

may for a time have peopled my bedroom with imaginary dangers, but I doubt whether the ultimate effect on my nerves was half so serious as the effect on my eyesight. There is a period in most people's lives when thrillers have an enormous appeal. Hence the demand for detective fiction, horror films, and adventure serials. In itself I doubt whether this is harmful. But there are several big Buts. There is the danger of young children listening to serials that their older brothers and sisters listen to. There is a danger that the child who would not read a thriller because he is too young will get caught up into listening to something like *The Green Hornet* or *This Man Is Dangerous*—this serial is dangerous—which is full of gunfire, stabbing, gangsters and brutality. The deplorable feature of serials is that they are serials. An exciting book can be read straight off. You can put your mind at rest by finishing it. But a serial episode ends always at the most thrilling point. An adult says, "Well, well," smiles and forgets about it until the next day or week. But the child who has been listening keyed up with excitement is then expected to settle down quietly to a night's rest.

It is not so much that any particular serial is harmful—though some are—as that children would be better without them. But as they are here, and likely to remain, it should be somebody's business to try to sort out those serials which are best suited to school boys and girls. *Commando Story*, for instance, is quite an exciting adventure story for the 10-year-old boy and upward, though a younger child might find it alarming. *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and *Halliday and Son* are also, generally speaking, suitable for primary school children in the upper standards. But most other bedtime serials that I have heard are rubbish.

In the days of penny dreadfuls it was sometimes argued that the boy who read them by the dozen acquired the reading habit, and soon tired of trash and graduated to literature. That doesn't happen with listening, as there is nothing (excluding good music, of course) to graduate to.

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*THE STONES CRY OUT*, when it was first released, was one of the BBC's best propaganda productions. It was written and produced for radio, and radio effects are fully exploited—the switch-back into historical scenes, the full range of voices, deep, throaty, high, guttural or Cockney. We heard it first two years ago when London, Coventry, Bath, York and other ancient and beautiful cities had felt the worst blows of the Luftwaffe. It was designed to rouse us to anger and tears at the senseless destruction of old buildings and living homes. But to-day we are in 1944. To-day it is Berlin, Cologne, Bremen, Hamburg and many other German cities that lie in ruins. In playing these records again (2YA, Friday 4 p.m.) we cannot but be reminded that we are now doing what Hitler tried to do three years ago, and that the tenement-dwellers of Berlin may say as the tenement-dwellers of Britain said three years ago—that bombs will never break their spirit and that houses can be built again.



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