted a German army to cross their country to invade Greece. But they resisted and every day a Yugoslav army keeps several hundred thousand German and Italian soldiers occupied. Possibly the resistance of these two countries delayed Hitler's time-table sufficiently so that he was not able to take Moscow.

Every day adds to the heroism of the Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians and Free French. The Chinese have been fighting longer than any; they refused their Munich temptation ten years ago. Tonight in the air, on land and on the sea, the free peoples of the British Commonwealth of Nations fight for the liberties of the peoples of the world. Tonight, as the Russians fight with incredible courage and skill against the greatest military might of all history, the American people are conscious of the fact that their front is where the Russian armies are fighting. We have the assurance that the British and American armies will go to Russia's aid. The harder we work and sacrifice the quicker that aid may go.

In the agony through which we are passing, there is developing a vision of the world that we can have if we win: a world of peace, freedom, justice, happiness, prosperity and security. President Roosevelt has called it the Four Freedoms. Its framework is outlined in the Atlantic Charter.

The Atlantic Charter contains eight brief articles. We haven't time to discuss all of them, but we can refer to three or four which show the spirit of the document. Article 3 guarantees the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live and the restoration of

their independence to those who have been deprived of it.

Here I want to make a comparison. I want to compare the slavery to which Hitler is reducing the world to the promise of economic equality in Article 4 of the Atlantic Charter in which the nations agree "with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity."

Article 6 contains a phrase of nineteen words and only one of them is a word of more than one syllable. It expresses the hope of the United Nations for a world which will afford assurance "that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."

The welfare of the people has not always been the first concern of peace treaties. Statesmen have written treaties that exchanged populations, traded colonies, or established new dynasties. But not until very recently has the welfare of people been considered a major concern of international relations. The Atlantic Charter indicates that at the close of this war it will become the major concern of international relations. The long arm of the Atlantic Charter not only concerns itself with nations, but reaches into the nation to concern itself with the humblest citizen.

Again let us compare: Hitler represents the idea that territories and their peoples are to be traded or exterminated in blocs according to the wishes of the conqueror. Roosevelt, Churchill and other statesmen of the United Nations represent

nations strong enough to prevent aggression and with adequate machinery to remove the causes of war by bringing the peoples of the world together in the closest cooperation in all phases of human endeavor. Nations no more than individuals can enjoy liberty and security without the organization of community life.

Many steps have been taken to implement the Atlantic Charter. The Lend-Lease agreements which Britain, Russia, China and other nations have signed with this country bind them with us to seek to establish a better world when victory is won. In ringing declarations, statesmen have made it clear that the Atlantic Charter applies to all the nations of the world.

The task before us is long and difficult. We must fight a long war with all of our energy until complete victory over the Axis Powers is achieved. As Elmer Davis said yesterday, "We are fighting fanatical men out for world domination, and we can beat them only if we want to beat them as badly as they want to beat us."

And when victory is achieved, we must not let down and say that the job is finished and that we are going back to the good old days. We tried to go back to the good old days in 1919. But one never can go back to the good old days. We know that our policy of isolationism for the past twenty years was tragic for us and for others. This time we must regard the complete winning of the war and the winning of the peace as parts of the same task. The Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations are the charter and declaration

of victory. Victory in the war and in the final organization of the world so that war cannot recur.

In the midst of all this serious writing, I couldn't resist the temptation to break in with a bit of comedy relief. Here is a "short," or excerpt, which struck my fancy. (It is not just the type of writing, however, I'd recommend to speakers.)

Jack Smiley, of Easton, Pennsylvania, discussed "Hash House Lingo" on Dave Elman's "Hobby Lobby," January 24, 1942, and this is how it sounded:

If you were at a lunch counter and heard the soda jerk call out: "Twist it, choke it, make it cackle and throw it in the mud," would you know that meant a chocolate malted with an egg?—or that "one sky juice" meant a glass of water?

Restaurants have a language all their own, all the way from Maine to California. For instance a waitress is a "soup jockey," a grapefruit is "a squirt," a codfish is a "submarine turkey," spareribs, "a pig's corset," tapioca pudding, "a pot of glue," and a large glass of milk, "white moo and stretch it."

In July, 1942, Margaret Culkin Banning, well-known writer, went to England at the invitation of the British Government, with a handful of other American women writers, to inspect "without restriction or censorship," England's war-time life. When she returned the first of

August, she gave this talk under the title "The Present British Mood":

Those of us who have had the luck and the privilege of going to Great Britain at a time when passage across the Atlantic is difficult and beyond price, know that we have a duty when we come back. It is to tell the people of our own country what it is like over there today. And everybody seems to want to know.

This is not just ordinary curiosity. In peace time the returned traveller doesn't hear all these questions as to how people abroad are living and what they are thinking. But today we want to know what things are like in a country which has been involved in a total war, how people stand up under such a strain, what they do about food and shelter, if they are healthy, if there is still any gaiety—and we want to know all these things, because they may soon affect us and we may be taking page after page out of the British book of experience.

We want to know if we think alike in the main, on both sides of the Atlantic, if we are after the same objects in this war, and if we are fighting for the same reason. We want to know "if they like us." I have been asked that question over and over again.

We want to know over here how our boys are getting on in Great Britain, if they are well fed, if they are happy, if they "fit in." We want to know what Tom and Bill and Jack

from New York and Maine and Minnesota are going to see when they get to Great Britain.

Some of these questions I can answer tonight, not fully but in part and truthfully. The first one I should like to answer is what the American soldiers are going to see when they get over there.

When I arrived in London, I spent three days pretty much by myself, going through the worst blitzed areas, the East End, the City and parts of the West End. I asked for directions but I went without any companion, because I didn't want to be influenced by anyone else's opinion. I thought that it might not be as bad as I had feared, or that it might be worse. It was worse than I had thought, at least in extent. People will say to you over there that when you have seen one blitzed area you have the whole picture; but you get that picture better when you walk and walk and see destruction and then more of it, until your eyes are tired and your heart is sick. The effect of high explosive is more shocking when you stand before a wrecked area and see how small you are and how large it is, when you see great crater holes, filled now with reservoirs of water in which you could easily drown.

It is true that the picture repeats itself. Piles of broken bricks look like one another. Rear walls without their front buildings stagger monotonously on for half miles. Ghosts of churches, burned out, scarecrows of houses, where a piece of plumbing or a shred of wallpaper clings to remind you that people once led orderly lives within, all resemble one another in a tragic way.

The British will tell you that you can't see much now of how the blitz was at its worst. "It's all been cleaned up," they will tell you and that is true. But the devastation has not been repaired, even though order has been completely re-established. And what a job that was! There was one time when three subways in one end of London were all being bombed. Two were out of commission at one time, but they had one of those repaired and working before a bomb hit the third. And that kept communications open between one part of London and another.

Everyone has a blitz and a bombing story. The English laugh at themselves—they really do—and say, "Everybody wants to have had the biggest bomb!" But one thing I saw impressed me more than any bombing story, more than the way they said "It was the noise that was worst," or "You didn't mind it as long as you could get water."

This is the thing I shan't forget. I was walking through a blitzed area which had been "cleaned up," as they say. But, on either side of the street, all you could see were acres of tumbled bricks, skeletons of structures that had nothing except a few supports left. The sidewalk was a precarious affair, obviously put up after the street had been cleared and it was elevated over a hole in the street. But on the sidewalk was a railing, and tacked to the railing was a can and on the can was a sign which read neatly: "Please deposit all rubbish in this can."

It wasn't a joke. It was a normal street sign put up in the midst of this complete devastation and it is significant. It



meant that the British weren't letting down their standards and, even if the sidewalk led through a blitzed area, they didn't want people throwing rubbish on the sidewalk.

I knew London from having stayed there at various times. And I was in London a month before the war broke out. The sight of the blitzed districts is painful to anyone who knows the city. Of course, Londoners will tell you that it was one way to get rid of some slum districts and a City district that had been accumulated rather than built according to plan. There's not much complaint about the loss of property. It's only the loss of life that they mourn.

And as a matter of fact most of London is right where it used to be. It has not been ravaged like Helsinki, like Prague. Its atmosphere is not lost, any more than its spirit has been broken. But enough has been done to prove to anyone who looks and sees that if we allow that sort of bombing business to go on in this world unpunished, no city is worth insuring for a cent.

Certain cities in England, as we all know, and certain parts of London, were hit worst. But after you have been traveling about for a few weeks and have seen senseless bombholes in fields, after you've gone into a district which you thought had escaped and find that the house where you were going to visit isn't there any more, you see that this has been an attempt at general terrorization. This was that total war we've been talking about so much, in which no woman, no child, no man, no animal or piece of property might not be victimized by the enemy. The whole area of England's life was the battlefield.

As I said, in the midst of all this, Great Britain tried to preserve the rules of decent living. The people tried to improve upon their own habits of life, even in the middle of the blitz. Standards had to be changed for a great many people. But the general working principle has been that the life of the poor must be graded up as the life of the rich was graded down.

The results of war have been a genuine shock to the British conscience in many ways. They found in 1939 that they were an unprepared country, not only in tools of war, but because their country had neglected areas where people lived in great poverty, and because they had waste land and were not living economically and getting the most of their food supplies. All that—and great credit must be given to them for this—they have tried to remedy in the midst of the blitz.

English children are being cared for better than they ever have been before. They get more food, better diets, more public attention. Nothing, it is true, is as good as it should be or as good as the average Britisher wants. But there has been a lot of "cleaning up," and not just of blitzed areas.

Many things, most necessities of life, as we all know, are rationed. The two important exceptions to date are bread, which is unrationed, and coal, which is threatened with rationing, but it hasn't been done to date. Other basic foods than bread, such as meat, eggs, butter, cheese, tea and milk are rationed. A meat ration is a little over a pound of meat, with bone.

The purchase of many other things is closely restricted. That

is, you cannot go out and buy a dozen cans of pork sausage, not if you have a hundred dollars in your purse to spend on pork sausage. You can get a limited amount of what you want and this goes for clothes as well as food. Women in England don't buy evening dresses. But they wouldn't have any place to wear them if they did, so they don't care.

Some of these things amount to deprivations that are truly hard to take. The last austerities, which is the British word for self-denials of war, were the abolition of ice cream after a certain date in September, and a poultry ration which means that the average household would be allowed to keep only one hen, on account of feeding the hen, of course.

The most serious shortage that might develop is that of fuel. Six million tons must be saved in domestic consumption this year if the supply is to be adequate for war purposes. That six million tons has to come out of small grate fires—and the British grate fire has never been big enough to warm an American—and out of hot water in the bath tubs and out of electric lights. It will be a chilly winter and remember, as you think of this, that fur coats aren't common over there as they are here.

But, in spite of all this, I tell you that the average Britisher looks healthy and cheerful. That expression that many of them used to baffle us with, as if they didn't know we were in the room, is gone. They look alive and interested in life and vigorous. And there is plenty of food—monotonous though it may be.

Great Britain is a different nation in lots of ways. It used to be pretty much of a man's world, but that is all changed. It is now a man's and a woman's world. Not because of courtesy or because men want to please women, but because they can't get along without woman's work. And I mean woman's work out of the home, in the factories, in the machine shops, in the barrage balloons, even on the gun sites. Millions of women not only work in England but they have to. It's the law. In England the labor of both men and women is at the Government's disposal, and nearly everybody is working who is worth anything in the labor market. There may be some reserve strength left among older people over fifty, but they'll call them up when the need comes and they anticipate that need.

It is important to realize this so that we may get rid of an illusion that has persisted in the United States. There is no great idle, waiting army of British soldiers in the British Isles. There is a Home Guard. There are soldiers from other countries. But British soldiers are all over the world, wherever a new front has developed. They want a second front over there as much as we do, but sometimes they say—"second front—it's the sixth or seventh front." And it may interest people here to realize that it is wanted popularly there, just as we want it here. Everybody knows, who knows anything, that it would be much safer to wait until next year, but the question is whether or not next year would be again "too late."

The people of Great Britain know that they have been too

late on too many occasions. No one knows it better than they do, and they are just as free in their criticism of themselves as they are ready to criticize outsiders.

They aren't muzzled. Not for a minute. The man on the street isn't afraid to say what he thinks of the Prime Minister or of Sir Stafford Cripps or Lord Woolton. What do they think of Churchill? Well, when Mr. Churchill is discussed, it is unanimous opinion that he saved England and thereby the world from being defeated by Germany. They are grateful to him, proud of him and his place in British history is secure. They like to say that. But what they want to do is to win this war, and if the war doesn't seem to be going well and if there is failure in production or in war strategy, then they will have to get new leadership. There will be nothing rough about a change, though it may be noisy, and the gratitude will always be there. But England comes before any leader, in the minds of its people.

They do not want to hang on to India. There is no popular demand for that. There may be men who still have financial regrets. I didn't meet them. I did meet men in almost all walks of life who felt that the world was changing—probably much for the better—and that Great Britain wanted to swing along with the rest of the world toward better health, better education and a fairer distribution of income. Great Britain is a Christian country and never has it practiced a working Christianity more than in the last few years.

And how do they feel about us? Well, that we are lucky that we'll never be in the geographical danger they are in.

They are grateful to us for all we have done. I have had the Lease-Lend machines pointed out to me. I have had babies' layettes shown me with equal gratitude. They think we are generous. They wish we had come in sooner, but they wish they had, too, so that cancels out.

They like their own country best. So do we like ours best. But they want to copy the best we've done over here. They want to talk things over, get together on plans.

In both Great Britain and the United States the best of our young men are at war. They are proving good fighters who can take it and give it. But the British are no more militarized for life than we are. They look forward to a more reasonable life on earth, and that is our greatest bond, the working out of that reasonable, decent life, politically and economically. In that they'll be with us, right to the end, no matter what it takes.

Oliver Lyttelton, British Minister of Production, in speaking over C.B.S. on June 10, 1942, told the following:

There had been a heavy air raid on London. Our Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, was walking amongst the smoking ruins of some houses when an old woman came up and greeted him. He asked how she felt after this night of horror. She replied: "Well, there's one thing about these air raids, they do take your mind off the war."

