

# BACKSTAIRS IN

*English Radio Man And Journalist  
of The "Cliveden Set" —The  
Party of the Astors, That  
British Foreign Office"*

By  
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From  
De Groene  
Amsterdammer.

VISITING New Zealand on a world tour, Mr. Ratcliffe has been listed for two talks for the NBS. One was given recently from 2YA on the inauguration ceremony for President Roosevelt (which Mr. Ratcliffe described some years ago from Washington specially for the BBC); the other,

on "Some English Celebrities of To-day," is being given on July 7 from 1YA. Before he leaves New Zealand, he is making a recorded talk on the political situation in U.S.A.

His name is known all over the world for special articles to the London "Sunday Observer," the "Manchester Guardian" and the "Spectator."

## His Young Friend

"THE 'Cliveden Set,'" Mr. Ratcliffe told me, "was 'exposed' by a young friend of mine, Claud Cockburn. I know him well.

"He was a young and extremely able man on the foreign correspondent staff of 'The Times,' who went extreme 'Left' in his views. He left the staff of 'The Times,' refusing all tempting inducements to stay, and began a small mimeograph publication called 'The Week.'

"He could write well, but in 'The Week' he wrote badly. He copied all the trans-Atlantic tricks of the American magazine 'Time.' His paper was full of what was supposed to be the 'inside dope' on the Cliveden Set.

"But in 'Current History' lately he published a summary, well written and clearly presented, of his investigations. It is this, no doubt, that has set the rumour about the 'Cliveden Set' going round the world."

THE name of Astor, a powerful one in Britain to-day, stands out strongly in any picture, however shadowy, of the Set. One of the Astor brothers, Viscount Astor, owns the weekly Sunday newspaper, "The Observer." The other, Major the Honourable John Jacob Astor, owns the controlling interest in the London "Times."

Both are profoundly influenced, says Claud Cockburn, by the enormously energetic and sprightly Lady Astor, wife of the Viscount. Cliveden is the Thames Valley country residence of the Viscount and his lady, who came originally from Virginia, U.S.A.

... The Anti-Marx Brothers play a soothing Lullaby.

THE English are renowned for their probity, but in London Americans tell a sly little story. They say that an American big business man once came to London determined on success. He called on numerous politicians, heads of departments and influential newspaper editors.

After chatting with them for a time and outlining the deals he hoped to put through, he would go away, carelessly leaving an open cheque on the desk of the man he was visiting.

Next day he would get a furiously cold letter enclosing the cheque, and his business did not prosper. None of his deals went through.

## Solution

HE was worried about this. It was not human, it was not nice. At last a compatriot who had lived some time in England gave him advice.

"Buy a country house," he said. "Ask them down for week-ends, with their wives and families. Give them good wine, cigars and shooting on the moors. Don't ever offer them cheques. Remember, they have a very old civilisation, much older than ours."

The American did this, and his business prospered.

THIS was the story that came back to me when Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe, distinguished English journalist and BBC radio man, began to tell me in Wellington last week of the now-famous Cliveden (pronounced "Clivden") Set, which is supposed to dictate from the country house of Viscountess (Nancy) Astor the foreign policy of Britain.