

Marcus King adorned the walls. She and her daughter hung up their coats on a thing provided, and someone else rearranged them tidily for the camera's eye. The basketful of props was distributed, and Barbara sat down ready to type *Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party and pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs.*

For the first act, Aunt Daisy had to come in the door, greet Barbara (who had been urging good men to come to the aid, etc.), and pick up the morning's mail to take to her own desk. Now in case anyone thinks this is all as easy as it sounds, it ought to be explained that it takes a lot of care and arranging. One performer who had to do his part especially well was the man who had to act as lock—the door had to be shut by Aunt Daisy and then stay shut, and this kept one male assistant fully employed during the several rehearsals and then the final shooting.

### The Shooting Begins

When everyone seemed satisfied with this brief act, Aunt Daisy was seated with a script for the talking part, and the big camera was wheeled forward for the close-up shot. Aunt Daisy began to read her script—"GOOD morning everybody. Well, here I am home again and HOW happy I am to be..."

A hurried conference behind the camera, in whispers, and the producer went forward and spoke softly to Aunt Daisy (no ill-mannered megaphone-bawling out at Miramar). Aunt Daisy, on this occasion as on all others, loudly repeated all the suggestions put to her so tactfully.

"They shine? Well I'll try the others, but I can't read it without them I'm sure, of course I never have a script NEVER. But I brought one to-day because Mr. Whateverhisnameis said on the phone..."

Several rehearsals were tried with Aunt Daisy trying to read without glasses, but it took a good many repetitions before she was fluent. At last she was persuaded to try without the script, and rehearsal began all over again with Aunt Daisy improvising upon a few main headings writ large with a big black pencil.

This seemed to promise success. Knowing grins were exchanged behind the cameras, and everyone seemed to relax. Rehearsal, repetition, amendment, abbreviation went on time and time again. Our memory leads us to think that we heard that "Well GOOD morning everybody," twenty-five times altogether.

### Cutting and Polishing

But the thing is that once Aunt Daisy has given up the idea of sticking verbally to her script, she never says the substance of it the same way twice. She has inexhaustible vitality and bounce, and at the twentieth time seemed still to be saying it all for the first time.

But in the meantime, "that bit about Paul Robeson" had been thrown out, a remark about homelife had been dropped because it was redundant, a "Saturday night" had become a "drizzly Saturday night," then a "wet drizzly Saturday night," and a plain "Saturday night" again; a little child had been a "tiny little child," a "two-year-old," a "little-child-I-suppose-he-wouldn't-be-two," and a hot meal had become "vegetables and gravy." All this in the course of rehearsing the same short stretch of Aunt Daisy's address to the cinema public. In other words she was doing for the camera

and sound-track exactly what she does for her radio listeners—thinking it out as she went.

All this, as we have said, took about two and a-half hours, before the sound-track man and the producer and everyone else seemed to be satisfied. Only Aunt Daisy seemed to have any regrets. Her belief was that some of her rehearsal attempts had been far better than the final performances that had actually been filmed. And as she left, she went through the triumphal progress in reverse, with the smiles and handshakes, and "AND you Will let us see it before it goes on the screen, won't you, do, because we WOULD like just to see...."

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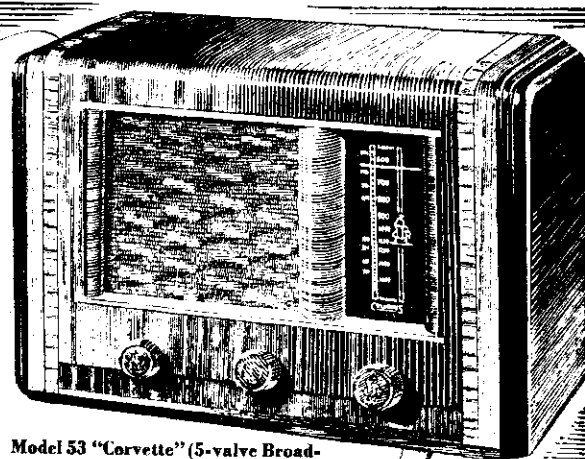
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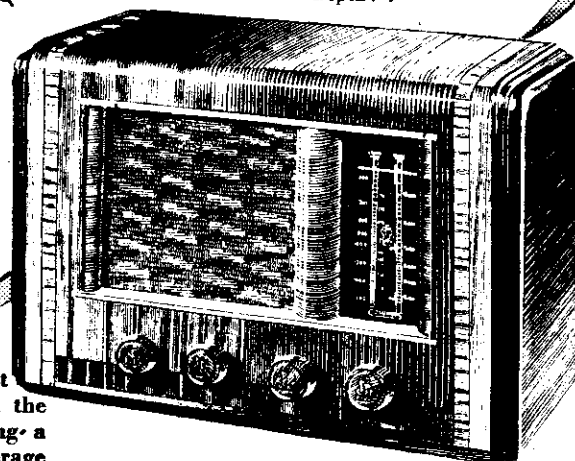
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