

those dark moments by professing to believe, at last, in Christ. For a man whose gods once were Da Vinci, Freud, and Karl Marx, and who had no illusions save the sacred ones of art and science, in which were revealed the only true godheads, this comes as a startling revelation, if revelation it is. Certainly, the legion of Eisenstein's admirers will be hard put to accept it without documentary proof. One cannot isolate any single facet of the multi-faceted personality of so complex and bizarre a figure as Eisenstein and say, "This is it!" Like his films, each facet is only a part of a whole in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This is the first requisite of genius—the rest lies in validity of achievement. Here there is no dispute.

It is an overwhelming story of sometimes unbearable poignancy of a tremendously lovable man who was a great artist and who, though he enjoyed the pinnacles of triumph in his art, also suffered grievously for it and, in the most profound sense, died for it. For Miss Seton, who knew Eisenstein intimately, this has been a labor of love. The research she has done on this biography is staggering. The book has a vast amount of previously unpublished material, including photographs, documents, and drawings.

More than anything else, it is a personal portrait of "an artist rushing forward to the future . . . to serve generations of artists yet unborn." There is much to be left to psychologists to fathom, but a salutary overtone springs from this portrait nonetheless. The freedom of the artist and his right to creative integrity is a theme of such nobility that it rises above all social systems, above all politics.

Let each search within himself who reads the biography of a great man and answer that question which some day must be answered:

"I have given you a life . . . what have you done with it?"

Surf Swimming

By Charles Wharton Stork

THE shoulder of cosmic rhythm

Lifts and bears onward
Infinitesimal me,
Joyously conscious
I am not flotsam
Helplessly driven,
But integral and participant in
The will that bears me.

Air-Wave Idioms

OUT OF THE BLUE. By John Crosby. New York: Simon & Schuster. 301 pp. \$3.

By GILBERT SELDES

JOHN CROSBY'S "book about radio and television" offers several different kinds of enjoyment, almost all of them coming from his own wit and intelligence. I can't be sure whether he intended us to be taken in by the photograph on the jacket in which, striped sweatshirt and all, he looks a little like the young amateur pugilist Hemingway.

The major pleasures of Crosby's "Out of the Blue" I count as 1) reading this section of Crosby's comments, 2) remembering having read them, 3) recalling the programs about which they were written, and 4) finding some pieces which by evil mischance I had never read before. In New York City, where Crosby's column appears only four times a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays are dull days, and Saturday—when neither he nor Bob and Ray appear—is a sheer loss. From now on we will be able to read a reprinted column on the off-days and by strictly rationing ourselves to one a day we'll get through a year or two.

"There was some loose talk," says the foreword, "about putting together a rounded and exhaustive study of the broadcasting industry. Fortunately, this worthy but dreary enterprise was abandoned." Freely translated this means that Crosby is lazy and that his publishers have not yet learned the art of blackmailing a writer into doing what he ought to do.

It means also that Crosby, being a relatively sophisticated person (which is not the same thing as a sophisticate) with high standards of quality, has to pretend that he is essentially another guy in a sweatshirt, one of the mob. His last words are: "The fact is—deplorable as it may sound—that I greatly enjoy those things of which I most heartily disapprove." In the same afterword he also says: "I remember writing 'Lotsa Fun, Lotsa Laughs, Lotsa Loving' . . . in a total elapsed time of twenty minutes, propelled to this furious outburst by a feeling of hopeless exasperation. On the other hand, a column on 'Amahl and the Night Visitors' . . . took hours. My admiration for this work was so boundless that it struck me dumb."

In short, I do not believe that Crosby gets as much enjoyment out of the programs he intellectually despises as



John Crosby—"ferocious and funny."

he pretends. That he is capable of intellectual contempt is copiously evident in this collection, and it doesn't at all imply that he is slumming when he records his pleasure in programs that everyone likes. In fact, he is doing the critic's proper job, sifting the better from the worse, regardless of popularity. This has always been done in the major arts, but critics of the popular arts are often expected to abdicate their function as if it were somehow undemocratic or un-American to say that some popular things are better than others.

After dealing brightly with the good and the silly in broadcasting for eighteen chapters, Crosby has a nineteenth where, instead of lifting a glass to the industry, he blows up the intolerable pretensions of the total apologists for our present system. He denounces as spurious the idea that the broadcasters are merely filling a demand created by the public. "The public has created a demand for entertainment . . . but the quality of . . . product should be determined by the broadcasters." (I am myself doubtful about the first part of this; the broadcasters have again and again created a demand by creating a supply before the demand existed. But the point about quality is major—and Crosby is absolutely right.)

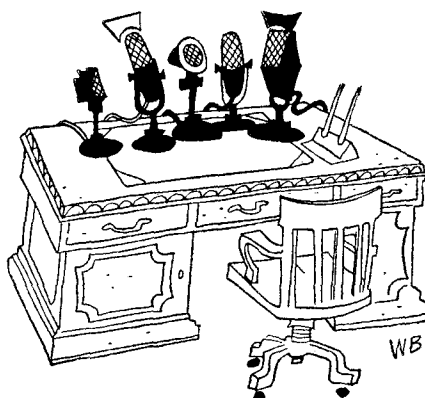
On this subject, on censorship, on the vagaries of research and polls, Crosby is as sound, serious, entertaining as when he writes about sponsored marriages, television detectives, and Kate Smith as an American institution. On the quality of commercials he is ferocious and funny. The more important the subject, the better he writes.

Gilbert Seldes wrote "The Seven Lively Arts" and "The Great Audience."

Flickers-Radio Notes

SHAVING THE SMITH BROTHERS: There are plenty of radios around the country that are turned on at 11:10 week-day nights (EST) for the voice of Eric Sevareid, CBS's chief Washington correspondent as well as one of its chief commentators. As voices go Sevareid's is calm and reassuring; as commentators go Sevareid is among the very best. Neither a Pollyanna nor a crepehanger, Sevareid can be counted on to shuffle the day's disjointed bits and pieces of news into five minutes of sense, free of panaceas and cliches. You don't need to tune in on Sevareid for more than a night or two to realize that he is keen, civilized, liberal, humorous, sympathetic, and rather passionately involved with the United States.

"In One Ear" (Knopf, \$2.95) is an anthology of 107 commentaries that Sevareid has broadcast in the past few years. All are as easy on the eye as they were on the ear. Even the "Contents" can be enjoyed with its five pages of titles like "Shave the Smith Brothers and What Have You Got?," "The Old Bull and How to Throw It," and "Senator Pooh and the Communist Woozles." Washington, war, peace, loyalty programs, civil rights, Eisenhower, Stevenson, Truman, Christmas, correspondents, even the pronunciation of words are handled by Sevareid with such imagination that his observations and phrases echo



in your mind long after the book has been closed or the radio turned off. His performance is so consistently fine that for a moment one is apt to forget that the commentaries were written against a deadline. Anyone who may feel that there isn't a man on radio who can be *that* good would do well to read, or listen to, Sevareid tonight.

—BERNARD KALB.

THE EYE & THE IDEA: There is a chap, name of Allen Funt, who has dedicated the last six years of his life to eavesdropping on 750,000 persons (one at a time) with the aid of either a hidden microphone or a hidden camera. Not one punched him in the nose. Some, it also turns out, were so overjoyed at the prospect of being heard on "Candid Mike" or being seen on "Candid Camera" that they readily signed a release, despite the fact that their candid selves often were silly, witless, and flabby. All this made Funt, never a man to embarrass another man, happy.

In "Eavesdropper at Large" (Vanguard, \$3), Funt tells the full story of Funt. He chronicles the germination of his idea, of hiding microphones and cameras, of dreaming up ideas, of luring the man-in-the-street into the act, and of being called everything from "a dirty snoop" to "the second most ingenious sociologist in America." Modestly, Funt denies both, claiming only that he is "a straight man" in a "screw business." There are several verbatim illustrations of Funt as a straight man like one with the electrician who cheerfully agrees to build him an electric chair. Again, there are several conclusions about human behavior based on Funt's candid excursions, such as "We are all much harder to arouse than is generally supposed." For anyone who has ever seen or heard Funt in action, there are few surprises, though eyebrows may go up from coast to coast when Funt says of those interviewed on his programs, "... our concentration is more on everyday people than on freaks." It, to fall back on Funt's own parlance, sounds screwy to me.

—B. K.

FICTION

(Continued from page 19)

War to the 1930's. In the antebellum heyday of steamboating Creole planters built mansions modeled on the ornate steamers plying the Mississippi. A onetime gambler and carpet bagger, Clyde Batchelor purchases one of these river estates from a compliant French widow. With his bride, a high-born but impoverished Virginia widow, and her young children he embarks on a lavish existence at "Cindy Lou" (a corruption of Saint Cloud), financed by sugar, tobacco, and floating palaces. The Batchelors' idyllic marriage and their children's not so successful ones, their relations with neighboring Creole gentry, and the decline of their fortunes when railroads replace steamboats form the main threads of the narrative. A grandson's discovery of oil restores Cindy Lou to prosperity and provides a cheerful ending. Mrs. Keyes deftly juggles numerous sub-plots, and lavishly describes the customs and manners of plantation and river life.

On the debit side are a sentimental style and a heavily padded story. But the author's rich panorama undoubtedly will please her wide audience.

—RAY PIERRE.

GREETINGS OF THE SEASON: There are eight Christmas stories in Margaret Cousins's collection "Christmas Gift" (Doubleday, \$2.75). All are of the type which every editor of a mass-circulation magazine prays for when it comes time to make up his December issue. In each the miracle of Christmas works the expected transformation in the hearts or circumstances of the characters. Lovers are reconciled, misunderstandings are cleared up, old and lonely people discover they are wanted and need not be lonely, criminals are reformed, dour characters lose their bitterness, enemies give up old enmities, and all's for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Miss Cousins writes a briskly competent prose that partly screens the sentimentality of her offerings. Those who can weep at each rehearsing of the "Christmas Carol" will undoubtedly enjoy these though they are not quite up to the level of that masterpiece.—EDWARD J. FITZGERALD.

YORKSHIRE PUDDING: A century ago Yorkshire men were mining coal in Pennsylvania and copper in Michigan while other Yorkshire miners were working lead mines in the mountains of Spain. In a Spanish mining camp

FRASER YOUNG

LITERARY CRYPT No. 493

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 493 will be found in the next issue.

FLY HERB CHHN UP

GEHARYNCY, MEN FLY HERB

YOUR UCEHSMEQY.

NUHCYEYP RMYSFUXP

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 492

You cannot make a windmill go with a pair of bellows.

—G. HERBERT.