

# How to Do and Say in the U.S.A.

ESQUIRE ETIQUETTE, a Guide to Business, Sports, Social Conduct; Angus and Robertson, Australian price 25/-.

(Reviewed by D.G.)

EVERY etiquette book is a source of satisfaction because, of course, it is only the other fellow who won't know how to wear, even if he can afford them, the clothes and flowers perquisite for each demanding occasion. America need no longer be thought of as a land of civilised barbarians, for here is *Esquire's* very own Etiquette. *Esquire*, whose eyes on sticks have heretofore hinted so many unspoken salacities, has forsaken his gentlemanly raffishness and gone into trade; this is a very serious consideration of etiquette and "guestiquette." And the old gentleman does it without batting an eyelid:

Even if you want them only as a cover, you need smooth business manners.

It is NEVER correct to call anyone in business "dearie," "darling," "honey," "baby," "toots"—

Take care not to startle others' horses by clucking to your own horse. . . Width of cuffless trousers—by current narrow standards, 18½ inches at bottom. Always worn with braces.

Accompanying me on many social occasions is a British book called *Etiquette for Men*, from whose genteel pages I have been wont to admonish my host or hostess when they have committed more than the initial social solecism of inviting me to their home. I shall replace it with *Esquire Etiquette*, brighter in the cover and deadly thorough. (But the British book says of Eating Oranges: "Oranges are very difficult to manipulate. . . However careful



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you may be, there is danger that someone will receive a little of the juice, and really the fruit is best avoided at a public dinner," while *Esquire* ignores the subject. Does this mean non-recognition in England and acute embarrassment in the U.N.?)

It is heartening to note there is a staunch international accord on so many other points: neither book wishes me to bare the head to a public lift, and both prefer I should ride to the dogs (or is it hunting-hounds?) not wearing a pyjama jacket with my jodhpurs.

*Esquire* is too big for other than a poacher's pocket, but a quick flip through the index (for everything except oranges) will save many a social day. If everyone reads it we shall all be impeccable puppets with much to do and nothing to say. But everyone won't read it. Among those who do, gentlemen of impeccable memory need never again fear to look a head waiter fair in the napkin.

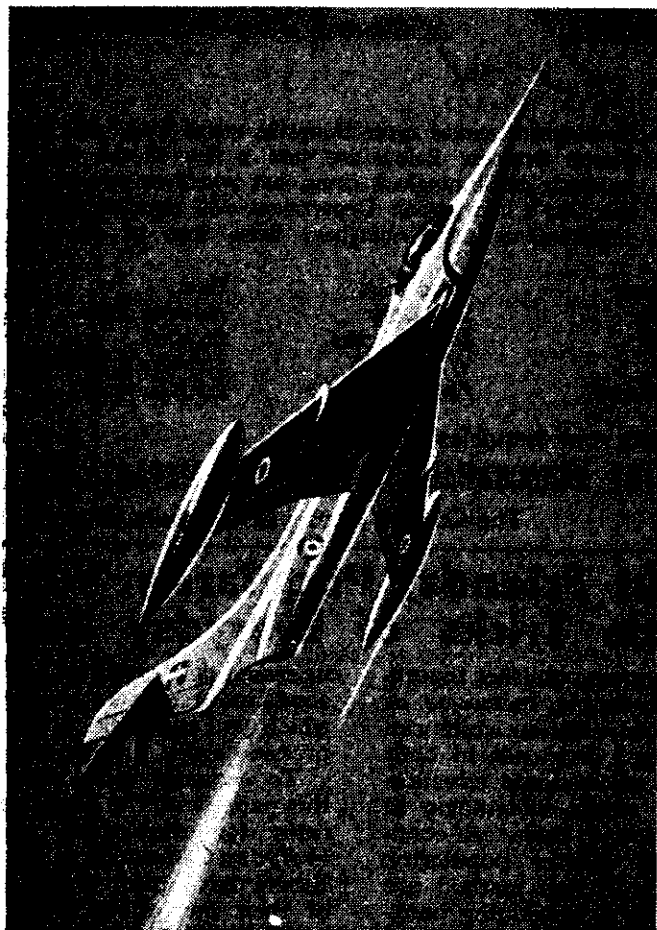
## FALLEN BY THE MICROPHONE

AUTUMN SEQUEL, by Louis MacNeice; Faber and Faber, English price 12/6.

THE Oxford poets of the 'thirties—they were given many labels, but these two points of reference are central—were a fairly compact group once;

now they are squandered abroad. Through the war years, Louis MacNeice's gifts—quickness, deftness, an Irish wit and a North-of-Ireland mental toughness, reinforced by a dogged humanism—seemed to wear better than most; his romantic impulses were balanced by a classical training, his vision remained clear. Since the war, two things have happened: there has been a recrudescence of literary romanticism, and Mr. MacNeice has continued to work for the BBC. The lamentable results are written large through the 26 cantos of this "Rhetorical Poem."

*Autumn Sequel* as a radio script has many merits. It is almost embarrassingly professional—one can read the composer's notes for the producer between many lines, most clearly at the beginning and end of every canto. As a poem, it suffers abominably: the material is inflated, the most trivial incident is blown up into a radio pseudo-drama which the trained voice may cunningly interpret. Why should this be so disastrous? Professionalism in the theatre never did a true poet any harm; Shakespeare in another day, Christopher Fry in ours, may spin words admirably for calculated effect. The answer here, I think, is that this is really a romantic confessional piece in a minor key, which should have been a great deal less rhetorical and about a quarter as long. Of course, there are good things in it—I liked especially the return to Oxford,



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