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The Right Way to Radio Playwriting

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BY

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RIGHT WAY BOOKS
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CONTENTS

PART II

INTRODUCTION

I FIND nowadays a general tendency, particularly on the part of the younger generation, to disbelieve or at any rate to question practically everything that is told them by their elders and betters—which does not matter very much—and by their parents, which does matter a good deal. That this tendency distresses me personally is probably no more than a symptom of the fact that I have become middle-aged and would prefer not to have done so. But it is probably true that, while middle-age has its disadvantages, it also implies certain compensations in the shape of valuable experience. A sample of that experience, and one by no means to be neglected, is the slightly irritating fact that most of the maxims so carelessly brushed aside during our arrogant adolescence, turn out, twenty years later, as not only true but good.

Among these maxims was one which I believe is still to be found in copy-books: there is a right and a wrong way to do everything; and it is presumably due to a profound belief in the truth of this maxim that the editor of this series of little books has undertaken their publication.

I may as well confess, however, that in spite of having the slight professional qualification of having spent the greater part of nineteen years in reading, selecting, rejecting, writing and directing plays for broadcasting, I find myself up against a very serious difficulty in attempting to write a book on the subject of the right way to write a play for broadcasting. The reason is a simple one. There is clearly a right and a wrong way in which to lay a brick. There are certainly not more than two or three

right ways in which you can play a stroke at golf or cricket, or ride a horse, or drive a motor-car. But writing is one of those damnable occupations which cannot truly be called fish, flesh, fowl or good red herring, because it can so easily be any one of all these things.

The writer, of course, must be a professional craftsman —though, heaven knows, the majority of people who put pen to paper are supremely unaware of that fact; but the writer, and certainly the first-flight writer, must also be a creative artist. And that is where the fun and the trouble come in.

It was, I believe, a distinguished Frenchman who remarked that criticism is as simple as art is difficult. He was simply putting in a nutshell what practically every artist feels to a greater or lesser degree, because he knows more about his own work than anybody else can ever hope to do. That is why it is so much more difficult to write a working manual for any brand of artist than to do so for a practising handicraftsman or for an athlete with his eye on some record or other. It is as well to recognise frankly that the artist, even if he does not actively despise advice, nevertheless instinctively and by all inclination rejects it. I think, therefore, that I should make it perfectly clear that the hints and suggestions, however practical, included in this book are no more than hints and suggestions. ' "Art," said the painter in the late Victorian novel, who slept all day in front of an empty canvas, "cannot be forced" ', and I would not wish this small volume to be thought of as if it were an incubator of creative eggs!

I believe it to be true, however, that there are many writers who are interested in the broadcasting medium, and even a few who have already experimented in

writing for the radio, and are either deterred by ignorance of the technique that governs both subject and production methods, or depressed by a vague feeling that there is a *mystique* of radio drama impenetrable except by the initiated.

It is because of these senses of depression and frustration, this widely prevalent ignorance of the actual working conditions under which plays are produced on the air, that this book has been written. I hope it may be helpful.

V.G.

PART I

CHAPTER I

OF WRITING IN GENERAL

The Art of Writing

IT is, in this present day and age, unusual to meet with anybody who is physically unable to write, and in my less aggressive moments I occasionally wonder whether this all-embracing ability to apply pens and ink to paper is altogether a good thing. In my Introduction—which was meant, unlike some Introductions, to be read and not skipped—I spoke of the writer as being necessarily a craftsman. As an assumption, it sounds obvious enough. And yet my first and by no means least important hint to anyone who wishes to write a play for broadcasting is that he or she should ask him or herself a straight question: Am I qualified to practise the craft of writing? and an honest answer to this question is imperative.

This is not so silly as it may sound. It is no less than the truth to say that of the plays submitted every week to the British Broadcasting Corporation, perhaps five or six per cent reach a reasonable standard of professional craftsmanship. I am not speaking of inspiration, of imagination, still less of genius. What I want to make clear is that, more than anything else, writing is a job of work like any other job of work. It is not a hobby. It is not a pastime. It has to be learned and it has to be practised. The first thing that any writer who wishes his work to be taken seriously must learn is that he must

write. It does not matter how much of that writing is torn up or consigned to the waste-paper-basket; it does not matter if it takes the form of a day-to-day diary designed for his own eyes alone. But if he expects his work ultimately to be taken seriously, he must in the first instance take it seriously himself.

There is a strong prejudice in this country in favour of the artistic *dilettante* and the brilliant amateur, but it is sometimes forgotten that this tradition dates only from the great Victorian Age when considerable leisure and wealth belonged to certain classes; a condition of affairs which no longer prevails and is unlikely, at any rate in our time, to prevail again. The Gentlemen are fading with some rapidity out of first-class cricket. We may regret their passing, but the passing is inevitable. It may be tiresome that life has become so real and so very very earnest. But progress, no matter what its goal may be, is merciless, and the amateur can no longer both keep his status and hope to compete triumphantly in the professional field.

The Professional

The writing of plays for broadcasting is, of course, merely one small field in which the writer can exercise his talent. But if he is to enter that field at all, he should enter it with the consciousness that he is professionally equipped in the elements of his business. The "dashing off" of a play for broadcasting as a relaxation from more important affairs, as a method of filling in time, or as a mere exercise in ingenuity, may make an agreeable change for the would-be author. But it is not and cannot be good business.

The reader may feel inclined to interrupt at this stage

that all this sounds very well and reasonably crisp, but that it butters remarkably few parsnips. How, in short, you may feel inclined to ask, does one learn to write and ultimately to recognise oneself as a professional writer? Again, the only possible reply, and a rather grim one it is, is: by writing and continuing to write. And just as writing for the stage is a highly specialised form of writing, so writing for broadcasting is rather less highly specialised, but essentially a special type of writing. It is most unlikely, therefore, that anyone who has not to some extent won his spurs in the more general fields of literary composition should be able, as a tyro, to achieve success with a radio play.

The suggestions that follow, therefore, are addressed on the assumption that my would-be author is a professional and not an amateur. And should this book's sale be sufficiently wide and its contents accepted, one of the more satisfactory results will be, I think, to lighten the burden laid upon the B.B.C.'s play readers. Not the least among their difficulties is that of trying to preserve an acute sense of discrimination and judgment when more than ninety per cent of the scripts that pass across their desks ought never to have been written at all!

CHAPTER II

BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM

I WILL assume, therefore, that my author has qualified himself professionally for the practice of his craft. I will also assume that he is profoundly and maybe happily ignorant of everything pertaining to the organisation of the B.B.C.'s Dramatic Department, and of all the circumstances which govern the selection of plays for broadcasting and the physical conditions in which such plays are brought to the microphone. My correspondence leads me to believe that, in general, answers are sought to the following questions:

1. What type of subject should I select?
2. To what length should my play be confined?
3. In what form should my play be submitted?
4. How much should be included in the script relating to the use of Music or Sound Effects or both?

I propose to try to answer these questions *seriatim*, but first of all I might as well clear one issue out of the way.

Stage Adaptation

While it is perfectly true that a great number of plays are broadcast which have been adapted for the microphone from pieces originally written for and conceived in terms of the visual theatre, it is the greatest mistake to believe that the easiest way in which to break into the radio dramatic field is to take some play which has gone the rounds of the various theatrical managers out of the bottom drawer, to dust it over and even have it re-

covered, and then to submit it as a broadcasting vehicle. Broadcasting is not to be considered as a repository for the unwanted left-overs of the stage. Stage plays that are broadcast are selected for a variety of reasons from the very cream of the visual theatrical output. They are, as a rule, plays which have behind them either a classical tradition of prestige, or a commercial record of considerable and often outstanding success. It is, of course, perfectly possible that a play which has failed to find favour with the commercial theatre might prove perfectly satisfactory from the point of view of broadcasting; but though the subject may be right, the treatment will almost certainly be wrong, and an author who is writing a play of this type should in the first instance clear the question of subject by submitting a synopsis of his story to the B.B.C. and, in the event of the reaction being favourable, should then address himself to the problem of completely re-writing from the broadcasting angle.

Dialogue

Here, too, it may not be out of place to mention another point which is too frequently disregarded. There are many writers, and admirable writers, who have achieved success in the field of the short story or the novel who yet feel either disinclined to essay playwriting or consistently fail to make that particular grade. In the latter case, they are sometimes indignant, and more often hurt or astonished. The reason for this is—and here the stage and the microphone have something in common—that playwriting depends in the first instance on the ability to write dialogue.

Now, in my opinion, for what it is worth, the ability to write dialogue is one with which one is born or not.

It cannot be learned and it cannot be taught. It is in a curious way analogous to the ability, for example, to play the piano by ear. It has nothing to do with the ability to turn out a number of "wise cracks". It has nothing to do with being able to write what seems to be perfectly satisfactory dialogue when read on the printed page. Dialogue for the stage or for the microphone must, in the first instance, consist of lines *that it is possible for actors to speak*, and to this it must be added that such dialogue must also contain what is called characterisation, that is to say that it will not be satisfactory if all the lines could equally well be spoken by any of the characters included in the play. For this, there is one practical test, though it is by no means an infallible one. A playwright should in the first instance always read his lines aloud; and, at a later stage, he should if possible get a variety of people to read them aloud to him. If he lacks the requisite qualities of ear and phrasing, and of characterisation in terms of conversation, he should by this means be able to recognise the fact; and if he cannot write dialogue, he would be well advised to abandon the medium.

CHAPTER III

THE QUESTION OF SUBJECT

The Audience

THIS particular problem is clearly fundamental and by no means to be tackled on a single or a narrow front. Whereas the writer of a novel can almost certainly choose to please himself as far as the subject of his work is concerned, the writer of a play or of a play for broadcasting must, in the first instance, consider his audience; for it is not too much to say that the audience takes an active role *vis-à-vis* a play, while the reader's share in a book is by comparison a passive one.

I think that probably in this connection the first expressions that will spring up in the would-be author's imagination are words such as "policy", "censorship" or "monopoly"; that he will feel that he wants some professional help to show him the way round, through or over this particular type of passive defence system. But I will deal with these points a little later on. To start with them would be to put the cart before the horse with a vengeance, for while it is true that there are certain considerations peculiar to all broadcasting in general and to British broadcasting in particular, which put some subjects beyond the pale, it should in the first place be assumed that there is nearly always an opening for the first-rate. It is the *tastes of the audience* that should be considered primarily. It is only when these have been considered and satisfied that it is worth while to bother with the foibles and idiosyncrasies of the B.B.C., whether

that organisation be represented by a play reader on the one hand, or a play producer on the other.

Let us consider, therefore, the tastes of the radio audience. First of all, they will not be the same as the tastes which are usually catered for by the author of a stage play. It is true that some theatrical authors who take a natural and proper pride in the localities where they were born—Mr. Priestley, for example, in the North country, or Mr. James Bridie in Scotland—do not in their works subscribe to the theory of the average dramatic author who draws his hypothetical audience from the West End of London. But while it is obvious enough that the radio playwright should not design to please those people for whom cater the theatres off the Strand or Shaftesbury Avenue, it may not be so obvious that he is not writing for a theatre audience at all. But this is the truth, and it is a very important truth. The author who is writing for the stage is writing for an audience with a mass reaction. The mass may be large, as in the case of Drury Lane, or small, as in the case of The Ambassadors or The Arts Theatre Club. It remains mass for all that.

The Individual

The prime factor in the equation of the radio audience is the individual listener. And just as the problem of production of a play which is addressed to the individual is quite different from the problem of production for mass reaction in a theatre, so the problem of choosing a subject acceptable to the individual or, at the most, a group of individuals, is quite different from that of choosing a subject for dramatic presentation to a theatrical audience. It is, I think, a matter, principally, of taste allied to common sense. It is not a matter of complying with a

number of rules of censorship; and it is an interesting fact that the plays broadcast by the B.B.C. do not come within the purview nor under the authority of the Lord Chamberlain in his capacity as censor of plays.

It would, however, be a mistake to assume that because the radio audience is made up of a cross-section of individuals belonging to every class and condition of the community, the subjects of radio plays should be confined to those which are of universal appeal. It is said that you cannot fool all of the people all of the time, and it is equally true that you cannot please or entertain all of your listening audience all of the time.

The broadcast play has ceased to be a producer's toy, or an experimentalist's dream, or one particular type of highbrow's pride and joy. The broadcast play has grown up and come into its own as what is called in Broadcasting House a "majority" listening item. But there will always be plenty of people who do not listen to plays at all, and there will be even more people who do not listen to certain types of play. There is no need for the would-be author to be depressed by this inescapable fact. What is more important for him to keep clear in his mind is that he is writing *for an individual* and that, if he succeeds in doing so, he will inevitably be writing for a vast number of individuals of the same taste. The individual for whom he writes may only represent thousands. He may equally well represent millions. But let the author remember always the individual and then the group, and let him think of reaction to his basic idea and to his play with that qualification in his mind.

The Danger Signals

But I do not wish to seem to be taking refuge in a mist

of generalities. The candidate for radio dramatic honours can hardly be blamed for demanding in specific terms to know what subjects are quite hopeless and for what danger signals he should keep open a watchful eye.

In the first instance, it may be worth while to list three or four of the most obvious points:

Plot

Interest of story—genuine originality of plot, if such a thing, indeed, be possible—is of paramount importance. It is occasionally forgotten that playwriting is simply another form of the age-old human instinct *to tell a story.* Mr. Maugham has reminded us of this fact in his Preface to his latest book, with a typically sardonic comment on critics who prefer idiosyncrasy of style to the less showy merits of capable story-telling. Radio drama is simply a new medium in which the teller of tales can exercise his craft, and through which he should interest and entertain his listeners. The story, therefore, should contain a strong and well-defined narrative spine. The trimmings are all very well and the dish may largely rely on them for its flavour; but there is danger, in an Age so conditioned both to rationing and to canning, that the quality of the joint itself, however small, may be insufficiently considered before the trimmings are added.

Narrative

It must be possible to deal with the subject in terms of dialogue. This is by no means to be interpreted as casting any slur on what has been frequently dismissed far too casually by certain radio critics as "narrative". Let me be perfectly clear upon this point. Narrative which can be compared with the reading aloud of bald stage direc-

tions is an affront to the actor who is asked to read it and a menace to any radio play in which it occurs. Narrative has been vilely misused on more occasions than I care to remember and is almost invariably far too little considered by the radio playwright, who does not realise its extreme importance to his business. But there are a thousand differing ways in which narrative can be used, and narrative *per se* is no more an evil convention in the writing of a radio play than is the conventional use of scenery in a play for the theatre. I propose to devote a special section to narrative at a later stage. Enough to say here that, while the story chosen must be susceptible to dialogue treatment, the proper and intelligent use of narrative should certainly be in the author's mind when, in the first instance, he is considering his subject's treatment and possibilities.

Cast

The subject should be adaptable to treatment through a cast of characters as limited as possible. This, to the veteran listener, must seem so obvious as hardly to be worth saying. But too few would-be writers for the microphone are in fact veteran listeners. And I think that I should state frankly at this point that the first practical step which the radio playwright should take is to familiarise himself with the listening end of the broadcasting of plays. I am not suggesting that his easiest road is by way of slavish imitation. But it is almost as easy to learn from other people's mistakes as it is from one's own, and to do so is by all means less hurtful to vanity. The briefest listening experience will teach you how difficult it is to disentangle the individuals of an enormous cast in a radio play, particularly when there are a number of

small parts concerned, without any strong distinguishing personality characteristics. It is almost the only disadvantage of Shakespeare as an author for broadcasting.

The greatest of the Elizabethans shares with the Greeks such immense advantages from the broadcasting point of view as the verbal setting of scenery, the perfectly normal use of the aside, the great set speech, and even occasionally the invaluable chorus. But where the cast of the Greek plays was most happily confined in general within extremely narrow bounds, the plays of Shakespeare and particularly the historical chronicle plays are, from the broadcasting point of view, cluttered up with members of the medieval nobility whose lines might almost equally be allotted to any one of them, and whose individualities are sadly lacking in genuine individual interest.

Let your cast, therefore, be limited in number. Let it be composed, if it is at all possible, of characters aurally distinguishable on immediate hearing. To press the point to an extreme, it is as well to avoid, wherever possible, scenes in which two or three women are all simultaneously engaged, for it is simply an unfortunate fact, which no mechanical ingenuity can get round, that, over the air, women's voices, having a smaller range, are considerably less distinguishable one from the other than are men's.

Length and the Listener

Do not fall into the mistake of believing that because the microphone frees the author from the bondage imposed through the conventions of acts and scenes and all the other limitations of the theatre, that therefore he should rush wildly to the other extreme, make space his wash-pot and cast out his shoe over time.

During the experimental period of 1929–1933, there was

a persistent belief that radio was the ideal medium for fantasy; for every type of play that owed its origin, however remotely, to Mr. H. G. Wells and *The Time Machine.* The fact that radio can travel freely in time and space by no means implies that it invariably *should.* The medium is certainly flexible to a degree. Production methods can, if it is necessary, be adapted to cope with tremendous complexity. But in radio, as in every other medium of expression, the best story is the simple story, and the reason for this is that listening is by no means easy. The individual or the family group, listening by the fireside, is liable to every type of domestic interruption—the telephone, the dog, the baby or the demands of the domestic chore. Nor, except by an infinitesimal amount, have the seats been paid for. To stretch out a hand to the switch is an extremely simple action. The attention of the radio audience has to be gripped at once and, once gripped, held remorselessly throughout. To grasp and hold by any device other than a simple one is quite remarkably difficult; in fact, the odds will always be upon the switch.

Choice of Subject: Love, Politics, Religion

But to return to what may be called, for convenience, the Red Lights along the would-be author's road, the three biggest and most obvious are, of course, sex, politics and religion. At which point the author will probably throw up his hands in despair and exclaim that if serious plays on these three subjects are out of court, what remains other than the ineptly frivolous, the drearily suburban, or the boringly melodramatic?

The answer must be to avoid anything in the shape of hasty generalisation. It is quite true that, in the earliest days of the B.B.C.—when its headquarters were still at

Savoy Hill—a general directive was issued "at the highest level" banning with more rashness than common sense all plays dealing with what is commonly called "the Eternal Triangle". But like a good many other high level directives, it was presumably intended, and it was in fact interpreted, in a practical spirit by people who were aware of the intention behind it. In fact, it did not mean what it said! And the people who had to interpret it knew that it did not mean what it said and acted accordingly. What in fact it meant was that the Corporation did not look with favour upon the type of play which treats sex in general and adultery in particular as a subject for sniggering and faintly distasteful humour. This, I think most people would agree, was and remains a quite unexceptionable point of view.

In considering the possible use of media, a large part of whose audience consists of family groups including children beside the domestic hearth, the B.B.C. has established, and in my opinion, for what it is worth, rightly does its best to maintain, standards of respectability in its programmes of entertainment. But respectability need not be synonymous with dullness, and the ruling out of the favourite theme of French farce must not be interpreted as ruling out sex as a dramatic subject or as a serious incidental ingredient in a broadcast play. Listening experience in fact provides plenty of evidence to the contrary. As long ago as 1929, a childbirth sequence was brought to the microphone in the adaptation of Compton Mackenzie's novel, *Carnival*, and several adaptations of Mr. Maugham's stories—notably *The Painted Veil*—have dealt seriously and without any mealy-mouthed reticence with adultery; one even with a case of pretended rape in *The Letter*.

It was indeed also as early as 1929 that the B.B.C. went so far as to produce Shakespeare's *Othello* completely uncut, on a Sunday afternoon; while during 1947, with the advent of the Third Programme, such plays as Sartre's *Huis Clos*, Giraudoux's *No War in Troy* and Thierry Maulnier's *Field of Kings*, and various English Restoration comedies distinguished more for their wit than for their propriety have been produced without apparently giving the listeners to whom they were directed any cause for offence.

While the basic principle to which I have referred still holds, it would seem that as far as the treatment of sex is concerned, both the B.B.C. and its audience have, not unnaturally over a period of twenty years, attained a certain sophistication of outlook.

In this matter of sex, as in the matter of politics and religion, it is a question of individual judgment and approach in every case qualified by the demands of ordinary good taste. If you press me to define good taste, I can only suggest with diffidence that it is the attitude of an informed and cultivated mind, which can hold a proper relative balance between the demands of truth on the one hand and good manners on the other. While such phrases as "good manners", "good taste" and "standards of respectability" may sound, from the point of view of the present day and age, rather old-fashioned, I would suggest that they may possibly be none the worse even for that.

With regard to politics, the problem is a little different. Again, the solution must be one of individual approach. But, as far as politics are concerned, the B.B.C. is in a unique position, and it must be recognised that it holds certain unique responsibilities. There is, as I see it, no

earthly reason against the B.B.C. broadcasting a play on a political theme, provided that the play is in itself a good play and not merely a disguised propaganda pamphlet on the one hand, and that it presents the problem fairly on the other. This must inevitably weight the dice against the chances of a play dealing with a burning and current political topic, because it is not necessary to look further than the newspapers to realise how remarkably difficult, if not impossible, it is to present such a topic except from an angle either partisan or prejudiced.

To the author interested in plays of this type, I would strongly recommend the study of the dramatic works of John Galsworthy. In such pieces as *Strife*, *The Silver Box* and *Justice*, and, in a rather lesser degree, *The Show*, the problem is posed with the most admirable fairness to both sides. Where a system or an institution is indicted, it is represented by individuals who are both virtuous in intention and well-meaning in practice. The capitalist in *Strife* is certainly presented as determined and obstinate but he is not a tyrant and his obstinacy is balanced by his eldest son's humanity. The prison authorities in *Justice* are neither brutes nor sadists, nor is the victim a pillar of all the virtues. The audience in fact is addressed as a jury. It is not incited to hysteria by an orator on the stump. It may be worth remembering, in addition, that the entertainment value of a political play must as a rule lie rather with its human individuals rather than with its abstract problems. Man, said the old Greek, is a political animal. It is probably true also that politics are made by and for man and not man for politics. It is only too easy, and it is almost invariably fatal from the entertainment point of view, to flood the human scene

with waves of political theory—leaving all prejudice aside. Even such a magnificent play as Granville Barker's *Waste* does not wholely succeed in avoiding this danger. Here, incidentally, is a notable example of a play dealing both with politics and with sex on a level altogether unexceptionable from the point of view of any audience, and repays study proportionately. It may be interesting to note that *Waste* was one of the first plays broadcast after the inception of the Third Programme and that its production received unanimous commendation from both critics and listeners.

Thirdly, religion. At the risk of appearing repetitious, I must emphasise that the only possible touchstone must be that of good taste interpreted in this connection as meaning reasonable consideration for the deepest and most sincere feelings of other people. Miss Sayers, in her celebrated play sequence, *The Man Born to be King*, Mr. Ross Williamson in his plays dealing with the life of St. Paul, and Clifford Bax in his play on the life of The Buddha, have all shown that it is perfectly possible to deal with religion through the medium of the microphone. But there is no subject about which men and women feel so deeply in their individual capacity—witness the comparatively recent surprising display of passion engendered in the House of Commons during the debate on the subject of a revised Prayer Book—and there is no subject which so imperatively requires delicacy of approach and sensitivity of handling. The attempt to proselytise is as inadmissible as to descend to vulgarisation. And one of the less reputable theatrical beliefs, to the effect that a sure-fire commercial formula for a play is one that combines a sexual problem with a parson's conscience, may perhaps be pinned down as a flaring

example of the type of subject which radio drama should not, at any rate in this country, essay. When one considers the conventional view of the Victorian attitude towards sex, it is remarkably difficult to understand how that great Age could have contemplated with equanimity the production of such a play as *Michael and His Lost Angel*. It is, however, fair to add that the play was a failure.

Physical Disability

In this connection, it is not perhaps out of place to stress the undesirability, from the broadcasting point of view, of any theme fundamentally dependent upon the subject of physical disability in one of the characters. It is perfectly possible in the theatre to introduce the blind, the mentally afflicted or the mutilated, since no one is likely to go to a theatre without having some preliminary idea of what the play is about, and because people who are themselves sufferers from such disabilities are unlikely to be members of the audience. But with broadcasting, it is a very different and in every way a more painful story. People who are themselves blind or deaf or victims of some hideous accident are frequently found listening to broadcasting as a regular occupation; and even, in some degree, achieve solace for their suffering. But the impact of a play of this kind upon the relatives of such people in their own homes is, and can be proved from experience to have been, a quite overwhelmingly painful one. It does not seem to me to be in the least mealy-mouthed to admit that this particular consideration carries great weight in the Corporation's policy. Plenty of authors have written moving plays on a subject of this kind in the greatest good faith, and it is a pity that such talent and effort should go to waste.

Choice of Programme

I fear that these various signposts and danger signals may give an impression rather deplorably negative as opposed to positive, and that the reader may feel that it is all very well to be encouraged to write plays, but that the course over which he is invited to compete seems to approximate suspiciously to that of the Grand National, with a Beecher's Brook to complete the downfall of anyone who can tackle the Canal Turn. But in fact the range of subjects is wide and though a certain amount of rubbish has been talked about the internal competition of the three B.B.C. Home Services, nevertheless the organisation of its programmes under the three titles of Home, Light and Third has widened the range still more.

When Lord Reith originally laid down in very broad outline the standards which should govern the old National and Regional Home Services, he gave to British broadcasting the inestimable advantage of broad-basing it fundamentally upon the goodwill of the English domestic fireside. The policy may not have been an adventurous one. It certainly tended to neglect the claims of certain intellectual minorities. But it did achieve the goodwill and, even more important, the confidence of the listening public as a whole, and to that degree contributed directly to saving this country from the grim perils of complete governmental control on the one hand and complete commercial vulgarisation on the other.

By the time that the Second German War had ended —and it must be confessed that it was also high time that it should happen—British broadcasting had passed beyond its fumblingly adolescent and its exuberantly experimental phases and had grown up. Dramatic broadcasting

in particular had grown up largely owing to the incidentals of war-time production which, for the first time, provided an audience which was almost *compelled* to give the necessary attention to radio plays owing to lack of alternatives, and the wish to find some sort of escape from *blitz*, black-out and sheer physical inability to visit the theatre of flesh and blood.

It was therefore appropriate that, having grown up, B.B.C. drama should begin to break away from what I have called its domestic fireside policy, and in such series as Appointment with Fear, Mystery Playhouse and—dare I say so without being riddled by catapults?—Dick Barton, the Light Programme admitted the demands of an ever-widening audience composed of "the boy who's half a man and the man who's half a boy". And it is worth while to remember that, if some inhabitants of Bloomsbury and Chelsea dismiss such an audience as composed of Morons, the Morons have been known to refer to the *Intelligentsia* with equal crudity as "Bloody Lits". It is not, as I see it, for the B.B.C. to essay the judgment of Solomon between such conflicting points of view. Rather is it its business to provide for both, but with the stern qualification that whatever it provides shall be, professionally speaking, of the best quality obtainable both in scripting and production.

There is, therefore, for the professional writer of serials or of short story "thrillers" the special field of the Light programme in which he can practice his craft by way of the broadcasting medium. Simultaneously, the Third programme is open to authors who might find admission to the Home Service problematical owing to doubts raised in the minds of the planners of that Service regarding their works' basic popular appeal. There are

some writers who apparently find themselves working most happily in an atmosphere of comparatively crude characterisation, sternly limited programme space and considerable physical action. To these, the Light programme can be recommended for a special study of its requirements. There are others—and possibly, though not inevitably, these are the most important of all—who tend to be in advance of their time, whose thought and expression depend for understanding upon an audience, necessarily limited, of people sensitive naturally and cultivated educationally beyond the ordinary; authors who can hardly work at all under the whips and scorpions of time-limitation and the listening figures compiled by Listener Research. For the work of such authors, the Third programme was expressly designed.

Great Opportunities for High Comedy and Modern Poetic Drama

There are, in particular, two types of play which have not yet received that amount of attention from writers which they deserve. Melodrama and crime, fantasy and adventure—there has never been any lack of examples in these fields, though, as always, there have been too few examples of what may be called "the best". But what used to be called, in the great days of the Edwardian actor-managers, "High Comedy"; the play written with distinction, elegance and verbal felicity and which presented such actors as Sir George Alexander, Charles Hawtrey, Sir Seymour Hicks and, more recently, Mr. Ronald Squire, with their greatest opportunities, seems almost to be a lost art. The immense success, on the air, of various productions of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and, though on a considerably less classic level, of some of the stage plays of Frederick Lonsdale, have proved

that the microphone is crying out for work of this calibre and quality.

Secondly, there is the modern poetic drama. All the valiant efforts of The Mercury Theatre have failed as yet to break down what seems to be an instinctive aversion, on the part of English theatre audiences, from the play in verse. In radio there is another and a more cheerful story to tell. Since Geoffrey Bridson paved the way with his *March of the Forty-Five*, first produced in the early Thirties, the record of the broadcast play in verse has been an increasingly distinguished and interesting one. It is only necessary to mention such examples as the same author's *Aaron's Field*, *The Dark Tower* of Louis MacNeice, *The Rescue* of Edward Sackville West, and Patrick Dickinson's *Theseus and the Minotaur* and *The Wall of Troy* to hammer home the point I seek to make. As a point, it should be obvious enough. The classical plays, the Greek plays and the blank verse plays of the Elizabethan dramatists have, I dare to assert, achieved a genuine *renaissance* through presentation at the microphone. They have done so because they depend for everything on their words and the way in which those words are handled; for their scenery, for their continuity, for their characterisation. To adapt their peculiar conventions for broadcasting was certainly a task, but a task both agreeable and, comparatively speaking, simple. To the modern poet, therefore, who writes to be heard rather than to be read, the radio play in verse and the Third programme offer unrivalled opportunities.

It may indeed be no more than the truth to suggest that the reason why the B.B.C. has to some extent succeeded where the theatre has failed in this connection may be the difference in their respective potential audiences.

The Mercury Theatre is not ungetatable but it is extremely small, and the inhabitants of Notting Hill Gate will, I hope, forgive me if I aver that theirs is not perhaps among the best known of London districts. The potential audience for plays in verse must be scattered all over the country, and for many of the individuals composing that audience a visit to the Mercury is simply a physical impossibility. For my own part, I imagine that many people of this kind live, by preference and inclination, in comparatively remote parts of the country where their taste for what may be called a contemplative and thoughtful life can be enjoyed more easily than in a capital city with all its hubbub and distraction. But the verse play broadcast does not require the audience to come to it; it can reach its audience, whether the individuals composing it live in the Hebrides or at Land's End.

CHAPTER IV

THE QUESTION OF LENGTH

THERE are two questions which crop up in my official correspondence with the persistent regularity which entitles them to be called bad pennies. The first—which is by and large irrelevant to the subject of this book—enquires whether actors in broadcast plays act or whether they read their scripts. (In case anyone should be interested in the answer, it is, put brusquely and rather irritatingly, "Both".) The second asks quite simply: what is the proper length at which a radio play should be written?; and simple though it may appear as a question, the answer is by no means a simple one. Indeed, to answer it at all satisfactorily implies, I think, touching upon a number of factors that would not seem at first sight to be included at all in the meaning of the word "length". The question, indeed, usually means a good deal more than it says. It is usually put because it is the simplest and most immediate problem that arises in the mind of the would-be author, who very naturally tends to be intimidated by a medium of whose technical machinery he is perforce ignorant.

The Factors Involved

*The author of a book, as a rule, hardly needs to ask a publisher before submitting to the latter a reasonably clean and tidy typescript, properly typed. There is no

*Publisher's note: The position of *Right Way Books* is slightly different. The editors (who welcome all title suggestions) prefer a preliminary letter to a completed typescript. In a one-price series, various matters—length, treatment, illustrations, etc.—are better arranged first.

mystery about the form of the average book; there are no distorting factors in the shape of producers, engineers, microphones and fade units between the submitted script and the printed volume. Even in the theatre, the author generally feels reasonably at home. There are a great many printed plays at his disposal for reference; he can go to the theatre and see how words are made alive and what stage directions involve in practice. But when it comes to the medium of the screen or microphone, it is altogether another story. Machinery comes in, technicians come in. The actual process of shooting a film or of rehearsing a radio play is not and cannot be open to the general public though, as far as the B.B.C. is concerned, special arrangements have frequently been made to give authors the opportunity, within reason, of experience "behind the scenes". *Practically no film scripts have been printed, and such radio plays as have been published are by no means necessarily representative of radio dramatic scripts as a whole.

As a result, the author tends, I think, to feel that he is advancing into a jungle without knowing whether he should take with him a rifle or a water-pistol, a pen-knife or a pick-axe: which is probably why so many scripts that are submitted are either quite needlessly complex in so far that they include directions about movement, about sound effects, and about music, which lie far more properly within the province of the producer; or alternatively consist either of bald patches of dialogue illumined only by such inadequacies as *Time Lapse*, or fall back upon

*Publisher's note: At the time this was written, the editors of *Right Way Books* had foreseen a demand for a book on Scenario Writing and Adaptation, and readers are referred to "The Right Way to Write for the Films" (White and Stock—Introduction by Noel Langley), 5/- net, from booksellers, or, if difficulty, by post 5/6, just published.

the old stage model of acts and scenes, which serves only to perform the functions of a strait-jacket and to destroy that freedom of construction which is one of the few boons granted to the writer by the radio dramatic medium.

Presentation of Script

Suppose, then, that we start at the beginning. I have written this before elsewhere, but I feel it is worth while repeating that, all impressions to the contrary notwithstanding, radio play readers and even responsible B.B.C. producers are human beings. They are also inclined to be temperamentally a little highly strung, and practically to be working under considerable and regular pressure. I am not putting this forward as an excuse for their shortcomings, whatever those may be; I merely state the fact because, in submitting a play, it is as well to consider not only the audience but also the *entrepreneur.* No doubt it would be more agreeable, and no doubt in Utopia it could be arranged, for these unfortunates to have no nervous systems, and virtues of patience and imagination extended *ad infinitum.* But in this present wicked world, it is no use blinking the fact that a script which is illegible, a script with its last two pages missing, a script typed in single spacing on flimsy paper on the sort of typewriter that smudges every third letter, a script that lacks at the beginning any cast of characters, a script that gives the impression of having been dug out with difficulty from the dustiest shelf of the most obscure cupboard, is automatically weighting the dice against itself.

It is, of course, the business of B.B.C. play readers to read any script submitted that is legible, and it is only very occasionally that they are confronted with plays written in long hand, in faded red ink, or in block capitals

on circular pieces of cardboard. But, to put the matter briefly, it is very much worth while for any author to submit a script in a clean, tidy and easily legible form, for choice pinned and not clipped together, and in some form of outside cover on which should be printed not only the title of the play but also the author's name and address, together with that of his Agent, if he has one. It is also helpful, though it is not so necessary, if the paper chosen is quarto and not octavo. The spacing should always be double; directions, for choice typed in red or underlined in red ink, should be single-spaced and begin half-way across the page; the names of the characters should always be printed in full and not merely indicated by initials. The great advantage of the quarto page is the simple fact that it immensely simplifies this matter of timing. A quarto page scripted after the fashion indicated above can, as a rough general rule, be accepted as needing a minute-and-a-half of playing time. The value of this both to the author and to the play reader is, I imagine, obvious enough.

Generalisations as to Length

To come now specifically to this problem of length. To answer it at all briefly would inevitably be misleading in the extreme. Indeed, to answer it at all is to take something of a risk. I am perfectly well aware that there are a number of writers who will say in perfect good faith that they are writers and not manufacturers; that you cannot set limits to a work of artistic creation in the same way as a grocer weighs out quarter of a pound of cheese. I am inevitably reminded, at this point, of a young man who, years ago, came to see me at Savoy Hill. He brought with him a letter of introduction from Mr. Bernard Shaw

—a letter penned, I feel, in one of Mr. Shaw's more impish moments—and he planted upon my desk a dramatic work which ran to between seven and eight hundred pages. Evidently it was a work conceived on a big scale, and I will confess my spirits drooped when I perceived that the first scene included a number of wordless conversations between animals. I pointed out that the microphone had its limitations, and that I thought that I might be better able to judge the play's merits if they were presented to me in a form somewhat abbreviated, and to an extent adapted to those limitations. My visitor then expounded to me at great length his theory of artistic creation, its requirement of perfect freedom, and expressed the opinion that it was the business of a merely mechanical medium to adapt itself to the artist and not *vice versa*. As a person, I found him amusing and rather agreeable; as a practising playwright, he was beyond reason or belief. But all my most patient efforts could not convince him of the fact.

This is, of course, an extreme case, and such extreme cases are matter rather for the smile than the tear. It would, in a way, be easy enough if the British attitude towards radio drama corresponded with that in vogue in the United States of America and—I must add with great regret—the majority of broadcasting stations overseas. There, the radio play must conform literally to split-second timing and, for the most part, must run either to thirty minutes or to an hour. For the author, there is neither argument nor appeal. He must take it or leave it.

But in this country, we are proud, and I think justifiably proud, of having adopted a far less rigid and far more intelligent attitude. A play is not confined within the bounds of cast iron planning schedules. It is realised that

a play should run for the length of time which the author feels is desirable to enable him satisfactorily to cover his subject or to develop his theme. The necessary time is then asked for, by the dramatic department, from the programme planners concerned. This, of course, implies special difficulties. The length of time may not be available without doing violence to other programme items; as a result, plays may have to be held up before production for considerable periods. And this is an aspect of the question which authors are inclined neither to appreciate nor to understand. But no matter how elastic these planning arrangements may be, there must—*pace* my young friend of Savoy Hill—always be some kind of outside limit of available time even for the great wide open spaces of the Third programme. That limit must be conditioned, on the one hand, by the amount of overall broadcasting time available and, on the other, by professional broadcasting experience of how much of one particular type of entertainment the listener can be counted upon to enjoy or, at the worst, to endure. The broadcast of *Man and Superman* in full was probably a worth while experiment; but certainly not to be regarded as setting a reliable precedent.

Advantages of the Shorter Play

There is a further complication. The writer will see—in such series as World Theatre or Saturday Night Theatre—quite regular time periods allotted to plays, varying from seventy-five minutes to one hour and three-quarters, and he may feel therefore aggrieved if I should suggest that a play specially written for broadcasting can, as a rule, do very well with less. It is true for all that. And it is true because the plays in the series that I have men-

tioned are almost always in the first instance adapted from the stage, and their stage versions have played for anything from two-and-a-half to three hours, if not longer. In spite of all the efforts of such organisations as the Lux Radio Theatre of America, it is my considered opinion and one which has been accepted by the B.B.C. that it is impossible, without butchering by the death of a thousand cuts, to compress any worth while adapted stage play within a period of less than one hour and a quarter. The authors have had the conventional timing of the theatre in their minds when they have written their original works, and radio adaptations are compelled willy-nilly to conform.

But there is no reason for the author writing directly for the microphone to think in terms of theatrical timing, with allowance for stage directions, for audience participation in the shape of laughs, and so on; and he should remember, once again, that he is writing for individuals and groups, and not for a mass audience. To hold the attention of such individuals and groups in the environment of their own homes is a far more difficult job than to hold the attention of an audience which is extremely conscious of the desire to get its money's worth while occupying the seats for which it has paid no small sum. The radio play can and should dispense with much of the padding and many of the trimmings that are the *sine qua non* of the play in the theatre. In general, the former's plot is simpler, its characters are fewer, its development is more rapid, its impact upon the audience more direct. And all this saves, and quite justifiably saves, time.

That this is not a purely personal point of view is proved, I think, by the undoubted fact that nearly all the best plays that have been specially written for the

radio have fallen within the limits of forty minutes on the one hand and seventy-five minutes on the other. I would not care to make my final answer more specific than that.

Specific Timing Suggestions (for the Three Services)

It might be worth while, in conclusion, to sum up this whole question of length very briefly in a few, I hope, practical sentences.

Writers whose objective is the Light programme are well advised to aim at the strict half-hour length, for instances of which Mystery Playhouse has provided many admirable examples. As a general rule, Light programme scripts should never exceed an hour.

For the Home Service, limitations of time are less exacting. While programme spaces exist for the seventy-five or eighty-five minute play, experience has shown that the most successful plays, specially written for broadcasting, tend to come out between forty-five minutes and an hour.

For the Third programme, the question of length is, within reason, immaterial, but this should not be taken necessarily to imply that unusual length is a guarantee of unusual merit.

CHAPTER V

THE QUESTION OF MUSIC

Advantages and Disadvantages

FEW things have aroused and so persistently continue to arouse controversy among listeners as the use of music in connection with the broadcasting of plays. Indeed, upon some listeners the mere raising of the question appears to have an effect very similar to that of waving the red cloak before the eyes of the proverbial bull. Such warm-blooded individuals assert roundly that there is no place for music in radio drama; that the human ear cannot listen to two things at once; and that, in particular, to broadcast the human voice against a background of instrumental music is both an offence to the ear and a violence to every æsthetic canon. Against such a point of view it is possible to argue, but I do not propose to do so. A number of the people who subscribe to it turn out in fact to be musically tone-deaf, in which case their irritation is quite comprehensible. But the majority of them have adopted this point of view not because of the use of music in connection with radio plays but as a result of its *mis*use. That their position is really untenable is, I think, proved by the inexorable facts of experience.

While I do not agree that music is invariably an asset to the broadcast play, especially in the case of a very large number of adapted stage plays, it is none the less true that a great many of the outstanding successes of the theatre of the air have been plays in which music has played not only an important but an integral part.

Louis MacNeice's *Christopher Columbus* and *The Dark Tower*, Edward Sackville West's *The Rescue*, Emery Bonett's *One Fine Day*, the Holt Marvell adaptation of Compton Mackenzie's *Carnival*, James Elroy Flecker's *Hassan*, *The Frogs* of Aristophanes, Clemence Dane's translation of Rostand's *L'Aiglon*, all owe an inestimable debt to the musical composers connected with their production, and most of the plays quoted—a list, incidentally, quoted quite haphazardly—were practically conceived in terms of music as well as words.

Music and the Theatre

It is of course true that, speaking generally, the recent history of music in connection with the theatre is a singularly unfortunate one. As far as the ordinary stage play is concerned, it is difficult to find a defence for or justification of the blare of the over-amplified panatrope or the scratch and tinkle of the depressed trio of ill-tuned piano, violin and 'cello, which have served for so long as little more than a hint to the audience that the time has come to seek rest and relaxation from the play in the comforting seclusion of the most adjacent bar. Such music is of no importance except in that it is one more remarkable symptom of the curious blindness of many theatrical managers to the importance of what may be termed the "over-all presentation" of their entertainment. It can only be categoried as "Interval" music and its fate should be charitable neglect, with a side-glance of compassion for its unfortunate executives.

But "Incidental" music is another matter. No one with a working knowledge of the stage and the possession of psychological insight, however small, into the make-up of audiences, and a knowledge, however superficial, of the

history of entertainment, can fail to be aware of the enormous power for embellishment and emotional emphasis that is latent in the use of music properly selected and skilfully performed. But in the theatre especially, the additional expense involved must always be a serious factor, to say nothing of the added complication of rehearsal when music is used, to say nothing of the difficulty of achieving adequate performance.

The Cinema

In the cinema, musical history has been even more unhappy. The piano that tinkled so pathetically and persistently as an accompaniment to the original silent film; the three- or four-piece combination that at one time used to be brought on to the set by excitable directors with the curious notion that actors would grimace more feelingly before a camera to the accompaniment of a little Mozart or of a Viennese waltz; the Hollywood Heavenly Choir, which seems to have attained a conventionalised immortality by consistent misuse; the application of music quite grotesquely ill-selected and only too often monstrously over-amplified to colour situation and simultaneously to destroy any illusion of reality: all these things added up to a point at which Mr. Michael Powell, in his film, *One of Our Aircraft is Missing*, dispensed with accompanying music altogether, and the innovation struck both critics and audience with what seemed almost a stunning physical blow.

The Significance of Music to the Radio Play

Nor can it be denied that broadcasting has been guiltless in the matter. Most radio producers come from or have had experience of the theatre; a few have had

experience of films; all cannot but be aware of the simple fact that, for the ordinary listener, it is infinitely easier to listen to music than it is to listen to the spoken word (this because, as I have often said elsewhere, we are all conditioned in childhood to going to *hear* music while we are taken to *see* plays). It was, therefore, and remains natural enough for radio dramatic producers to think of music almost as the second cartridge in their double-barrelled gun.

At the same time, there are some producers, like the listeners of whom I have written above, who are tone-deaf, and there are many producers who suffer from a defective musical education. In conclusion, time was—and I fear occasionally still is—when what I would call "Interval" music, completely devoid of significance or distinction, creeps into a play to carry one scene over into another; when "Incidental" music indifferently chosen, over-familiar, or too heavily orchestrated, produces just the effect upon listeners which I have condemned in citing the Hollywood Heavenly Choir, or the symphony orchestra which seems so curiously to turn up as a background to the Arizona Desert, to Greenland's icy mountains, or to the gangsters' hide-out in the Chicago Loop.

But we are not primarily concerned here with the misuse of music which has given it a bad name, nor with that listening minority who have made up their minds, and are by no means to be convinced to the contrary, that there is not another and a brighter side to the picture.

We are concerned with the extent to which the author, as opposed to the producer, should concern himself with music as an essential ingredient of his play.

In the first place, then, the author must make up his mind as to whether he is conceiving his play in terms of music-and-speech, or in terms of speech only. If the latter, the problem of music, whether "Incidental" or "Interval", becomes one of the producer's headaches and should be left entirely to him. In these circumstances, music becomes neither more nor less than a sound effect of a particular kind or, alternatively, a part of the general set-up of presentation. To deal with it in either of these capacities is almost certainly beyond the scope of the writer's business.

In the case, however, of a piece conceived in terms simultaneously musical and verbal, while the producer may and in practice certainly should be consulted—as a simple and obvious means of checking with regard to practical possibilities of finance, orchestral resources, rehearsals and so forth—the musical responsibility lies with the author. In this connection, I am naturally assuming that the composer and the author can be regarded as a single entity; that the writer of the music has been in the closest contact and most complete creative harmony with, and has the entire confidence of, the composer of the words from the very start of the complete project.

I no more propose to lay down *ex cathedra* instructions as to the composition of individual music than as to the writing of individual plays. I am, in fact, considerably less qualified to do so as, while I have written a number of dramatic pieces, I have never yet tried my hand at musical composition, and am now unlikely to do so! But it may not be out of place to establish certain points in connection with the use of music which have impressed themselves strongly upon me as the result of a good many years of production experience.

Musical Balance

There is an almost invariable tendency on the part of authors to yearn for and indeed to demand orchestral combinations of much too large a size. It may be more attractive—it can hardly help being so—to have at one's disposal the sound and fury of a symphony orchestra. It is merely the fact that unless your play is conceived on the heroic scale, symphonic music will probably destroy its balance, blur its outline, and complicate almost unbelievably that primary task of the producer, the achievement of simple audibility.

The normal dramatic studio used for the broadcasting of plays is neither designed nor equipped for the largest musical combinations. As a result, when a large orchestra is used, some sort of lash-up equipment has to be adapted to a building specifically designed for concert work, with inevitably evil effects upon the acting aspect of the production.

Both a small combination and light orchestration are absolutely essential if there is to be much speech against a musical background. This business of the proper relative balance of speech and music is, in nine cases out of ten, the reason why a large number of listeners rage so consistently against the general use of music in plays. It has, however, been proved again and again that if the music is suitably orchestrated and the actors are properly balanced, the combination can not only make perfectly easy listening but also produce an æsthetically satisfactory result.

Musical *perspective* is all-important. (This is really a producer's note, but it may not be without its interest for the writer.) It is extraordinary how, when there is an error of judgment over this perspective, the visual image

of the musical combination becomes immediately present to the listener's imagination. As a result, you get such a ludicrous effect as that of a string quartet performing at the South Pole, or of an orchestra ranged about its conductor in the middle of a battle-field. When the right perspective is achieved, the music becomes unearthly and takes upon itself some of the magical quality of Prospero's island. It is as important to avoid summoning up any visualisation of your musicians as it is to achieve the visualisation of the characters in your drama.

It is vital not to mix up what may be called "atmosphere" music, on the one hand, with "realistic" music on the other. Suppose that your play is dealing with the life of a celebrated musician—as a good many too many plays tend to do—and the script necessarily includes the playing of a number of solo pieces on the piano or violin, with possibly a complete concert hall performance as part of the dramatic climax. It is on all counts undesirable that with a play of this kind the audience should be left in doubt as to whether the emotional atmosphere is being "ginned up" by music that is outside the body of the piece, or whether they are actually listening to flesh and blood performers who are to all intents and purposes members of the *dramatis personæ.*

The intelligent writer who knows himself to be no musical specialist should by no means be deterred from general indications in his script as to the type of music which he feels would be most appropriate. Such indications may be of the greatest help to the producer, and while they may be improved upon, they should certainly never be ignored.

It can be taken for granted that, unless there is some perfectly good and easily explicable reason for

the use of music at any point of a play, it is better to cut it.

The basic problem to be resolved is whether the added complications on the rehearsal front inseparable from the use of music for reasons which will, I trust, appear later, are not only compensated for but overborne by advantages which suitable music suitably used can bring to a play.

CHAPTER VI

THE QUESTION OF SOUND EFFECTS

IT may surprise the reader to know that, in my judgment, this problem, while naturally and normally akin to the problem of the use of music, is one of infinitely less importance. I have for years adopted as an axiom that if a producer is in any doubt about either the quality or the usefulness of a sound effect, he should ruthlessly and immediately cut it. I have, indeed, heard several admirable performances of broadcast plays which did not include a sound effect of any kind; and while I would not go so far as to advocate the complete abolition of sound effects—bag, baggage, railway trains and sea-gulls —I doubt if there is any other part of the machinery with which I should find it easier to dispense, did circumstances compel me to do so.

The main trouble about sound effects is that they have always been fun and that they have always been "news". Long before the radio play was taken seriously, it was possible to find plenty of space in reputable journals given up to tall stories about Sound Effect studios at Broadcasting House, and faintly embarrassing photographs of what occurred therein. In the old days of Savoy Hill, distinguished visitors were invariably conducted to the Effects Room as a matter of course; and I fancy that there was more joy in high places over the discovery of the original sea-gull effect—a Recording Van on the Thames Embankment had suffered melancholy failure interspersed with a good deal of the hooting of tugs, when one of the Effects boys, with that cheerful ingenuity proper to

his age, proceeded suddenly to do the trick with two pieces of wood and one piece of elastic—than there would have been had I announced that I had found a promising new writer of radio drama in blank verse.

The inevitable result was that the importance of sound effects was magnified beyond reason or belief; when every lighted match, every footstep, every opening and closing door, every whisky-and-soda, was solemnly reproduced at the expense of much ingenuity and hard work, and only too often to the utter confusion of the listener.

Sound Confusion: the Value of Dialogue

The trouble, of course, is that—as can be proved at any time by going into a cinema and listening to the sound track with your eyes shut—one sound effect, unaided by sight, is liable to be horribly like another. This is particularly the case with such things as machinery, motor-cars, trains and water. If, therefore, any sound effect is essential, then the dialogue must either point forward to it or refer back to it. This sounds both elementary and clumsy. It is elementary but it is none the less important. And that it should not *appear* clumsy or obvious is one of many tricks which the radio playwright must make it his business to master.

Not only did scripts tend to become cluttered up with extraneous noises of all kinds, but plays even came to be written because of the opportunities that their scripts offered for the ingenious use of sound effect: which was putting the cart before the horse with a vengeance.

The harsh truth is that the significance of sound effects decreases in proportion with their quantity. One door that opens—as listeners may remember who heard Mr. Norman Edwards' play, *The Baron's Room*—can be effec-

tive in the extreme. But a play in which a door opens and closes every time a character enters or leaves a room, becomes as irritating to the ear and as artistically jumbled as those early British films in which characters were invariably taken up to a door by the camera, shown opening it, passing through it, turning and closing it again, and finally walking away from it. It needed the genius of a Lubitsch to show, by cutting, how to use doors properly from the point of view of the camera. The equivalent treatment is necessary in the use of the microphone.

The Correct Use of Effects

Let the writer, therefore, consider most carefully which of his sound effects are truthfully *necessary* to his play. Let him remember that, given the slightest stimulus, the imagination of his audience can function in a more dramatic and, indeed, a more efficient fashion than the best equipped Sound Effects Section at any producer's disposal. Let him fling aside remorselessly anything that may come under the category of the *bric-à-brac* of sound effects: the little fiddling natural sounds which are part of everybody's minute-to-minute existence, and which are also of neither significance nor interest to the onlooker.

Let him hold fast by the conviction that one sound effect is ten times as dramatically significant as ten.

Finally, let him by all means be aware that the end is important rather than the means; that sound effects, like multiple-studio technique, have their uses and their place, but both are altogether secondary to ingenuity of plot, and integrity of writing and construction.

It is no more than the brutal truth to say that nothing is so revealing of the amateur writer for radio than a script peppered with directions for the use of sound effects.

CHAPTER VII

A NOTE ON ADAPTATION

Stage Plays

FEW ideas are more prevalent or more mistaken than that which conceives of adaptation for broadcasting as being either a simple or a "hack" job. There still exist quite a number of persons who are profoundly indignant when the B.B.C. declines to accept an adaptation of a stage play which consists merely of scratching out the original stage directions, making a certain number of cuts to meet the requirements of the limited time-space periods indigenous to broadcasting, and adding the names of characters to a large number of speeches in the hope that this will serve to make the action intelligible. It is hardly too much to say that to submit an adaptation of this kind is the next thing to trying to obtain money under false pretences; but if not dishonest, it is at any rate profoundly unintelligent. In fact, the adaptation for broadcasting of stage plays is not, generally speaking, a satisfactory activity from the point of view of the free-lance author. It is a comparatively specialised type of adaptation. A good deal of it is done by the individual producers to whom such plays are assigned. And there is a small section of the B.B.C.'s Dramatic Department whose business it is to deal with work of this particular kind. It is true that when this section is overburdened with work, as is not infrequently the case, certain stage plays which it is desired to have adapted are offered for adaptation to outside authors. But these authors are and must be

writers of very considerable broadcasting experience. It is also too often forgotten by adaptors of theatre plays that copyright in such plays remains the property of the authors or of the managements to whom the rights have been assigned. It is therefore more than possible that the adaptor who does not investigate this original copyright position may find that he has merely wasted his time. The owner of the copyright may object to having his work broadcast at all. Or, more reasonably, he may prefer to make any adaptation for broadcasting himself. Or, equally reasonably, he may make it a condition that any adaptation for broadcasting must receive his approval. The writer, therefore, who contemplates the adaptation of a stage play should not involve himself in the necessary work without making preliminary contact first with the author and then with the B.B.C., so that this copyright situation may be regularised. There have been a large number of cases in which failure to do this has led to disappointment and an inevitable sense of waste and frustration.

What Adaptation Means

It is easy enough to say what adaptation should not be. It should not consist of a mixture of abridgment and explanation. To define what it should be is rather more difficult; and I must return to a point that I made rather earlier in this book. Broadcasting is simply another medium of telling a story. The novelist uses the medium of words, the theatre uses the medium of living actors, the cinema uses the medium of the camera, and broadcasting uses that of the microphone.

Adaptation, in short, means the proper telling of the story in terms of a medium different from that in which

it was originally conceived. It does not mean altering the story, although it may do so. It does mean preserving at all costs the spirit of the story, and the motivating purpose of the original author in telling it.

Characterisation

There is, of course, the very evil tradition of the film industry to contend with in this matter. Producers of films have for years had a touching belief not only that two authors are better than one, but that nineteen authors must be nineteen times better than one; to which they have added a singular conception of dialogue as something that can be spread upon the story like so much butter by that queer *ersatz* personage, the dialogue writer. Now it is quite true that much dialogue in books and short stories, which is perfectly readable, is by no means speakable by actors on the stage or in front of the microphone. It is also quite true that there are plenty of authors of books who seem congenitally incapable of writing dialogue for actors. The latter, as I have said, is an inbred talent rather than something painfully to be acquired. None the less, dialogue, if it is to be effective—and dialogue is if possible more important to a radio-piece even than it is to a stage play—must arise naturally from characterisation. Indeed, in play, film or in radio-piece, as opposed to novel, dialogue is the only resource at the author's disposal for achieving characterisation at all. The writing of "additional dialogue", whether for a whole film or for individual scenes out of that film, by an imported stranger who cannot hope to be familiar with the original author's basic conception of his characters, seems to me as fantastic in theory as it is unsatisfactory in practice.

British broadcasting has always attempted to guard itself against this particular sort of temptation. Most people have read or heard of well-known books which have been bought by film companies in Hollywood on the strength of their success as fiction, which have been re-written and tre-written and additionally dialogued until they have become altogether unrecognisable were it not for the titles, and which ultimately have had the titles changed on the grounds that they would not make sufficiently exciting billing from the point of view of the purchasing company's Publicity Department!

Common Mistakes

In doing its best to guard against imbecile extravagance of this kind, the B.B.C. has, in my opinion, tended unduly to conservatism in adaptation, and this is particularly true of what may be called "form". It can almost be taken for granted that the *form* of a book or a short story is unsuitable for direct representation at the microphone, and skilled adaptation consists in a selection and blending of scenes most easily susceptible to representation on the air. The almost invariable mistakes can be listed as follows:

Too lengthy slabs—I use the word advisedly—of narrative. Even if lifted bodily from the novel and thereby preserving to a degree the book's elementary spirit, such slabs will always make the piece top-heavy. If added for the purpose of telescoping the plot, they are bound, unless they are written with great individual distinction, to give an impression both ponderous and dull.

Too many short scenes. The freedom given by the microphone from the static conventions of the theatre does not free the writer from the necessity of establishing

both situations and characters firmly before his audience and allowing both of them time to develop.

Trivial editing of original dialogue. While it may be desirable, here and there, to make a change for purposes of clarification, the greatest care must be taken not to destroy that rhythmic quality which is present in the writing of all good dialogue. This point, again, is probably of greater importance before the microphone than it is behind footlights.

Possibly most important of all: the notion that adaptation is "easy meat". The truth is that to adapt with distinction and accomplishment requires as much detailed study of the medium as does the writing of an original work. Such writers as the Agg-Constanduros combination; Mr. Oldfield Box, who has brought so many of Trollope's novels to life; and Miss Muriel Levy, who was responsible for the adaptation of *The Forsyte Saga*, are under no illusions whatsoever on this point.

Choice of Material

Taste and discrimination are needed for the selection of the original work; knowledge of both the capacities and limitations of the medium is required for the actual business of adaptation; and, possibly most vital of all, an acute sensitivity to and sympathy with the original author's mentality and style of writing is called for, if the completed work is to avoid giving the impression of something painfully machine-made.

There is the case, almost legendary in broadcasting history, of Mr. Holt Marvell's adaptation of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's novel, *Carnival*. It is true that, in this case, Mr. Marvell had the supreme advantage of close contact with Mr. Mackenzie while he was making the adaptation.

But it is also true that when it had been completed, Mr. Mackenzie was unable, without specific reference back to his own novel, to tell which of the dialogue was his own and which had been invented by Mr. Marvell. This was indeed "a wedding of true minds" brought about largely by the extreme and almost burning enthusiasm for the original work which had flamed in Mr. Marvell's breast for a number of years. Such enthusiasm and such affection are by no means the least of the motives upon which the ideal adaptor should rely.

Here, I feel, I should re-emphasise the very real need for both radio playwriters and adaptors not merely to listen to broadcast plays of all kinds but particularly to that type of play in which they intend to specialise. It is not enough just to listen casually now and then, when the switch is turned and the play—probably already half over—pours out of the loudspeaker. It is necessary to treat listening to plays with as much respect as an author would pay to works of reference in a library. This type of specialised listening is absolutely essential if what may be called "the general hang" of the problem, as opposed to its mechanical details, is to be mastered. Without mastery of this "general hang", it is most probable that the author will waste his time in submitting work to the B.B.C.

PART II

CHAPTER VIII

A GLIMPSE OF THE MACHINE

I FEEL that at this point it may be useful to attempt to take the reader behind the scenes. A number of would-be authors have, from time to time, expressed the opinion that their task would be eased if they could "see the wheels go round", and a number of them have, from time to time, been given the opportunity of attending rehearsals and watching broadcast plays in the actual process of production. Unfortunately circumstances of geography and limitations of listening-room space make it out of the question for a general invitation to broadcasting studios to be issued to writers as a whole; nor, as I have said before, is it desirable that the mind of the writer should be unreasonably clouded by an emphasis upon technical gadgets or by an over-emphatic or highly-coloured presentation of the machinery of production. The latter is and must remain the business less of the writer than of the producer. At the same time, there is no doubt that some slight acquaintance with studios and with what goes on in studios may be useful to the writer and is likely in any event to clear his mind with regard to the use of a number of otherwise largely unintelligible technical terms as well as the most sensible form of the laying out of the script.

I propose, therefore, to trace the course of the average play from the time of its reception by the B.B.C. to the

moment of its production. If the reader will follow this progress without impatience, I hope that he may find the answers to quite a number of the questions which recur with such frequency in the correspondence addressed to the B.B.C.'s Dramatic Department.

The Play Library

A play that is submitted to the B.B.C. goes, in the first instance, to what is called the Play Library, which is one of the sections of the Dramatic Department. There, it is registered and a note is taken of its receipt, of its title and of the author's name and address. It may perhaps be as well to suggest, at this point, that unless an author is personally known to an individual producer, he will be unwise to address his play to a producer personally rather than to the Play Library. All producers are not as business-like as they might be and many producers tend, when they are actually engaged on a production, to allow their correspondence to wait. I do not defend these shortcomings, but I submit that it is a mistake to ignore the factors of human error and of human weakness, and the only way of ensuring the safety of the script is to address it to the Play Library, where machinery exists for its proper registration and storage.

The Play Readers

The second stage is for the script to pass into the hands of one of a small staff of play readers who work for the B.B.C. It is not the business of these play readers to pass anything in the nature of a final judgment upon the play unless, for reasons immediately obvious, the script is quite hopeless. There are more quite hopeless scripts submitted than might be expected and many more than anyone

would wish. If the average number of plays submitted in the course of a week varies between seventy and ninety, the number that can claim serious consideration can be laid down generously in single figures.

Preparation of Synopsis and Recommendation

The play that passes this first elementary test is then synopsised, with brief notes to cover any particular points which have aroused interest or uncertainty in the reader's mind; and script and synopsis are then passed over to the Head of Drama or his deputy. The latter then asks one, or more usually two, of his individual producers to let him have a report on the play, which will definitely recommend its acceptance or rejection. Final acceptance or rejection rests only with the Head of Drama or with his immediate deputy.

We will assume that the play whose fate we are following has been read, synopsised, recommended and accepted. The play is then returned to the Play Library, where it is first timed and then filed. Its name, the author and the timing are entered in a large black book for immediate reference by the Head of the Department, and Programme Copyright are invited to open negotiations with the author for an appropriate fee. The question of fees is outside the scope of this book, but it may interest would-be authors to know that these fees are a matter for individual negotiation and that it is not as a rule the practice of the B.B.C. to purchase the play outright nor to purchase any rights other than the broadcasting rights.

Let me add one word of advice on the financial issue. An author is extremely ill-advised if he accepts hearsay reports concerning the fees that are habitually paid by the B.B.C. There is a long-standing tradition to the effect

that the B.B.C. is "mean" and that its fees compare extremely unfavourably with those paid by commercial or profit-making organisations. The tradition can probably be traced back to the earliest days of broadcasting, when the resources of the old company were much smaller and when broadcasting, both from the point of view of the actor and the author, could hardly be taken as a serious activity. If the legend was ever well-founded, it is no longer true. It would be stupid to pretend that a non-profit-making monopoly can compete with the more notorious extravagances and the more showy aspects of the entertainment industry. And to descend from the general to the particular, it is obviously impossible that any organisation, however generous, can pay for one or two performances of a single play the equivalent of the royalties which would accrue to an author in the course of a lengthy West End run. But the analogy is a false one. The writing of a play for broadcasting is far more comparable with the writing of what may be called a "long-short story" than with the writing of a stage play. And without going into actual figures—because actual figures vary with the reputation of the author and various other imponderable factors—the fees paid for radio plays are quite definitely comparable with the sums paid for stories by the editors of reputable magazines. It is occasionally suggested that the B.B.C. expects authors to accept moderate fees because of the unrivalled advertising value which broadcasting performance gives to their work. I would be the last to deny such advertising value, but it is simply not the fact that the B.B.C. consciously throws such value into the scale. For the benefit of the cynical, it may be worth while to point out that it brings no personal profit to any member of either the Copyright

Section or the Dramatic Department if an author can be persuaded to accept a fee lower than that which he considers his work to be worth. For the benefit of the impecunious, it may be encouraging to add that a proportion of the payment is made on acceptance.

The Programme Planners

You must imagine our play now with its script safely filed on the shelves of the Play Library, its title, author's name and timing on the appropriate page of the black book, together with all other plays accepted for future production. Every week, three meetings are held between the Head of Drama and the programme planners of the three Services, Home, Light and Third. At these meetings, it is his business to put forward material for which he is anxious to find time and space on the one hand, and on the other to meet the varying demands of the planners themselves. It is not possible for the Head of Drama either to determine definitely that such and such a play shall be broadcast or still less that it shall be broadcast at a particular time. On the other hand, it is unusual, for obvious reasons, for the Heads of the three Services to overrule or completely to ignore a strong recommendation by the individual whose duty it is to be their professional adviser on all matters dramatic. There is, however, quite obviously a great deal of purely mechanical fitting together to be done and an enormous number of qualifying factors to be taken into consideration, apart altogether from the sheer merits of any individual play. This is a point which most authors tend to overlook or to ignore. There is the factor of available time-space; there is the factor of the general "weight" of the programme as a whole; there is the question of

competing claims upon studio space; there is the question of available money; there is the question of the all-over balance of dramatic output between the three Services themselves. All these complications are consistent problems requiring solution. Frequently there may be added, into the bargain, the problem of the availability of an orchestra, the availability of certain individual actors, the availability of one or other particular studio, even the availability of one particular producer.

The Play Reaches the Producer

Let us suppose that, as far as our play's progress is concerned, it wriggles successfully through this maze and emerges triumphantly in the week's schedule for the Home Service. That implies production six weeks ahead. At the same time as the week's schedule is completed, the plays contained in it are assigned to their individual producers. The individual producer is informed accordingly and he then gets the script from the Play Library and proceeds to study it. His first business must or should be to confirm its timing, to budget for its cost, to work out what studio facilities are (a) ideal and (b) the minimum necessary for production, to estimate his Programme Engineering Staff requirements, and to cast it. All this done, the script must be sent for roneoing so that the necessary number of copies are made in preparation for its first "read-through".

Preliminary Read-through

It will not, I think, be either profitable or interesting to go into any detail with regard to these questions of budgeting, casting, studio organisation and so forth. These are headaches strictly for the producer and the

author can thank his stars that he is not concerned with them, nor with their solution. None the less, it may be worth his while just to bear in mind that his work has caused these problems to demand solution and that the word *production* covers a good deal more than "just telling a few actors what to do".

The next stage at which the author becomes directly interested in production is when the play is read through for the first time by its cast. This may not sound a very exciting or important stage. In fact, it is both exciting and important, and I should like to add, without qualification, that if an author wishes to contribute valuably to the actual production of his play, it is probably after this first read-through that he can make his most worth while contribution. The practice of individual producers at such reads-through may vary. Some may take it as an occasion for a round-the-table discussion of the general meaning and slant of the play as a whole, and of the approach of individual actors to the characters they are to represent. Others may feel that it is an opportunity to give the cast a clearly defined picture of the play from its production angle. In my own case, my practice is and has been for a number of years to assemble the cast and get them to read the play straight through without either preamble from me or discussion with them. The objects of doing this are two. The first is the extremely utilitarian and profoundly important one of checking the estimated timing. It is remarkable what a difference to the timing can be made by an actor's vocal method or by his conception of a particular part. I have known a difference of as much as seven minutes in an hour to occur in this connection. The second object is to enable the producer to get an all-over impression of the play, hearing it as

opposed to reading it from the page, and further to appreciate the unadorned interpretation of each individual actor's role.

The reader may be inclined to ask, what is the point of a producer if he does not from the very first instant make his production felt? To this I would reply that even a producer can err. I have known plenty of occasions when an experienced and talented actor has, at a first read-through, provided much in the shape of enlightenment and originality to improve upon the producer's conception of his part. For a producer to destroy the possibility of such improvement by making up his mind in advance and then closing it firmly to suggestions is, in my view, a shortcoming. At the end of the read-through, the play can be discussed, obscurities can be pinned down and clarified, particularly important scenes or any out-of-the-ordinary problems can be noted for special attention at later rehearsals, and false approaches by the actors can be gently but firmly guided on to the right lines.

It is at this point that the presence of the author can be of immense use. If parts of the play are obscure, he better than anyone else can resolve the obscurities. If particular lines have proved difficult to say or for some reason prove unsympathetic to a particular actor, it is he rather than anyone else who can best re-write them. If cuts have to be made from the point of view of timing, it is he who is in a better position than anyone else to suggest what scenes will suffer least from cutting. Finally, it is only he who can state with absolute precision whether an actor's interpretation coincides with his own original conception of a part. For the author to be available for consultation on all these points can be most

helpful to any producer, however positive or distinguished.

But there is a qualification and it is a vital one. This usefulness of the author depends entirely upon his realisation of its proper limits. By this I mean that *in no circumstances must he attempt to interfere between the producer and his cast.* Let him make all the notes he likes; let him be as definite, even as stubborn, as he wishes in his arguments with the producer on points of interpretation or on the removal of certain lines. But he must not address the cast over the producer's head; and in no circumstances must he talk to individual members of the cast behind the producer's back. Conflict between producers and authors nearly always arises from a confusion in the minds of the individuals concerned as to their proper respective functions. The producer must not believe nor persuade himself that he knows more about the intention or the writing of a play than the man who wrote it; and the writer must not believe nor persuade himself that he knows better than the producer how to explain what is wanted in production. The production of any play, whether on the stage or through the microphone, must be a matter of co-operation and to some extent of compromise. But the last word lies and must lie with the producer, and unless an author is willing to realise the necessity for this, he will do far better to keep away from rehearsals altogether. A friendly relationship, however argumentative certain aspects of that relationship may prove, between writer and producer is essential unless the cast is to get the impression that the directing hand upon the wheel is either uncertain or shaky. Once allow the cast to get such an impression and the play is well on the first stage to disaster.

"*On the Floor*"

I am assuming, for the moment, that our play is of sufficient length and importance to be rehearsed for four-and-a-half days, that the first half-day has been occupied with the preliminary read-through, and that the author has expressed his intention of wishing to attend certain rehearsals. As I have just said, his attendance at the preliminary read-through is extremely desirable on a number of counts. During the two days that follow, his presence is largely superfluous. The proceedings may be of interest to him. He may feel inclined to succumb to a temptation irresistible to many authors, among whom I include myself, to listen with a mixture of wonderment and self-satisfaction to the repetition of his written lines by other people of flesh and blood. But the two days' work "on the floor" which in sequence immediately follows the preliminary read-through are essentially the producer's business and not his. During these two days, undistracted by mechanical trimmings, studio balance, sound effects and such like, the producer "breaks down" the play scene by scene. Individual inflexions are decided, the relative tempo of scenes is experimented with and settled, the actors achieve sufficient familiarity with their lines to begin to open their shoulders and break away from the constraint of the scripts in their hands, and the proper inter-play of characterisation begins to "jell".

The writer may find, according to temperament, all this work irritating, depressing or quite fascinating. It is not one in which he can take an active part, and he will be well advised not to try to do so. For, if the producer knows his business, the trees at this stage will be getting in the way of the wood. The final picture will remain

obscure, and auctorial interference, however polite or well-intentioned, will probably prove irrelevant or time-wasting or both. In such circumstances, my own recommendation to an author would be that, having attended the preliminary read-through, he should then absent himself during the next two days, and only return to the scene of action when the production foundations have been laid "on the floor", when he can sit in the listening-room and for the first time get some sort of appreciation of the production as a whole.

In the Listening-room

At this stage again—although it must be realised that here he will probably be handicapped by a certain lack of technical knowledge and an inevitable ignorance of a good many of the factors involved—his advice may well prove most useful. After his two days with the cast in the studio, the producer may well find himself in the situation of having got a little too close to the play, and in danger of losing the all-important sense of perspective. This an intelligent and sympathetic author can easily help to restore. He comes, as it were, fresh to the picture, and his reaction may well serve as a useful qualifying influence. It is perhaps fair to add, without disrespect to the author, that almost any other fresh and intelligent mind can do this particular service for the producer just as well.

It will, however, undoubtedly be of interest to the writer, and it may well be of positive advantage to his future work, to see at close quarters the addition to his play of such trimmings as music and sound effects, and to watch what can be done by studio technicians who know their jobs in achieving relative vocal balance and varying aural perspectives. In addition to this, he will see

at first hand the contribution made to his work by the handling of the control knobs and cue light switches of the Mixing Unit. Whether these, as is most frequently the case, are handled by a Programme Engineer under the producer's direction or, as most frequently in my own case, they are moved by the producer's own fingers, he will probably realise with something of a shock that the impact of his play upon the listener is very largely determined by the smoothness and dexterity with which one scene is "faded" or "cross-faded" into another, and by the judgment of the timing of the cue lights which time the actors' entrances and exits and, by no means least vital, their pauses. It is this aspect of radio production which has, of course, been most advertised and it is, on the face of it, most significant to the medium. It stands in a *genre* of its own. For in the theatre, the producer's business is over before the curtain rises, and in a film studio, the director has done his work when the film finally leaves the Cutting-Room. Only in broadcasting is the producer a part of the cast, in so far as he personally and directly affects the play that he is handling during the time of actual transmission.

Here let me repeat a note of warning. The author must be on his guard against the deadly fascination of such machinery. Time was when plays were apparently written and produced on the air in order to display virtuosity of knob-twisting, in order to exploit the ingenuity of sound effects experts, and to seek notoriety rather in the number of studios used than in the interest of their stories or the intelligence of their dialogue. In which connection it may be significant and melancholy that certain so-called *avant garde* broadcasters on the Continent are just arriving at a precisely similar stage of

sterile excitement about nothing in particular. The mechanical side of production is not, of course, to be ignored. It must be as technically flawless as hard work, experience and *expertise* can make it. But the generally acknowledged high standard of plays broadcast in Great Britain at the present time is due far more to the hours spent by the producer "on the floor" than to those spent in the listening-room. At a pinch, the producer has technicians at his disposal who can do a large proportion of his listening-room work for him. But the "breaking down" of the play and the personal handling of the actors "on the floor" must be done by him and can only be done by him. It is not showy work. It calls far more for patience and application and the power to infect actors with interest and vitality, than for brilliance or inspiration. In my opinion, the author may well think twice about the producer who is over-anxious to quit the studio floor for the quasi-Olympian detachment of the listening-room and the Mixing Unit.

Final Stage

And so to transmission. Should the author attend the actual performance or not? The temptation to do so is of course considerable. Although not comparable with those tense few minutes which immediately precede the curtain-rise on a theatrical First Night, there remains nevertheless something in the nature of a dramatic thrill in the circumstances of an actual radio-dramatic transmission. The slightly exaggerated attitudes of ease adopted by some actors, and the quite shameless nervousness displayed by others; the last moment discussion of the announcement between the producer and the announcer on duty; the last moment telephone call

between the Programme Engineer and the Control-Room; the flickering of the red light which is the signal for silence in the studio: all these things combined with the imaginative realisation of being "behind the scenes" of a play which is going out to homes which may be numbered by millions, provide an experience that no creative writer can be blamed for wishing to share. None the less, there are factors to be considered on the other side.

First of all, the Listening-Room is not the best place in which to listen to a broadcast play with an unbiased mind. There are distractions. There is frequently something of a muttered running commentary proceeding between the producer and his Programme Engineer. There are occasional temperamental explosions. There is the background movement along the gramophone "bank", occasionally quite lively, of the "Jeep" (Junior Programme Engineer) who, since the war, is a young lady often of attractive appearance, frequently picturesquely attired.

Such distractions combined with the fact that from the Listening-Room it is possible to see a certain amount of movement by the actors on the floor of the studio, will prevent the author from hearing his play under the same conditions as those in which it is heard by his audience. As a result, he is liable to draw false conclusions. He is quite liable also, in some degree, to be affected or infected by what may be called "producers' nerves". Difficult as it may be to believe, it is none the less true that nearly all producers suffer acutely from nervousness immediately before and sometimes even during a transmission. And speaking for myself, if I found no nervous reaction to the flicker of the red light, no moistening of my hands as I stretched out my fingers towards the vulcanite knobs on

the Mixing Unit, I should ask myself seriously whether the time had not come for me to take a long holiday. In my view, the author will be wise if he preserves himself from the possibility of this infection. If, as I am assuming, he wants to listen to his play less from the point of view of personal enjoyment than from that of improving his grasp of the medium and of its possibilities, he should listen alone, without distraction, and with no more light than is necessary to enable him to make such notes as occur to him in the course of the play. I should also recommend him to exploit the good nature of half a dozen of his more candid friends, inviting them to listen individually and later to let him know their opinions without favour or fear.

Last of all, if mutual circumstances permit, there can be much profit from a *post mortem* discussion, a few days later, between author and producer. What went wrong and why? Was it the line or the actor? Was it the story or the *tempo* at which the production was handled? Such points can be most profitably resolved. And, if a meeting cannot be arranged, no producer of experience and common sense will be anything but gratified to have the author's reactions, both general and particular, set down in the form of a letter.

And here again I would like to say a word of warning. Speaking for myself and, I believe, for most other producers, the interest and collaboration of the author, both preliminary to and during rehearsals, is only to be welcomed. But the author must always remember that, while to him quite naturally his play is the largest object on his horizon, to the producer the same play is only one of a series of professional assignments. What may seem to the former an affair of burning excitement, may appear to the latter as little more than a business of routine. It is

not easy to reconcile such differing points of view. It calls for goodwill and forbearance and imagination on both sides. I hope I may not appear prejudiced if I say that it is the author who, in this matter, must come rather more than half-way, for the final responsibility is not his. The producer is cumbered with all kinds of niggling yet extremely worrying detail. And, when the red light finally dies and he lays down the script marred—or so it often seems to the author—by so many pencilled notes and peculiar hieroglyphics, it is not with the ultimate satisfaction of a job completed, but with the anticipation of finding on his desk the next morning a virgin script on which all the work has to be done all over again.

It is quite wrong for producers to perpetuate the hoary theatrical tradition of all authors being unmitigated nuisances. It is equally wrong—from the point of view of the result of the work, which is all that matters—for an author to take umbrage because the producer's attitude towards his play is not the same as his own. Between the point of view of the parent and the foster-parent there must inevitably be differences. The reconciling of these differences can only be achieved if the over-mastering motives of both are the best interests of the child.

CHAPTER IX

A NOTE ON TELEVISION

THE editor of this series has asked me to include in this volume a note on writing for television. Frankly, I have agreed to do this with considerable reluctance and this is due to the best of reasons—that I know very little about it. My personal experience of television has been confined to four months' work at Alexandra Palace immediately preceding the outbreak of the Second German War, during which time not unnaturally I was rather an onlooker than a practitioner. It is true that I produced two short plays, one of which I adapted specially from a short story of my own. It is true that I rehearsed one full-length play, which was scheduled for production on September 1st, 1939. It was, perhaps, unfortunate for me that two First Nights clashed and that my production, being of rather less cosmic importance, had to give place. But the truth about writing for television in its present stage is, practically speaking, that none has so far been done. Stage plays have been and continually are being adapted for television with a greater or less degree of ingenuity and success, but to the best of my knowledge, writers have not begun to conceive original stories in television terms.

The Lure of Production Machinery

This is not so strange as it may sound. To begin with, everything that I have said elsewhere in this book on the subject of the fascination of the machinery of production applies with far greater force as soon as the problem of

vision is added to that of sound. It is, for instance, notable that producers who start working for the first time with television cameras tend to neglect the problems of the microphone. At its present stage of development, television mechanics are of a hideous complexity and they cannot be thrust aside and placed in their proper perspective in the same way as it is possible to ensure that microphone and Mixing Unit are only means to an end.

Television and its Relationship to the Radio Play

The reader must remember that on the whole of this question my opinion is of no higher value than the next man's. In this note, I speak as an interested observer but by no means as an expert. But speaking thus personally, I am inclined to the opinion that at present "the end" of television production has been insufficiently defined. Before the story-teller can hope to tackle this picturesquely elaborate medium, he must surely be aware of just how that medium of expression can improve upon the stage play, the cinema film or the broadcast play in sound. My own theory is that television should operate not as a substitute for the play of sound only, and should certainly not serve as a drawing-room-second-best to a visit to the theatre. Again, and I emphasise it, in *my personal* view, the television play should be thought of in terms of broadcasting and the camera should only be used where the microphone falls short. It is fair to add that it is not a view that is accepted by the majority of those who have done so much pioneering work in putting a television service upon the air.

The Aim of the Writer

None the less, from the writer's point of view the prob-

lem is a capital one. He must know the object which he is trying to achieve and the audience for which he is writing. Is he to work for the single viewer or group of viewers by the fireside, as in the main he writes for the individual listener, or is he to write with his imagination focused on the large screen and a pseudo-cinema audience, with reactions equivalent to that audience?

The writer for sound broadcasting is perfectly aware of the advantages and limitations of his medium. He need not bother with problems of time and space, he need not bother with problems of costume or scenic design. He can rely upon appeal to the individual emotion and upon an audience now trained to the use of its imagination. But though the limitations of the television camera are very fairly obvious, its advantages, except in so far as its effect seems largely to belong to witchcraft, are rather nebulous. It is no use burking the fact that television combines quite a number of the disadvantages of the cinema with those of the stage. It deprives the actors of the living audience, which provides them with a combination of back wall and sounding board; yet it demands that a piece shall be played straight through. No possibility in a television studio of one "take" after another until at last patience and persistence are successful and the shot can be put "in the can". As in the theatre, lines must be learned and costume must be worn; but, as in the film studio, actors must work under violently concentrated light, in conditions of extreme physical discomfort, and distracted by the movement of cameras and the placing of microphones.

It may well be that, with the passing of time and as the result of vigorous and imaginative experiment, an indigenous form of piece for television may be evolved; a

form that will—as the very elementary example included in this book shows—approximate far more nearly in layout to a film script than to that of a play for sound broadcasting. To date, that form has not evolved and I would hesitate to say that even the embryo of such a form is in existence.

If I am asked to give practical advice to the writer who is interested in television, I think that I could do no more than to urge him to buy a set and watch results. If the result is that he feels only that he is playing with a fascinating toy, or that he remains almost shamefacedly bewildered by the astonishing fact that he can see anything at all, then the medium has for his own expression little to recommend it. But if, as he watches the screen, he finds that sparks are struck from his imagination; if he sees here a way by which the age-old art of story telling can be adapted along more novel lines and thereby achieve an end unattainable by any of the better known media open to the creative writer, then I would urge him to experiment and to experiment boldly.

A Clear Field

For he has this supreme satisfaction. On the one hand, the field is clear; on the other, television is bound to come. It is bound to come because, as was proved so signally when the talkie banished the silent film into Limbo, no audience will rest content with entertainment in one dimension once they have experienced it in two. It may be that this is regrettable. It is doubtful if even today the best talkies have achieved the same artistic standards as were reached by the finest examples of films in which the work of the camera was not complicated by the addition of the human voice. It may be that even the radio play

will be regretted once it has become a thing of the past. But that television and the televised play will supersede sound broadcasting once its mechanics have been perfected and the distribution of its receiving sets enlarged is as certain as anything can be in an uncertain world. When that day comes, television will have sore need of the writer. He will be ill-advised if he neglects to study its first tottering steps along the path which, sooner or later, will lead to a self-contained maturity.

The two scripts which follow are two treatments of the same subject, which began its existence as a short story in a fashionable magazine. I have included them, not because the story in itself is of any particular merit, though I confess to a weakness for the twist at the end; but it may be of a certain interest to compare the layout of a simple piece for broadcasting with the comparative complexity of the layout for the same piece as adapted for television in 1939. I will not be so arrogant as to suggest that the sound broadcasting script is any kind of model except in so far that it does tell a story, that its characters are few and quite clearly defined, that it has a beginning, a middle and an end, and that the end has something of an unexpected dramatic punch.

Most of the sound-broadcasting script is virgin, as it was delivered to the actors. The opening two pages are marked as they were by the producer.

The television script, I think, speaks for itself.

"ENDING IT"

Adapted for broadcasting by HUGH STEWART
From the short story by VAL GIELGUD
Produced by VAL GIELGUD

Barbara Lethbridge	-	Margaret Leighton
Guy Martinsell	-	Albert Lieven
Restaurant Proprietor	-	Christopher West

TRANSMISSION: HOME SERVICE, 23rd August, 1946, 8.00–8.30 p.m.
Studio 3E BH

REHEARSALS: Wednesday, 21st August, 1946, 10.30–5.00 p.m.
Studio 3E BH

CHARACTERS:
Barbara Lethbridge
Guy Martinsell
Proprietor of a Restaurant in Paris

Light. Gram. Music.

ANNOUNCER: This is the B.B.C. Home Service. We present Margaret Leighton as Barbara Lethbridge and Albert Lieven as Guy Martinsell in "Ending It", adapted for broadcasting by Hugh Stewart from the short story by Val Gielgud. . . . Ending It.

Gram. *A clock stikes eight, and the strains of a small string orchestra fade up, playing a dreamy*

Light. *waltz. Hold a little, then down behind.*

PROPRIETOR: Bonsoir, Madame.

BARBARA: Bonsoir.

PROPRIETOR: I take your cloak, Madame?

BARBARA: Thank you, no—I shall keep it on.

GUY: (*approaching*) Good evening, Miss Lethbridge.

Music out.

BARBARA: Ah, there you are . . . hello. I'm afraid I'm just a little bit late.

GUY: Not at all. Exactly three minutes.

BARBARA: I have a feeling that you are an almost morbidly punctual person, Mr. Martinsell. Am I right?

GUY: Why do you feel that?

BARBARA: (*lightly*) You have the thin face and the big black eyes! // Is this our table? It looks delightful.

GUY: I thought you would like to be not too near the . . .

BARBARA: This is perfect. Um . . . what lovely, lovely roses.

GUY: I had a feeling that you would be wearing white roses.

BARBARA: (*laughing*) Having sent them to me? You're obviously a person of imagination.

PROPRIETOR: The menu, Madame—Monsieur, I will return in one moment.

GUY: Now, let's see. < As this is our first dinner together, Miss Lethbridge . . .

BARBARA: (*gay*) Barbara, please.

GUY: Thank you, Barbara, I should like it to be something rather special. // Like your beauty

BARBARA: I'm flattered. And I adore flattery.

GUY: Do you care for caviare?

BARBARA: I adore that, too.

GUY: Caviare, then, and what about some lake trout . . . *omble-chevalier?*

BARBARA: Yes.

GUY: . . . *Mignonnettes d'agneau*—no, I think *Aiguillettes de Caneton Rouennais?*

BARBARA: What is that?

GUY: (*flat*) Duckling.

BARBARA: (*laugh*) Please.

PROPRIETOR: Monsieur?

GUY: Caviare—trout—*Caneton*—the usual trimmings——

PROPRIETOR: Bien, Monsieur.

GUY: And a bottle of, er . . . Lanson '21.

PROPRIETOR: *Tres bien, Monsieur.*

GUY: A glass of vodka with the caviare, of course.

PROPRIETOR: *Toute à l'heure.*

Slight pause.

GUY: This is extraordinarily—companionable—Barbara.

BARBARA: I think so. // You're rather a lonely person, aren't you?

GUY: Perhaps.

BARBARA: Did you enjoy the party the other night?

GUY: > I met you there.

BARBARA: But did you enjoy the party?

GUY: To be honest, not very much.

BARBARA: Nor did I; I'm afraid mutual boredom brought us together.

GUY: (*laughing*) I hope something else may keep us together. Are you staying long in Paris?

BARBARA: I've no idea—yet. // But I never stay anywhere for very long. "Here today and gone tomorrow", that's the tiresome, restless sort of person I am.

PROPRIETOR: The vodka, Monsieur.

GUY: Thank you. What are your plans for the future?

BARBARA: But I haven't any. I never have. I hate plans. I just do things, and go places, on the spur of the moment. It's so much more fun that way.

GUY: Yes, I know; I'm rather like that as well, but there are one or two very favourite places, which I've made into something—as near a home as possible.

BARBARA: Oh? Is Paris one of them?

GUY: Yes. Paris—Portofino—Maggiore.

BARBARA: Ah, Maggiore! Isn't that perfectly glorious?

GUY: Well, I think so.

BARBARA: I've always heard it is, and you know I've never been there. Some day I must go.

GUY: Perhaps . . . perhaps if you found some place lovely enough, like I have—you'd feel differently towards it, and always be able to go back to it?

BARBARA: Perhaps, but I don't think any place . . .

GUY: My villa there is right on the lakeside. Are you fond of swimming? Well, one can dive from the terrace straight into deep water. Then, you see, there are steps down, which go to a boathouse . . . You must look lovely when you swim.

BARBARA: I wouldn't like swimming if it didn't suit me!

GUY: And there's a garden at the back, lots of roses, then a little road, then the sheer side of the mountain.

BARBARA: It sounds perfect!

GUY: Yes, it . . . it is really. I always spend part of the summer there. But it's no place for a man to live alone.

BARBARA: I suppose you'll be going back soon?

GUY: Next week.

BARBARA: What do you call it?

GUY: La Casa di Terrazza Bianca: the house of the white terrace.

PROPRIETOR: Caviare for Mademoiselle?

BARBARA: Please. (*slowly*) La Casa di Terrazza Bianca . . . it sounds almost irresistible. I think I should like to see the house of the white terrace.

GUY: Would you? Would you?

Bring up music, hold a little, then cross-fade into another tune, down behind.

GUY: Cigarette?

BARBARA: Thanks.

GUY: And we want two brandies, please.

PROPRIETOR: Two brandies. Oui, Monsieur, immediatement.

BARBARA: It was a quite perfect dinner.

PROPRIETOR: Merci, Madame.

BARBARA: I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed it, Guy.

GUY: Splendid. So have I. I never care for eating alone, do you?

BARBARA: I've never thought about it. Tho' I believe they do say that it isn't so good for one.

GUY: How do you mean?

BARBARA: Oh, I suppose that the food doesn't do you so much good in some way; something to do with our digestions.

GUY: Are you sure it's the digestion . . . and not the heart which is affected?

BARBARA: No-o, it's always been digestion in my version.

GUY: You won't mind getting very sunburnt, will you?

BARBARA: Mind?

GUY: Some women do. But at Maggiore we just can't help it.

BARBARA: I think it's much nicer than being pallid like this.

GUY: It'll suit you. Just as that scarlet dress suits you.

BARBARA: Will it? How do you know? I may go scarlet and peel.

GUY: I know better. You'll brown exquisitely.

She laughs.

BARBARA: You're quite brown now. The hang-over from your last visit?

GUY: No, this . . . this is more or less permanent; my mother was Spanish. That's why I can't do without the sun for long.

BARBARA: (*sighs*) Nor I—Italian sunshine! Guy, couldn't we leave before next week?

GUY: Tomorrow if you like.

BARBARA: Let's say the day after.

GUY: (*anxious*) You're not changing you're mind?

BARBARA: I never change my mind, once it's made up.

PROPRIETOR: Two brandies, Monsieur.

GUY: Thank you.

BARBARA: Thank you.

The music stops. A short pause.

What were you thinking when you drank just then?

GUY: Perhaps the same thoughts as you.

BARBARA: Give me your glass—and you take mine—like that. You see I have a sentimental side. Now, just for luck . . .

The ring of glasses as they touch.

Here's . . . to the day after tomorrow!

GUY: The days after tomorrow.

The orchestra begins playing another tune. Cross-fade slowly to sound of continental train running at speed. Fade back and over it we hear —with echo—Laroche—Migennes—Lyons—Chambery—Milano—Dessenzano—fade up train and we hear it come to a stop.

BARBARA: If only one didn't get quite so inescapably filthy on a night-journey.

GUY: I fancy I've a bottle of eau-de-Cologne in my suit-case.

BARBARA: You have, have you? Somebody has brought you up far too well.

GUY: I used to travel a good deal with my mother. She always used eau-de-Cologne after a night-journey.

BARBARA: I'm sure she did. I'll copy their—I mean her—example.

GUY: Here you are.

BARBARA: Of course a boy's best friend is his mother, isn't she?

GUY: Only in America.

BARBARA: I see. And where do we go from here?

GUY: There's the lake—at the bottom of the street. Half an hour in a motor-boat, and we're home.

BARBARA: You mean, you're home.

GUY: I hope it's the same thing. Don't you?

BARBARA: (*slowly*) Of course I hope so.

GUY: I'll take the bags. Shall we go?

BARBARA: Blue sky—smooth water—Italian sunlight—why can't things always be like this?

GUY: Perhaps they can.

BARBARA: (*almost to herself*) And only—woman—is vile! Perhaps they can, Guy. Come along.

Cross-fade on the last words to the chugging of a motor-boat. Bring up, hold, and fade out slowly. Silence. A clock strikes eight.

BARBARA: You ought to have bathed, Guy. It was wonderful. Why didn't you?

GUY: I was lazy. And I wanted to think.

BARBARA: Think? What about? On a morning like this! Coffee?

GUY: Please.

BARBARA: Roll—butter—black-cherry jam.

GUY: You remember everything.

BARBARA: Thank you. I remember—things I want to remember.

GUY: And the things you prefer to forget?

BARBARA: (*calmly*) I forget.

GUY: The people also?

BARBARA: Yes—the people also.

GUY: Of course it makes life easier.

BARBARA: Much easier.

GUY: That's really what I was thinking about.

BARBARA: I don't follow.

GUY: How long have we been here?

BARBARA: A week—almost to the minute. I remember hearing that clock strike as we crossed the terrace, coming up from the landing-stage.

GUY: And it's fulfilled your expectations?

BARBARA: Every one.

GUY: I had no doubt of the Casa di Terrazza Bianca. I was less certain of myself.

BARBARA: I don't believe it.

GUY: Don't fence, please. I want the truth. Have I disappointed you?

BARBARA: (*lightly*) Not a scrap. Not for a moment.

GUY: I know the truth is always liable to be embarrassing.

BARBARA: Well?

GUY: (*intensely*) I want this to last, Barbara. I want it to last more than anything in the world!

BARBARA: Well?

GUY: Is that all you have to say?

BARBARA: Why shouldn't it last? Except that it's all a little too beautiful to be real.

GUY: Exactly—why shouldn't it? That's the question I've been asking myself, sitting here in the sunshine, imagining you down below there in the water.

BARBARA: Did you find yourself an answer?

GUY: No. You must do that for me.

BARBARA: (*cold*) Must?

GUY: Those—people—you prefer to forget——

BARBARA: Yes?

GUY: What made you prefer to forget them?

BARBARA: How can I tell you, when I've forgotten them?

GUY: Barbara—please!

BARBARA: I told you in Paris, Guy, that I'm the cat who walks by herself. I like the wet wild woods, or the smooth cool lake, or the warm white terrace —even the wet wild roofs. I'm that sort of person. You're not trying to make a scene, are you?

GUY: There's nothing I loathe more than scenes!

BARBARA: We agree about that, you see. And, whatever I may have chosen to forget, I don't fancy that you're exactly—inexperienced in the ways of this wicked world, are you?

GUY: Maybe not.

BARBARA: Then can't we leave it at that? It's such an exquisite morning. More coffee?

GUY: No thanks.

BARBARA: Capital.

GUY: Why such enthusiasm?

BARBARA: More for me—that's all. (*a pause*) Don't sit there, frowning, and looking worried.

GUY: I'm sorry.

BARBARA: Then cheer up. Let's go over and get the Ghisios from Pallanza. Maria can manage lunch for four.

GUY: Very well.

BARBARA: Guy.

GUY: What is it?

BARBARA: As you're being so serious——

GUY: Yes?

BARBARA: I'll be serious too, for about one minute!

GUY: Go on.

BARBARA: I'll tell you just one thing. It's something I believe to be absolutely true and rather important.

GUY: Well?

BARBARA: It's just this—and then I don't want to talk about it any more. Promise?

GUY: I promise.

BARBARA: People have a way of saying that happiness is unattainable. I don't agree with them. But I do know this much—happiness is like a crystal vase balanced on the narrowest possible strip of, say, cedar-wood, with the ends in two people's hands. They must keep their hands very steady, Guy. The strain of preserving that delicate balance is —considerable.

GUY: I see.

BARBARA: Do you? I wonder. I hope you do. I hope you do very much.

GUY: Better get dressed. The carabiniere in Pallanza will arrest you if you try and walk down the main street in shorts and a pocket-handkerchief.

BARBARA: It's a big pocket-handkerchief!

GUY: Your midriff is a little conspicuous all the same—for excitable Latins!

BARBARA: Richard is himself again! All right, Guy. I'll make myself respectable. Five minutes.

GUY: Meaning fifteen. I'll just make sure that the boat's functioning properly. I don't want to have to row to Pallanza.

BARBARA: You're right. You are lazy. Au revoir.

Fade on last line. Silence. Bring up sound of motor-boat, hold and fade to silence.

BARBARA: (*approaching*) Coming for a swim, Guy? Or are you going to be lazy again and watch me? Um?

GUY: (*doesn't answer.*)

BARBARA: How I love this terrace—and the view of the lake, from here. I shall always remember it, and the good times we've had: eight weeks of heaven. Always.

A pause.

Don't take it too hard, my poor Guy. After all, we knew it would happen someday, didn't we? We agreed that it must; that when it did we should be sensible and spare each other. Wasn't our first agreement of all that we both hated scenes more than anything in the world? You told me so at that cocktail party and it broke the ice.

GUY: Yes.

BARBARA: Well then . . . it's happened, that's all. You've seen it coming, Guy, as clearly as I have.

GUY: Have I?

BARBARA: Yes, but you hadn't the pluck to face it. Or perhaps it was only that you hadn't the words to say it. I had, and now we're going to make it easy for each other, aren't we?

GUY: Yes.

BARBARA: I knew you'd understand.

GUY: But I thought we were happy! Weren't you?

BARBARA: I . . . was. Listen; would you have preferred it to become gradually dull and commonplace? First a

bore, then an exasperation—finally an intolerable burden? After all we've had a wonderful summer together, we can keep it——

GUY: (*sharply*) Oh, I know! We can preserve it as a perfect memory, an unsullied perfection. I'm afraid I don't find that particularly consoling.

BARBARA: Of course not, because I've tired first. Men have lost that prerogative and a good many others, my dear.

GUY: Well, what do we do now?

BARBARA: (*matter-of-fact*) I shall leave for Rome tomorrow morning.

GUY: Are you sparing me another day? I don't think you need.

BARBARA: No, I'm just indulging my own sentimentality.

GUY: Is there any other reason for prolonging the tension?

BARBARA: You forget that I shall have to collect my clothes; and I want to get one or two things in Stresa. I'll drive the car myself. I'd rather you didn't come . . . I'll be back in time for dinner.

GUY: For dinner?

BARBARA: Yes.

GUY: But why wait for dinner?

BARBARA: Well—the first time we met, really met, was at dinner, wasn't it? I'd like to dine with you once more. We'll have exactly the same dinner that we had that evening in Paris—at eight. We'll end it theatrically, and you'll be able to despise me for ever and ever. Don't you think it's a good idea?

GUY: (*roughly*) I think it's damned nonsense, if you want to know.

BARBARA: My dear Guy!

GUY: Will you tell me one thing—is it someone else?

BARBARA: No, it's not. In a way I wish it were.

GUY: What do you mean?

BARBARA: Because then perhaps I could make you understand and realise how right I am. But it's no one else. I told you in the beginning that I am the cat who walks by herself. I can't help it. I have to go on roofs maybe to appreciate how warm the fire can be afterwards. But I never—I can't go back to the same fire. I warned you, didn't I?

GUY: Yes, Barbara, you did.

BARBARA: So you can't say I'm being unfair.

GUY: Unfair?

BARBARA: Because I'm not. I warned you.

GUY: Ask Giuseppe to see that the car's all right. She may want filling up, and when you're in Stresa, you might bring me a box of cigarettes.

BARBARA: Yes, Guy . . . you shall have your cigarettes. I'm glad you have avoided the conventional idiocy of pretending that you'll drown your sorrows in drink.

GUY: (*slowly*) But I'm not a very conventional person, am I? Somehow I feel that I shall smoke a good many cigarettes in the next few days.

BARBARA: Why not go over to Pollanza in the motor-boat? Spend the day there, you know the Ghisios want you to go and see them. This afternoon I shall be busy with our dinner, and I shan't want you back before half-past seven at the earliest.

GUY: Good idea, I will. I'll go now. Oh, Barbara—my cigarette holder——

BARBARA: What about it?

GUY: I cracked it some weeks ago and sent it to London to be repaired. It arrived back the other day, and——

BARBARA: Where is it?

GUY: I think—in the right hand drawer of my dressing-table, in a sealed box with English stamps on it. I didn't even bother to unwrap it. Anyhow, Giuseppe knows where it is.

BARBARA: Do you want it now?

GUY: No, don't bother. I've just remembered it, that's all. You might ask him to give it to you—for this evening.

BARBARA: Very well.

GUY: (*after a moment, tensely*) Barbara, what you've been saying—about leaving me, it's fantastic. It isn't real. People don't behave like this; for no reason.

BARBARA: Perhaps they don't. But I do, Guy. And they are unhappy; and I'm not. Au revoir.

A slight pause, before the sound of a motor-boat can be heard in the distance starting up, and then gradually fading away. A silence. Then a clock strikes eight; and a bird chirrups for a few seconds.

GUY: Good evening.

BARBARA: (*approaching*) Hullo . . . here you are. I'm afraid I'm just a little bit late again.

GUY: Not at all. Not even three minutes this time.

BARBARA: I had a feeling you were an almost morbidly punctual person, Mr. Martinsell. And I was right! (*she laughs*) We've remembered our parts well, haven't we? Why, it only seems like yesterday evening when we were in Paris; and the orchestra was playing—I think a waltz. Do you remember?

Fade in and out a few bars of the waltz, very distant.

And I was wearing this same white satin dress, and you—you'd taken special pains with your white tie and the set of your waistcoat—just as you have tonight.

GUY: I don't see why all this—this farce is necessary, Barbara.

BARBARA: But I thought we'd do it properly, my dear. Let me look at you—I believe I remembered everything—white tie—links—studs—weren't they all there?

GUY: They were.

BARBARA: And you found your cigarettes on the dressing-table.

GUY: Yes—thank you.

BARBARA: Oh, and Giuseppe gave me the box you wanted. I put it——

GUY: (*interrupting*) I've got that too.

BARBARA: Good. Now let's have dinner, shall we? I've managed to get everything just the same, Guy—but whether it will taste the same I can't say! It was really quite exciting, I had such a hunt for everything. The roses were the easiest to get, and the Lanson the hardest. Even now, it isn't '21. But don't you think I've been industrious?

GUY: Very. Where's Maria?

BARBARA: She wanted to go to church, so I told her she might. We'll be quite alone together. Oh, I must confess something—I bribed Giuseppe to let me have a bottle of your own brandy from the cellar.

GUY: (*slowly*) It must have given you a lot of trouble.

BARBARA: Nonsense; I've enjoyed doing it.

GUY: You drove pretty far and fast to get all these things, didn't you?

BARBARA: I don't think I've forgotten anything. I hope the strawberries are all right, it's a little bit late for them now . . . Some caviare?

GUY: Thanks.

BARBARA: You look tired, my dear. What have you been doing? Did you go to Pollanza?

GUY: Yes—we had some tennis.

BARBARA: In this heat? No wonder you look so white. Did you tell them I was ending my visit tomorrow?

GUY: No.

BARBARA: Oh, I hoped you'd say addio to them for me. Did they ask after me at all?

GUY: I can't remember—I suppose so.

BARBARA: They didn't. I wonder if they really believed I was your sister; we're not very alike, are we? (*a pause; she sighs*) Ah well . . . it's been worth while, hasn't it? That's all that matters. I've been happy here with you, Guy—perhaps as happy as I shall ever be anywhere. But I'm not certain about that —and I have to go on to find out.

GUY: In search of a dream, eh?

BARBARA: Call it a dream. Because we all have to wake up from dreams and come down to earth for a while —before we can have others. I'll have a lot to remember of this place—and I'll miss a lot—things I don't want to spoil with familiarity. Evenings like this—you and I sitting together. The sound of the water lapping against the steps —the cypresses at the end of the garden, like black spears against the sky; watching the little golden lights spring out one by one along the other shore of the lake—like the stars; and the ring of the cowbells somewhere far away in the mountains. All those things—and many others . . .

Her voice fades; the sound of cowbells is heard softly, then the clock chimes the half-hour.

Shall we have our coffee on the terrace as usual? (*going*) Perhaps you'll pour out the brandy and bring it with you. The glasses are beside the bottle.

A slight pause.

The air is a little chilly out here, the wind seems to have got up rather. (*she shivers: raises her voice*) Bring my cloak with you, Guy, please.

GUY: (*approaching*) Here you are.

BARBARA: Give me the coffee. I'll put it down.

GUY: You've lovely shoulders——

BARBARA: They're lovely and cold at the moment. Ah—that's better. Now the brandy—then we'll be comfy. And the cigarettes!

GUY: (*as he returns*) Will you have one?

BARBARA: In a minute.

A pause.

GUY: Yes, it was a good dinner. I have to thank you for that, as well as a good many other things.

BARBARA: Admit I did it well; that I forgot nothing.

GUY: You did it marvellously. Would you mind telling me the real reason why you did it?

BARBARA: Perhaps for a whim. Perhaps because I wanted to. Perhaps because I thought it might help you to despise me, or at least to think of me more lightly.

GUY: And you're really going tomorrow?

BARBARA: Of course I'm going! I'm really going tonight.

GUY: Tonight?

BARBARA: Yes, I'm not playing cat and mouse with you, my dear Guy. I shall finish my coffee, and drink my brandy, and light one more cigarette. And then I shall go.

A pause.

GUY: I suppose you are right. Perhaps it's only that I'm vain, or old-fashioned, or that I don't understand women, but somehow, tho' I've tried all day, I can only see your decision and what you have done tonight as something unbelievably selfish and cruel.

BARBARA: (*quietly*) I'm sorry.

GUY: I don't think it was necessary. I don't think you can cheat unhappiness by creating a different kind of unhappiness first at someone else's expense.

BARBARA: Please, Guy—need we talk about it any more? I've made up my mind, so don't let us squabble like children on this last evening. We haven't, so far. May I have my brandy?

GUY: We've been lovers, you and I, Barbara, and that means that we've given a good deal of ourselves to each other.

BARBARA: Well?

GUY: For you to go like this means that you must take with you more than you have any right to take from any man. That's why I say you are unbelievably selfish. But you can't end it like this. There's only one way you can end it.

BARBARA: May I have my brandy?

GUY: (*after a second*) Your brandy——? Certainly.

BARBARA: Thanks. What do you suggest we drink to this time?

GUY: Shall we drink to our future?

BARBARA: By all means—to the days after tomorrow, again

Their glasses touch.

I wonder when I shall taste brandy like that next. And now a cigarette, please.

GUY: Have you matches?

BARBARA: No, you'll find some on the table indoors.

Short pause. The faint ring of glasses touching is heard.

Got them?

Sound of match being struck.

You might have brought the bottle out with you.

GUY: I don't want any more; do you?

BARBARA: No-o; let's finish this with another toast, shall we? A new one.

GUY: Very well.

BARBARA: Here's to hoping, my dear, that you will soon forget—the days before yesterday.

GUY: (*in almost a whisper*) Thank you. Most appropriate.

They drink again. A pause.

BARBARA: There! Now there was something you were saying before I interrupted you. Let me see—about there being only one way I could end what we've done; what we've been to each other. What way is that, Guy?

GUY: It's just one of those old-fashioned things that persist. It's called Death.

BARBARA: —Death?

GUY: (*levelly*) You wanted to end this love of ours. So you're going to die, Barbara. It's all right, it won't hurt you. Unless that English chemist has deceived me, it will be quite quick.

BARBARA: (*fear in her voice*) Guy!

GUY: About ten minutes, I believe.

BARBARA: (*shrilly*) Guy, you're mad!

GUY: (*his words coming swiftly*) Perhaps I am. But you see, death was so easy as a solution. So easy and so right. So simple that I saw almost at once, when you told me your decision this morning, what the solution must be. It was pure chance that I had that packet in the drawer of my dressing-table; I got it when my wolfhound went mad a year ago. One of those silly precautions that one takes after a tragedy, and, of course, I've never even opened it. You got it for me; you asked for the packet from Giuseppe. And you even asked him to give you the brandy. I think there's a good chance of its being put down to suicide, don't you? You also secured and prepared this curiously elaborate dinner. And I had spent the day at Pollanza. The evidence is almost overwhelming.

BARBARA: (*almost inaudibly*) But, Guy . . . but, Guy . . .

GUY: The repetition of the dinner—a charming conceit. A most effective rounding of the circle. Yes, Barbara, you certainly chose the way in which you'd end it. My God, you did!

BARBARA: But, there's one other thing . . . something you've forgotten.

GUY: Forgotten?

BARBARA: Just one thing. One thing we did in Paris that night we dined together. After dinner, don't you remember, we were drinking brandy, and just for luck—a silly sentimental joke—after the first sip, we exchanged glasses.

Bring up the waltz theme, distant.

Well—I did it again tonight. When you went for the matches. So I don't think the verdict will matter very much to either of us, will it?

She begins to laugh shakily.

Guy—it's beginning to hurt rather. Would you mind holding my hand?

Music.

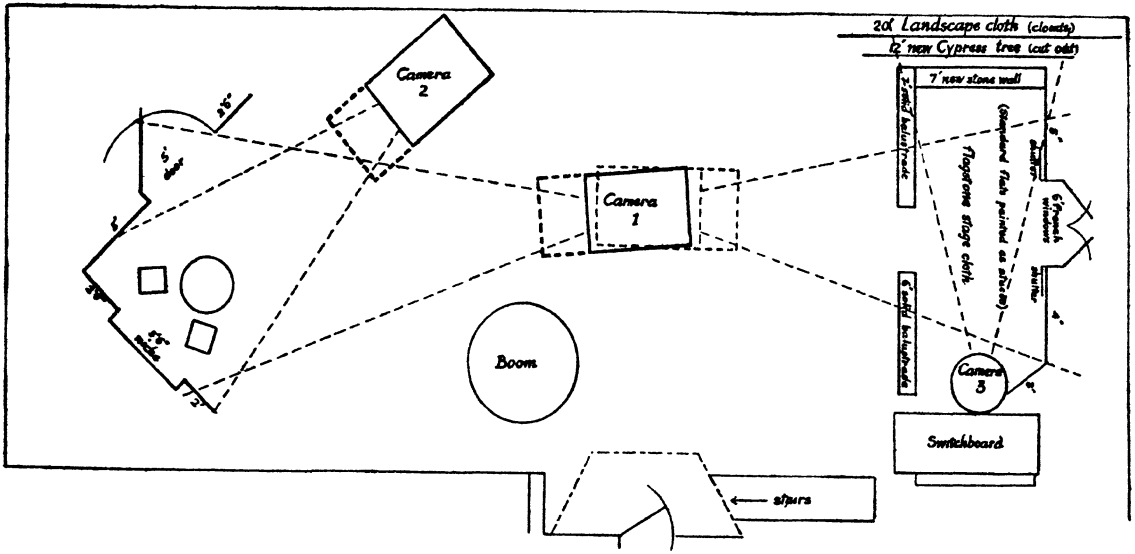
ANNOUNCER: You have been listening to "Ending It", adapted for broadcasting by Hugh Stewart from the short story by Val Gielgud, with

Margaret Leighton as Barbara Lethbridge (by permission of the Old Vic Theatre Company)

Albert Lieven as Guy Martinsell

and Christopher West as the Restaurant Proprietor.

The production was by Val Gielgud.



TELEVISION STUDIO PLAN

"ENDING IT"

Adapted for television by
HUGH STEWART and VAL GIELGUD
From the short story by
VAL GIELGUD

TRANSMISSION: Friday, 25th August, 1939, 9.50–10.20 p.m.

Producer: VAL GIELGUD
A.S.M.: MR. BASIL ADAMS
Senior Studio Engineer: MR. SAVAGE
Scene Master: MR. CORNISH

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

CAMERA 1 and CAMERA 2 Two tracking cameras. (N.B. CAMERA 1 is turned round and used on Scene 2. Dotted lines show its second position on plan.)

CAMERA 3 One iron man

Sound on boom

Scene 1 (top of plan)

Two tracking cameras (1 and 2)

Radiolympia set
Small round table
Two chairs
} Representing interior of small but exclusive Parisian restaurant

Scene 2 (bottom of plan)

One tracking camera (CAMERA 1, second position)

One iron man (CAMERA 3)

Scene as per plan—landscape cloth, cypress tree cut out, balustrades, etc.

N.B.—For *second* part of Scene 2, the round table and the two chairs used in Scene 1 are required to be set in the middle of the stage, which represents the balcony of an Italian villa.

CHARACTERS

MURIEL LETHBRIDGE	Joan Marion
GUY MARTINSELL	John Robinson
PROPRIETOR OF A RESTAURANT IN PARIS	Dino Galvani

OPENING ROUTINE

Vision	*Sound*
CAMERA 3:	*Caption* 1: "ENDING IT" — *Up grams.* (*Some quiet French light music*) *Caption* 2: "Adapted by Hugh Stewart and Val Gielgud from a short story by Val Gielgud" *Caption* 3: "The Players" *Caption* 4: "DINO GALVANI as The Waiter"
CAMERA 2:	C. U. Galvani
CAMERA 3:	*Caption* 5: "JOHN ROBINSON as Guy Martinsell"
CAMERA 2:	C. U. Robinson
CAMERA 3:	*Caption* 6: "JOAN MARION as Muriel Lethbridge"
CAMERA 2:	C.U. Miss Marion
CAMERA 3:	*Caption* 7: "The action takes place in a small Paris restaurant, and on the terrace of a North Italian villa" *Caption* 8: "Production by Val Gielgud"

CAMERA 1:
Long shot of first set, tracking slowly in. Guy at table, looking at wrist-watch

CAMERA 3:
C.U. clock-face at nine o'clock

Slowly fade grams.

CAMERA 2:
C.U. Guy looking at watch

CAMERA 1:
Mid-shot on door. Muriel entering to Waiter

Dialogue as per script . . .
Up grams. "LES MILLIONS d' ARLEQUIN" (Drigo)

ENDING IT

Scene is the corner of a small Paris restaurant. Table laid for two. On it a bowl of white roses. Clock framed in gilt on wall pointing to nine o'clock.

The strains of a small string orchestra fade up, playing a dreamy waltz. Hold a little, then down behind.

(Practical clock-face for caption camera)
After opening sequence

CAMERA 1:
Mid-shot on door: Muriel entering to Waiter. Track in to C.U. Muriel

PROPRIETOR: Bonsoir, Madame.
MURIEL: Bonsoir.
PROPRIETOR I take your cloak, Madame?
MURIEL: Thank you, no—I shall keep it on.

MIX CAMERA 2:

	GUY:	(*approaching*) Good evening,
2-shot, Guy and Muriel		Miss Lethbridge.
	MURIEL:	Ah, there you are . . . hello. I'm afraid I'm just a little bit late.
	GUY:	Not at all. Exactly three minutes.
	MURIEL:	I have a feeling that you are an almost morbidly punctual person, Mr. Martinsell. Am I right?
CAMERA 2:	GUY:	Why do you feel that?
Follow to table	MURIEL:	Oh, I don't know! (*cross to table*) Is this our table? It looks delightful.
	GUY:	I thought you would like to be not too near the orchestra.
	MURIEL:	This is perfect. (*sits*) Um . . . what lovely roses.
	GUY:	I had a feeling that you would be wearing roses.
	MURIEL:	(*laughing*) You're obviously a
MIX CAMERA 1:		person of imagination.
3-shot	PROPRIETOR:	The menu, Madame—Monsieur, I will return in one moment. (*exit.*)
CAMERA 1: Track in to 2-shot: Guy and Muriel	GUY:	(*on cue*) Now, let's see. As this is our first dinner together, Miss Lethbridge . . .
	MURIEL:	Muriel, please.
	GUY:	Thank you, Muriel, I should like it to be something rather especial.
	MURIEL:	I'm flattered.
MIX CAMERA 2:	GUY:	Do you care for caviare?
2-shot	MURIEL:	Adore it.
	GUY:	Caviare then, and what about some lake trout . . . "omble-chevalier"?

MURIEL: Yes.

GUY: . . . "Mignonnettes d'agneau" —no, I think "Aiguillettes de Caneton Rouennais"?

Re-enter Waiter, with cocktails: hands them.

MURIEL: What is that?

GUY: Duckling.

MURIEL: Please.

MIX CAMERA 1 PROPRIETOR: Monsieur?

GUY: Caviare—trout—Caneton——

PROPRIETOR: Bien, Monsieur.

GUY: And a bottle of—er—Lanson '21.

PROPRIETOR: Tres bien, Monsieur. Lanson vingt-et-un.

Slight pause: they sip their cocktails.

MIX CAMERA 2 GUY: This is extraordinarily pleasant —Muriel.

MURIEL: I think so. You're rather a lonely person, aren't you?

GUY: Yes . . . perhaps.

MURIEL: Did you enjoy the party the other night?

GUY: I met you there.

MURIEL: But did you enjoy the party?

GUY: To be honest, not a whole lot.

MURIEL: Nor did I; I'm afraid mutual boredom brought us together.

MIX CAMERA 1 GUY: (*laughing*) I hope something else may keep us together. Are you staying long in Paris?

MURIEL: I've no idea—yet. But I never stay anywhere for very long. "Here today and gone tomor-

		row", that's the tiresome, restless sort of person I am.
	GUY:	What are your plans for the future?
CAMERA 1: C.U. Muriel	MURIEL:	But I haven't any. I never have. I hate plans. I just do things, and go places, on the spur of the moment. It's so much more fun that way.
MIX CAMERA 2: C.U. Guy	GUY:	Yes, I know; I'm rather like that as well, but there are one or two very favourite places, which I've made into something—as near a home as possible.
	MURIEL:	Oh? Is Paris one of them?
MIX CAMERA 1: 2-shot	GUY:	Yes. Paris—Portofino—Maggiore.
	MURIEL:	Ah, Maggiore! Isn't that perfectly glorious?
	GUY:	Well, I think so.
	MURIEL:	I've always heard it is, and you know I've never been there. Some day I must *go*. (*finishes cocktail.*)
	GUY:	Perhaps . . . perhaps if you found some place lovely enough, like I have—you'd feel differently towards it, and always be able to go back to it?
	MURIEL:	Perhaps, but I don't think any place . . .
MIX CAMERA 2: C.U. Guy	GUY:	My villa there is right on the lakeside. Are you fond of swimming? Well, you can dive from the terrace straight into deep water. Then, you see, there are

		steps down, which go to the boathouse . . .
	MURIEL:	Ah!
	GUY:	And there's a garden at the back, lots of roses—then a little road, then the sheer side of the mountain.
MIX CAMERA 1: 2-shot	MURIEL:	But it sounds perfect!
	GUY:	Yes, it . . . it is really. I always spend part of the summer there at least.
	MURIEL:	Then I suppose you'll be going back soon?
	GUY:	Next week.
	MURIEL:	What do you call it?
	GUY:	La Casa della Terrazza Bianca: the house of the white terrace.
CAMERA 1: Track in to C.U. Muriel	MURIEL:	Please. (*slowly*) La Casa della Terrazza Bianca . . . it sounds . . . irresistible.
	PROPRIETOR:	Caviare for Mademoiselle?
MIX CAMERA 3: Close-up shot of clock shows hands revolving slowly to ten o'clock. Music stops as camera returns to actors		*Bring up music. Up grams.*
		Out grams.
MIX CAMERA 1: 3-shot	GUY:	(*on cue*) Cigarette?
	MURIEL:	Thanks.
		Light cigarettes.
	GUY:	And we want two brandies, please.
	PROPRIETOR:	Two brandies. Oui, Monsieur, immediatement.

	MURIEL:	It was a quite perfect dinner.
	PROPRIETOR:	Merci, Madame.
	MURIEL:	I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed it, Guy.
	GUY:	Splendid. So have I. I never care for eating alone, do you?
	MURIEL:	I've never thought about it. Tho' I believe they say that it isn't so good for one.
	GUY:	How do you mean?
	MURIEL:	Oh, I suppose that the food doesn't do you so much good in some way; something to do with our digestions.
MIX CAMERA 2: 2-shot	GUY:	Are you sure it's the digestion . . . and not the heart which is affected?
	MURIEL:	No-o, it's always been digestion in my version.
	GUY:	You won't mind getting very sunburnt, will you?
	MURIEL:	Mind?
	GUY:	Some women do. But at Maggiore we just can't help it.
	MURIEL:	I think it's much nicer than being white like this.
	GUY:	It'll suit you.
	MURIEL:	Will it? How do you know? I may go scarlet and peel.
	GUY:	I know better. You'll brown exquisitely.
		She laughs.
MIX CAMERA 1: 2-shot	MURIEL:	You're quite brown now. The remainder of the last visit?
	GUY:	No, this . . . this is more or less permanent; my mother was

		Spanish. That's why I can't do without the sun for long.
	MURIEL:	(*sighs*) Nor I—Italian sunshine! Guy, couldn't we leave before next week?
	GUY:	Tomorrow if you like.
	MURIEL:	Let's say the day after.
		Re-enter Waiter.
	GUY:	You're not changing your mind?
	MURIEL:	I never change my mind, once it's made up.
	PROPRIETOR:	Two brandies, Monsieur.
	GUY:	Thank you.
	MURIEL:	Thank you.
		They drink in silence.
		What were you thinking when you drank just now?
CAMERA 1: Track in to C.U. Muriel	GUY:	Perhaps the same as you.
	MURIEL:	Give me your glass—and you take mine—like that. You see, I have a sentimental side. And now, just for luck . . .
		The ring of glasses as they touch.
MIX CAMERA 2:		Here's . . . to the day after tomorrow! (*she drinks.*)
C.U. Guy	GUY:	The days after tomorrow (*he drinks.*)
MIX TELECINE SEQUENCE		*Up grams. Behind telecine. The scene is a terrace looking over an Italian lake: a stone balustrade, distant mountains, a deck chair.* GUY *is sitting on the balustrade, smoking, wearing a dressing-gown. Fade grams.*
MIX CAMERA 1: Mid-shot: Guy on terrace		
MIX CAMERA 3:		

MIX TO CAMERA 1:

MIX CAMERA 1: 2-shot. Track in to C.U. Muriel

MURIEL: (*wrap over bathing-dress, approaching*) Coming for a swim, Guy? Or are you going to be lazy again and watch me? Um?

GUY *doesn't answer.*

How I love this terrace—and the view of the lake, from here. I shall always remember it, and the good times we've had. Always.

A pause.

Don't take it so hard, my poor Guy. After all, we knew it would happen someday, didn't we? We agreed that it must; that when it did we should be sensible and spare each other. Wasn't our first agreement of all that we both hated scenes more than anything in the world?

GUY: Yes.

MURIEL: Well then . . . it's happened, that's all. You've seen it coming, Guy, as clearly as I have.

GUY: Have I?

MURIEL: Yes, but you hadn't the pluck to face it. Or perhaps it was only that you hadn't the words to say it. I had, and now we're going to make it easy for each other, aren't we?

GUY: Yes.

MURIEL: I knew you'd understand.

GUY: But I thought we were happy! Weren't *you?*

MIX CAMERA 3

MURIEL: I . . . was. Listen; would you have preferred it to become gradually dull and commonplace? First a bore, then an exasperation—finally an intolerable burden? After all, we've had a wonderful summer together, we can keep it——

GUY: (*sharply*) Oh, I know! We can preserve it as a perfect memory, an unsullied perfection. I'm afraid I don't find that particularly consoling.

MURIEL: Of course not, because I've tired first. Men have lost that prerogative and a good many others, my dear.

Pause.

MIX CAMERA 1: 2-shot

GUY: Well, what do we do now?

MURIEL: I shall leave for Rome tomorrow morning.

GUY: Are you sparing me another day? I don't think you need.

MURIEL: No, I'm just indulging my own sentimentality.

GUY: Is there any other reason for prolonging the agony?

MURIEL: You forget that I shall have to collect my clothes from the castello; and I want to get one or two things in Stresa. I'll drive the car myself. I'd rather you didn't come . . . I'll be back in time for dinner.

GUY: For dinner?

MURIEL: Yes.

	GUY:	But why wait for dinner?
	MURIEL:	Well—the first time we met, really met, was at dinner, wasn't it? I'd like to dine with you once more. We'll have exactly the same dinner that we had that evening in Paris—at nine—caviare, trout, caneton. We'll end it theatrically, and you'll be able to despise me for ever and ever. Don't you think it's a good idea?
	GUY:	(*roughly*) I think it's damned nonsense, if you want to know.
	MURIEL:	My dear Guy!
	GUY:	(*rising*) Will you tell me one thing—is it someone else?
		MURIEL *laughs.*
	MURIEL:	No, it's not. In a way I wish it were.
	GUY:	What do you mean?
CAMERA 1: C.U. Muriel	MURIEL:	Because then perhaps I could make you understand and realise how right I am. But it's no one else. I told you in the beginning that I am the cat that walks by herself. I can't help it. I have to go on the roofs, perhaps to appreciate how warm fire can be afterwards. But I never—I can't go back to the same fire. I warned you, didn't I?
CAMERA 1: 2-shot	GUY:	Yes, Muriel, you did.
	MURIEL:	So you can't say I'm being unfair.
	GUY:	Unfair?

MURIEL: Because I'm not. I warned you.

Pause.

GUY: (*sits*) Ask Giuseppe to see that the car's all right. She may want filling up, and when you're in Stresa, you might bring me a box of my cigarettes.

MURIEL: Yes, Guy . . . you shall have your cigarettes. I'm glad you have avoided the conventional idiocy of pretending that you'll drown your sorrows in drink.

GUY: (*slowly*) But I'm not a very conventional person, am I? (*lights cigarette*) Somehow I feel that I shall smoke a good many cigarettes in the next few days.

MURIEL: Why not go over to Pollanza in the motorboat? Spend the day there, you know the Ghisios want you to go and see them. This afternoon I shall be busy with our dinner, and I shan't want you back before half-past seven at the earliest.

GUY: Good idea, I will. Oh, Muriel —my cigarette-holder——

MURIEL: What about it?

GUY: I cracked it some weeks ago and sent it to London to be repaired. It arrived back the other day, and——

MURIEL: Where is it?

GUY: I think—in the right-hand drawer of my dressing-table at the Castello, in a sealed box with

English stamps on it. I didn't even bother to unwrap it. Anyhow, Giuseppe knows where it is. You might ask him to give it to you—for this evening.

MURIEL: Very well. (*goes to window.*)

MIX TO CAMERA 3 GUY: (*after a moment, tensely*) Muriel, what you've been saying—about leaving me, it's fantastic. It isn't real. People don't behave like this; for no reason.

MURIEL: Perhaps they don't. But I do, Guy. And they are unhappy; and I'm not. Au revoir.

MIX CAMERA 1: C.U. Guy. Then mix 2nd Telecine sequence.

Close-up shot of hands of clock revolving from ten o'clock to nine the same *evening*. A table for two is now laid on the terrace, R. Two chairs, a bowl of white roses. Guy and Muriel now in evening dress; just the same as worn in the first scene

Up grams. Behind Telecine sequence.

MIX CAMERA 2

Fade grams.

MIX CAMERA 1: Mid-shot on French windows

GUY: Good evening.

MURIEL: (*approaching*) Hello . . . here you are. I'm afraid I'm just a little bit late again.

GUY: Not at all. Not even three minutes this time.

CAMERA 1: Track in to 2-shot

MURIEL: I had a feeling you were an almost morbidly punctual person, Mr. Martinsell. And I was right! (*sits*) (*she laughs*) We've remembered our parts well, haven't we? Why, it only seems like yesterday evening when we were in Paris; and the orchestra was playing—I think a waltz. Do you remember? And I was wearing this same dress, and you—you'd taken special pains with your white tie and the set of your waistcoat—just as you have tonight.

GUY: I don't see why all this—this farce is necessary, Muriel.

MURIEL: But I thought we'd do it properly, dear. Let me look at you —I believe I remembered everything—white tie—links—studs —weren't they all there?

GUY: They were.

MURIEL: And you found your cigarettes on the dressing-table?

GUY: Yes—thank you.

MURIEL: Oh, and Giuseppe gave me the box with your holder in it. I put it . . .

GUY: (*interrupting*) I've got that, too.

MIX CAMERA 3 MURIEL: Good. Now let's have dinner, shall we? I've managed to get everything just the same, Guy —but whether it will taste the same I can't say! It was really quite exciting, I had such a

hunt for everything. The roses were the easiest to get, and the Lanson the hardest. Even now, it isn't '21. Don't you think I've been industrious?

GUY: Very. Where's Maria?

MURIEL: She wanted to go to a service, so I told her she might. We'll be quite alone together. Oh, I must confess something . . . I bribed Giuseppe to let me have a bottle of your own brandy from the cellar.

GUY: (*slowly*) It must have given you a lot of trouble.

MURIEL: Nonsense; I've enjoyed doing it.

Pause.

MIX CAMERA 1: 2-shot

GUY: You drove pretty far and fast to get all these things, didn't you?

MURIEL: I don't think I've forgotten anything. I hope the strawberries are all right, it's a little bit late for them now. Some caviare?

GUY: Thanks.

MURIEL: You look tired, my dear. What have you been doing? Did you go to Pollanza?

GUY: Yes . . . we had some tennis.

MURIEL: In this heat? No wonder you look so white. Did you tell them I was ending my visit tomorrow?

GUY: No.

MURIEL: Oh, I hoped you'd say addio to them for me. Did they ask after me at all?

GUY: I can't remember... I suppose so.

MIX CAMERA 3 MURIEL: They didn't. I wonder if they really believed I was your sister; we're not very alike, are we? (*a pause—she sighs*) Ah, well . . . it's been worth while, hasn't it? That's all that matters. I've been happy here with you, Guy—perhaps as happy as I shall ever be anywhere. But I'm not certain about that—and I have to go on to find out.

GUY: In search of a dream, eh?

MURIEL: Call it a dream. Because we all have to wake up from dreams and come down to earth for a while—before we can have others. I'll have a lot to remember of this place—and I'll miss a lot—things I don't want to spoil with familiarity. Evenings like this—you and I sitting together. The sound of the water lapping against the steps —the cypresses at the end of the garden, like black spears against the sky; (*pause*) watching the little golden lights spring out one by one along the other shore of the lake—like stars; and the ring of the cowbells somewhere far away in the mountains. All those things . . .

MIX CAMERA 1: C.U. Muriel

MIX CAMERA 2: Close-up shot of hands of clock revolving slowly from nine to ten o'clock

MIX CAMERA 3	MURIEL:	(*on cue*) Maria seems to have left the brandy on the sideboard. Perhaps you'll get it, will you? The glasses are beside the bottle.
		Exit through window.
		A slight pause.
		The air is a little chilly out here, the wind seems to have got up rather. (*she shivers: raises her voice*) Bring my cloak with you, Guy, please.
	GUY:	(*re-entering*) Here you are. (*puts cloak round her*) You've lovely shoulders . . .
	MURIEL:	They're lovely and cold at the moment. Ah! That's better. Now the cigarettes!
	GUY:	Will you have one?
	MURIEL:	In a minute.
MIX CAMERA 1:		*A pause.*
2-shot	GUY:	Yes, it was a good dinner. I have to thank you for that, as well as a good many other things.
	MURIEL:	Admit I did it well; that I forgot nothing.
	GUY:	You did it marvellously. Would you mind telling me the real reason why you did it?
	MURIEL:	Perhaps for a whim. Perhaps because I wanted to. Perhaps because I thought it might help you to despise me, or at least to think of me more lightly.
	GUY:	And you're really going tomorrow?

MURIEL: Of course I'm going! I'm really going tonight.

GUY: Tonight?

MURIEL: Yes, I'm not playing cat and mouse with you, my dear Guy. I shall drink my brandy, and light one more cigarette. And then I shall go.

A pause.

CAMERA 1: Track in to

GUY: (*on cue*) I suppose you are right. Perhaps it's only that I'm vain, or old-fashioned, or that I don't understand women, but somehow, tho' I've tried all day, I can only see your decision and what you have done tonight as something unbelievably selfish and cruel.

Slight pause.

MIX CAMERA 3

MURIEL: (*quietly*) I'm sorry.

GUY: I don't think it was necessary. I don't think you can cheat unhappiness by creating a different kind of unhappiness first at someone else's expense.

MURIEL: Please, Guy—need we talk about it any more? I've made up my mind, so don't let us squabble like children on this last evening. We haven't, so far. May I have my brandy?

GUY: We've been lovers, you and I, Muriel, and that means that we've given a good deal of ourselves to each other.

MURIEL: Well?

MIX CAMERA 1: C.U. Guy

GUY: For you to go like this means that you must take with you more than you have any right to take from any man. That's why I say you are unbelievably selfish. But you can't end it like this. There's only one way you can end it.

Pause.

MIX CAMERA 3

MURIEL: May I have my brandy?

GUY: (*after a second*) Your brandy—? Certainly.

MURIEL: Thanks. What do you suggest we drink to this time?

GUY: Shall we drink to our future?

MURIEL: By all means . . . to the days after tomorrow, again.

Their glasses touch.

I wonder when I shall taste brandy like that again. And now a cigarette, please.

GUY: Have you matches?

MURIEL: No, you'll find some on the table indoors.

Exit GUY.

Short pause. MURIEL *begins to hum the waltz tune. She reverses the position of the two glasses.*

Got them?

MIX CAMERA 1: Track in to 2-shot

Re-enter GUY. *He lights cigarettes.*

You might have brought the brandy out with you.

GUY: I don't want any more; do you?

MURIEL: No-o; let's finish this with

another toast, shall we? A new one.

GUY: Very well.

MURIEL: Here's to hoping, my dear, that you will soon forget . . . the days before yesterday.

MIX CAMERA 3 GUY: (*in almost a whisper*) Thank you. Most appropriate.

They drink again. A pause.

MURIEL: There! Now there was something you were saying before I interrupted you. Let me see—about there being only one way I could end it. What way is that, Guy?

GUY: It's just one of those old-fashioned things that persist. It's called Death.

MURIEL: Death?

GUY: (*levelly*) You wanted to end this love of ours. So you're going to die, Muriel. It's all right, it won't hurt you. Unless that English chemist has deceived me, it will be quite quick.

MURIEL: (*fear in her voice*) Guy!

GUY: About ten minutes, I believe.

MURIEL: (*shrilly*) Guy, you're mad!

MIX CAMERA 1: C.U. Guy GUY: (*his words coming swiftly*) Perhaps I am. But you see, death is so easy as a solution. So easy and so right. So simple that I saw almost at once, when you told me your decision this morn-

ing, what the solution must be. It was pure chance that I had that packet in the drawer of my dressing-table; I got it when my wolfhound went mad a year ago. One of those silly precautions that one takes after a tragedy, and, of course, I've never even opened it. You got it for me; you asked for the packet from Giuseppe. And you even asked him to give you the brandy. I think there's a good chance of its being put down to suicide, don't you? You also secured and prepared this curiously elaborate dinner. And I had spent the day in Pollanza. The evidence is almost overwhelming.

MIX CAMERA 3

MURIEL: (*almost inaudibly*) But, Guy . . . but, Guy . . . (*she rises on this.*)

GUY: The repetition of the dinner—a charming conceit. A most effective rounding of the circle. Yes, Muriel, you certainly chose the way in which you'd end it. My God, you did!

MURIEL: But, there's one thing . . . one thing you've forgotten.

GUY: Forgotten?

MURIEL: Just one thing. One thing we did in Paris that night we dined together. After dinner, don't you remember, we were drinking brandy, and just for luck—

a silly, sentimental joke—after the first sip, we exchanged glasses. Well, I did it again tonight. When you went for the matches. So I don't think the verdict will matter very much to either of us, will it?

MIX CAMERA 1: 2-shot

She drops her glass, and begins to laugh shakily.

Guy—it's beginning to hurt rather. Would you mind holding my hand?

MIX CAMERA 1: Pan down to hands and splintered glass

MIX CAMERA 2

Final Caption (No. 9) "THE END"

Their hands touch and grip closely. Camera close-up of fragments of glass on floor.

Up grams.

CLOSING ROUTINE

CAMERA 3: *Caption* 9: "THE END"

"The cast of 'Ending It' was as follows:
Muriel Lethbridge—Joan Marion
Guy Martinsell—John Robinson
The Waiter—Dino Galvani
The production was by
VAL GIELGUD."

A Sample Synopsis

THE REAL THING
by
Henry James

Genre and Category

Ironical comedy set in the studio of an illustrator of what used to be called "high life" during the 'nineties, in the manner of Du Maurier.

Theme

The theme is that for an artist the imagination is more potent than the slavish devotion to the "seen thing", or even the actual thing.

Climax

The climax is the discovery by the artist that by drawing from real members of the aristocracy he produces something far less lifelike than when he draws from his servant.

Aspect Regarded as Suitable
for Invisible Dramatic Treatment

One isn't taken into the mind of the artist in this story—the idea is almost entirely got over by dialogue and presentation of incident—so I think it is good radio material. Although a comedy, there's something pathetically touching in this story.

Plot

Benson illustrates stories of "high life". A husband and wife, titled people come down in the world, ask him if they may pose for him. He agrees, but after a while receives complaints from his editors. He realises that his drawings are getting worse and worse. He wants to sack his models, but is too sorry for them. Then the second climax comes. He tells them they must go, and he will use Kate, his servant, as his model. A week later they come back and ask him if they may housekeep for him; and in the last scene of the story Kate is posing as a Duchess, while "the real thing" brings in tea and cake for her during her rest period.

Adaptor's name
Address

SOME NOTES ON RADIO DRAMA

as issued by the B.B.C. to authors seeking guidance

1. PRELIMINARY LETTER

Before starting to write a radio play it is wise to find out from the B.B.C. Drama Department if a play on that particular theme would be acceptable. (Similar advice applies to Adaptations: see Note 16.) In this way you may save yourself and the B.B.C. Drama Department some waste of time. If the theme is a fairly universal one, such as that the winter wind is not so unkind as Man's ingratitude, any number of plays with different plots would be, in theory, acceptable. But if the theme is a narrow one, such as racial antagonism in South Africa, whether it is illustrated by no matter how good a plot, it might be unacceptable for broadcasting purposes for several reasons: (1) it might quite recently have been used in a play, or (2) it might not be a subject which the B.B.C. wished to touch on at all in radio-dramatic form.

2. NEXT STEP

If the theme is acceptable, then a short synopsis of a few lines, accompanied by two or three pages of dialogue, would enable the B.B.C. to form a judgment as to whether it would be worth while to encourage you to go ahead.

3. WRITING A SYNOPSIS

The synopsis should be as short as possible after it has been carefully thought out and reduced to its basic elements. An enormous number of synopses have to be read by the B.B.C. and, therefore, both the style of the synopsis and its appearance on the page are of importance. That is not to say that an unsuitable story would be accepted if the synopsis were brilliant or

particularly well typed; but, undoubtedly, this would ensure a good and suitable-for-radio story not being turned down or passed over.

Begin the synopsis by saying what genre or type a story is—what category it comes into. Then say what the theme is. Then, in a sentence, give the climax. Then, also in a sentence, give a short account of the aspect of that particular story which makes you think it specially suitable for invisible dramatic treatment. This will not only help the B.B.C. to decide, but in some cases, it may make *you* have second thoughts about a story that you were going to suggest.

After those first four points have been covered in the way indicated above:

(1) genre and category (e.g. farcical thriller)
(2) theme (e.g. that virtue is its own reward)
(3) climax
(4) aspect

add anything up to a dozen lines giving the plot or story. Leave a good margin on both sides and use single spacing. This will make it easier to read and avoid the page having a boring appearance. There is nothing so putting-off as the typewritten line which begins at the extreme edge of the page and goes on to the extreme edge the other side.

4. Essential

The would-be dramatist must listen often and listen intelligently! Plan your listening with the *Radio Times*. The Dramatic criticism in *The Listener* is worth following also. And the B.B.C. Year Book is a mine of information.

5. Parenthesis

Playwrights are both born and made. That is to say, they must have an inborn talent, and it must be severely trained. Broadly speaking, the training can only be given by the writer to himself, and a talent which requires no training is genius.

These notes are not addressed to geniuses; they do not require notes.

6. Radio is Different from Stage and Screen

One very important thing to bear in mind is that both in the invisible play and the visible television play, time and place are fluid, and should be treated as such by writers who know their business. You are not governed by the limitations of the theatre and you are free from many of the limitations of the cinema screen. Remember that though your audience may number millions, the majority of them will be sitting alone, or, at most, with one other person, and will not be subject to the mass psychology which affects audiences in crowded theatres, cinemas, and congregations. Therefore, some dramatic tricks which succeed admirably on crowds, fail completely on the air. The ear becomes magically acute when the eye is not functioning to cloud or dress up its impressions. If the would-be author of a radio play wants practice in writing for the stage and thinks that radio drama will keep his hand in, he had far better leave broadcast drama alone. In their need for good, witty, or forceful dialogue, stage and microphone meet on common ground; but in the theatre, good looks, pretty clothes, ingenuity of production, can cover a vast quantity of bad writing. Not so with the radio play.

7. Depressing Fact

The Drama Department at Broadcasting House receives on an average some seventy-five plays a week from people sufficiently interested in broadcasting generally, and in radio drama in particular, to write for the microphone. Of every hundred plays received, perhaps two on an average comply sufficiently with the special conditions for their claims for production to be seriously considered.

8. Encouraging Note. Choice of Subject

We hope to encourage authors, known and unknown, to submit work which is not outside the bounds of the possibility of per-

formance. We are definitely not adverse from originality of thought in writing or treatment. Wireless plays must appeal to an enormous audience. It is in this simultaneous appeal to vast numbers of people by their own firesides that one of the main difficulties of the would-be radio dramatist is found. He, therefore, must begin with the realisation, however unpalatable, that the subject of his play should be popular in the best sense of the word; should contain some common denominator as interesting to the countryman as to the cockney; to the coal-miner as to the undergraduate. This is a very hard thing, as such raw elements of human nature are either platitudes or have been dealt with by the great dramatists—possibly both.

9. Characters We can Believe in

If the would-be dramatist can invent characters who convince his audience of their existence and evoke an atmosphere that makes the development of their circumstances interesting, he need have no fear for the success of his play.

10. Play of Ideas

There is one dramatic field which can be most profitably exploited by the radio dramatist: the play of ideas. Not that the play of action should be devoid of ideas. That would be absurd. But the microphone offers an extraordinarily sympathetic means of expression to the dramatist who has something to say or discuss which he is convinced could be made interesting to an audience of millions. A play on the stage in which the characters simply sit about and talk is liable to be dull, partly because a normal play lasts about two hours and a half, partly because seeing people just sitting about makes one feel that one is not getting one's money's worth. But listeners to a broadcast play are not in the theatre, they are by their firesides, and the play which discusses, for perhaps an hour, some problem which is presented vividly and with some individual meaning to each member of the audience, is as likely to make a good radio play as anything. It is not enough to take a theory and exploit it in

long speeches delivered by dummies. The characters involved in the discussion must have personalities, and the discussion must follow some dramatic formula of a recognisable kind. The scene in Bernard Shaw's *St. Joan* between the Earl of Warwick, the Bishop and his Chaplain, illustrates this point (though, of course, nearly all his plays are far too long for invisible performance).

11. Preparing the Script

The manuscript should be *clearly typed* and should be addressed to the Play Library, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, and accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope.

12. Length

For an ordinary quarto page of typewritten dialogue and stage directions, a minute and a half should be allowed. In a broadcast play stage directions must be reduced to minimum; they will consist solely of indications of the points at which it is necessary for sound effects to occur. For the author can only indicate the sounds that he requires and leave it to the producer. Generally speaking, a broadcast play may be of any length between fifteen minutes and one hour. The problem of length should be solved by the demands of the individual play in question.

13. Treatment

The "fade" is the basis of radio drama technique. It is the control and mixing and crossing of these fades that give to modern radio drama its particular shape and its special kind of continuity. As the scene in the film scenario ends with the moving of the camera, so the scene in the radio play ends with the fade. It is sometimes advisable to mark the fade of one scene into another by music or special sound effects or strong differentiation of voices. "Cross-fading" on parallel groups of voices is a most effective device, but it is extremely important that the voices should be sufficiently different for there to be no confusion. But never forget that nine times out of ten *simplicity* is more *effective* than complication. *For instance, do not have more characters than are absolutely indispensable.*

14. The following books, if he can find them, may be of value to someone interested in the writing of broadcast plays. All contain examples of plays specially written for the microphone and successfully broadcast:—

Radio Plays by L. du Garde Peach; *Squirrel's Cage* by Tyrone Guthrie; *Ann and Harold* by Louis Goodrich; *The Stuff of Radio* by Lance Sieveking.

15. Money

Do not forget that there are other markets for your radio play. Film and stage rights of radio plays are from time to time sold. You may be able to induce possible buyers to listen to the broadcast performance.

16. Adaptation

If you have no original ideas, but think you have a sense of drama and can write decent dialogue, the field of adaptation may be open to you, but, here again, don't embark upon any work (except for your own satisfaction and practice) until you have assured yourself by consulting the B.B.C. that the novel or short story which you propose to adapt is one which would be acceptable, and has not already been done. It is also possible that the original author may not consent, and this, too, has to be found out by the B.B.C. When you are writing synopses of stories which you think would adapt well, please remember Note 3 and what it says about writing synopses.

L. de G.'S.

A NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

There have been few, alas! too few, books written on the subject of radio plays and most of these are by now almost certainly out of print. But it may be worth while for writers who are interested in examples of their rivals' work, particularly if they share my own pleasure in rummaging in the depths of second-hand bookshops, to cast an eye down the following list. I will not guarantee that it is by any means definitive.

The Stuff of Radio (Cassell) by Lance Sieveking. While this volume belongs essentially to that experimental phase of which I may seem to have spoken rather harshly in the preceding pages, it is none the less worth reading. Its author shares the advantages of a lively and enquiring mind with a long experience of the medium.

Squirrel's Cage and Two Other Plays (Cobden Sanderson) by Tyrone Guthrie. The plays in this book also belong to the experimental phase, but they are rather less obviously experimental in form than those of Sieveking. It is, from the point of view of broadcasting, a thousand pities that Guthrie has almost entirely abandoned broadcasting in favour of the theatre. At the same time, I doubt if he would deny that some of his merit as a producer may be due to his early experience on both sides of the microphone.

Wedding Group and Other Plays (Stanley Smith) by Philip Wade. There can be no better model for the straightforward story teller who aspires to nothing more than a large and appreciative audience. Philip Wade has learned his business largely as a radio actor; and his work shows, in my opinion, the supreme importance to the writer of continual and careful study of other people's work.

Money with Menaces (Constable) by Patrick Hamilton. *Money with Menaces*, together with *To the Public Danger*, which is included in the same volume, stands high among plays written

specially for the microphone. Mr. Hamilton, who is of course both a novelist and a stage playwright of distinction, shows in these examples of his work how easy it is for a receptive and creative imagination to take advantage of those aspects for broadcasting which are completely foreign to the novel or the play.

The Great Ship and *Socrates Asks Why* (Macmillan) by Eric Linklater. No plays could show better than these examples of Mr. Linklater's work the vital importance to the play written for broadcasting of a genuine mastery of words, together with an ear naturally rhythmic. Of the two plays, *The Great Ship* had the distinction, unique at one time, of being broadcast thrice in a single week; while *Socrates Asks Why* is an example of a type of play too seldom essayed but almost invariably successful—a play which takes upon itself rather the shape and quality of a problem discussion. In this field, there are almost limitless possibilities for further exploration.

The Saviours (Heinemann) by Clemence Dane. These seven verse plays on a single theme are interesting largely in that they show as the series develops an ever-increasing mastery by the author of her medium. Their writing was spread over a considerable time, and I think it will be as apparent to the reader as it was to their producer that they improve immensely as they go on. It should, however, be remembered in connection with this series, as with the *Christopher Columbus* of Louis MacNeice and *The Rescue* of Edward Sackville West, which I have not listed here, that it depends almost as much upon its music as upon its verse.

The Man Born To Be King (Gollancz) by Dorothy L. Sayers. I imagine it is unnecessary to write more about this play sequence, which probably aroused more interest and publicity and achieved larger audiences than almost any other plays written for broadcasting. There are, however, certain sentences in the generally remarkable Introduction dealing with the proper relationship between producers and authors, which should be engraved on the hearts of both.

Theseus and The Minotaur (Cape) by Patric Dickinson. While

most of the contents of this book consist of Mr. Dickinson's poems, the piece which gives it its title was written as a verse play for the air. Because of its essential simplicity, leaving aside the merits of its poetry, it seems to me one of the most worth while examples of its kind.

Hemlock for Eight (Frederick Muller) by Clifford Bax and the late Leon M. Lion. While this play is not to be considered among the most distinguished of Mr. Bax's works, it is probably worth reading none the less for the lively and stimulating Prefaces contributed respectively by the two authors.

Radio Theatre (Macdonald), edited by myself. The reader of this book will probably find that my Preface to *Radio Theatre* covers a good deal of the same ground. I would, however, recommend a number of the seven plays collected therein for study, as they were all selected rather less for their literary merit than for their craftsmanship.

[P.T.O.]

RIGHT WAY BOOKS

DAIRY FARMERS ENCYCLOPÆDIA — ALAN MORLEY

PIG KEEPING AND BREEDING — ALAN MORLEY
Second edition.

WALTER'S HORSE KEEPERS ENCYCLOPÆDIA

BEE KEEPERS ENCYCLOPÆDIA
DEANS, F.R.E.S., Head of Bee Dept., North of Scotland Agricultural College

PSYCHOLOGY AND YOU
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CAT ENCYCLOPÆDIA — KIT WILSON
Well illustrated. The greatest book on cats and cat keeping ever.

HOME MEDICAL ENCYCLOPÆDIA
"DIOCLES," M.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.
256 pages. Illustrated. Indexed.

THE RIGHT WAY TO

TO SWIM — WINIFRED GIBSON

KEEP PET FISH — R. DUTTA, B.A., F.Z.S. of Fish Tanks.

KEEP DOGS
R. C. G. HANCOCK, B.Sc., M.R.C.V.S. (Radio Vet)
Second edition. "Probably the best book on dog management." *Animal Breeding Abstracts.*

THE RIGHT WAY TO

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The book for the novice.

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