

The Book Review The Radio Alphabet Work of Announcing Broadcasting in U.S.A.

QUIET CITIES.

Joseph Hergesheimer.

THE title encourages hope that amid burden and heat of the day—and general uproar—there may be discovered mental and spiritual oasis. This, however, is not the case. In these tales Mr. Hergesheimer has gathered material from stirring and lawless days of an America long past: a land where battle, murder and violent death were the rule, not the exception, mixed races predominant, and the sacredness of human life non-existent plank of social platform.

Amid varying grades of American fiction-makers Mr. Hergesheimer ranks high, being suave psychologist, skilful analyst of humanity's motives, and brilliant in visualisation of periods both ancient and modern.

Most of the narrative concerns violence, and warring of many nations and creeds. Episodes of grim horror are cheek by jowl, so to speak, with shadowy loveliness of old, dim cities and lure of wide prairies. Sylvester Dering, gambler, soldier of fortune, ever ready with rifle or rapier, is one day beckoned by some mystery of the spirit, casts evil communications and sinister river of ill omen, and seeks peace and ensues it in a City Beautiful, "where walks were set with lemon and orange branches, black-green magnolias and tulip trees." There, listening to melodious singing of pious negro doggerel, with his pocketful of dollars and new-found content, the rake and murderer discovers soul of goodness in things evil.

Destiny which has no mercy on contrite hearts, finds him out in his high green bluff, resurrecting his past in person of vile, beautiful quadroon, who in malice fouls his retreat and shatters dreams. Nothing for it then but the river and the roughs, to whom a repentant sinner returns to preach gospel of beauty and peace that passes understanding.

In noisome and blood-curdling narrative of the slave-trade we renew acquaintance with the three Black Pennys, protagonists in earlier brilliant novel; while in contrasting genre is tale of Nicholas Ellisset and son Ambrose, who, even as sons do now, falls in love with the wrong girl. There is an admirably etched impression of Brook Farm; from which sanctuary of plain living and hard work the damsel is lured by simple, subtle, strategic lure of necklace of emeralds, the wicked green fire of which extinguishes enthusiasm for simple life; as has been the way with many a maid since those days of Brook Farm, Louisa Alcott and George Washington.

Deft is Mr. Hergesheimer, with ear attuned to quaint dialogue and fancy to vivid exploitation of past period of romance; but, in the opinion of many, the American short story still lags far behind the best that emanate from other countries.—R.U.R.

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S.O.S
TRAVEL IN COMFORT BY
CAR

NEW PLYMOUTH
WELLINGTON — PALMERSTON

(By Philip Williamson, Whangamata.)

A stands for Aerial, it comes from a mast,

Which after much toil we erected at last.

B stands for Batteries, both dry and wet,

Which give us the power for working the set.

C stands for Crystal, let there be no deception,

A crystal set's only for local reception.

D stands for Distance, sometimes called DX.

There's a club for enthusiasts whatever their sex.

E stands for Earth, there are various types,

Though man prefer to use just water pipes.

F stands for Fading, and oh! what a pity

That the worst place for this is the Capital City.

G stands for Grouzers, who love to complain

That the broadcasts from stations afford them much pain.

H stands for Howlers who cause us displeasure.

Why can't they give their receivers some leisure?

I stands for Inductance, a technical term,

Which is used by the man from the radio firm.

J stands for Jumble, a mixture of noise,

That comes out of sets when they're treated as toys.

K stands for Knobs adorning each set,

Which by twisting and turning the stations you'll get.

L stands for Loudspeaker, the emitter of sounds,

A piece of equipment which costs a few pounds.

M stands for Microphone, often called "Mike."

Which to face is an ordeal that many don't like.

N stands for Night, when the concerts are broadcast.

Also the following day's weather forecast.

O stands for Ohms, to do with resistance.

If you know about this it will be of assistance.

P stands for Phones, which sit tight on the head.

Hospital patients wear them in bed.

Q stands for Query—"What station is that?"

"A Yank, or a Jap, or our neighbour's tom cat?"

R's for Reception, which is sometimes erratic.

Frequently caused by—

S, which is Static.

T stands for Terminals, "Earth" and "Antenna."

Sets not wanting these cost more than a "tenner."

U stands for Uncles who give great delight

To hundreds of kiddies at six every night.

V stands for Valves, which cause much vexation,

Whenever they break into loud oscillation.

W the Wavelengths to stations allotted,

By tuning to these the signals are spotted.

Women Not Suitable

DURING the month of November the British Broadcasting Corporation, after testing a number of women who applied for posts as announcers, decided to adhere to the policy of using men only for full time announcing before the microphone.

The suggestion by the corporation that women might be employed for announcing purposes, led to the receipt of a considerable number of applications from women. They were then invited to Savoy Hill and given tests under broadcasting conditions. The capabilities of the women applicants were carefully considered by the British Broadcasting Corporation before coming to a decision, and on November 9 the following official statement was made:—"There are no vacancies for announcers—male or female—and the corporation does not contemplate appointing women to full-time announcing posts in the near future. Among those women tested no suitable candidate was found. The total number of whole-time announcers employed at the central station at Savoy Hill is six. Women are employed before the microphone part-time, to announce programmes during the afternoon, in the children's hour, and at the provincial stations."

In commenting upon the result of these tests the New South Wales Broadcasting Company, Limited, says it does not come as a surprise to controlling authorities in the Commonwealth that women should fail to pass the tests for announcing. Their opinion is that women are not suited to the arduous duties of an announcer, the difficulties of whose work are not apparent to the general public. The conditions of announcing, they consider, place the work within a sphere peculiar to men. Announcing calls for a large degree of showmanship, and to get the best result out of a programme the announcer has at times to marshal considerable numbers who are to perform either in solo or concerted items during a session.

No matter how carefully the management may map out a programme the timing is apt to go wrong. A boxing or wrestling contest may end much sooner than was expected, some condition might arise which calls for a considerable alteration in the programme in an outside show, or the land line between the studio and the pick-up point might go wrong. Then it is that the announcer has to estimate the capabilities of the forces at his disposal, and see an impromptu programme through.

THE fact that a valve filament is intact does not necessarily mean that it is in good order, for it may have lost its emission.

X is a letter that often is found
In the call sign of stations on American ground.

Y stands for YA, New Zealand's call sign.

The programmes they broadcast are certainly fine.

Z stands for Zonophone, a record well known.

Having found this for Z we shall leave it alone.

THE overseas representative of the New South Wales Broadcasting Company, writing under date of December 20 from New York, makes interesting reference to the progress of radio in the United States of America during 1928, and also deals with the prospects of broadcasting during the new year. He says:

"As the year 1928 draws to a close, it may be of interest to review the growth of radio in America during the preceding twelve months. The year 1928 has been exceptionally good for the radio business here. In the first place, the transition period of 1927, during which manufacturers were changing over from the battery-operated sets to A.C. receivers, has now passed, and the latter type of receiver has been brought to a point of compactness and simplicity which has materially helped in gaining the public confidence. A.C. operated receivers now outsell other types at the rate of about 10 to 1. The Presidential election was another factor in increasing the interest in and sales of radio sets and components during recent months. In addition, the high standard of the programmes over the various chain systems has contributed to a great extent to the continued growth of the industry."

No Saturation Point.

"EACH year the question of 'saturation point' crops up, but the actual figures—for this year, at least—show that the problem need not be considered for some time to come, if at all. A very large percentage of the present sales are replacements. In this direction the public opinion is being moulded both by the advertisers and by the Radio Commission to the realisation that those owning receivers of 1924-5 vintage are receiving all the quality of that period. The older sets were not designed to reproduce the lower frequencies and overtones which distinguish the high-grade receiver of to-day. There are no radical changes in sight that will tend to make obsolete the sets now on the market. Television is still some years ahead as far as the public is concerned. Such changes as the use of the dynamic speaker and the new screen-grid valves, both of which will be featured in the 1929 receiver, are of minor importance."

Optimism the Keynote.

"THE quality of the better type of receivers and of the transmitting equipment is of such a high order that I doubt if it can be improved upon for some time to come. The speaker, however, is still the weak point in the chain, and it is to this that we must look for future improvements. Evaluate, as exemplified in the wide selection of period furniture, has been another factor in enlarging the sales of receivers. In some quarters art consoles are being sold in greater quantities than are table models. A highlight in the broadcasting schedule for 1929 will be the Presidential inauguration ceremonies. In addition, the broadcasting companies are making arrangements for several series of operatic and symphonic presentations that augur for the continued development along the programme side. Taking the above facts into consideration, it is not surprising that all sections of the trade are optimistic with regard to the continued growth of business in the new year."