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TV AND RADIO

Genius at Work

IF I CALLED off the numbers 660 or 710 or 770 or 880 you would probably guess I was pointing out the number of conservatives in government. You would be wrong.

Those dusty, old, half-forgotten figures are the points on your dials where once upon a bygone evening you used to tune in for some pleasantly nostalgic hours of radio entertainment. Those numbers have now been reduced on our TV sets to 2, 4, 7, 9—and often I have the feeling the entertainment has proportionately followed the downward trend.

Also reduced, I was depressed to read in a report by the Publishers Information Bureau, has been the income in radio-time sales. Whereas for the first nine months last year radio sales on the four networks totaled 119 million dollars, this year the total was 104 million dollars for the same period.

This drop of fifteen million dollars may not seem like much to you or me, but to the people who operate the radio networks it represents something more than just a loss of prestige, or a loss of éclat. It represents the loss of money. So much so that General David Sarnoff, chairman of the board of RCA and the National Broadcasting Company, and a true pioneer of the broadcasting business, was moved to say in a speech recently, "It may yet be possible for radio networks to eke out a poor existence, but I don't know."

This of course moved CBS to issue a snide bulletin: "Those who do not believe in radio should make way for those who do." And then proceeded to show CBS could make radio pay by putting on a five-a-week Bing Crosby show sustaining.

But there is more at stake here than just the passing of nasty notes between the networks. What is clearly needed is some genius to demonstrate how radio can be brought back.

So I will be glad to demonstrate.

In the first place, turning on a radio set has become an almost impossible inconvenience. In my home, as it is in almost all the homes where I have visited, the television set has become the focal point of the living room toward which the couch and all the chairs face. The radio set has been relegated to an inconspicuous window sill or tucked away in a bookshelf or on a bedside table. The actual physical effort involved in getting up out of a comfortable, front-row, over-

stuffed seat to wander about the house to turn on a radio set is not conducive to building up a sizable radio audience.

Now on television sets, as we have noted earlier, there are channels 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 11. And while these channels produce all the entertainment we see on our sets channels 1, 3, 6, and 8 lie there fallow.

MY SUGGESTION is to put the radio networks on channels 1, 3, 6, and 8. For some symphonic music we turn on the set and it lights up with a still picture of Toscanini or whomever. For the five-a-week Crosby radio programs we were talking about we turn on the set and there is a picture of Bing. For "Meet the Press" we see the panel and the guest. And so on.

Radio-vision! To recapture what we are told is fast becoming a dwindling audience and in order to keep the automobile-radio audience intact, of which there is still a sizable group, and to continue to reach the homes where television sets have not yet been installed, radio-vision should be offered sponsors in conjunction with the regular radio broadcasts.

And here is an extra, extra bonus to induce sponsors to come in and help this venerable old medium which has stood us in such good stead over the years. Comes time for the commercial and there is inserted a photograph of the product, behind which is heard the voice of the announcer making his pitch!

I offer this suggestion free and at some sacrifice. I give up my favorite channel to this worthy cause. Many a night after two or three hours of particularly undistinguished television viewing I have tuned in Channel 6. I sit for a long time and gaze at the thousands of little white snow flakes swirling about behind the glass of my twenty-one-inch screen.

Somehow it rests me—and faintly recalls the simpler viewing delight of a day far far gone, when you held the ball of glass in your hand and turned it upside down to watch the snow swirl about—early, early early TV.

But they finally went out of business too—couldn't "eke out an existence." Because their audience grew up. Now I had a way to save that medium too. But it involved Never Never Land. And nobody nobody would listen to me. Just as they probably won't listen to me now.

—GOODMAN ACE.



NEW EDITIONS

Enlightenment's Lexicon

IN ANY list of famous works that are little read the great French "Encyclopedia" would have to be given a place near the top. Everyone has heard of it, everyone has read about it, and read quotations from it; but it is a good bet that, aside from professional students, few persons in recent years have penetrated very far into the eighteen million words of its seventeen volumes. We may be grateful, then, to John Lough for having performed an editorial task that makes it easy for us to become at least partially acquainted with one of the few books that have made, as well as recorded, history. Mr. Lough has skilfully put together a small volume, "The Encyclopédie of Diderot and D'Alembert" (Cambridge University Press, \$3), which consists of some seventy articles, in the original French, selected from the mass prepared by Diderot and his collaborators; and by centering his attention on articles "dealing with religion, philosophy, and political and social ideas, while not ignoring other themes, such as science and education, in which the Age of Reason was passionately interested," Mr. Lough has given us a very fair idea of the intellectual quality, intellectual direction, and intellectual force of the whole "Encyclopaedia." It was, and it remains, a monument to the Enlightenment—a monument to eighteenth-century European man's faith in his own reason and the perfectibility of his own posterity. To many persons in the middle of the twentieth century this monument looks as strange and as out-dated as a dinosaur. Many persons are running away from a faith in reason as fast as their fears can carry them, and are looking towards a perfectibility that is not of this world. But perhaps they are mistaken in thinking, because reason cannot do all that was once expected of it, that an anti-rational attitude is the only proper posture for mankind. Perhaps they are mistaken in believing that anything but intelligence can save man from himself. Perhaps they could spend a winter's day in worse company than that of Diderot, D'Alembert, D'Holbach, and their fellows.

A really fine work of scholarship is a thing of beauty and a joy forever—or at least for as long as the printed pages last. Such a work is The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, now in progress

under the general editorship of John Butt. The volume most recently added to this edition are "The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems" (Yale University Press, \$6), edited by Geoffrey Tillotson, and "Minor Poems" (\$7.50), edited by the late Norman Ault. For readers who may have known Pope only in dim type, and without adequate notes, these volumes, like their predecessors, will be a revelation and a delight. They have been designed to communicate the maximum of pleasure.

Pope is worthy of the best that scholarship can do for him, but I wonder if James Joyce's poetry really merits all the learned, critical attention that William York Tindall has lavished on it in his edition of "Chamber Music" (Columbia University Press, \$3.75). And I wonder if it is not a little early to decide that Auden and Dylan Thomas should be included among "The Major Poets: English and American" (Harcourt, Brace, \$4), edited by Charles M. Coffin. Auden has been a fashionable poet for a good many years, and Thomas is very much in fashion at the moment, but to list them as indubitably "major" along with the greatest of English poets—or even with Robinson, Frost, Yeats, and Eliot—seems an act of editorial daring.

Cennino d'Andrea Cennini's "Il Libro dell'Arte," written in the fifteenth century for the practical guidance of artists, must be one of the first "how-to-do-it" books. The author wrote of mixing colors, mural painting, drawing, oil painting, glues, sizes and cements, panel painting, gilding, varnishing, illumination on glass, mosaic work, and casting. He also gave instructions for the taking of a life mask, and you might try to follow them—but not with a friend. This odd, fascinating volume has recently been published by Dover, in Daniel W. Thompson Jr.'s translation, under the title of "The Craftsman's Handbook" (\$3.50).

From the Heritage Press come two lavish editions of Dreiser—"Sister Carrie," introduced by Burton Rascoe and illustrated by Reginald Marsh, and "An American Tragedy," with an introduction by Harry Hansen and illustrations by Mr. Marsh (\$5 each). And from Penguin: "The Thousand and One Nights" (50¢), a selection, translated by N. J. Dawood.

—BEN RAY REDMAN.

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