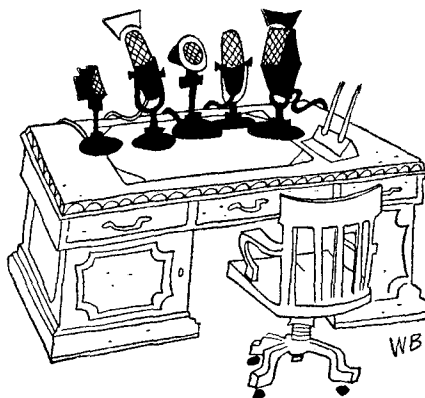


Flickers-Radio Notes

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.

made up of men transplanted from the North Riding, Thomas Armstrong begins his long, eventful story, "**Adam Brunskill**" (Harcourt, Brace: \$4). There Jim Brunskill lay dying, far from the Northern moors that had never faded from his memory, and in his last hours he told his stalwart son about the family quarrel that had sent him away from his own country. On his father's death Adam Brunskill set out for England. From London he journeyed north to the bleak windswept landscape of Yorkshire. He fell in with old Peg Stephen, wandering knife-grinder, and together they crossed the wild moorland to the valley of the Skew. It was Adam's own country, though he had never seen it until then.

Mr. Armstrong's novel is crowded with incident and rich, local scenes, but it is more than a picture of homely life in the village of Winterings. For Adam Brunskill soon encountered his burly cousin Reuben Nattrass, and he learned of the bitter rivalry between the East Side and West Side mining companies. He also met vivid and ardent Cherry Dinsdale, niece of the manager of the West Side mines. When he discovered that his cousin was seeking the favor of Cherry along with the ruin of her uncle there was need in Skewdale of Adam's shrewd knowledge of mining and of his prowess with his fists.

Mr. Armstrong, who is a very popular novelist in England, makes few demands upon his readers. He is an old-fashioned storyteller, with graphic powers of description and strong, unsubtle sympathies in a novel as hearty as Yorkshire pudding. There are times when this novel recalls pages of Thomas Hardy, but its somberness is never long sustained. Instead of impersonal and implacable fate, the villain here is flesh and blood and can be vanquished. "Champion!" Adam Brunskill comments on a far view or a fair turn of events. And champion he is, in all the earthy and unsubtle chapters of this novel.

—WALTER HAVIGHURST.

LAND OF DREAMS: Dorothy L. Pillsbury's "**Adobe Doorways**" (University of New Mexico Press, \$3.50) is a second collection of vignettes romantically extolling life among the Indians, Spanish-Americans, and Anglos of Santa Fe, New Mexico. There, if you will accept Miss Pillsbury's word for it, you can escape into a world that is full of gaiety, sunshine, good food, colorful costumes, and colorful customs, and no troubles except little ones. Apart from painting this idyllic picture the author has a few theses to expound. One is that the modern

world is too regimented. Another is that a happy blending of the best in the old cultures with the best from the new is highly desirable. I don't think anyone will quarrel with her. Nor do I feel that her pleasant view of a life without care is unattractive. I just don't believe it. Her prose is ingratiatingly simple if occasionally a little sugary, and if you really want to escape from it all you can do so through the pages of her book. I wouldn't want to test the reality however.

—E. J. F.

FINNISH TRAGEDY: Mika Waltari is capable of a change-of-pace novel. As a surprising chaser to such long, massive books as "**The Egyptian**," "**The Adventurer**," and "**The Wanderer**," the new book, "**A Stranger Comes to the Farm**" (Putnam's, \$3), is short, virtually a novella, and presents a contemporary story. To an isolated Finnish farm comes Aaltonen, a stranger, seeking work. The farm's manager is a woman—we are given no name for her—who is burdened by a drunken, degenerate husband. An aging, kindhearted farm hand, Herman, is the only other person on the place. It does not take Aaltonen long to see the horror of this marriage. He has left certain horrors behind him in his own life. The woman has been reduced from a once better state. Inevitably the two find a bond of cleanliness and restoration between them. Before this has more than begun to flourish, however, the degenerate stirs from his lethargy sufficiently to precipitate the tragedy latent in the situation.

Just what Mr. Waltari's purpose is in this dark tale, other than the telling for its own sake, I do not know. It is effective, striking, in many ways. Yet in spite of the sparseness and compactness of the book he manages to make it almost lush, or purple, in some of its passages. It is good of its kind, but I am afraid it is more of an interesting item in relation to Waltari's body of work than an enhancement of his reputation. The publishers liken it to "**Ethan Frome**" and there is perhaps a slight basis for the comparison. On the whole, however, it has too much passion in it, and too much of a "**Grand Guignol**" quality, to be the counterpart of Mrs. Wharton's bleak classic.

—EDMUND FULLER.

ENFANT TERRIBLE: There is probably nothing wrong with Calder Willingham that a good editor couldn't correct merely by declining to publish him. His latest effusion is called "**Natural Child**" (Dial, \$3.50) and it evidences all the lack of discipline, pretentious volubility, and sophomoric posturing that have been his hallmark



since his first promising novel. Its story has to do with the love life of Bobbie, a girl from the South, and George, a wolf on the fringes of Manhattan's literary bohemia. It is told in selfconsciously illiterate fashion that is supposed to be amusing, now in the first person, now in the third person. There are the customary references to sex, normal and perverse. There are pages of bombastic dialogue by unpleasant characters. And there is a final attempt to explain the whole thing away as an elaborate joke on the reader. That it is.

—E. J. F.

DISILLUSIONED COMRADE: Neither life nor literature has given us many Communists who ultimately changed into beings endowed with the faculty of recognizing man as created in God's image. We have had the opportunity to witness a quantity of Communists, in real life as well as in literary works of our contemporaries, who had broken with the Party and gone on to fight their own personal wars with it and those who, with Stalinist cynicism, had offered their real or fictional experiences to their former enemies in spite of the fact that they never experienced any inner transformation. Unfortunately, we have heard very little about a real transformation in which a philosophical materialist changed into a philosophical idealist, or about a man who had managed to free himself from within.

Hans Habe's new novel, "**The Black Earth**" (Putnam, \$3.50), attempts to portray such a theme. A man born in poverty rebels against his set pattern of life, frees himself from his feudal ties, flees to Budapest, is initiated into the revolutionary movement in 1914, and after joining the army reaches the Soviet Union as a Hungarian soldier. There, acting under orders, he contacts his comrades and becomes the leader of the deserters. He returns with the Russian army as a major and later on plays an important role in political life in his homeland. At the moment when his dream of freeing the enslaved peasants seems to materialize, he is rendered powerless and realizes that the new era is merely the continuation of the old one.

—EGON HOSTOVSKY.