

RADIO STARS

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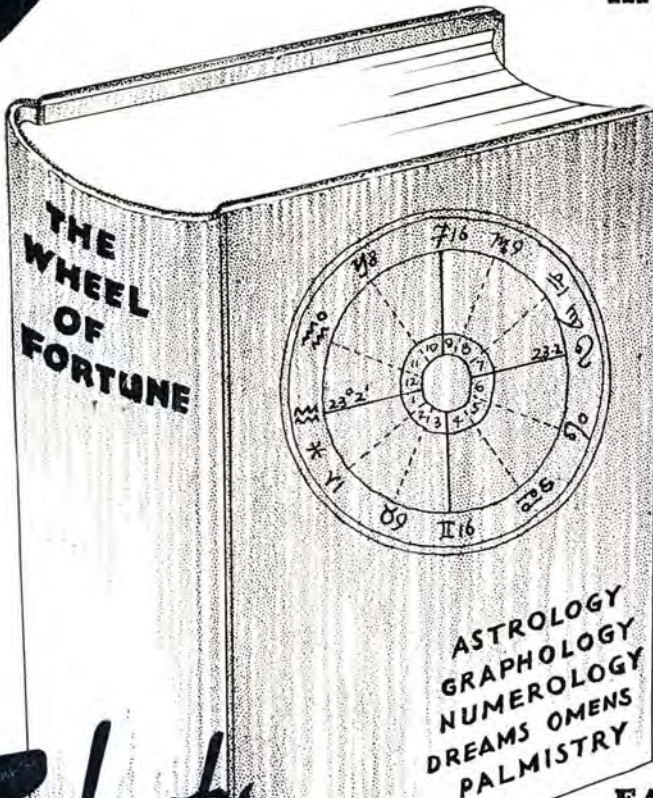
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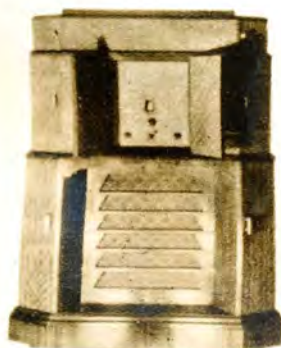


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HAVE YOU HEARD?

News tit-bits and chit chat gleaned around the radio studios

Maybe you never thought that Ruth Etting, that mistress of the "sob-song," might have made a grand bathing beauty. Well, folks, just look this over and see what you think.



MORTON DOWNEY and DONALD NOVIS are feuding over their spots on that Woodbury air show. Maybe, by the time this reaches you, the shooting will be all over. Again, maybe it won't. Maybe the two top-flight canaries will still be at each other's throats. Funny situation, isn't it? There's Downey, whose voice goes clear up to there, and Novis, whose voice can do practically all of Downey's tricks plus some of his own, both on the same bill. Woodbury did it, but why? Off the air, Mort and Don are pals. On it—whe-e-e-e!

BING CROSBY and RUSS COLUMBO will resume their earth-shaking, ear-splitting Battle of the Baritones. As this is penned, they're not on the air. But Bing goes vocal for Chesterfields early in 1933 and NBC execs are plotting to put Columbo on the spot with a sustaining pick-up. So what? So-o-o-o what? So, sez Bing, Bub-bub-bub-boo, bub-bub-bub-boo, bub-bub-bub-boo. . . .

WALTER WINCHELL lost ten pounds during his broadcast on Christmas night. At home lay Gloria, his eight-year-old daughter, whom he idolized, very, very ill. Walter went to the studio and wise-cracked, gagged and clowned through a mile-a-minute program. A few hours after he returned home, Gloria died.

STOOPNAGLE and BUDD are the only two "native" air comedians who can measure up to the buffooneries of the Cantor-Pearl-Benny stage stars. Stoopnagle and Budd, now audible on the Pontiac performances each Thursday, have invented their own sort of humor. They don't gag and they don't borrow ancient wheezes. They just act silly, and it is the conviction of many people that a lot of such silliness is just what this world needs.

GEORGE BURNS and GRACIE ALLEN are Hollywood-bound. Two pictures have been written for them. "International House" and "College Humor" are their titles. They'll be released this summer. If they reach your neighborhood and you are low on chuckles or guffaws, be sure to see them.

WENDELL HALL, the Red-headed Music Maker, is playing in Chicago over WIBO. This news comes to us from a reader who read our article of several months ago asking "Where Are the Stars of Yesteryear?" Wendell, our informant confides, was "dressed in a brown suit and it is a banjo he plays, not a guitar. He still has a mustache and I might add he still smokes just as much as ever,

possibly more." Thanks, Mr. Palmer. We are very glad to get that dope.

FRANK PARKER, the NBC tenor, has gone in for polo in a great big way. The other day he got a letter containing his rating as a player from the Polo Association. Tenderly and expectantly, he opened the letter and read it. His rating, as awarded by that very discerning association, was a great big zero. Do you suppose Frank will go in for ping-pong now or tennis? Or will he assert his stick-to-itiveness and keep on at polo?

LOWELL THOMAS, news conversationalist and globe-girdler, has moved his office. It was in the Empire State Building on Fifth Avenue, you know. But its halls got cluttered up. People, learning that he was in the building, came up to shake hands. As a result, Thomas had to shake hands before lunch, after lunch, before dinner and sometimes far into the night. But he is moved now, and even his best friends can't tell you his new address.

COME BACKSTAGE

Have you ever wondered how Eddie looks as he broadcasts for those Chase and Sanborn hours? Here's your chance to find out what the entire broadcast is like

By OGDEN
MAYER

(Below) James Wallington, the announcer for the Chase and Sanborn program and the chap who wisecracks with Eddie Cantor. 'Tis said the two of them may go into a show this spring. (Right) Wallington again and Eddie at the mike during a broadcast.



GET out your hotcha hats and coonskin coats and button yourself into a load of joy. We're going partying, folks; partying with Eddie Cantor.

Tonight, Eddie is host. He is taking us backstage to a Chase and Sanborn broadcast. We'll see Wallington, Rubinoff, and all the other unmasked marvels of this gay guy's program. Are you ready? Let's go! Whe-e-e-e-e!

We're at the Times Square studios of the NBC. It is a little theatre perched in the top of a 42nd Street skyscraper. Eddie will meet us here. See those empty seats, about eight hundred of 'em? They'll fill in a jiffy when the crowd arrives. But come on . . . backstage! This is a *backstage* party.

Look! See that huge yellow backdrop with its picture of a can of "dated" coffee as tall as a man, and fat red letters spelling Chase and Sanborn's coffee? No mistake about who is paying for this broadcast.

Through the wings there, see him? I mean the dark fellow with the longish hair and the deep eyes. Looks gypsyish, doesn't he? Music sheets in his hand, he is leaning on a \$200 violin case. Guess who? Right, it's Rubinoff!

Rubinoff! There's a magic name these days. Down in the alley, he's just left a \$12,000 foreign car and a chauffeur. His apartment is the sort of thing about which Roman emperors used to dream.

WITH EDDIE CANTOR



Another view of the stage during the actual broadcast. Yes, that's Rubinoff on the dais leading the orchestra. Evidently Eddie is nervous at those broadcasts for you'll notice he has his collar unbuttoned in both pictures. Or maybe it was just more comfortable.

And here comes Jimmie Wallington, with two ladies. Dark-as night, six feet high, young and cocky, but with a smile that knocks you for a goal, that's Jimmie. And the women? They are radio actresses.

BACKSTAGE here is a crazy quilt sort of place. Chairs and music racks everywhere, with each rack holding a black folder full of music. On the right is the sound effects table. Bells and telephones and a pile of empty fruit boxes stand alongside a big cylinder full of compressed air. And a basket of glass with a hammer in it. Queer odds and ends these noise wizards collect.

Here come the musicians. They've got a room on another floor where they pile their cases and clothes. All dressed in tuxedos. Rubinoff becomes the center of a noisy group. Fiddle under chin, he saws unbeautiful practice chords from it while they ask him questions.

Chatter, chatter . . . some of them are talking about Ernie Watson, arranger and saxophonist. His baby daughter was born last week up in Canada. An hour ago,

he talked to her on the phone and she said, "waah."

Hear that voice? Sharp, staccato, insistent . . . Cantor's voice. He's coming through that door. There! "Hi, Eddie!"

Gray trousers and dark-blue coat, white kerchief in a breast pocket. And eyes that you've seen pictured a thousand times. He stops, shakes hands, grinning. . . .

"That was a swell picture on your last month's cover," he says. "But your artist made a big mistake. He made me good-looking."

He's gone, darting into a little room offstage. It holds a loudspeaker and the program comes in there just as it does in millions of homes. Artists rest there between their turns at the mike.

That clock on the wall says one minute to go. People are getting into their positions. A. K. Spencer, production man, dashes past with a stop-watch in his hand. His job is to get the show on and off the air, and that is a split-second business.

Now! We're going on the air. The big velvet curtain

RADIO STARS

YOUR RADIO FAVORITES REVEALED

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Editors: Ernest V. Heyn and Curtis Mitchell

Associate Editor: K. Rowell Batten

Art Editor: Abril Lamarque

NEXT MONTH

Do you know Father Coughlin? You must, of course, if you're a radio fan. He's the Detroit priest who had a parish of thirty-six families only—and then he went on the air and now he has millions of followers. Don't miss the fascinating story on this unique personality. And Jane Froman, the blues singer. She has made good despite the greatest handicap a woman can have. A most sympathetic story. And the life story of Vincent Lopez. Lopez was one of the first to go on the air—and, in spite of the fact that he's been labelled "through" a number of times—is still going strong. Incidentally, we promised you this story in the March issue, but we didn't have room for it.



(Above) Rubinoff looking over his music at a rehearsal. (Right) Eddie at a rehearsal. Have you ever noticed how, during the broadcast, Eddie kids Rubinoff but Rubinoff never talks back? There's a reason for it which you'll find in the story.

Culver Service Pictures



rises. Peek through the wings at those auditorium seats. They're full now, to the limit. The announcer is saying, "Rubinoff and his violin."

Rubinoff walks from the wings and spreads his feet before a mike. The orchestra is already playing. He begins to saw that bow back and forth. We can't hear a thing and we're less than twenty feet from him. But that black metal mike hears him.

As he finishes, Cantor and Wallington step out of the side room. Cantor's collar is turned up and he has a woman's fox fur around his neck. Wallington sees a lady sitting in the wings with a fur around her neck. "Let me borrow it," he says, lifting it off.

Crisp dialogue spills swiftly into the foremost mikes. It tells us they are visiting the North Pole so they can ask Santa Claus for Christmas presents.

"We'll have him bring all saxophonists a cow," Eddie states and we wait for the next line.

"Why?" Jimmie demands.

"Because a cow makes the same sounds and gives milk besides."

The racket of a raging wind whines across the stage. The sound man is turning a crank. A crank on a black box that looks something like an old-fashioned churn. But instead of butter, it gives wind. Dogs bark! That's the sound man again. He's holding his nose and barking like a dog. Another fellow is barking at him. They sound like a dozen dogs.

Cantor and Wallington finish their stunt and race into the wings as Rubinoff leads the orchestra into a number.

You've never seen an orchestra really *led* until you've seen Rubinoff. He leads with his hands, his elbows, his chin, his nose, and his eyebrows. Every musical phase calls a different expression to his mobile countenance. His face pleads and damns and scorns in fleeting succession. Such grimaces, my dear. If we'd only brought a movie camera.

He finishes adroitly, heaping the harmony to a rousing thunderbolt. Then Jimmie and Eddie rush back with Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus. They talk to her first. She replies in good Santa Claus English. But look at her. She is a high blond, wearing a low-cut evening dress. Boy, what a swift whiff of polar wind would do to her. She is Doris Dagmar in real life—and real life to her is the radio business for she is one of broadcasting's favorite actresses.

But, say, look at the guy Eddie is calling Santa. Santa talks in a basso brogue. Sounds as whiskery and good-cheerish as you'd want. But not a whisker hides his face. He's shaven clean, wears an immaculate tux, and *pince nez* on his thin nose. Say, Santa, you're a big disappointment.

EDDIE sweeps into a song. If you've never seen him broadcast before, you are seeing a new Eddie. Here is none of the bouncing, prancing epilepsy that made him a famous stage comic. He stands at the mike, looking not quite as pop-eyed as is his footlight habit, and doesn't even raise his voice.

That's what radio does. The performer has to develop a new technique that satisfies the ear instead of the eye. Personally, I'd like a few extra hops, please, Mr. Cantor.

More music. Jimmie accidentally backs into the sound equipment and turns over a stand. The clatter bangs into the wings. Jimmie doesn't even seem to notice it. Ten seconds later, he is babbling into a mike of the virtues of dated coffee. I wonder if he smokes Murads.

But as he comes off the stage, he says, "I certainly scrambled that up."

Listen to that. Cantor is kidding Rubinoff again. You've heard it on the air a dozen times. So have I. And I've wondered how Rubinoff felt and how he looked. Never, you know, has he made a retort.

"There's Rubinoff," Eddie chants. "Look at his smile."

In millions of homes, people imagine that they see Rubinoff grinning . . . but here—here! Where is Rubinoff? Not on the stage. Cantor is (Continued on page 48)



"... *Must* you whistle?" this author asks Morton Downey.



Would like Mr. McNamee to smooth his jittery speaking.



Why do the sponsors make Ruth Etting sob all the time?

TAKE MY ADVICE

—says this famous author to various radio personalities, and stop doing the various things which annoy—instead of please. Here is sane criticism

By FAITH
BALDWIN

THIS compilation which, I hope, is not impertinent and which, I trust, is constructive rather than destructive criticism, is the result of a great many hours spent at the radio with the dials turned on, while I listen to innumerable programs; and is addressed to the program makers with the most friendly intentions. So here goes—

Take my advice—

All Announcers. Please do not distort the English language into something it isn't, in a frenzied effort after good diction. Nothing shows up more glaringly on the radio than affectation.

Ted Husing. You're a swell sports announcer, the best we have. Stick to that last; forget the gags and the facetiousness. We like your stuff to come to us straight from the shoulder.

Graham McNamee. Never mind the critics. You do an awfully good job, but isn't it possible to smooth your jerky and jittery descriptions into the even flow which is so much easier to listen to, Mr. McNamee?

David Ross. You merited the 1932 Diction medal but don't let it get you. Too much diction is a curse. Keep your Poet's Gold programs on CBS natural. Stay—yourself.

Bill Hay. Please, for the love of heaven, do not announce Amos and Andy in that infuriating manner. You aren't presenting a symphony or an Edwin Booth. The sponsor-plugging sounds like a blow by blow description of Westminster Abbey. Try and be natural—as the boys are (artfully) natural. Tooth paste isn't a cure-all. And Amos and Andy are not a couple of male Duses.

Stoopnagle and Budd. Isn't it possible to *ad lib* a little

more? I'm sure you haven't lost that genius for the right word at the right time—and all unpremeditated. The written and read lines are not nearly as good . . . or as

funny. Let's have more of your casual, cuckoo selves.

Ruth Etting. A whole program of straight songs without sobbing would fasten me to my loud speaker. Why is it necessary for the girls who can put over songs as well as you can, to break down into tears in the middle?

Edwin C. Hill. More news, less disinterment of past newspaper legends would hold the interest of your audience a little more, I think. You can really interpret the news, but too much of that "story behind the headlines" palls, after a time.

Fred Allen. What's wrong? You have me considerably mystified. You are so exceedingly funny in the stage shows. But what is cramping your style on the Bath Club spot?

Mills Brothers. Don't get too eccentric and tricky. A novelty is a novelty—the first time; but a good quartet which sings close harmony as you do is good for innumerable times. The public is tiring of voice and instrument stunts.

Vaughn De Leath. How about the theme song? It doesn't do your voice justice—or you. Could you be persuaded to change it?

Rudy Vallee. I realize that it is necessary to explain your guest stars to the millions of listeners, but can you not be more brief? Let's have terser announcements and fewer; and more of your own singing.

Lady Bugs. You're a marvelous team and could be the best on the air in your line (Continued on page 50)



The romance of George OLSEN and Ethel SHUTTA

(Left) Isn't Ethel lovely looking? (Right) Meet Mr. and Mrs. Olsen and the two children. The elder boy is called Charles Monroe, and the younger, George Edward. There's a special reason for the "Edward." (See story.)



(Right) George Olsen—he was playing out on the coast when Fanny Brice heard him and at once sent a long telegram of praise to the late Florenz Ziegfeld. That was the beginning of George's real success. And it led to romance, too.

THEY are children of Broadway, a gay son and daughter of the nervous, hectic entertainment world—but they are the happiest married couple I know.

This romance of George Olsen and Ethel Shutta is a miracle. Almost invariably, Broadway condemns its children to heartbreak. Somehow, the tinsel and brittleness of our gay gulch of bright lights jinxes the lives of those who touch it. Walter Winchell calls it a street where sun-tan comes out of a lamp and love comes out of a bottle. And how he knows his Broadway!

Yet, we have the dazzling, triumphant spectacle of George and Ethel.

It could never happen, people said; not in the glare of the rainbow signs where all the roads of the world cross. But it did happen, and therein is the amazingly human story of a girl whose life had been spent behind the footlights and a boy with a bee in his bonnet about music who met on the spotlighted stage of the Ziegfeld "Follies."

I want to tell this thrillingly romantic story in as sweet and simple a way as it deserves. George and Ethel insist that I tell only the truth—the grand truth that here is a man and here is a woman who have found the greatest thing in life. They are so proud of each other, and so a part of each other.

Ethel Shutta was a name in Broadway's brightest lights when George was a student in the University of Michigan. Since five, she had acted. Still in her 'teens, she was a reigning queen of the musical shows. And he was a

sweet-swinging drum major for the Michigan U. band.

Inevitably, he had a college orchestra. Not a good one, but not a bad one. After graduation, he had another in his home town of Portland, Oregon. A continent separated George and Ethel. They played at the brink of two oceans, entirely unaware of each other, unknowingly awaiting the turn of life's merry-go-round that would whirl them together.

A visitor in Portland heard George's music. Her name was Fanny Brice, the girl who gave us that magnificently pathetic song, "My Man." Curiously enough, it was

He was leading the orchestra, she was singing. The music drowned out her words and she was furious! That was the beginning of a romance which—because of its constancy—surprises Broadway

By CURTIS
MITCHELL



train was bringing a blond Viking man into her life. Olsen reached New York with his musicians. He was to play for the "Follies". Rehearsals were under way. There were mad, frantic days of headaches and fears and sleeplessness. Would he satisfy the Great Glorifier? Could he match the matchless standards of Broadway?

ON the last rehearsal night, Florenz Ziegfeld decided that he needed Ethel Shutta's help in his "Follies." So he arranged that she should have a spot midway through the performance. It demanded that she leave the theatre where "Louis XIV" played at the end of the first act, race to the "Follies" show house, do her numbers, and race back to her own show.

No entertainer in New York was busier than Ethel. Two shows in one night, benefits, posing for pictures, endless demands on time and endurance. And a family at home depending upon her. It never occurred to her, I think, that she was working too hard. It was the only life she knew, the only one she had ever known. It was her life.

Let's go to that dress rehearsal for a moment. The orchestra—Olsen's orchestra was on the stage. Lost in the maw of the black auditorium were Ziegfeld and his assistants. The show stumbled through its colorful routine. At her cue, Ethel walked to her place under the floodlights and began to sing.

I doubt if she even saw the stocky orchestra leader

Fanny who indirectly brought George and Ethel together. Fanny, who was so soon to know heartbreak, led them to happiness.

Fanny liked Olsen's music and sent a long telegram to Flo Ziegfeld. The answering wire, invited George to bring his band to New York. The merry-go-round was beginning to turn!

At the moment, Ethel Shutta was working in one of Florenz Ziegfeld's shows called "Louis XIV." To her, it was just another job, another role to play in the lime-light's glare. No one could tell her that a transcontinental

RADIO STARS

whose crew accompanied her song. But she heard him. Bouncing, bubbling harmonies swelled from those West Coast instrumentalists, flowed through the proscenium arch, and smothered Ethel's bravest tones.

She went straight to Ziegfeld, her cheeks afire.

"I won't do it," she snapped. "I can't sing with an orchestra that plays like that. What's the use of my being there at all? I couldn't even hear myself. You'd better get someone else." Angry, flame in her eyes and face, tossing up her job in the "Follies."

Ziegfeld said, "Why don't you speak to Olsen?"

They had never been introduced, but the freemasonry of their backstage world made it unnecessary. She sought George out, still smarting, knowing that orchestra leaders are often touchy and stubborn.

"Would you mind playing a bit softer, next time?" she asked.

"Just tell me, how you want it," George said. "I'll do anything you suggest."

Sweet, wasn't he? The memory is still aglow in her thoughts. That sweetness drew the sting from her mind. She forgot to be angry. And George? He was standing there, trembling, thrilling at the compliment this gorgeous girl was paying him by asking that her music be played in a certain way. He felt that it was a compliment that she noticed him. Who was he but a youngster with a band from the sticks? He hadn't meant to drown her song. His inexperience had caused it, inexperience that he was too proud to admit. He knew only this: she had asked him to do something to please her, and he wanted to please her. He felt that he wanted to please her all the rest of her life.

When she sang again, the music was perfect.

AFTER that, George formed the habit of waiting for her outside the stage door. They began to go places together—and to sit in shadowy corners, forgotten of the world and forgetting it.

They saw so much in each other, so much that was fine and clean and romantic. To her, he was a charming Lochinvar, a Viking Lochinvar unspoiled by adulation and the mock worship of Broadway's leeches. To him, she was a princess of an impossibly romantic kingdom. She knew all the right places to go and the right people to meet. The sort of unbelievable girl of whom one might dream but never possess. He pinched himself often to make sure she was by his side instead of atop a platinum pedestal where she belonged.

One night when the wild cacophony of the nervous city was stilled and an indulgent moon turned Central Park into an onyx-and-silver paradise, he told her what was in his heart—told her how much he loved her.

For the first time, Ethel realized how tired she was. And how much she needed someone. She is no clinging vine, never, but here was a strong man on whom she might lean and rest. It gave her a delicious sense of relief and joy.

Shortly afterwards, her show went on the road and she went with it. George remained in New York. When she left, he escorted her to her Pullman. They heard music. Somewhere, a phonograph was playing "Who?"

Olsen and his orchestra had made that record—today it is one of the two biggest sellers in musical history.

"Who stole my heart away. . . ?"

George's "who" was Ethel. He made that record for her, with every sweep of his baton writing his love for her in wax. This day, he had bought the phonograph and sent a friend to play it in her Pullman stateroom as she came alongside her car. It was his way of saying, "Goodby, my dear. I love you."

That road trip was the worst that Ethel ever took, and she had taken many. For the first time in her life she came to know the heart-sickness of one who is lonely in the special sort of way women reserve for the men they love.

IN each new town that she visited, she found fresh tokens of George's thoughtfulness. Always, her hotel room had been reserved for her. Always, it was filled with fresh cut flowers. Often there were presents—a box with a dozen new handkerchiefs, or a dozen pairs of silk hose. Always there were telegrams and long distance phone calls.

Ethel had read about such things in stories, but here it was actually happening to her. The thrill of it excited and frightened her. It was so grand, so perfect in its delight . . . but what if it should suddenly stop? She knew other women who had been in love . . . knew that most of them had suffered for it.

After a few more weeks, she gave up her role in the show and bought a ticket to New York. On the third night after her arrival, she and George slipped away from their friends and drove to New Haven, Connecticut, where they were married.

That first year, they lived in a heavenly two-room apartment on lower Fifth Avenue. In 1926, she knew that she was to have a baby. At the time, George had an offer that would take him to California. It was important and it meant a lot of money.

"You go on," Ethel told him. "I'll follow later with the baby."

So George went to Hollywood to make music for the movies. On September 17, 1926, he got a phone call from New York that announced a son. By long distance, he and Ethel decided to call the baby Charles Monroe Olsen. Five weeks later, Ethel took her infant to his father.

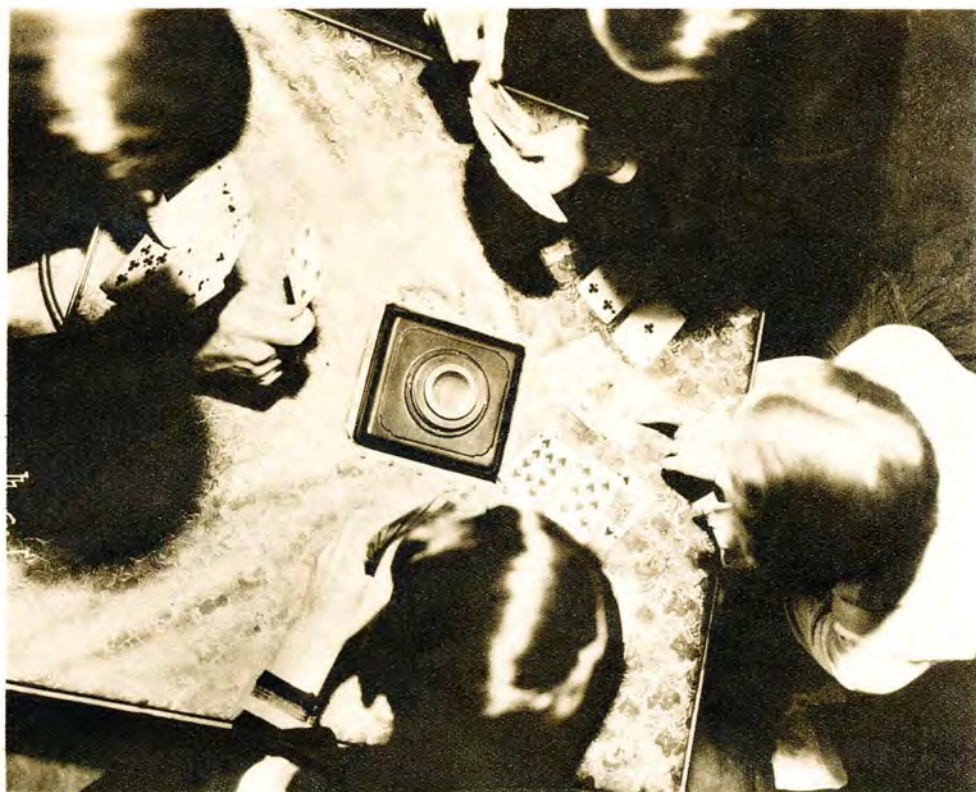
The years have been busy since then—and happier than Ethel dreamed they ever could be. At first, she was certain she was through with the stage doors of theatres for the rest of her life. A home and a boy and a husband of whose love she was certain, (Continued on page 46)



When Ethel first went on the air she thought she knew exactly how a song should be sung into the mike. But she was going by her stage training. George Olsen advised her. At first, Ethel rebelled a little about being advised.

Not as easy as it looks. Read about them and see what you think of Mr. and Mrs. Ace as they really are

NOT SO EASY



(Above) That funny gadget in the center of the table is a microphone. It enables the Aces to broadcast direct from the bridge table. At right you see Mr. and Mrs. Ace at work on their script. Isn't Mrs. Ace cute?



By CECIL B. STURGES

THE elevator operator shot me to the top of the Drake Hotel in Chicago, opened the door, and said, "Walk up them stairs and ask for Goodman Ace."

You know Goodman Ace. He talks through his tonsils and lathers his *bon mots* with sarcasm, usually at the expense of Jane, that dumb daughter of the radio dials.

So Goodman Ace was up that flight of stairs? Up those steps was the studio from which the Lavoris laugh-drama emanated. I climbed them.

Ace met me, shushed me into a chair against a studio side, and vanished. You've never seen such a place. In the center of a room about the size of Uncle Nesbit's drawing room was a battle-scarred bridge table. A bridge table with accessories. The center of the top was cut out and a CBS mike stuck its black, square face up from below. Eighteen inches above, suspended above the center

of the table was a twin mike, hung from the ceiling by four guy-like cables.

In a corner . . . a heap of sound effects lay in disorder, left from a previous broadcast. On the floor . . . rubber covered electric cables coiled and twisted in all directions like vines. Four empty green chairs stood at the table, their backs painted with the singing words, "Easy Aces." Overhead, weary-looking lamps gave a faded light. I felt a sense of disorganization, of carelessness. It was none of my business but I wondered why this studio had such an undusted look. Most studios are scrupulously tidy.

And this—this puzzled me. A box beside one bridge chair held up the end of a fifteen foot bamboo pole, just the sort of pole on which mother used to roll her carpets. The other end was lashed to a door knob in the opposite wall of the studio.

(Continued on page 44)

INTIMATE SHOTS

(Below) Mildred Bailey, the famous radio singer, Kelvin Keech, NBC announcer of importance, and Vera Engels. Vera Engels is a German movie player who has been signed up by RKO. (Right) Petite Lee Wiley, the blues singer who is heard with Leo Reisman's orchestra.

Culver Service



Culver Service

The Three X Sisters. They've startled the radio world with their amazing imitations of outlandish musical instruments. Their most popular number is the Highland bagpipes. (Left) Peggy Healy and Irene Taylor, both of Paul Whiteman's orchestra, reading fan mail between numbers.



Take a peek at the radio stars when they're unaware

OF YOUR FAVORITES

(Left) Ben Bernie and Al Jolson are great friends. Here you see them in an informal moment in Chicago. Ben was largely responsible for Al's getting on the air. What's the joke, Al? (Below) Marie Dressler and Rudy Vallee the night Marie appeared on the Fleischmann hour.

Culver Service



(Right) When Gracie Allen was told to change the plate in the camera it was only natural that she should run into the kitchen and grab a dinner plate for the work in hand. The photographer's subject is George Burns. (Above) A marvelous close-up of Ruth Etting throwing a sob into the mike.

Mildred Bailey, Vallee, Jolson, and others in informal moments

Come with us to the opening of Ted Weems' orchestra at the Pennsylvania Hotel. Marvelous intimate pictures of radio stars



(Above) Jack Benny, Ted Weems, the important personage of the evening, Budd of Stoopnagle and Budd—and the Colonel himself. Too bad Budd's face is hidden by the mike. (Below) Mrs. and Mr. Jesse Crawford, organists supreme; Jeannie Lang, blues singer; Jack Denny and Mrs. Denny. If you know the Pennsy Grill you can tell this picture was taken there.



(Above) Well, well, if it isn't the once very obese Paul Whiteman. He certainly dropped some poundage. The pretty little lady with him is not a radio performer. (Below) Front row: George Olsen, Guy Lombardo, Paul Whiteman, Ted Weems, Jacques Renard. Back row: Leon Belasco, Harold Stern, Abe Lyman, Anson Weeks and Don Bestor.

Pictures by Culver Service



The romantic story of the success of these four delightful colored boys, as told by this famous writer, is better than a Horatio Alger yarn



By THYRA
S A M T E R
W I N S L O W

MEET THE MILLS BOYS

FOUR complete Success Stories in one family!

Four entire Alger Books rolled into one romance!

Four male Cinderellas who went from rags to riches!

Ladies and Gentlemen, the MILLS Brothers!

Some day when you're feeling blue and it occurs to you that nobody gets ahead any more, that sudden success has been relegated to the past or to the pages of fiction and that, things being what they are, nobody who is unknown has a chance, consider the Mills Brothers. And, considering them, you may change your mind.

For the Mills Brothers are a practically perfect example of getting ahead. Without influence. Without family. Without background. Oh, but with talent. Yes, you

mustn't forget that. But then you won't, if you've heard them. And, if you haven't heard them, just turn over to the next page and forget all about this. Or, better still, find a radio and snuggle up close to it and stay there until the Mills Brothers are on the air.

The Mills Brothers play Hot Harmony. And is it hot? You're asking me? If you've already read stories about them—and a lot of stories both true and untrue have been printed—you'll know that the only real instrument they play is a guitar. They simulate all the rest!

I didn't believe it until I heard them myself—in person. It's true. They really do! John plays the guitar. They bought it, years ago, from a (Continued on page 47)



Yes, the greatest liar and braggart of them all—Baron Munchausen—whenever he's before the mike. But Jack Pearl has experienced a Pagliacci tragedy that reads like fiction—and at heart he is melancholy, sensitive, weighed down by the world's suffering

It's a tough business being a funny man, says Jack Pearl. Although people may think his humor comes spontaneously, he insists he has to work hard at it.

JACK PEARL, whose amusing line of patter, whose tall stories as the modern Baron Munchausen make countless thousands of radio listeners hold their sides with laughter, is the real Pagliacci of the air.

All those trite phrases—"the show must go on" and "a real trouper never lets his audience down"—may be applied to Jack. He was playing in a Ziegfeld show, cutting capers, making his rubber face do all the amazing tricks of which it is capable, when word was brought to the theatre that his mother was dead. He loved his mother devotedly. She had, for years, been a shining light of inspiration for him and her death, unexpected as it was, was a crushing and a bitter blow. But they told him—as if any good trouper doesn't know—that he had to give a performance that night.

He went out before them, in his funny clothes, his face smeared with greasepaint that made him look the more ludicrous and *he gave the best and funniest performance of his career*. Those in the audience who wiped away the tears of laughter could not see that tears of grief were cutting a furrow through Jack's make-up. But something inside him—the knowledge that people who wanted to forget their own troubles for a time had paid their money to see him and expected to be amused and entertained—kept him from breaking, kept him going on.

Norma Shearer and Irving Thalberg were in the audience that night. They were the only two "out front" who knew what had happened. As he took his last curtain call Norma blew him a kiss and Irving nodded his head reverently to him. It was a lovely tribute which Jack Pearl will never forget.

And it wasn't only that night that he had to go on. One can meet one such emergency, perhaps, but the next day he came from sitting beside his mother's body to the theatre and the day after that he came from her funeral to amuse the audience. According to Pearl's faith there

are eight days of intensive mourning. He mourned inwardly and sincerely for his mother all during the day and at night he stepped on a stage and made people laugh! And for months thereafter there was a sharp stab of pain through his heart every time he thought of her but he had a show to give and nothing must stop him from giving it!

Jack Pearl is, by all odds, the most melancholy of comedians. By his own admission he worries eighteen hours a day. He worries terrifically about the depression. On his way to the Times Square Studio where he performs his weekly broadcast he passes hundreds of men and women with marks of sorrow upon their faces and only the fact that he knows his clown-

ing over the microphone might cheer them a little makes it possible for him to keep going.

He is terrifically sensitive. For his friends he has a deep and sincere loyalty and if one should pass him on the street without speaking he is harrassed for hours until he is assured that he was not seen by the friend.

In Philadelphia he visited the jail there (the sheriff is a friend of his) and the sights he saw so depressed him that it was difficult for him to appear and yet he knew that listeners-in to the Lucky Strike hour were waiting for him and it was his duty to make them laugh. Human suffering hurts him since he, himself, has suffered so much.

Yet his amusing remarks are quoted and re-quoted all over the country. A little school girl was expelled on account of one Mr. Jack Pearl, alias Baron Munchausen. You know how, when his announcer doubts his amazing and fantastic stories, he always says—with a sly intonation—"Was you dere, Charlie?" Well, it seems that this little girl had failed to recite her history lesson correctly. The teacher told her wherein she was wrong and the girl answered, "Was you dere, Charlie?" This crack, as you might well imagine, threw the entire school room into a

By KATHERINE
ALBERT

THE GREATEST LIAR OF THEM ALL!

(Right) All dressed up for one of his frequent microphone appearances. If you can think of a crazier costume you're a better man than Jack—to say nothing of ourselves.



Jack discussing a broadcast with Cliff Hall, his announcer. Cliff is the chap Jack always calls Charlie. There's an amusing reason for the change of name. You'll see why in the story.

panic—and the little girl was figuratively thrown out on her ear.

INCIDENTALLY, that funny line was an accident. The name of Jack's announcer (the man who works with him in the broadcasts) is Cliff Hall but the writer of the scripts did not know this and used, instead, the name Charlie. Naturally, "Was you dere, Charlie?" is much funnier than "Was you dere, Cliff?"

Before the broadcast you find Jack Pearl very worried and very busy. He is as nervous as if it were his first night on the air but he is extremely eager to please. Each new person who comes into his dressing room—no matter what that person's position may be—is treated with an eager, real deference by Jack. He is one of the most sincere people I have ever met. And one of the most melancholy.

But his wife is the balance wheel for him. He met Winifred Desborough when they were playing together in "The Belle of New York" and they were married shortly after the close of the show. She is a calm, level-headed woman—very pretty and attractive—who understands Jack thoroughly and cheers him up when he feels low. It is she who makes him fight for his rights in show business (charming and sympathetic fellow that he is, he would allow everybody to run over him rough shod) It is she, also, who handles all (Continued on page 50)

KATE SMITH'S



(Above) Imagine anyone being unpleasant enough—as one man was—to call this girl "clumsy lummox"! (Above, right) Ted Collins, Kate herself and that Gable feller. It was taken at station KNX on the coast.

By PEGGY WELLS

*K-K-K-Katy, Beautiful Katy,
You're the only g-g-g-girl that I adore;
When the m-m-m-moon shines over the mountain,
I'll be waiting at the k-k-k-kitchen door.*

KATE SMITH has been called a woman without romance. Is it true? I asked her just the other day. And her answer was straight to the point. "I'm not the type," she said. Kate is young—just twenty-three or four. Why isn't she the type? Doesn't anybody love a fat woman? You would be amazed at the number of proposals she has had. They come in almost every mail. Lonely bachelors enamored of her voice, song-sick widowers seeking a companion. She could marry a dozen men . . . but she says she isn't the type.

People have called her cold and hard and high-hat. They don't know Kate . . . the *real* Kate, I mean. Whenever I hear people criticizing her I always think of these stories. They are scraps of life . . . ordinary fragments out of a meteoric career, yet so very warm and human.

Her first lie . . . she was just eleven. Her favorite pal was a bulldog named Miz. She had a new winter coat. This afternoon, Miz felt very full of pep and went racing like mad all over the spacious Smith backyard. Somehow, his teeth caught in the new coat and ripped a great jagged hole down the skirt. Kate's mother came home from a club meeting and saw the damage.

"How did it happen, Katherine?"
Kate visioned her precious Miz tied up or beaten, his high spirits shattered by punishment for something that

All about Kate's later school days and her first hospital days

PATH TO GLORY



Kate recently signed with Paramount to appear in movies (after "The Big Broadcast"). She has already appeared in movie shorts, though. That's Cliff Edwards with her. (Left) Getting camera-wise on the Paramount lot.

was accidental. She said, "I tore it on a fence, momsy."

Her first heartbreak . . . she was just thirteen. It was summertime and the Smiths were vacationing at Colonial Beach. Kate sat on the porch reading a book. Miz walked up to her, licked her hand briefly, and went away to lie in a shaded corner. Presently, she heard him growl; he often growled when he slept. She read until her mother came to call her to dinner. Mrs. Smith started to say something and stopped in mid-sentence. Kate saw her eyes, followed them to the dog in the corner.

"Miz," she cried. "Miz!"
Miz didn't answer because Miz was dead. Kate didn't sleep at all that night. The memory of Miz licking her hand, of Miz begging for her attention as he was dying, and then wandering away unnoticed to die alone . . . all that twisted her girlish heart. Next day,

she buried him in a blanket and a box in the garden. The story that gave her that high-hat reputation had a curious origin. It shows how the most innocent action on the part of a celebrity may be twisted into viciousness.

Her manager and several others interested in her success were throwing a party for her. She was to meet some New York newspapermen and writers, who could give her the news "breaks" that are so coveted by those who seek careers.

Kate came to the party. She said hello as brightly and honestly as she knew how. The place was fogged with tobacco smoke. There were cocktails. Men she had never seen before came up and murmured; "Katey, ol' girl, I think you're wunnerful . . ."

The gift of detecting insincerity is something with which Kate Smith was born. She hates a hypocrite with unconcealed passion. She has a violent dislike for men who use profanity in a lady's presence. A liquor breath blown in her face makes her (Continued on page 42)

And, too, her first years in show business. Years which she hated

LET'S GOSSIP ABOUT



Meet the Paul Whiteman Rhythm Boys. (Left to right) Jimmy Noel, George McDonald, Ray Kulz and Al Dary. You hear them over the NBC network, with Whiteman.



Have you ever wondered what the Radio Rubes look like? Well, here's the answer. Do you suppose it's okay to say they look as if they've all gone to hayseed?

IT'S a boy at the Morton Downeys and Morton has already written a new song to celebrate the gay occasion. It's name—the song's, not the boy's—is "Welcome, Little Stranger."

REMEMBER that "Fifteen minutes of Su-u-u-unshine" that used to brighten our loudspeakers, all for good ol' Doctor Strasska's toothpaste or something? Well, Charlie Hamp, none other than Old Man Sunshine himself, is back on the air. Station WBBM, six nights a week except Sunday. He is one of radio's highest paid one-man shows.

THERE is a story about that song you sometimes hear on the "Myrt and Marge" programs. One Saturday last fall, Frank Westfall, who directs the musical activities of WBBM in Chicago, was asked to supply a love theme for the following Monday night broadcast. He scratched through his supply of ballads and discovered nothing that satisfied. So he got out his pencil and paper and wrote "How Can I Go On Without You?" Just like that, if you please. And the thing is selling like hot cakes. Over ten thousand copies at the last report.

PETER VAN STEEDEN, whose music has recently supported a lot of Barbasol blurbs, got scientific the other day and took his band up to the Central Park Zoo to learn how the animals would act under the influence of jazz.

The astounding result, ladeez and gents . . . zebras just

didn't give a hoot . . . the polar bear rolled his eyes and swayed drunkenly . . . the camel did a shimmy . . . and the yaks looked sad.

IT'S a small world after all. Fanny May Baldrige, the Dixie Girl whose Miracles of Magnolia emanate from the Chicago NBC air castles, went to a stable for a ride last week. Her regular mount was in use so the attendant gave her another horse.

"It's very bad manners," Fanny May said, "not to be introduced to your steed. What's her name?"

"Fanny May," said the attendant.

IT could never happen now . . . never, never! But Howard L. Peterson, organist for WJJD in Chicago, remembers the time he started a program at midnight in 1927 and promised to play just as long as requests came for him to continue. He played, believe it or not, for five and one-half hours. And quit, not because phone calls and telegrams weren't demanding more, but because he got organist's cramp in both hands.

DON'T miss these Five Star Theatre presentations. They're a new and ambitious effort to create something bigger and bouncier in the way of broadcast ballyhoos.

Just to show you that it is different, it uses both networks, Columbia and NBC. And it gives its listeners almost every sort of entertainment. The Marx Brothers, for instance. Concert singers. Dramatizations by fine short story writers and novelists. Light operas presented

How the zoo reacted to jazz! Then there's that 5½ hour program

YOUR FAVORITES



"The Pinochle Players" in action. Chet Cathers, Marshall Sohl, Winifred Aukland Lundberg, Grant Merrill and Casey Jones. Just a moment at Station KJR.



The gal whose feet are just above is Doris Robbins, "the Angel of the Air." (Right) Two extremes of the Chicago NBC studios. Jackie Heller and tall Norman Cordon.

Wales orders every Annette Hanshaw record. Yet doesn't know her name

LET'S GOSSIP ABOUT YOUR FAVORITES



Alice Remsen, crooning contralto, signs up with WLW, Chicago. With her are Richard Nicholls, WLW's production manager (seated) and William C. Stoess, WLW's musical director.



Here's Roy Atwell—you know, the chap on the Linit Bath Club program. The one who manages to get most of his words hind end foremost. He's with Bololumbia Croadcasting System.



Have you heard Adele Ronson and Matthew Crowley as Wilma and Buck in the "Buck Rogers in the Year 2432" program? Very thrilling drama series about this world 500 years hence.

by the Aborn Opera Company. And Charlie Chan, the Chinese detective character created by Earl Derr Biggers.

Five stars, they say. A star for each of the first five week nights. The Standard Oil Companies of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana, and the Colonial Beacon Oil Company are footing the bill.

MONTHS ago, Ted Weems was visiting Minneapolis with Pierre Andre, announcer for "Easy Aces." They turned on their hotel radio and heard a voice that held their attention. "If she looks half as good as she sounds, I'll hire her," Ted said as they hurried to the studio.

The singer was Andrea Marsh. She got the job. You can hear her these days over the Columbia network in the Jack Benny broadcasts.

THE Prince of Wales has a standing order for all the phonograph records made by Gay Ellis, Dot Dare, and Patsy Young. All of which makes Annette Hanshaw, blues singer on Captain Henry's Maxwell House Show Boat, very proud and happy. It's like this. Gay, Dot, and Patsy are all Miss Hanshaw's working names. Since getting her start in a music store in Mount Kisco, N. Y., she has made between three and four millions of records for various phonograph companies. But she has never taken a music lesson in her life and admits that she can't read a note of music.

THE loudspeaker sometimes emits some startling sounds—and are our pluperfect announcers embarrassed! One of recent vintage came from the CBS chain. John McGovern, hero of the evening in Paris Mysteries, meant to say, "I'll give the bell a pull," but he said, "I'll give the bull a pill."

YOU'VE got to dial WLW, the "nation's station" in Cincinnati, to catch those Randall Sisters. Bonnie, Ruth, and Shirley are their names. Not long ago, they were at the New York Biltmore performing with Paul Whiteman. Before that, they lived in Memphis. Before . . . well, they come from a billet known as Bogue Chitto, Louisiana—which sounds like a gilt-edge start in life for any trio, doesn't it?

MONTH before last, *Radio Stars* called attention to the fact that Hindermann and Tuckermann, two of the air's prime jesters in days of yore, had vanished. It's good news to learn that they are back. NBC, we hear, is now tossing their tumultuous antics to the four winds five days a week. And millions of new fans are being treated to a brave new type of comedy.

LOOKS like somebody will have to do something about the Smiths. We had Al during the political storm and strife. We've still got Kate, Whispering Jack, and the Smith Brothers. And we hear there's a new one in Chicago with a voice that goes clear up to the-e-e-e-ere who may dazzle the kilocycles any month now.

PAUL WHITEMAN tells the story of two idle vaudeville actors who met on Broadway with the depression blues. "Why don't you join me tonight at Bryant Park?" said one. "I can't. I've got a bridge date," the other explained. "All right, I'll jump off with you," exclaimed his friend.

SINGIN' SAM has his name painted in small letters on the door of his car. The other day, a cop stopped him.

Don't miss Paul Whiteman's excellent gag about the two actors out of a job

LET'S GOSSIP ABOUT YOUR FAVORITES



Ben Bernie wants to play golf all winter. But he can't go south because of his Blue Ribbon Malt contract. So he ran this little thing up at home to wear on the winter golf links.



Here are the Randall Sisters: Bonnie, Ruth and Shirley. You can hear them do their three-part harmony over Chicago's WLW. They're on the Doodle-socker programs.



Good Lord! Four aces! Singin' Sam—Columbia's deep-voiced singer of old-time songs and minstrel melodies—doesn't know quite what to do. He's thinking of consulting Mr. and Mrs. Ace.

Sam claimed he wasn't going more than twenty miles an hour. "Never mind that," the cop cracked. "My wife and I've been arguin' about your looks for months and I want to give her the straight dope."

YOU don't see many black cats around the studios, but you can run into plenty of superstitions. "Home, Sweet Home" is one song that must never be sung. The same goes for Tosti's "Goodby." And whistling before a performance is absolutely taboo.

In the recent anniversary performance of the "Myrt and Marge" troupe, every actor had on the same clothes which he had worn one year earlier on the opening night of the broadcast series. Those garments were lucky. They're packed away right now, waiting for next year.

HAVE you listened to KJR's Mardi Gras? It started two years ago out of a clear sky and is still going.

Two years ago, KJR suddenly found itself with an afternoon wide open. It had to be filled. A program had to be concocted. Somebody suggested a Mardi Gras. But whoever heard of a Mardi Gras in the north? KJR is in Seattle, Washington. There were plenty of sceptics.

That afternoon, though, a show went on the air and every member of the studio staff participated. Enough people liked it to keep it going. Since then it has grown until the Northwest's Mardi Gras is one of the big events of the week.

IT isn't news any more that Rudy Vallee has signed up with Fleischmann again. But that's just what the way-haired conductor and master of ceremonies has done. Already, he has completed three years of continuous weekly broadcasts. Done them so satisfactorily, accord-

ing to his boss, that he is set for fifty-two more.

SOME bright broth of a lad thought up a lot of words not long ago that he called the most beautiful in the English language. They were dawn, hush, lullaby, murmuring, tranquil, mist, luminous, chimes, golden, and melody.

David Ross got busy with the list and decided that lilt, thunder, and lambent beat dawn, golden, and chimes.

Fred Allen added stooze and sponsor.

Colonel Stoopnagle wired his selections from Florida: Fizz, fuzz, zither, eczema, muzzle, buzzer, buzzard, daze, maze, and maize. He's fond of "z", he explains, having followed the "z" for many years.

It took Walter Winchell, the blab boy of the air, to ring the bell. His ten favorite words are money, money, money, money—and so on.

BEAGLE, SHYSTER & BEAGLE are the firm of lawyers that the Marx Brothers pretend to be. They have dug up some curiosities of the law which we present.

Connecticut, for instance, prohibits the chewing of tobacco without a doctor's permit.

It is illegal to peel an orange in a hotel room. That's a California law.

In St. Paul, Minnesota, the law says that a motorist meeting a horse drawn vehicle must get out and help the driver to pass the auto.

In Kansas, every able-bodied citizen is required to devote one full day a year to killing grasshoppers.

In Idaho, if you want to sell a chicken after sunset, you've got to get a permit from the sheriff.

And you'll be arrested in Elizabeth, Tennessee, if you wear a watch on your ankle.

Those old laws are a riot which the Marx Brothers, eminent lawyers, dug up



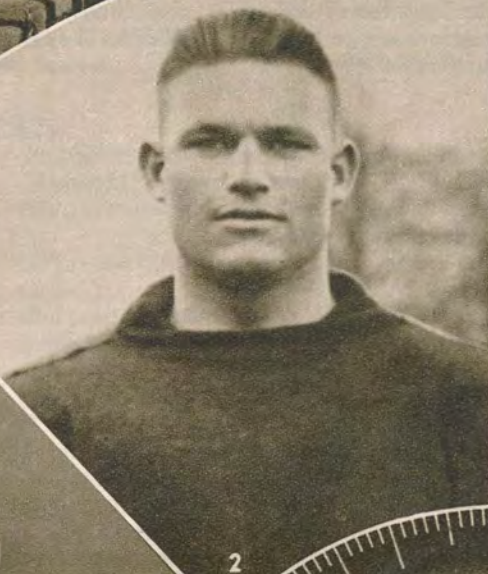
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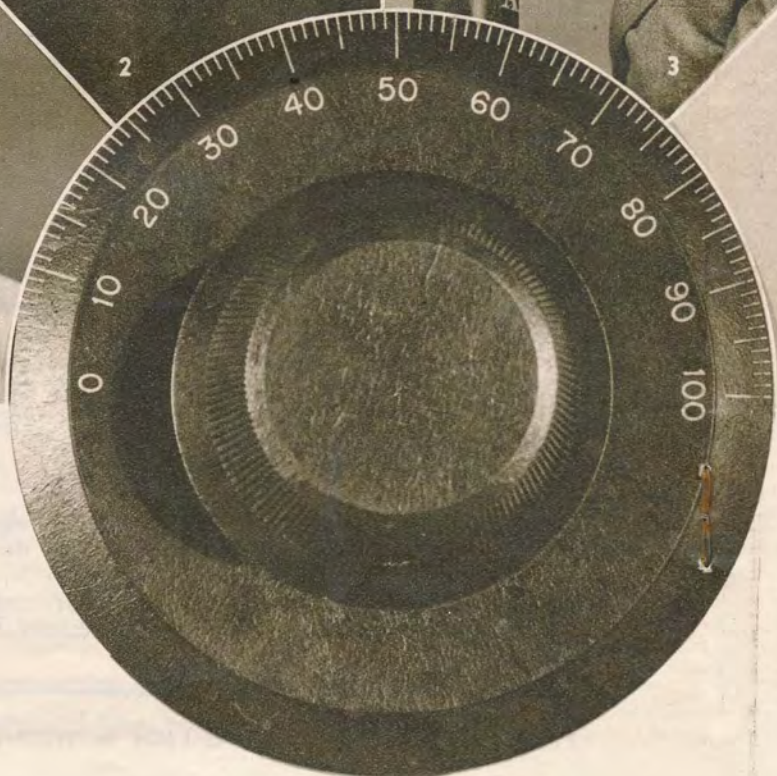
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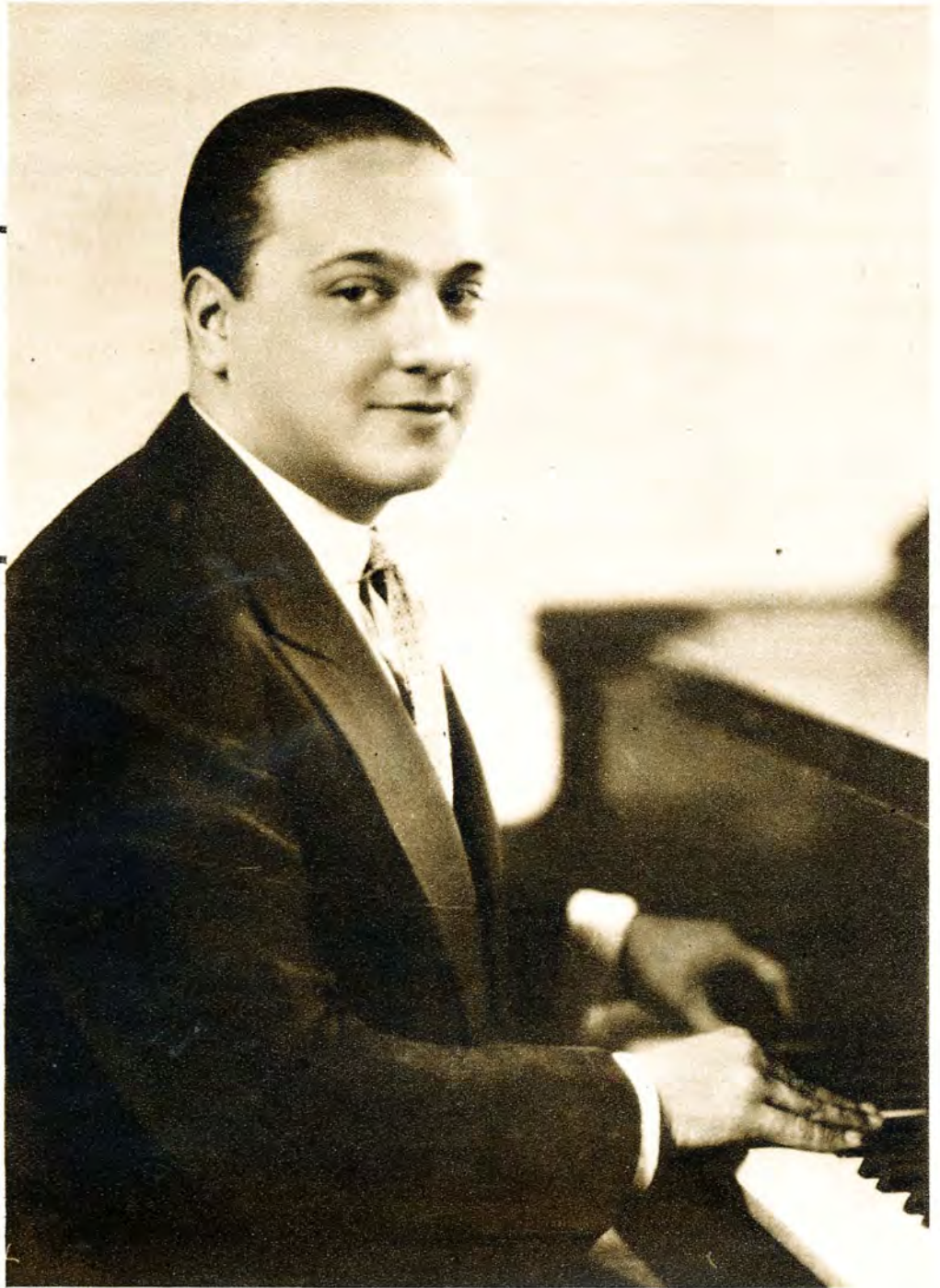


ALL AROUND THE DIAL

To identify these pictures, look for the number on the picture which corresponds with the number here. 1. Jules Bledsoe, the baritone of "Captain Henry's Show Boat." 2. Bill Elliott, the crooner of the entertaining staff, WBT, Charlotte, N. C. He used to be a star on the North Carolina football team. 3. This is Singin' Sam. He's now on WABC Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8.30. 4. Mary Steele, NBC's songster who is heard daily, except Sunday, at 11 a. m., from Chicago. 5. Doris Robbins whom you've heard with Ben Pollack and his orchestra over WABC from Chicago. 6. Georgie Price does a little female impersonating for one of the Chase and Sanborn programs. 7. The Durham trio, whose ages range from nine to thirteen, are famous over WBT for their string melodies. 8. Miss Madge Tucker outlining her plans for Children's Tour programs to some of the youngsters of the NBC "Lady Next Door" program.

Album

Vincent Lopez
almost became a
priest—long ago



If you're a radio tuner-
inner you certainly
know of Vincent Lopez.
His band was one of the
first to broadcast. It
is still one of the best.

Strangely enough, not
many people really know
this sleek, suave orchestra
master. He is hard to
know, his friends say,
but once he accepts a man
as his pal nothing is too
good for that lucky fellow.

Behind his back, they
call him "the Duke." His
clothes and his carriage
win him the title. He
dresses—impeccably is the
word.

Lopez carries himself
with a sureness and certainty that tells the world that
"the Duke" knows what he wants and how to get it. A
less-than-medium tall fellow, hair as slick as he can brush
it, round-faced, spotless and something of a dandy, that
is "the Duke."

Once, he took to the flowing vestments and long black
skirts of the priesthood. That was when he was a Brook-
lyn kid looking ahead into life.

The seminary where he studied bored him so he turned
his nimble fingers into livelier channels. One of his first
jobs was playing the piano in a Sheepshead Bay oyster
house.

Since he organized his first orchestra he has made a
point of hiring the best talent that he can find. That
accounts for his long stay in the top flight of dance bands.

Secretly, he is something of a mystic. At heart, prob-
ably, he is still a priest. He goes for astrology and numer-
ology in a big way. Some of the fees he has paid for

horoscopes would paint any town a very bright red.
But a man must have *some* extravagance.

And you ought to hear him argue. On anything. Par-
ticularly with Elmer, his valet. Elmer's especial job is to
make Lopez change his neckties. There are hundreds in
the Lopez apartment but "the Duke" chooses one on Mon-
day and wears it all week without a shift unless Elmer
interferes.

No orchestra spends money more lavishly . . . but he
always counts his change. He has been broke a half-
dozen times since his name on a theatre marquee meant
big business. So, aside from his horoscope weakness, he
is an economical soul about most things.

A half dozen times his associates have marked him off
their lists, thinking that he had lost his popularity and
following. But he always comes back stronger than ever.
And his fluent piano playing is one reason.

His favorite saying is . . . "Lopez speaking."

Album



Irene Wicker
married during
a football game

lady was a mystery and her sponsors, the Kellogg people, demanded her silence. It was in her contract.

But now we know. Irene is the real Singing Lady who sings that delightful "Little Jack Horner." And she is so much more than just that. She is a charming person with one of the brightest smiles in radio. If you like her voice, you would love her.

Her talent doesn't end with nursery rhymes or fairy stories. She is an exceptional actress as her roles in "Judy and Jane" attest.

PEOPLE thought because she didn't show her face to the public, that the "Singing Lady" of Kellogg fame must be as old and ugly as the stepmothers she sang about. One persistent rumor had it that her voice was all that remained of her former charms—that she had been burned by acid about the face as a child.

All the while, pretty, petite Irene Wicker—don't forget the two e's in Irene—went gaily and busily up the rungs of radio stardom with her "Painted Dreams," "Roses and Drums," and "Judy and Jane." She never told anyone that she was "The Singing Lady." Still, she tells no one . . . but the secret is out.

Several months ago, we mistakenly thought we had discovered her, and called the wrong person the "Singing Lady." Irene read that story . . . and it broke her heart. She had worked so hard at the part, and the thought of someone else getting credit for all she had done cut like a knife. Even then, she could not deny our story for the

Chicago is her home and all her broadcasts come from there. It was in Chicago that she met black-haired Walter Wicker whom you've heard in "Today's Children" and "Judy and Jane." They went to a football game one day. Ohio State was playing Illinois. During the first half, Walter said, "Let's get married." "Let's," Irene answered. So, between halves, they were wed.

Her hardest broadcast came the afternoon she left her "Singing Lady" program, leaped into a cab and raced to another studio where she took the leading roles in excerpts from Henrik Ibsen's "Doll House," "Anna Christie" and "The Life of Greta Garbo."

Her first public appearance was at a church. She was required (age six, remember) to recite a sad poem. Her mother had instructed her in the art of simulating grief. Irene cried. She cried louder, longer; sobbing racked her body until the minister had to carry her out.

She is five feet two and weighs a hundred and three.

Album

Frank Munn
wanted to sleep
late every day.
Now he does



IF Frank Munn had done what folks told him to, the business of broadcasting would never have known a Paul Oliver. You remember Paul, don't you? Paul was one of Palmolive's pets during four bright years of soap selling. Now he is a "forgotten man"—and Frank Munn is as pleased as can be.

It all really started in a machine shop up in New York's northern end known as the Bronx. Frank Munn was a day laborer with engineering aspirations. And a yen for long and undisturbed hours of slumber. This machine shop opened at the heathen hour of seven a. m.

Frank is a jolly, stout fellow with a great big heart and a manner that indicates that this is a lazy world and he wants to live in it. The burdensome business of plinking his pinkies against a cold carpet at sun-up each day was something that got under his skin.

That machine shop and its inexorable call to work became a taskmaster that he hated. He wanted to sleep late—like a gentleman.

But how?

One dull afternoon, he was singing at his lathe when the shop foreman slipped up behind Frank and listened. This foreman was a tough bebbey. Little children ran from him and he could look at a bottle of cream and make it curdle. In the midst of Frank's song, he felt this hard gent's breath on the back of his neck. He stopped.

"Nize tune," said the foreman. "Yez gotta good voice."

No reprimand. Praise from a ten-minute egg. That decided Munn. "If I can please him, I can please the world," he decided.

His pursuit of a job that would let him sleep took him to Gustave Haenschen, the orchestra conductor, and the two became friends. Haenschen put him in a spot on old WJZ before it was an NBC network station. Somehow, that doughty foreman knew what he was saying, for Frank's tenor voice clicked immediately.

His biggest single account has been with Palmolive. But that program called him Paul Oliver for four years, mind you. When the account went off the air, Frank was sunk. He had a great radio voice, and no name. Nobody in America had ever heard of Frank Munn. So, for over a year now, he has been painfully building up his own reputation. The voice and the performance are the same . . . which counts.

And he sleeps late every morning.

Album



Keenan and
Phillips and two
pianos flew over
New York

Knabe parlor grand. Later, at the University of Southern California she distinguished herself as a rooter for Trojan football teams.

She also played the piano. A year in Europe really broadened her. Sometimes, she admits to her best friends that it practically flattened her. Before she came back home to Uncle, she gave concerts in both Paris and Berlin.

Sandra Phillips (whose parents don't make dental magnesia tooth paste) was born in Berwick, Pa., a mining town what was a

mining town. A real tough one, I mean. At the calloused age of four, she played "Frankie and Johnnie" on her mother's pianner.

After high school, which she finished with relish, she sallied into New York in quest of fame and frolics. She has found both. Vaudeville lured her.

After various appearances, she met Peggy Keenan and they decided to team up for the purpose of stalking a microphone job. They teamed, as you know, and they stalked, as you know. And they got the job, (P. S.) as you know.

Today, two of their favorite vices are matching pennies and eating broccoli. Don't ask why. To date, Sandra is thirteen pennies ahead, which she attributes to clean living and hard work. Peggy calls it "red-headed luck."

Their most recent vaudeville appearances have been with Tony Wons of Scrapbook fame. Their music plus the Wons philosophy seem to be clicking.

YOU will have to look a long time before you will find two other young ladies who would do it. And the ones who did it probably wouldn't do it again. We mean that flight that Keenan and Phillips took last year above the spires of Manhattan in a big airplane.

It was a stunt, of course. But it worked. Peggy and Sandra piled their two pianos into the interior of a giant plane, soared aloft a mile over Manhattan and broadcast for fifteen thrilling minutes.

Peggy and Sandra (Misses Keenan and Phillips of the "Piano Pictures" broadcasts, if you pliz) are two courageous lassies. Look at their hair, if you doubt it. Look—and see red.

Peggy Keenan comes from California, and a gifted family. Among her close relatives are five concert pianists.

As soon as she was big enough to chin herself on a piano stool she began to play tinkly tunes on the family

BURIED ALIVE FOR FOUR YEARS!

By IRIS ANN
CARROLL



Virginia Rea is a little gal from the old South. She was born in Louisville, Kentucky. Although brought up in traditional Southern fashion, she is anything but a clinging vine, as you will see.

OBLIVION is an ugly word. Virginia Rea hates it because she knows so completely what it means. For four fretful years, she fought it with all her strength. And lost the fight.

Believe me, she knew oblivion. She knew what it was to be buried—by the hurrah and huzzas of the public—under a personality she had created but who did not exist. For four years, she lived in the shadow of a famous ghost named Olive Palmer. It was inevitable that a woman of her fire and spirit should rebel. And that was a battle royal. Who should survive . . . Virginia Rea or Olive Palmer?

Here is a scrambled life; rather here *was* a scrambled life. Now, with her victory finally won, Virginia looks ahead for new worlds to conquer.

In those days, though, she didn't dare look ahead. I'll tell you why, and if you are one of the many whose eyes are on the ladders that lead to radio careers, you may find a star or two to set your course by.

But first, the girl herself . . . softly Southern, a brunette, with that "schoolgirl complexion" that she used to advertise, of medium height, as feminine as the lace on a handkerchief, and charming . . .

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, was home until she was thirteen. Then, Des Moines, Iowa. She sang from the very first, the immature sweet pipings of a child. Finally, her mother was forced to discourage it because

clubs and societies were demanding her on so many programs and taking so much of her time that she had none left for school.

In Des Moines, she told no one that she could sing. She even forgot it herself, for not a program of her high school's musicals carried her name. At Drake University, though, she found the opportunity to study languages and harmony too much to resist. She majored in fine arts, and laid the first bricks in the foundation of a career of which she was just beginning to dream.

By graduation, she was determined to go to New York for further study. An astute and canny uncle who knew the concert business from the inside took her part against her parents. "Let her go for a summer," he said; and then, aside, "She'll come back cured."

So she got her summer. At its conclusion, the folks in Des Moines began to plan for her home-coming. A letter came by special delivery addressed in Virginia's handwriting.

"I've just gotten a job making records with the Brunswick Phonograph Company," she wrote. "I'll not be able to come home."

That was her first job. She had gone after it, cinched it, and wangled a year's contract. The money was enough to keep her comfortably while she continued her studies.

There is a legend about another job that she had. She was out west somewhere when she accidentally got news that a New York impresario (Continued on page 42)

Ask Virginia Rea "what's in a name?" She'll tell you the answer vigorously

WOULD YOU RUN THIS RISK?

(Right) As kids. (Further right) Jane, the next to the eldest, in the old Georgia days. Then there mules is Gawgia mules, and that there colored boy is a Gawgia darky, suh. (Right, below) As they are today. Reading left to right: Jane; Patti, the baby; and Helen, the eldest.



In order to make the original vocal noises which have made them famous, the Pickens Sisters have to constantly distort their faces into strange, beauty-destroying shapes

By D. L. PROVOST



YOU ought to see the Pickens Sisters. I mean you ought to *see* them. Gathered around a microphone, they do things to their faces that would make a child run for its mother. Such facial contortions you can't imagine. And it's all a part of their singing routine.

It is a current idea around the world that women without exception wish to be, and seek to be, beautiful. You wouldn't think, would you, that three girls as pretty and wise as these Georgia misses would deliberately assault their features? Or twist their noses and pound their cheeks? But they do!

It's their act, I've said. You've heard their vocal gymnastics, haven't you? If you haven't, they do tricks with their three-ply voices that send little shivers down your spine. Those tricks are no accidents. Rather, they are inventions.

They've invented new ways of making faces—and making vocal noises. Musical noises. What fun, one might think, to do a program while making faces. Actually, these girls can't look at each other when they work. If they did, they would burst out laughing. When they first started this type of singing, they had to rehearse in different rooms. Now, they're more accustomed to seeing

their features take punishment. Their audiences aren't accustomed to it, however. Very few people are allowed to watch them work.

There's always a place for you in radio, the broadcast moguls tell us, if you are original. Originality is the price of success. The Pickens Sisters have it.

THOSE bubbly, buttery tones that gurgle like water poured from a jug, for instance. No normal throat could ever concoct them. Those Pickens kids stick out their lips, flop them up and down with a bristling, beating forefinger, and sing like sinners. Result: a musical effect that the radio never knew until they came along. Or they will clutch both cheeks, pinching them with the forefingers, and vibrate them back and forth or in and out. The result is bizarre and pleasing. One effect requires that they pinch their noses at the bridge and slide the thumb and forefinger down to the very end, pulling it all the while. Pulling one's nose, now there's a way to make a living!

And a way to ruin one's beauty, if the face culturists are to be believed. Pat, but don't pull, they advise. Rub upward, never downward. If (Continued on page 46)



(Above) The view from Jessica's apartment—which once belonged to a very famous artist—comprises majestic Radio City and the buildings of upper Manhattan. (Right) The drawing room. Of course there'd be a grand piano. And just look at that tapestry. (Bottom of page, left and right). The dining room—heavy oak furniture. And Jessica in her study.



(Right) Miss Dragonette and part of her collection of rare and beautiful books. (Below, left) The bedroom. Note the luxurious shoe closet. (Below, right) A corner of the bedroom showing the dainty dressing table and exquisitely panelled walls.

AT HOME WITH JESSICA



The Dragonette home—in one of Manhattan's nicer skylines

—is a lovely place. Quiet, remote, and beautifully decorated

THOSE MAD MARX Brothers

By
DAVID EWEN



(Above) Chico, who plays the piano. (Left) Chico and Groucho back in 1916. Would you recognize these two cherubic kids?



THOSE mad Marx Brothers—you've seen them on the stage, on the screen, and now you're hearing two of them over the air—are, like the four musketeers, inseparable. "Pun for all, and all for pun" is their rallying cry. To them the pun is mightier than the sword, and these four mad marxeteers go through life with a pun on their lips.

There is Chico, who speaks the Italian dialect with such a queer nasal twang and who plays the piano with such capricious fingers, who, when asked if he ever saw a "habeas corpus" answers that he never did, but he saw "Habie's Irish Rose."

There is Groucho, the philosopher, who losing his job in his adolescence as a choir singer because his soprano voice had become unforgivably bass, turned to vaudeville and who, of the four, suffers most from pun habit.

There is Zeppo, the straight man, who supplies the love interest and who sings the love songs.

Finally, there is Harpo the Great, who had been a bellhop, and a guardian of Cissie Loftus' dog for a quarter a day, who landed into vaudeville only because his brothers were there and wanted to keep the profits in the family, and who was so perturbed on the day of his debut that he forgot his lines completely—and has remained mute ever since. Add them together and you have the Marx Brothers.

On the air, you're hearing only Groucho and Chico because—radio being what it is—neither the silent pantomiming of Harpo nor the straight act of Zeppo can be reproduced effectively through the microphone. In representing their family on the air, Groucho and Chico are repeating history—for it is they who were the first to



(Above) Groucho. He is the worst punner. (Right) Groucho and Chico again—as they are today. Clowning about as usual.



Mad? Of course they're mad! But what a marvelous fascinating, altogether charming insanity it is. And, incidentally, their madness goes on always. Not just when they're "working"

go on the stage. Mother Marx had always harbored an ambition to see her sons on the stage. Night after night she listened to her brother Al (a vaudeville actor who was later to become famous as Al Shean, of Gallagher and Shean) tell glamorous stories about the stage, and as she listened she weaved magic dreams in which her sons featured as star vaudeville actors.

But Mother Marx was not the one to satisfy herself with mere idle dreaming. She bothered the booking agents day after day, repeating to them that in her family there was more talent than in a whole artist's colony: Groucho had the voice of an angel; Zeppo had the personality of Francis X. Bushman; Chico could play the piano like Paderewski; and Harpo—well, Harpo was in a class by himself.

"Oh, yeah?" the booking agent said skeptically, dis-

missing the enthusiastic mother. But Mother Marx was soon to have her day. An extra part in a tragedy was suddenly available, and the booking agent asked Mrs. Marx if one of her prodigies was accessible. Groucho was the one to be selected, because he was the oldest. And as he went through the one line allotted to him, Mrs. Marx sighed deeply and felt that her life's dream had at last reached fruition.

ONCE on the stage—always on the stage. Having tasted of success (several people applauded him!), Groucho decided to remain an actor. He enlisted the services of his brother, Chico, and together they planned a song and piano act. Their act was, of course, awful, and no booking agent would listen to their pleas. They decided that their act needed (Continued on page 49)

Album

Fred Allen was a juggler—he learnt it in a library



HAVE you heard Fred Allen, master mirth-maker of the Linit Bath Club programs? He's got a hayseed voice and a bright galaxy of gags. Each week he gets a princely sum from the Linit sponsors. His first professional appearance, though, was different.

He was a juggler on a vaudeville program, billed as "Paul Huckle, European Entertainer." His pay was exactly \$3.00. Funny thing about this fellow's names. He was born John Florence Sullivan. From that to Paul Huckle was quite a step. In 1914, he migrated from Boston to New York. With another new name . . . Fred James. Still later, he switched to Fred Allen.

His introduction to juggling is a story. He was at work in the Boston Public Library when he came upon a slim, alluring tome called "The Art of Juggling." He studied it, slipped it out under his coat each night and practiced at home.

He became a juggler in earnest. Amateur shows, at first. One night, someone offered a grand prize of \$25.00. His *pièce de resistance* was juggling a derby, a lighted cigar, and a cane. He got along famously until the cigar exploded. A backstage villain had switched cigars on him.

The lure of the road show beckoned him to all sorts of odd places. Australia, for one. He booked himself for a tour of Texas and then a long hop to the "Down-under" land. Through carelessness at a card game, he became stranded in El Paso, Texas. What to do?

With no ticket, he got on a train headed for New Orleans where he had a credit rating. The conductor came up and asked for his ticket. Fred stuttered a reply . . . and at that moment the train was side-swiped by a passing freight. When Allen dug himself out of the wreckage, he proceeded to New Orleans.

His wife is the Portland Hoffa who plays dumb on his Linit programs. They met when they were in a show together.

On his right hand is a gunpowder mark. In one of his shows, the property man shot him. He never smokes, but he carries special cigars which he uses for chewing purposes. One of his favorite stunts is to trace old gags. Remember the song written about the line, "Take off your clothes and dance around in your bones"? Somebody accused Fred of stealing it from Mark Twain. Fred had a lot of fun proving that Twain lifted it from a guy named Smith who lived in England in the year 1771.

Album



David Ross
studied to be a
farmer once

WHAT about this David Ross who won the 1932 Gold Medal for Good Diction? What about this David Ross who has charmed you on the Pond's program, Arabesque, and Poet's Gold?

Well, it's an Alger story with a typical Alger hero. It is titled *The Dreamer*, or *From Newsboy to Announcer*.

David Ross was born in New York City. One of his first jobs was the delivery of Sunday papers. He pushed them about town in a senile, staggering hulk of a baby carriage that had been salvaged from some junk heap. That is, until he fell in love. She lived, not on his paper route, but on the road home. He will never forget the problem his passion presented. You see, David was a prideful youth and only too well aware of the sight he presented at the helm of his decrepit perambulator. Love could not survive that spectacle, he knew. Rather than chance it, he chose to take the long way home around a park for an additional two miles, gaining thereby much

unnecessary exercise and the continued respect of his girl friend.

The Ross family was not wealthy. At an early age, David was impressed with the necessity for learning a way to earn his living. Even then his horizons were not limited by the city towers that rose about him. Sky and sun and the good earth were his ideals. He resolutely decided to become a scientific farmer. It is a matter of painful record that he enrolled in dear old Rutgers for that very reason.

It is also a matter of painful record that David didn't fit the part. He rattled around in it like a pea in a pod. Ask him about it today and you'll discover that he still thinks he might have made a very good farmer.

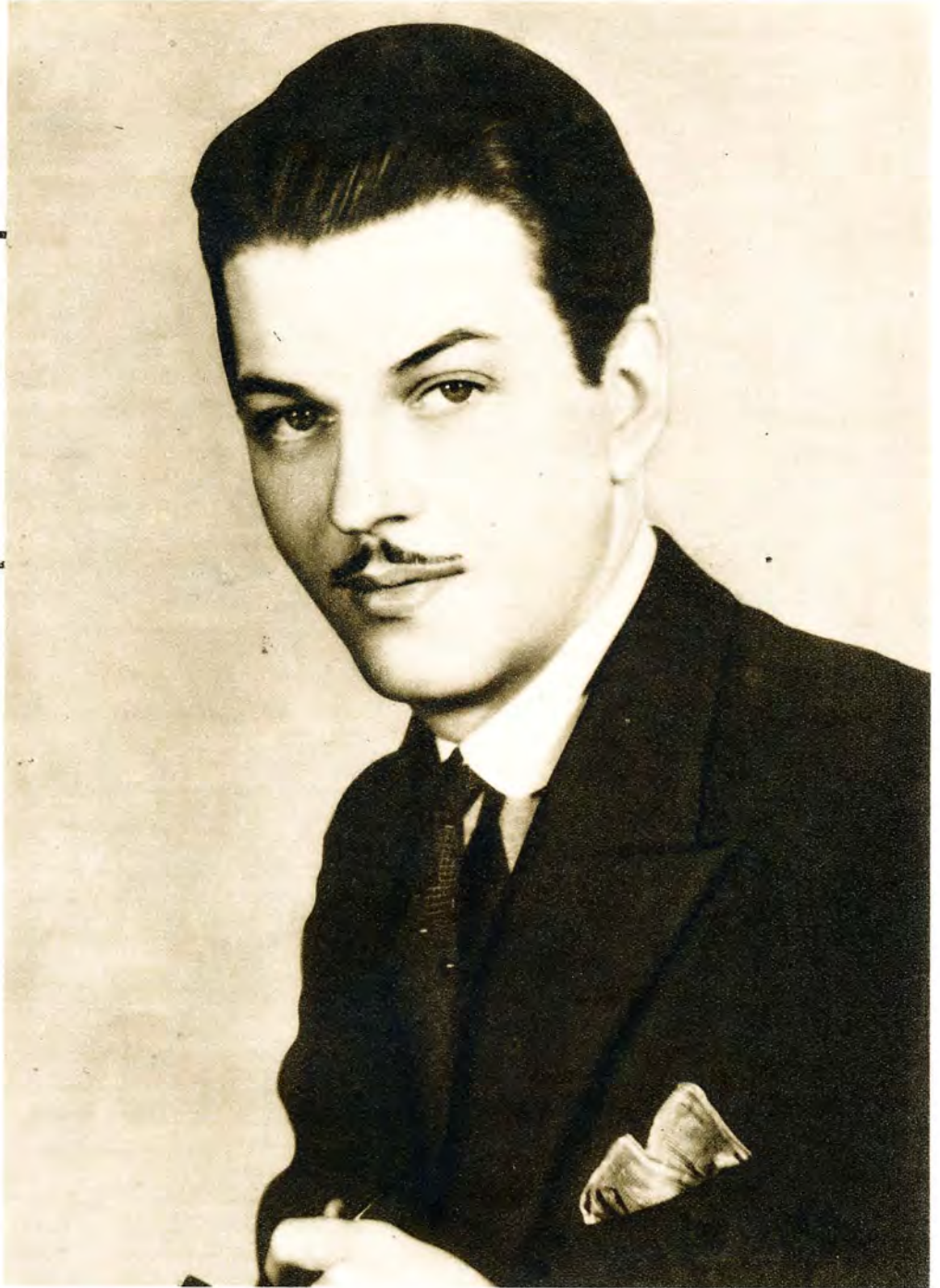
Instead, he makes a better announcer, coming to it from a series of jobs that had him supervising an orphan asylum, soothing a temperamental Russian baroness as her secretary, and writing poetry.

In appearance he is below average height. From time to time, newspapers refer to him as Columbia's diminutive announcer. Ross doesn't like that and who can blame him? He isn't diminutive; he fills out his coat like a big man. His clothes are probably the best cut in radio row.

This Diction Award that he has won is a coveted prize. It is awarded for voice, enunciation, pronunciation, freedom from local peculiarities, personality and culture. A large order, that. But Dave Ross fills it.

Album

Jack Nelson
once took a
fifteen-cent room



JACK NELSON, of the "Myrt and Marge" sob-and-smile shows, is a slender, dark chap named Vinton Haworth. A dark chap named Vinton Haworth (his own monicker, by the way) who started to be an actor in Washington, D. C., which is not a good place to start to be an actor.

Vinton found that out. So he left Washington for the richer pickings of Broadway and its playhouses. Manhattan smiled not too kindly on the southerner. A road show offered beans and bread and a place to sleep. He went with it, performing under a tent from Pennsylvania to Virginia.

Have you ever wondered at the richness and friendliness of his "Nelson" voice on the air? He learned to act in that interstate tent trek. He learned to act better and bigger roles during four years in vaudeville. Two years of stock playing in his ol' home town gave him a polish that even Chicago couldn't kill. It *almost* did.

His show went broke on the road. Vinton snagged a ride to the Windy City and spent fifteen cents for a room with a bed in it. That was ebb tide for him. He missed more than one meal before he got a break. When it came, he grabbed it. Broadcasting was his dish, he discovered. He became an announcer. Recollect the "Three Doctors"? He was their personal spieler. He directed television activities for W9XAP. He turned actor. Got a job in a Bible story over WMAQ.


The next high spot was his wedding, a year ago last

Christmas. A wedding fit for a story book. Vinton's pal was calling on a girl. One night, this girl brought her room-mate along.

The girl, who was Jean Owens, a sweet-as-cider southerner, heard him propose. And heard herself accept. She heard him suggest a day for their marriage. And heard herself accept. The day was Christmas Eve . . . and here they had met each other for the first time a week ago.

Crazy, kid stuff, eh? Maybe. On Christmas Eve, Haworth had to work. He was on the air until ten o'clock that night. At home in a little Chicago penthouse they had rented, Jean Owens was trying to get him on her radio. And she blew out the fuse. Vinton got home at ten-thirty, to find darkness and everything gone wrong. Somehow, he and the preacher fixed it. For at eleven-forty-five he and Jean were married.

And at nine-forty-five o'clock the next morning, he was back in the studio broadcasting.



Bing Crosby's back on the air again! Have you heard him? Of course you have! Who isn't a Crosby fan? But in case you haven't all the facts and would like to hear his swell baritone regularly, just tune in on CBS every Wednesday and Saturday evening at nine p.m. It's the Chesterfield program, you know, and Bing does his stuff for a grand fifteen minutes at these times.

Buried Alive for Four Years

(Continued from page 32)

was going to produce twenty operas. It was something she particularly wanted to do. So she called this impresario on the long distance telephone.

And there was an historic conversation. She wanted a job but the impresario said all the roles had been taken. No, there was absolutely nothing. It was much too late for an audition. She saw she was getting nowhere, so she began to sing. The "Bell Song" from "Lakmé" on the phone, mind you. When she finished, the impresario in New York hired her.

She was only nineteen when she left New York on a transcontinental concert tour. Only nineteen and the sort of cuddly, helpless looking missy you would expect out of the old South. Her Pullman porter looked at her, evaluated her experience—or lack of it—and said, "Honey, don't you ever talk to no men on these trains."

Only nineteen . . . but she crossed America four times, unchaperoned. And she took that porter's advice.

ALL those concerts weren't the milk-and-honey affairs such arty occasions are supposed to be. One—a town in Washington—gave her a new sensation, that of being hated.

She got off the train and saw white, angry faces glaring at her. Wherever she went, people deliberately snubbed her. She couldn't understand it.

What was it? Well, the man who had hired her to appear was fighting the town's Fortnightly Music Club. And everybody in town was a member of the Fortnightly group. It was having a rival entertainment that very night.

That very night, Virginia Rea went to the auditorium and sang her heart out to rows and rows of vacant, empty benches. Her audience was the man who had hired her, the janitor of the auditorium and a handful of others.

In New Mexico, she suffered another experience. At the hotel, she felt dizzy. As the afternoon passed, it became so bad she had to go to bed. All strength seemed to have fled from her body.

She called a doctor but he failed to explain the malady. What to do? The concert had to begin at eight o'clock. It was a high spot in the city's social and artistic life.

"I must cancel," she told the concert manager.

"You can't," he told her.

In the end, she consented to try to sing. And she did sing, to a house packed with the cream of that city's society. All but the last number on her program. She was too faint to attempt it.

Because she wouldn't attempt it, the concert manager refused to pay her. Virginia went to bed for a week, battling that baffling weakness. The town split in two camps. The women's club refused to pay her full fee and the business men said, if the women wouldn't, they would pay it. She sickened of the whole mess and wired her brother to come to Chicago to meet her.

AS she was carried aboard her train, the women's club sent its apologies and a check. Within six hours she was feeling better. When the train steamed into Chicago, she was her old self again. And the brother who had come all the way from New York was quite annoyed to find that she wasn't an invalid.

This malady that had laid her low was nothing at all, she learned later. Nothing but the altitude. New Mexico is a high country and she had come from the coast.

These concerts led her finally to Europe where she learned that a career is a costly proposition. Virginia came home again and found the budding business of broadcasting.

Her first contract was with the Ever-Ready Hour. And her second brought her face to face with the ghost who was to haunt her for four years, the ghost named Olive Palmer.

The Palmolive people were going on the air and they wanted a coloratura soprano. Virginia Rea was singing for another company but they decided that they wanted her. They settled it like this: Virginia Rea's name was con-

tracted for exclusively but not her services. She could sing under any other name. And some bright Palmolive minstrel invented Olive Palmer. A good name—except for Virginia.

That all sounds harmless enough, doesn't it? Well, it was almost Virginia Rea's professional death warrant. She became Olive Palmer with the initial Palmolive broadcast. That first year, she enjoyed it. The second year, she began to worry. Would people remember that there was a singer named Virginia Rea? The third year she discovered that Olive Palmer was a tyrant. That fourth year she realized that she was buried alive. She had been buried alive—for four years!

She resented it. She was human enough, too, to want for herself the fame her popularity brought her. Not for an invented name. Matters came to a head when Palmolive finally went off the air.

Here was a singer who had charmed millions, suddenly stranded at the crest of her career. When she went back on the air, should she be herself or the ghost? As Olive Palmer, millions knew her. As Virginia Rea, she was a nobody . . . worse, she was a nobody who sang exactly like Olive Palmer. Radio audiences don't take kindly to imitators. She saw very clearly that those who heard her sing as Virginia Rea would think her only an imitator. Can't you picture her dilemma?

It took a lot of thought to settle it. She came to a gallant decision. She would start again, this time as herself, as Virginia Rea. She hoped people would forget Olive, hoped they would like her just as well as before.

You hear her now as Virginia Rea, of course. She will never sing again under another name. Once in a while, she gets an excited letter from a fan who thinks she is stealing Olive Palmer's stuff.

On the other hand, she is finding new friends with every broadcast. Virginia Rea's friends. She likes that; loves it, in fact. For it means that she has banished that famous ghost.

Kate Smith's Path to Glory

(Continued from page 21)

ill. She doesn't smoke nor drink, doesn't let any of the men who work with her ever use a rough or profane expression. Can't you imagine how out of place she felt at that "press tea"?

So she slipped away.

I don't know what newspaperman first discovered that she had gone. But it was he who started the story. "She's gone . . . thinks she's too good for us . . . high-hat!"

Don't you see the wrong of it? Kate was out of her element and knew it. She thought the others would have a better time if she were not there. And she had the courage to leave.

"But I've passed her a dozen times on the street and she doesn't even speak. She looks right through me," a musician protested the other day.

I'm telling no secret when I admit to you that Kate Smith has the best

reason in the world for "looking through" people. She doesn't see them . . . really. For Kate is near-sighted. When she performs, she wears glasses so she can read the music on the rack under the mike. Glasses, understand? She won't wear them outside the studio—it's a fragment of vanity, I suppose—and the boys who want to criticise have another weapon.

Last month, I left Kate Smith in Washington, D. C., growing up to

MODERN SCREEN has More Readers

womanhood. And singing as she grew. School days were always a trial to her. The old President Arthur school, now torn down, was her first alma mater. Then four years of secondary education, finally graduation.

Her sister, Helene, was her model. Helene is twenty-eight now and a secretary in the Department of Justice in Washington. She never had any trouble passing her subjects. Kate always did.

When a family conference decided that Kate was to become a nurse and then, possibly, a doctor, her life seemed to be all planned and settled. No more adventures, no more juvenile jousts with fate.

She accepted it, wondering darkly if this was what she wanted. And remembering the years full of escapades that were now all banished.

This escapade, for instance. She was playing with her gang of boys. Hide-and-seek was the game. She found a furniture van standing at a curb and crawled across the tailboard into the dark, yawning interior. Seconds passed as she awaited her pursuers. Suddenly, the door slammed tight and the truck leaped ahead. She pounded the walls with panicky fists. The van swayed on a curve and steadied away for a long ride. Hours later, the doors were opened again and she flung herself at an amazed truckman somewhere in Maryland.

Fortunately for Kate, the driver took her home that same night. For days, her narrow escape was the talk of the neighborhood.

And this! It was Hallowe'en night and Washington was alive with mischief-makers. Kate was dressed and painted like a Mother Goose witch. She and three friends boarded a trolley to a party. Across the aisle, a drunken man leered at the gay quartet and lurched to his feet. Before anyone could move away, he grabbed one of them and tried to kiss her. Kate was fifteen and growing big and solid. Always, a man who doesn't respect women infuriates her. She remembers that she closed her fingers tight . . . and hit straight out.

The man staggered away, loosing his grip, and bounced off the car-side. Kate admits now that she was scared to death. The man slunk away.

But now—*now*, she had to go to a nursing school. To George Washington University. She started out, bravely, keeping a stiff upper lip.

And singing! Everyone in Washington knew Kate Smith in those days. She sang for every club that asked her. And at amateur nights. Her father, keeping his pride in her a secret, frowned on it. Her mother intimated that a lady of the south would avoid the stage as a plague. Kate loved it instinctively.

HER first professional engagement was an accident. A vaudeville team that had been hired to appear at a theatre failed to arrive. The manager (Kate had sung for him in in-
(Continued on page 45)



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MODERN SCREEN 10c

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Not So Easy

(Continued from page 13)

The big entrance door through which I had come opened and Goodman Ace came through. And three other people. I'd seen none before, nor their pictures. They took their seats around the bridge table, spread thick sheafs of paper before them.

Ace looked at me. He seemed out of place in this reckless room. A dark suit, blue kerchief peeking from the breast pocket, blue tie, close-combed hair . . . all neat.

"We're going on the air," he called. "I don't know how . . . well, you're the first visitor I've ever let into the studio."

"Don't mind me. I'm house-broken," I told him.

The loudspeaker on the wall began to hum with harmony. The Boswell Sisters in New York were concluding their program. Then came the sound of saxophones playing from another studio, introducing the Lavoris Easy Aces.

ACE leaned his squarish, good-looking face toward the mike, laughed deeply in his throat, and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, Easy Aces."

Jane began her dumb Dora dialogue. "I'll say the world," she piped. That voice . . . who can forget it? She doesn't put it on; she doesn't have to. When she goes shopping, salesgirls recognize her by it.

There she sat, drawing that good old Kansas City drawl, looking cute as a couple of kittens. Jane Ace is a blonde. That night, I didn't know who she was until she spoke. Bright head bent over her continuity, capable shoulders in a stylish plaid silk dress-top. And under the table a slick pair of ankles as trim and slim as a Follies girl's.

Truman Bradley sat at Jane's left, broad-shouldered and cocky. They say in Chicago that he doesn't have to act to play the rôle of Brad Dixon. It comes natural. Marge had the fourth chair, a dark girl whose home town name is Mary Hunter.

Easy Aces on the air . . . they read off their lines carefully, cleverly, not revealing the fact that they were reading. Jane sputtered on a couple of syllables, something she almost never does. "Nervousness," Goodman told me next day. "We'd never let anyone else in the studio before and she was uneasy."

The dialogue indicated that someone was coming down the hall to their apartment door, their Hollywood apartment door, if you remember the script. Good-

man leaned over to a box and thumped it with his fist. Knock . . . knock . . . knock. . .

"Come in," he called

He leaned the other way and picked up that long bamboo pole that was lashed to that doorknob in the wall. Twisting it, the knob turned and he pulled the door open. Beyond, just an empty closet, but the opening door's sounds were caught in the mike and sent across America. Slamming it, he was fifteen feet away but the pole gave him the needed reach. He snapped back into the dialogue again. Sound affects are Ace's own worry. He opens and closes his own doors and that particular portal in that studio is his pet. "It's the best-sounding door on the air," he boasts.

WHEN they got down to playing bridge, he shuffled real cards alongside the black mouth of that mike in the table's center. Real cards, all right, but they're so old and flimsy I'm pretty sure no respectable bridge player would be caught dead with them.

And that's the way the Easy Aces broadcast, efficiently, timed to the second, crisply, in direct contrast to that careless studio room. Try and understand it.

I've got to hand it to Goodman Ace. And to the broadcasting business. It certainly takes its talent where it finds it. Ace grew up, training himself for newspaper work. In Kansas City where he met and married Jane, he was a newspaperman. A movie critic, columnist, man of all work. And hungry part of the time.

He just happened to go on the air. They called him "The Answer Man," and he answered the silly questions penned by bashful school lassies anent their movie heroes. Was John Gilbert Married? Was Greta Garbo in love? Was Marie Dressler the sister of Wallace Beery?

His broadcast was at night. Jane would come and wait for him outside the studio door. One night—and this ought to make you believe in Fate or something—Goodman Ace finished his last question and realized that he still had five minutes left. Five minutes to fill. . . and what to do about it? Jane was outside the door so he pulled her in and introduced her to his public.

They clowning for five minutes. Jane was dumb, dumber than anybody that

had ever been on the air. She got her words twisted, accused him of trying to "get her ghost." They signed off, chuckled about the episode, and went to a party.

A new day started on the morrow, and a new deal in Ace's life. A music company's president had heard that last five minutes. And liked it. He hired the Aces—together—for a series of broadcasts. And he paid them real, genuine silver dollars. Ace couldn't believe it, Jane couldn't believe it, their friends couldn't believe it. Not even when a drug store gave them more money and KMBC spread their antics through the Middle West. Then a coffee company took them to Chicago for seventeen weeks on WGN. Lavoris hooked them next, got their names on the dotted line for four years.

Jane and Goodman live in a modest Chicago hotel. They like it there because it is within easy walking distance of their studio. "And some of these days," Ace told me, "we're going to walk it."

HE'S a guy like that, if you get it. Always cracking wise. Many of his gags have decorated the country's gaiest columns. Usually, he is trying to think up new ones for his own show. And that is a job, take it from him. Election night, for instance. He'll never forget it.

Joke writers all work along the same general line, you probably don't know. And it is inevitable that some of them should hit upon the same gags. This election night, Goodman was worried. He had a flock of jokes about the election. What would the other comics have? Burns & Allen, both good pals of the Aces, were on the air first from New York. Would they have stumbled on the same comic spots that he had invented? He had fifteen minutes, if I remember it rightly, to find out. So he took a radio in the studio, listened to their broadcast, and checked their gags against his own. And would you believe it, not a one of them conflicted.

But sometimes it does happen. Too often, when it does, this western wag has to chop open his carefully prepared continuity, eliminate the line that some other guy has ruined, and think up something else. Thinking up something else, he confided, is one of the reasons radio humorists die young.

Easy Aces, eh? Not so easy.

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The life story of the man who everybody said was through—but who has proved time and again that he isn't through. Know who it is?

Kate Smith's Path to Glory

(Continued from page 43)

numerable amateur contests) telephoned the Smith home. Kate will tell you today that life seldom affords so thrilling a moment. He offered her \$75.00 to substitute for the team.

She went on with a piano player. She sang a few simple songs and the sight of her standing up, unashamed of her ample figure, throwing her full young voice to the back of that music hall, won her an ovation. After that first night, she made a decision. She would never go back to the George Washington nursing school. And she never did.

That engagement placed her feet firmly on a ladder that was to lead to all sorts of unexpected things. First, she got a job in "Honeymoon Lane" with Eddie Dowling. It took her to New York where she rehearsed for eight miserable weeks. "I cried every day," Kate told me. Week-ends, she went home to visit her mother. When the show opened, Mrs. Smith came to New York and lived with her.

The next show was "Flyin' High." And here was more misery. She sang—and almost stopped the show. She danced, all two hundred and twelve pounds of her—and *did* stop the show. But jealousies arose among the cast. She was big and green and easily teased. The other girls kidded her, ragged her, made her life a horror. There were dozens of times when she felt that she had to stop.

But her boss wouldn't let her. The man who paid her salary knew she was one of the hits of his show. He drove her ahead.

Kate always shudders when she remembers this one black day. Her father was ill in Washington. A phone call from her mother told her that he was not expected to live through the night. Kate adored her dad with child-like worship. She told her manager that she had to go to Washington.

"It's probably just a hospital scare," he said. "You know how they are. Play tonight's show and take the midnight train down. You'll be there by seven in the morning."

Kate had an understudy who could have taken her part but, being young and anxious to please, she stayed. And sang with her heart and mind full of horrid doubt, knowing that her father lay on his death bed. At midnight, she took her train south.

She was still on the train, tossing sleeplessly in a Pullman berth, when Bill Smith died in Washington. He was dead three hours when she reached the hospital.

I have told you that life had not taught her to meet grief and tragedy. That morning, she could think of only this one thing . . . her father was dead

and she had not been with him at the end, because—because her boss had told her to take the midnight train. Blindly, she blamed that man. She still blames him. It is curious to discover in this girl who is so big of heart and soul the bit of steel that holds the imprint of that harrowing night.

BACK in New York, she sang on through the run of "Flyin' High." Only the contract held her in it. She had no friends there; rather, they tried to humiliate her. One performer, a man, prodded her nightly with such asides as, "Get out of my way, you fat slob!" "You're lousy tonight, you clumsy lummo." Each night, every night, it was like that.

One night her mother and some friends came from Washington to see her. She wanted desperately to do her best. She went to this man and begged him to leave her alone. During that performance, he was worse than ever.

She was ready to quit, even to go back to nursing, when she happened to wander next day into the office of Ted Collins, then vice-president of the Columbia Phonograph Company for whom she was making some records.

This man Collins—you've heard him announce her programs and seen him with her in movie shorts—is a kindly, sympathetic Irishman. Somehow, he aroused trust in Kate. "What's wrong, kid?" he asked. "Aren't they treating you right?"

Kate Smith broke down and told him the truth. Pride and hope were all forgotten. Here was a man who seemed to understand. They talked for three solid hours that fateful afternoon.

At the end, Ted Collins had come to the biggest decision he ever made in his life. He thought he saw in this big, broken-spirited girl something that nobody else had ever seen. He thought it was worth the biggest gamble he could make.

"You need a manager," he said.

"Do I?" Kate asked.

"If you'll do exactly what I tell you and not ask me why, I'll make you one of the biggest names in show business."

Kate stared at him through tear-stained eyes. What should she do? Chewing her fingernails nervously—a habit she still has—she tried to make up her mind. To do all that . . . to ask no questions . . . to be the biggest name . . .

"How about it?" Ted Collins asked.

That was Kate's cross-roads. Should she put her life in this dapper Irishman's hands? Or should she stick it out alone?

What did Kate decide? And why?

(To be continued)



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**REMEMBER—RADIO STARS IS A MONTHLY
MAGAZINE!**

The Romance of George and Ethel

(Continued from page 12)

was all she thought she'd ever want.

Eddie Cantor persuaded her to come back for "Whoopee." Both on the stage and on the screen. During the time between the closing of the show and the making of the picture another son was born to Ethel—named, this time, George Edward Olsen. That Edward is in honor of Eddie Cantor.

With two children, Ethel settled back to enjoy her life. Show business isn't soothing to the nerves. It is night work, a topsy-turvy existence that she never really liked.

But radio, she learned, was something else. It meant pleasant hours and a new technique.

"George has taught me everything I know about radio technique," she told me.

That teaching was no easy job. She

had sung on more stages than he had seen. She knew just how to put a song over—when she faced footlights. She thought the mike was the same sort of proposition. George told her to sing softly, gently, to forget the "punch" that sold a song clear back to the last row of an auditorium. Ethel admits that she didn't take his suggestions kindly. And George, who recognized in her voice something sweet and new for radio, raged and harangued. One remark Ethel still treasures:

"I'll bet if I wasn't your husband, you'd take my advice."

Eventually, he moulded her and coaxed her until she learned the technique of the microphone. And that was the beginning of her success on the air.

They are splendidly loyal to each other. A Broadway legend tells of the

time that Olsen was offered a rich contract—but the offerers intimated that they would not need his wife on their program. George's answer was:

"No Ethel, no George."

A year passed during which Ethel's softly exciting style caught the public fancy. A new sponsor was looking for talent and he decided she had just the voice he wanted. His offer was stunning, more money than she had ever earned. But he had contracted already for an orchestra and could not possibly use the Olsen band. Ethel's answer, I think, is a key to the amazing success of this most amazing of Broadway's matches. She said, simply:

"No Georgie, no Ethel."

Four simple words, that's all. But they tell the whole story of the romance of George and Ethel.

Would You Run This Risk?

(Continued from page 33)

Patti, Jane, and Helen had stuck to those rules, they would never have gotten such success on the air.

That getting on the air, by the way, is a story. But first . . . let's turn time back for seventeen, twenty-one, and twenty-four years and move to the state of Georgia.

Twenty-four years ago, Helen was born. Jane was second and Patti was third. Their father was a great athlete and it was his dream to have sons. Sons that he could train to become even greater athletes.

Fate has a curious way of toying with those who try to plan their own lives. Instead of sons—well, do you think Mr. Pickens ever regretted his three daughters? Not one minute. He accepted them, said they were the next best thing to boys, and proceeded to make of them just about what he would have made of his sons.

He taught them boxing, wrestling and jiu jitsu. And never regretted it until the time Helen tangled with the fresh son of a neighbor, threw him over the porch railing, and broke his arm.

Now a man can't have his daughters going around breaking people's arms. So Mr. Pickens dropped their athletic training and substituted more ladylike pursuits.

THOSE kids' years were typically Georgian, sun-shot and golden and gay. Patti, named after the famous

opera star, was possibly the most musical. But Jane was the singer. At twelve she was performing in three different churches each Sunday. In order to keep her schedule, she rode a bicycle from one to the other. Helen didn't care for music, and even now she would much rather be a fashion artist.

None of them, except Jane, had any definite idea, ever, of becoming singers. We wish we could tell you that they starved and slaved in order to crash the gates to radio's Olympus. But that would be stretching the truth. What actually happened is this: Helen had been living in New York a short while when the other two girls came up from their home to visit her. The night they arrived, they went to a party in Greenwich Village. During the course of the evening, they harmonized a few songs together. A publicity woman from one of the studios was present. She was thrilled and delighted.

THROUGH her, these girls were given an audition. At the Victor Company. Two weeks were allotted for rehearsals. They sang on schedule, sang the songs they had known down south and added a few of the newest and neatest blue tunes. A contract to make records was their reward.

Shortly after that an NBC official heard one of their recording. "We can use those girls," he said, sending for them. This time, there was no audition.

They were hired on sight.

Unromantically easy, wasn't it? Not many have such luck.

Presently, with their own triple harmony on the air in direct competition with a dozen other trios, they realized they had to fight to retain the spot into which they had been pushed. It is Jane who pilots the Pickens Sisters. It was she who started the business of lip slapping and nose tweaking. The others took it up, added variations.

And what of beauty? Well, in the beginning the fates conspired to give them more than their share, so they can afford to lose a little. And are they losing it? Friends have warned them about their noses. They beg them to stop tugging at their cheeks and lips. I think the Pickens Sisters don't even listen.

They like to sing. They like the thrill of discovering new musical notes. Creation, that. And originality. Just the other day a radio poll revealed that hundreds of thousands of fans have voted them the most popular harmony team on the air.

Beauty culturists say that anyone can become beautiful. Anyone at all, if she uses the right pats and puffs and does the right things. But how many can sing those sweet southern songs? How many can—well, just you listen to the Pickens Sisters.

That is the reason they are willing to take the risk.

KATE SMITH'S HOLLYWOOD EXPERIENCES—

Fascinating anecdotes about Kate Smith and all the people she met in Hollywood. Movie stars, titled personages, famous directors. And what her reactions were to the cinema cameras and to the town itself. It's a honey!

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF RADIO STARS. DATED APRIL — OUT EARLY IN MARCH.

Meet the Mills Boys

(Continued from page 17)

mail order house, and it does very well, so they haven't thought of changing it for a better one. The other instruments they "play" with their voices. They can successfully imitate the clarinet, the saxophone, the trombone and the tuba.

There is a slight legend going around that it's hard for a colored boy to make good. You know—the color line—all sorts of difficulties. I asked my friend Paul Robeson about it one night. And Paul told me.

"The only difficulty today is that if a colored boy shows any talent at all along any artistic line he is given too much encouragement. Even a mediocre talent is praised and encouraged until the boy is completely spoiled. The same slight talent in a white boy would undoubtedly pass unnoticed."

So, the Mills Brothers were *not* kept back because of their color. And, having more than a slight talent, they were not taken up and spoiled because of their accomplishments. They seemed quite as unspoiled, when I spoke to them, as they must have been when they left home. Though, when you come to think of it, that wasn't very long ago.

They are mere children, now, the Mills Brothers. Though three of them have had birthdays since their success was assured they are still mere infants when compared to most successful people. John, the senior of the quartette, is twenty-one. My, my, he IS getting on! Herbert is twenty, now. Harry—he's the fat boy—is nineteen and Donald, the baby of the family, has just had his eighteenth birthday. They are good-looking "light brown skins."

THEY were born in Piqua, Ohio. And they have three sisters. Their parents were jubilee singers until the babies came. You can't travel around and sing with seven babies to look after! So Papa Mills took a job as a barber. And a colored barber in Piqua, Ohio, even if he is a good colored barber, doesn't make a lot of money. But he worked hard. And pretty soon he had his own barber shop. And even then it was pretty hard going with nine mouths to feed. Papa Mills is still a barber. He's in Philadelphia, now. And it's a good sign, it seems to me, for Papa still to be working after the boys have made good. Two sisters are married and the third is a registered trained nurse.

Even when the boys were little they liked to sing. But, as John explained to me, all little colored boys like to sing. It just happened that, because there were four of them, they could sing together and learned to sing a little better—or a little louder than the other boys. They used to sing on street corners when they were little bits of kids. Can't you see them—four very small, very eager colored boys, their

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RADIO STARS

little red mouths closing and opening oh, so fast, trying so hard to make harmonies?

It probably sounded pretty good even then. But the cops in Piqua, Ohio, didn't think so. And where are those cops today? Undoubtedly still chasing little colored boys off street corners.

But the chasing did, temporarily, discourage the Mills Brothers. They sang around the house for a while, after that.

Barbering wasn't so profitable in Piqua, so the family moved to Bellefontaine. The boys were in school then, and they kept on going to school in Bellefontaine. And then finances grew more stringent and they had to go to work. John was a sophomore in High School, then. The others quit before they reached High School.

There aren't many things that young colored boys in a small town can do. But they weren't lazy—that is, none but Donald—and he was such a little boy! They all found jobs. John tended flowers in a green house. Then he was a janitor in a bank. Harry was a boot-black. Of course! Doesn't one *have* to be a boot-black to make this a proper success story? There were dozens of other jobs. It takes a lot of working to buy enough groceries for so many young hungry mouths.

THEN one of the boys thought of singing. Publicly, that is. Without the benefit of cops on the corner. So they rehearsed some songs, singing them straight as a quartette and got some engagements. Not many, but a few. Just a quartette of young colored boys trying awfully hard.

But they had something. And, pretty

soon they began putting in little original bits—and then they weren't just a straight quartette any more. Harry had been playing on a gazook—don't ask me what a gazook is, John told me about it—and one night he forgot it and imitated one instead. And, except for the faithful guitar, that was the end of the "real" instruments. The audience liked the simulated gazook far better than they had liked the real one. Pretty soon, imitations of trombones and tubas began to appear—and the boys' engagements at smokers and socials grew in number and importance.

Then Martin Bower gave the boys a chance to appear at May's Opera House in Piqua at an American Legion entertainment. That was their first big chance. And did they make good? One guess, now.

They got another "opera house" engagement after that. And, before they knew it, they were playing vaudeville houses. Then came a chance at the radio—a local Cincinnati station. And they went over something grand.

They were a little bit doubtful about coming to New York for an audition. But they finally did come. That big thing called "influence", which you've heard so much about, was absent entirely.

They got an audition. And three days later they were scheduled for their first broadcast. They went on cold, without a line of publicity or advance notice. And, immediately the telephone began to ring. What about that quartette? Who were the Mills Brothers? And the Mills Brothers were made—as far as radio success goes.

They are still young and eager. Still a bit more Piqua, Ohio, than New York City, though they're getting along very nicely in New York, if you ask me. They've learned to dress in the accepted New York fashion for colored boys who have made good in radio. But they send their money to their mother and she saves it for them.

They haven't a car, now. They travel so much that they find it more convenient to depend on rented cars. They have a valet, but, after all, when you have to make changes in vaudeville—and all those new clothes to be taken care of.

ALL four of them prefer living in the country. They like New York but "some day" there is going to be a big country house—or a number of country houses. Near New York, likely as not.

They spend most of their time learning new songs. They have an extensive repertoire and it takes a couple of hours to learn a song and put in the proper "orchestrations." Then, this year, they have gone in extensively for sports.

John likes golf. Herbert and Harry like golf, too, but prefer tennis and horseback. Donald, while he's interested in nearly every out-of-door game, prefers polo. He doesn't want to live, in the summer, very far from a good polo field. And, if things keep on, there's no reason why he'll ever have to.

From boot-black to tennis player. From window washing to golf. From Piqua, Ohio, to polo. From being chased by the cops on the corner to—but I really can't spend any more time at the typewriter. Isn't this the night the Mills Brothers are on the radio?

Backstage with Eddie Cantor

(Continued from page 8)

looking at thin air. Not in the wings. I'll tell you where Rubinoff is. He's in that little green room over there, sitting in a chair. He and his fiddle. That's why Rubinoff never answers back, never pays any attention to Cantor's digs. He never hears them. But on the air, the show sounds swell.

Music breaks the spell of Cantor's comedy. Rubinoff invokes memories and heart pangs with his magic melody. Then Cantor steps back and cracks our shells with a series of gags.

Now he is helped by Arlene Adaire, a girl in evening dress. She takes the part of a telephone operator. Just about a dozen lines. She's come a long way to say them and she goes a long way to get home. She doesn't mind, though.

CANTOR'S last scene introduces another actress, Rosalind Green, one of the best. She plays two parts tonight, Cantor's wife, and his nurse. Look! She's limping.

"Rosalind, how come?"

"Turned it on the way to the studio," she says. "It's swelling."

Swelling! It's already puffed way out to there. But she limps up to her mike and laughs as if life hadn't a hurt in it. And limps away. Not until after the program can she go to a doctor.

Funny thing about all these broadcasts. The last few minutes seem to generate a furious sort of nervousness. Spencer dashes through looking at his split-second watch. Cantor scans the clock and hurls himself into a flying finish. Wallington gets his commercial announcement ready. Rubinoff has deserted the side room for the rostrum before his orchestra.

The program reaches its peak . . . like a short story building to a climax. Then, abruptly, it is over. The little scarlet light just inside the prescenum arch turns black. We are off the air. Cantor makes a face at the mike, sticks out his tongue. Wallington does a soft-shoe dance. (And by the way, the two of them may go into a show together

this spring.) Musicians get up wearily. Rosalind Green limps away to find a doctor.

Going out, we catch a few scattered glimpses. Rubinoff, polished leather violin case under his arm, talks to a platinum-haired princess. Probably she sings blue songs and wants a job. Cantor bends over a lady's hand and kisses it. "Darling, I'm glad to see you," he says. The lady is really a lady. Lady Peel of England, but Beatrice Lillie to you and me. We take an elevator to the street. Snow piles against the curb. The footing is treacherous. There's Wallington with a girl, trying to reach his car. A drift lies between. He bends over and scoops her into his arms, wades across the drift and deposits her in the seat.

The audience swarms across the sidewalk after us. Their chatter says they liked the show. Says they liked Cantor's bantam rooster walk, his owl eyes, his cuckoo clowning. Says they're going home and going to bed.

Don't miss the grand story on Father Coughlin—Next Issue

Those Mad Marx Brothers

(Continued from page 37)

another man, so they called upon Zeppo.

Zeppo seemed to be their lucky star, for no sooner did he join them when the three brothers got their first booking. They were moderately successful—that is, they were not hissed off the stage—and so, it was not long before they received other bookings. It was at this time, that the fourth of the brothers joined the team—Harpo. And the four brothers—billed as “The Four Nightingales—A Serious Entertainment”—began to tour the small vaudeville and movie houses in the small towns.

“The Four Nightingales” went from town to town, from small house to the next small house trying to please their audiences with serious songs, sketches, monologues and real poetry. Groucho would do dramatic monologues, imitations of famous actors of the day, and then would sing sentimental ballads; Chico would play the piano, and Harpo the harp; Zeppo would sing in duets, or else recite sad poetry.

It was a very serious act, meant to pluck at the heart-strings. But, somehow, the audiences didn't seem to take it that way. They laughed themselves sick. At last, Mrs. Marx, in despair, called a meeting of her four sons. Something had to be done immediately, she told them; evidently their heart-felt poetry and songs were not half so heart-rending as they were meant to be. Mrs. Marx insisted that the act be changed.

But Groucho was more practical. Why change the act, when they were attracting so many laughs? They had merely to change the billing of their act from “serious entertainment” to “comedy”, without changing a single line. And so, henceforth, the “Four Nightingales” were billed as comedians—and they have remained comedians ever since.

Those were the days when they earned \$40 combined for their act, and were pretty lucky to get it. Those were the days when, if they had a booking for four consecutive weeks, they looked upon themselves as the most successful actors in the world. Those were the days when, after having taken their \$40 salary from their employer, they would entice him into playing poker, and then would earn a juicy profit sufficient to permit them to live in comfort for the week.

Those were the days when Mrs. Marx, as their business manager, would compel her sons to wear long socks so that when the conductor was about to collect his fare, they would hurriedly roll up their trousers, look naïve and swear to the assertion of Mrs. Marx that they were only children, and should be charged only half fare.

One unexpected afternoon, the con-

ductor came breathless to Mrs. Marx and told her that he saw one of her little darlings—Groucho—smoking a cigar, while the other—Chico—was shaving!

Those were the days when, having decided to produce a show of their own, they posted a huge picture of Theda Bara outside the theatre, under which they wrote “Admission 25c”—thereby tempting some \$28 of business into the theatre! Those were the days when they dreamt of the time when they would make an entire Broadway shake with laughter—and while dreaming, played to half-empty, and unappreciative houses.

THE Marx Brothers, now that they have everything in the world they want, find much to their surprise that they want very little. They do not care about clothes, and their wardrobe is both simple and inexpensive. Groucho confesses that his two favorite pastimes are eating corned-beef and playing chess; Chico chimes in that, for him, his two preferences are eating chess and playing corned-beef.

Zeppo has, without doubt, the most expensive taste of the four; his two pastimes are to buy real-estate and to lose expensive dogs.

All the four brothers love to sleep; it is their most beloved recreation. Their eternal grumble against their profession is that they must rise early each morning when they are filming a picture.

All four brother play golf—Groucho is the champ; Harpo, in addition, plays cricket and cribbage. Harpo used to have one other distinction—that of having read every book in his library. Those were the days when their library consisted of Maugham's “Of Human Bondage.” But since that time, Shaw presented him with an autographed copy of “Saint Joan.” and Frank Harris kindly gave him a copy of his own life. So Harpo's other distinction no longer holds good.

And, of course, there is poker. In Harpo is centered all the poker-luck of the four brothers. But, although Harpo plays all the hands, that does not mean that the other three brothers are inactive kibitzers. Groucho runs around the table, looking at everybody's hand, giving everybody advice, distracting all the players with puns and tricks.

When they are distracted, Zeppo tells Harpo exactly how to play the hand. And then, at the end of the deal, Chico would call up his mother to tell her exactly how many dollars her prodigal son won in that last deal. Ever since Mrs. Marx died—that was last year—Chico has stopped going to these poker games. After all, his function was telephoning, and there's no one to call.

What a Strange Paradox Their Love Was!



To keep her for himself he was even willing to accuse her before the law.

JUDY and Nick considered a long time before they fell into step with Mendelssohn's wedding march. All about them their friends and acquaintances—even their servants—were making a mess of marriage.

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Screen Romances

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Don't Miss the Fascinating Life Story of Vincent Lopez,
Which Will Appear in the Next Issue of RADIO STARS

Greatest Liar of Them All

(Continued from page 19)

his contracts and attends to all business affairs. If it were not for her I wonder what would happen to Jack's money? He would probably give it all away to beggars on the street!

But Winifred looks out for Jack and for his best interests. He never tours the country without her and she is in the audience every night that he broadcasts.

It was an accident that he happened into comedy rôles. When he was just a youngster he got a job in the show "School Days" (at the magnificent sum of \$15 a week) and so ambitious was he, he understudied every role—the Jewish, Italian and German characters. One night Danny Murphy, the German comedian, was taken ill and Jack went on in his place. He has been playing German comedy rôles ever since. And probably always will.

But, in spite of the fact that he is an excellent comedian and his fame has grown by leaps, comedy is not his real forte. And Jack Pearl knows it. Some

day he hopes to play drama. Nothing would delight him so much as to do some of the successes of David Warfield, notably "The Music Master" and it seems to me that in this the full talents of Jack Pearl would be realized. But will they let him?

YET when he is on a stage or before a microphone the business of being funny is all that counts. As you perhaps know, the Lucky Strike hour is broadcast from the New Amsterdam Theatre and the place is always packed with a real and most demonstrative audience. This is a swell idea for it gives the performers something to work to. It is not like speaking into a cold, dead microphone.

Pearl, like Ed Wynn, does his act in full make-up, wearing the funny baggy clothes and breast-full of medals that he uses on the stage. He makes two separate appearances before the mike and makes a practice of changing his costume for both of these.

"I work hard at being funny," Jack Pearl says. "It may sound as if it were all done on the spur of the moment. It isn't. Few people know how hard a funny man works to get that way. Every intonation of the voice, every turn of phrase must be carefully thought out beforehand."

And Jack even uses his hands and makes funny faces in front of the microphone. Every gag is painstakingly executed.

Off stage (or rather off air) Jack Pearl is far from being a funny man. He has no deft non-professional patter—no line that he passes out indiscriminately. He is serious, earnest, eager and sympathetic. The weight of the world rests upon his slim shoulders. And that's no gag.

And I'll bet if it were not for that wise and calm wife he wouldn't have a dime. For his heart goes out to suffering and distress. By being funny he thinks he can, perhaps, make the world forget some of its woes.

Take My Advice

(Continued from page 9)

but the keyboard pyrotechnics put me all in a dither. You are pianists, not acrobats. More melody, please, and rhythm.

Rise of the Goldbergs. I hear you have gone on a new coast to coast network. Please don't change your act. What makes it real and vital and worth listening to night after night is its human heart interest. You've built up such a big following that way, stick to it, and you'll make more friends. Don't go highbrow.

Morton Downey. I do like your singing, Mr. Downey. But *must* you whistle?

Walter O'Keefe. That's a very snappy act, but please, Mr. O'Keefe, don't sing. I like you better without music.

Kate Smith. Not so many mammy songs, for this chile, not so many hot songs. There is too much of that on the radio already. Lovely melody, the memory songs, give us lots of this. But oh, Miss Smith, can't you greet the listening multitude a little more normally? Sweetness and light is all very well in its place but a little of it goes a long way. And speaking for myself and, perhaps others, less loud-pedaling on your friends in hospitals would be welcome.

Major Bowes, of the Capitol Family. I do like your program and your announcements and introductions but I do not like the poems which conclude your program. There are so many lovely poems in the world, which contain real and enduring beauty that

surely it is not necessary to select those which are merely synthetically, tritely philosophical and, in addition, not very good verse.

Hollywood Newsboy. This newsboys' voice isn't newsboy and it isn't Hollywood. The program idea is good but the selected material is merely daily paper, fan magazine rehash.

Norman Brokenshire. It isn't necessary to tell us how good the Boswell Sisters, the Street Singer and Miss Etting are. We know they're good or we wouldn't listen so religiously. We don't like to be told things we already know or to be congratulated on our good luck, thanks to Mr. Chesterfield. Let your fine stars speak—or rather, sing—for themselves.

Ben Bernie. Please forget Walter Winchell and your mutual conversations. And don't plug for your sponsors so much. This sort of thing detracts from a good program.

Ed Wynn. A little freshness, or else you'll be slipping. The opera stunt is beginning to pall, as are the planted letters which conclude your period.

Leo Reisman. Play all you want, we eat it up; and lead your orchestra through the tunes that you alone can play as they should be presented but please omit the da-de-o-dumming as you play. We get enough of that. I am beginning to see pink giraffes when the da-de-do, vo-de-dow starts on any program. And this is said with a hey nonny nonny and a couple of hotchas. Too much is enough.

George Olsen. Can't we have a little

more of Ethel Shutta's singing; and won't you talk a little more, please? I like your announcements!

Fu Manchu. Elegant creepers, I eat them up. But what is wrong with the sound effects . . . or are they vocal cross word puzzles?

Jack Pearl. The dialect is funny but over the mike it is sometimes hard to understand. Go easy when you come to the point of your jokes.

Eddie Cantor. What's the idea of the prrrt-prrrt-prrrt business? I can't spell it but I am tired of hearing it. And the gags could be newer.

Burns and Allen. I couldn't complain if I tried and Lombardo's orchestra is elegant but I could, after all, do with less music and more of this gaga gal Gracie and her bewildered pal.

In general, who are we to kick? But I am getting pretty weary of blues and torch songs and the dear old Southland (as never was) and of old gags and older situations. Surely we rate better music and more of it, and more compact drama and less hi-de-ho. And when will Colliers be back on the air? Or do I ask too much of my loud speaker; and have I become a loud speaker myself?

Also, for those making charity appeals I vote for five minutes, no more and no less. Five minutes is plenty, you can say all you have to in that time and most people in this fevered age will not listen to more. So take my advice . . .

But I don't suppose anyone will. I've never been able to take it myself.

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