

Entertainments At Which We All Assist, No. 1

Settling In The Set

A Bargain, A Budget And The Birth of A Dial Twiddler

Described in Detail

by

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ALL my friends are divisible into one of three groups—those who listen in to the A stations and are conceited about it; those who prefer the ZB's and feel boldly Socialistic; finally, those who favour the between stations and are just ordinary.

Often, in conversational silences at tea parties, these embarrassing friends would turn and ask me straightly to which camp I belonged. It used to unnerve me. I would blush and stammer: "Well, to tell you the truth, we haven't got a radio—not yet."

And they would raise the pencil above their eyes and say: "Goodness, but they're not luxuries any more—they're necessities"—just like salesmen of refrigerators, and very tactfully turn the subject on to old-fashioned things like gardens and babies and the weather.

I complained about the humiliation to Tony, but he said he was sorry about it, but there you were. You couldn't expect to buy a new car and a radio in the same year, particularly when you didn't know how the Government would balance their Budget—and where was the money coming from?

However, when I was recuperating in the country from a rupture between me and my tonsils, Tony had time to what he calls "make contacts" with his various business friends and fellow-drinkers. The result was, he came to me last week and said, knocking out his pipe on the carpet, "I've a surprise for you, Anne."

"Have you?" I answered. "You'd better sweep that up, Tony."

He smudged the ash firmly with his foot and said, "Good for the moths. Anne, it's a radio. Bill Smade is getting it for me; £35 in the shops, but he is taking over the agency and we can have it for £7/1/7 if we want it. What would you say?"

"Oh, Tony," I cried happily, my winter-sales complex vibrant, "why, Tony, of course we must get it. It's a bargain! Besides, we really should have a radio. They're necessities now, you know."

"We'll have it on trial," said Tony.

NEXT day the radio arrived, wrapped up in cardboard. I waited until Tony came home and we opened it together. He put his arms into the box and drew it gently out.



... "Slowly! You must tune slowly," barked Tony, watching me like a bad-tempered ferret.

We both looked at it dubiously. "Rather small, isn't it?" I suggested. "I was down town to-day, Tony, pricing them, and I saw some at least three times that size and only £25. I suppose Bill Smade wouldn't do you, would he?"

"Nonsense! The money's in the guts, Anne. What do you want with all that cabinet work?"

I decided, anyway, the cabinet work would be more trouble to clean, so I chirruped brightly: "Go on, Tony, turn it on. Where's the thing you push in?"

"Curses!" said he with a piece of frayed wire in his hand, "we'll need a three-point."

I left him to tinker. There is always fixing and adjusting before you can start any of these modern electrical gadgets. I had knitted three inches before Tony was back.

"I've done an awful thing."

"Me, too," I told him. "I was reading, and the pattern's all funny."

"I've tapped the aerial of the man downstairs," whispered Tony. "He'll be mad if he finds out."

"Can't you mend it?" I gasped, for we have had trouble enough lately with the downstairs flat and their garbage tins. Tony snorted fiercely and explained he had merely borrowed some of the man's power to do justice to our radio.

"It's ready, then?" I said eagerly.

IN the living-room, the radio was making a sizzling sound. Tony boldly turned a knob and there was a sudden piercing scream—then silence—then more sizzling. "Damn!" said Tony.

"Let me do it," I cried.

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THIS week the "Record's" popular woman contributor, Anne Hope, begins a new series of articles on "Entertainments At Which We All Assist." First subject is radios on "appro."