pier when he got off the boat.

"So you did come after all. Why didn't you wait till you heard? I almost didn't think I could stick it out."

"Wasn't that the point?" she asked.

"Then you really believed I could. Fly, I mean."

"Why not? But if you had shown me beforehand, I might not have come."

"That's what I figured."

"By the way, your father called."

"You're kidding."

"Okay, I'm sorry. I was worried. I called him. He told me to come over and we talked and he wanted to know what I thought, why you couldn't settle the whole thing at home. He looked sort of sad. I don't think he liked it when I told him that was a stupid question."

"You said that?" Pitterman laughed.

"Well, it was."

"I know, that's half the trouble, I suppose. At least I didn't think I had that much time."

"It was Lilian's turn to laugh. "You were probably right," she said. "Now tell me, quick, what happened? What did they do?"

"They didn't get mad at all. They even let me go on living in the big hut, but they simply were not interested any more. And I had to eat with everybody else. That queen used to walk by. . . ."

"That who?"

"The queen, never mind, I'll tell you about it sometime, anyway she would walk by and make noises sometimes, and there was always an old character behind her, doing a dance and spitting and things, but the rest of them—you'd have thought I didn't exist. They didn't care a hoot when I finally just walked away. I waited till I was well out of sight before I took off."

PITTERMAN'S popularity as a diving coach is enhanced by his refusal to take part in competitions himself. He does occasionally yield to temptation, during lessons, but only in obscure ways that even his wife does not always recognize, and only to illustrate a difficult point when he feels that the extra fraction of momentum will provide a clearer picture.

BOOKS

News and the Newsman

GENE BARO

IN SEARCH OF LIGHT: THE BROADCASTS OF EDWARD R. MURROW, 1938-1961. *Alfred A. Knopf. $6.95.*

In principle, what interest can a volume of broadcasts have, old news broadcasts at that? They're divorced from personality. All the inflections and mannerisms that gave life to their even prose are missing. And events have passed them by with a vengeance. Nothing is staler than yesterday's crisis, when there are so many now to pick and choose from. Yesterday's joys? Only the chronically nostalgic return to the text. Some can live through Queen Elizabeth's coronation every day from a newscast, but it's not an ideal introduction to the past.

The case is plainer with catastrophes. They are preferred fresh if they're to hold the mass audience; here, everyone's agreed. And such events need to be projected as entertainments, since improved communication techniques have almost overdosed us with them. Today's reporter brings the microphone to the fallen riot victim; the murderer capers for the cameras when he isn't actually performing before them. A few brave words from the battle line might strike us as commonplace.

What's wanted from the airwaves are well-modulated excitements, words and images that will stir people without moving them—or is it the other way round? It's all right if listeners and viewers shift uneasily in their easy chairs, as long as they settle back. The game is, they mustn't touch the dials.

I'M SAYING that a book of broadcasts, 1938-1961, seems beaten before it starts. The spoken word without the voice is a balloon without air. The news of those years is played out, without quite being history. Then, there's the limitation of broadcasting as a news medium to consider, its rule by sponsor and corporate image; its objectivity by directive; its dependence on teams, and on echelons of executives; its ambivalent service to the great public that wants its open way; and, finally, its tendency to simplifications, its frequent haste and uneconomic brevity.

Where such a book succeeds in holding us, as this one does, it is because of the man, the broadcaster, and not because of the news he reads. The sustained dramatic interest is the news working on the man. Others saw London during the Blitz, courted danger to report bombing missions at first hand, and so forth. Edward R. Murrow's book is distinguished, not for newsmen's hazards, for these and thousands of other incidents and exposures in a long career (he gave more than five

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THE REPORTER

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thousand broadcasts), but because Murrow was a particular sort of person.

He had a concern, for instance, for democratic values, and a belief that these values were the tools to make the future. In that regard, he was an old-fashioned American. He had humility, empathy, and a sympathetic sense of responsibility to his audience. Part of the extraordinary quality of his broadcasts is that he was often able to put himself in the place of his listeners when giving the news. He illuminated a situation according to the American layman's interests and understanding, as if that housewife, clerk, farmer, mechanic, doctor, or shopkeeper had been on the spot, too. Then Murrow might push knowledge and understanding forward a bit. He would plant a thought or two gently. He was never the demogogue. He scarcely ever spoke as an "authority"; it was not his way to trade on his expertise. Customarily, he said less than he knew, but in such a way as to give scope and point and impetus to the listener's own awareness.

Murrow thought of himself as a reporter first, then perhaps as a news analyst. The Columbia Broadcasting System, for which he worked throughout his career as a broadcaster, has high standards of reportorial accuracy and a distrust of editorializing the news. In part, those standards and proscriptions were developed by Murrow. When he returned to broadcasting in September, 1947, after a year and a half as a CBS vice president and director of public affairs, he saw fit to quote from his contract: "News periods . . . should be devoted to giving the facts emanating from an established news-gathering source, to giving all the color in the proper sense of the word, and interest, without intruding the views of the analyst."

Of course, Murrow's views were always there to be found, but mainly in the selection and organization of his material, rather than in overt thesis or aggressive statement. His wartime broadcasts from London are a case in point. He was wholly sympathetic to the British cause. He was certainly a supporter of Roosevelt's emerging policy. But he did not lecture the radio audience on the issues as he saw them. He made those issues palpable by reporting the life of Britain in wartime. Picturing the struggle day-to-day, he was able to convey what the struggle was about. Dwelling upon small incidents—but not laboring them—he exposed the values that made sacrifice meaningful for the British. He made Americans sense their kinship, and so renew it. The news itself was the message.

More often than not, Murrow analyzed simply by providing the frame of reference by which the news could be understood. He brought a few things together; they hovered on the verge of a conclusion: usually, it was left to the listener to jump to it.

This was particularly the technique of Murrow's American broadcasts. Dealing with subjects like the Hiss case, the Army-McCarthy hearings, or the responsibilities and privileges of a free press, he would remind his audience of the connection with basic American concepts and democratic traditions. The news and its implications were inseparable. He was after the meaning in events.

None of this is to say that Murrow wasn't hard-hitting. He wasn't a wild puncher or frequently riled; the blow was more effective when it came. But blow perhaps gives a false impression. Murrow was essentially constructive, even when angry. When Senator McCarthy's committee was investigating the Voice of America in 1953 and charges flew thick and fast, Murrow proposed "a group of professional newsmen and information specialists to study the output of the Voice of America over a period of weeks or months . . . to make an informed report regarding the accuracy and reliability of the reports being broadcast." When he was invited to address a convention of radio and television news directors in Chicago in 1958, he took the opportunity to challenge the industry to meet its obligations. That fine speech is still worth quoting:

"I refuse to believe that the presidents and chairmen of the boards of these big corporations want their corporate image to consist exclusively of a solemn voice in an echo chamber, or a pretty girl opening the door of a refrigerator, or a horse that talks. They want something better, and on occasion some of them have demonstrated it. But most of the men whose legal and moral responsibility it is to spend the stockholders' money for advertising are removed from the realities of the mass media by five, six, or a dozen contraceptive layers of vice-presidents, public relations counsel and advertising agencies. Their business is to sell goods, and the competition is pretty tough.

"But this nation is now in competition with malignant forces of evil who are using every instrument at their command to empty the minds of their subjects and fill those minds with slogans, determination and faith in the future. If we go on as we are, we are protecting the mind of the American public from any real contact with the menacing world that squeezes in upon us. We are engaged in a great experiment to discover whether a free public opinion can devise and direct methods of managing the affairs of the nation. We may fail. But we are handicapping ourselves needlessly.

"Let us have a little competition. Not only in selling soap, cigarettes and automobiles, but in informing a troubled, apprehensive but receptive public. Why should not each of the twenty or thirty big corporations which dominate radio and television decide that they will give up one or two of their regularly scheduled programs each year, turn the time over to the networks and say in effect: 'This is a tiny tithe, just a little bit of our profits. On this particular night we aren't going to try to sell cigarettes or automobiles; this is merely a gesture to indicate our belief in the importance of ideas.' "

He was no pundit, no prophet. He had no dazzling gift of phrase, but he did his homework and he thought things through. Broadcasting schooled him in getting to the point: "The astonishment caused by Fidel Castro's rise in Cuba is a reminder that people still do not properly evaluate the power of guerrilla warfare. If skillfully used, it

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Whiteness of Fog On Wintry Mountains

(To Baudouin and Annie de Moustier)

—ROBERT PENN WARREN

White, white, luminous but
Blind—fog on the
Mountain, and the mountains

Gone, they are not here,
And the sky gone. My foot
Is set on what I

Do not see. Light rises
From the cold incandescence of snow
Not seen, and the world, in blindness,

Glows. Distance is
Obscenity. All, all
Is here, no other where.

The heart, in this silence, beats.

Heart—oh, contextless—how
Can you, hung in this
Blank mufflement of white

Brightness, now know
What you are? Fog,
At my knees, coils, my nostrils

Receive the luminous blindness,
And deeper, deeper, it, with the
Cold gleam of fox-fire among

The intricate secrets of
The lungs, enters, an eye
Screams in the belly. The eye

Sees the substance of body dissolving.

At fog-height, unseen,
A crow calls, the call,
On the hem of silence, is only

A tatter of cold contempt, then
Is gone. Oh, try to remember
An act that you once thought worthy.

The body's brags are put
To sleep—all, all. What
Is the locus of the soul?

What, in such absoluteness,
Can be prayed for? Oh, crow,
Come back, I would hear your voice:
That much, at least, in this whiteness.

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