THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
FOUNDED IN 1728 BY Benj. Franklin

Bing and his sons Philip, Gary, Dennis and Lindsay at Hayden Lake, Idaho. After a summer's hard work on a Nevada ranch, the boys win a vacation here.

RICHARD T. LEWIS

When Bing Crosby decided to tell his own story of his life, it was inevitable he should do it aloud—at home, on the high seas, wherever he happened to be. So a Post editor traveled over 20,000 miles at Bing's heels with a microphone and recorder, taking down the true Crosby more faithfully than Boswell took down Johnson. Here, in Bing's own words, is one of the most charming and unusual life stories ever published.

Call Me Lucky

By BING CROSBY
as told to PETE MARTIN

FIRST OF EIGHT PARTS

THE autobiographical kick is a new kind of caper for me. Starting the story of my life makes my memory feel like an out-of-kilter juke box. When I drop a nickel into it, I'm not sure what story it will play back.

I might push a nickel in and have the story of my grandmother, Katie, come out. Katie married an Irishman named Dennis Harrigan. When she was on her deathbed, Dennis sat nearby watching her for some sign of recognition.

Just before the end, her eyes opened and she said, "Give me your hand, Dinnis."

He put his hand in hers and said, "Katie, it's a hand that was never raised against ye."

Copyright 1953 by Bing Crosby.

Her eyes opened wider. "And it's a domn good thing for ye it wasn't!" she said. Then she died. She must have been a very spirited woman.

I might shove in another nickel and my memory juke box would play the story of the oddly assorted crowd which attended a New Year's Eve party given by Win Rockefeller at the Pocantico Hills estate which had once belonged to his grandfather, John D.

I was having lunch with Win in New York, where business had taken me in 1946, just after Christmas. "You know what we ought to do this New Year's Eve?" he asked. "Instead of going to a café and letting people throw confetti at us and blow horns in our ears, and stomp on our toes and push us around, we ought to throw our own party."

He warmed to the notion as he talked about it. "We can go up to my grandfather's estate, open the

DECCA

house and get in some servants. You bring your gang from show business and I'll bring my friends. We'll have a band and we'll hire some entertainers. I'll supply the drinks and food. We'll have fun."

"All right," I said doubtfully. "But your gang has probably never been exposed to my kind of a gang."

"I don't care," he said. "Bring anybody you want to. We'll meet in front of The Sherry-Netherland about four or five New Year's Eve afternoon. I'll have a chartered bus there with a bar installed in it, and I'll stock it with sandwiches and we'll drive out. We'll be out there in time for a swim in the indoor pool. Then we'll have drinks, dinner, a big New Year's Eve dance, spend the next day and come home in the evening."

I talked some of my pals in show business into going. Among them were such blue-blood Back Bay types as Phil Silvers; the song writers Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen; Barney Dean, an ex-vaudeville knockabout comedian; Jack Clark, a song plugger; and Rags Ragland, a *magna cum laude* graduate from burlesque.

Some of the married fellows brought their wives and there were some extra unattached lovelies too. I held a meeting with my group before the take-off and begged them not to get gassed or start any fights or make flip observations about the clothing or mannerisms of our host or his friends.

They promised solemnly that they wouldn't, and they did pretty well in the bus. We drove through a vast stone gateway and a succession of parks, then more gates and more parks and more gates, with watchmen at each gate. Finally we pulled up before a tremendous pile of brick and masonry, and I heard a whispered question from one of my pals, "Is this the rumpus room?" But, fortunately, none of the Social Registerites heard him. Then we got out of the bus and started up the fifty or sixty stone steps leading to the main entrance.

We were halfway up when Barney Dean stopped and said, "Wait!"

"What's the matter?" Win Rockefeller asked.

"I can't go in," Barney replied.

I asked, "Why not?" I should have known better.

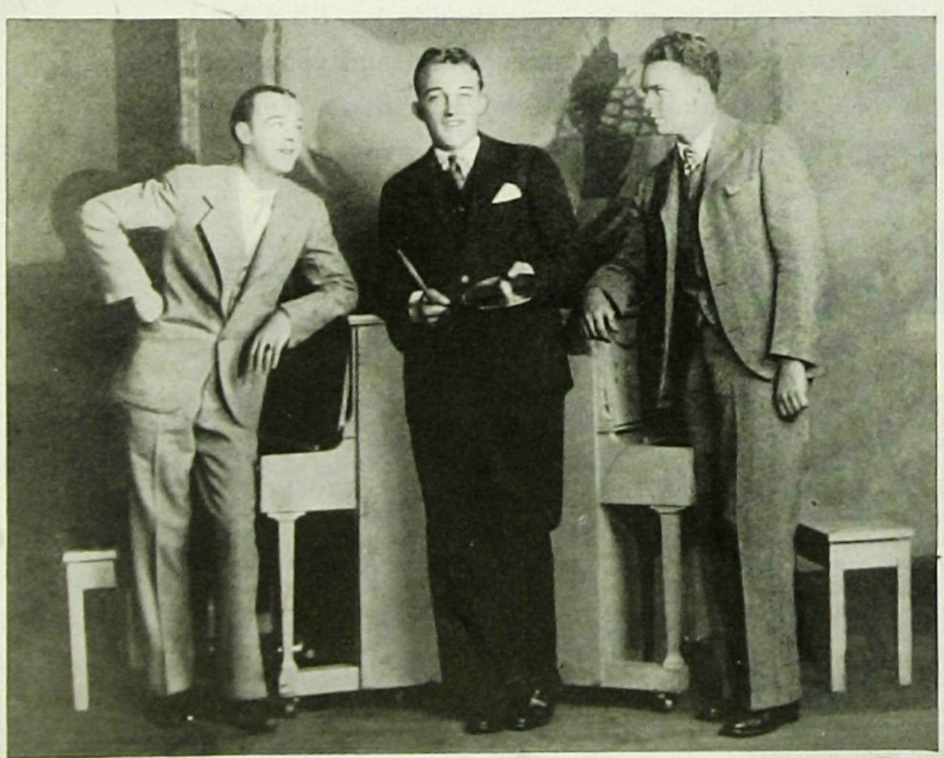
"I forgot my library card," Barney said.

I gave him a dirty look. I had a feeling my gang was getting out of control.

The head butler assigned us to rooms and told us that we could do anything we wanted to do; we could swim or play table tennis or indoor tennis on a regulation-size court. There was everything any-

UNITED PRESS

Bing and his wife, Dixie, who died last October. Newspapers reported Dixie Lee's marriage to Bing, then relatively unknown, with the headline, WELL-KNOWN FOX MOVIE STAR MARRIES BING CROVENY.



GLOBE

The Paul Whiteman Rhythm Boys (Harry Barris, Bing, Al Rinker) in 1928. Bing's big break came in 1927 when his act with Rinker was spotted by members of the Whiteman band.

INTERNATIONAL

Fort Lee, N. J., 1935. Bing at a reunion with his old boss, "Pops" Whiteman, once known to his band as "The Fat Fiddler."

one could want for recreation or amusement. We opened one door and there before our bugged eyes were long, gleaming bowling alleys with pin boys waiting, their arms folded across their chests. We opened another door, and there was Dorothy Shay, the Park Avenue Hillbilly, singing songs to entertain us. Behind another door a band was holding sway, thumping and blaring.

We were watching a tennis game from the gallery above the indoor tennis court when one of Win Rockefeller's dowager friends popped her head in and asked, "Has anyone seen Millicent?"

We stared at each other blankly. Then Barney Dean said helpfully, "Maybe she's upstairs playing polo."

After that the atmosphere grew a little tense, but following a highball or two, the chill thawed. We played the piano and sang and danced, and everyone became bosom friends. All in all, it was a memorable party.

The Inside Story of Going My Way

A THIRD nickel in my memory juke box might spring loose a disk of me reciting the story of making the movie Going My Way, in 1944. Leo McCarey, a top director and also an old golf-course, football-game and Del Mar-Race-Track friend of mine, was always threatening to use me in one of his pictures. "I'll get an idea for you, and when I do, I'll let you know," he said. It became a running gag. Every time I saw him, even if he was three or four fairways away, I'd holler, "Now?"

He'd give a slow, negative shake of his head and yell, "No!"

That went on for years. Then one day I saw him at a football game, and when I asked "Now?" he said, "Now!"

I said, "Come over to the house."

When he came over, he told me, "After you hear the idea I have for you, maybe you'll think it isn't 'now.' I want you to play a priest."

"Now what kind of a priest could I play?" I asked. "I'd be unbelievable, and besides, the Church won't like that kind of casting."

"I think it would," he said. "I've talked to some pretty wise priests in this diocese and they think you can handle the character I described."

I said, "Let's hear it."

So he gave me the story—or, at any rate, such story fragments as he had then for Going My Way.

Leo is of the old school of directors. His roots go back deep into the silent days when a director never put anything down on paper. In Leo's fledgling days, directors had to be accomplished actors and great mimics. When they told a story they had to put it over so effectively that the producer suffered an acute attack of enthusiasm and said, "O.K. Here's five hundred thousand dollars. Make it."

Leo told me a terrific story. It wasn't the story he eventually used, but when he was through, there wasn't a dry eye in the house—his or mine. In his preliminary take-out of his idea, I played a priest all right, but from there on it wasn't much like Going My Way. Looking back, I don't think he had a story at all. He just made one up as he went along. Nevertheless, he had me transfixed.

When he finished, I was sold. I said, "I'll be ready in the morning."

But first he had to see those good, gray elder statesmen, Paramount's top brass. Probably he told them an entirely different story, but at least it had a priest in it, for the higher-ups back East who controlled the studio's purse strings blew a gasket when they heard that I was to wear a long, black, buttoned-down robe. One or two of them suggested that it might be a good idea to have Leo committed for observation.

However, Paramount's production head, Buddy De Sylva, believed in Leo. He was willing to go along with him on his Crosby-as-a-priest notion. Eventually, Buddy sold it to the people in the East.

Leo had his own movie-making system. I don't think that even when we started he had a final story mapped out. He began with a few scenes to establish the locale and to give an idea what kind of priests Barry Fitzgerald, Frank McHugh and I were. After that, we never knew what we'd be doing from morning to afternoon. We'd come on the set about nine, have coffee and doughnuts, and Leo would go over to a piano and play for a while, while the rest of us sang a little barbershop. Then he'd wander around and think. He might even take a walk down the street and come back, while we waited. About eleven o'clock he'd say, "Well, let's get going."

We'd run through the scene he'd described to us the previous night. Then he'd say, "We're not going to do that. Take a two-hour lunch break. I'll whip something up and we'll shoot it after lunch."

When we came back, what he'd whipped up might change the whole direction of the story. We shot it anyhow.

Leo is no Fancy Dan, Mittel-European technician who tosses close-ups, medium shots, montages, angle shots and camera tricks around. Most of his shots are old-fashioned, no-nonsense, full-figure shots. One of the scenes in the picture was a checker game which involved Fitzgerald, Frank McHugh and me. We ad-libbed it right on the set under Leo's direction. He shot it from just one angle, then he said, "Print it."

"What, no close-ups?" we asked.

"It looked good to me from that angle," he said, and that was that.

The picture won a flock of Academy Awards. Leo was given the director's award and the award for writing the screenplay. Barry Fitzgerald won the supporting Oscar. I got lucky and wound up with the award for the best male movie actor of 1944.

My memory of the award-giving at Grauman's Chinese Theater is not too clear. I'd heard there was a chance I'd get an award, but I was sure that it would go to someone who was recognized as an able actor rather than a crooner. So I didn't take it too seriously until shortly before the ceremony, when it began to look as if I had a chance. After that I took it seriously enough to put on a dinner jacket, which is unusual for me. I'm not a great lad for getting into a dinner jacket in which to attend functions of a semiofficial character.

Gary Cooper was chosen to hand me the award. I don't remember what he said, but when he managed to put the idea over to me that I had won the award, a great warm feeling came over me. I stumbled up on the stage like a zombie. Neither Coop nor I said much.

I asked, "Are you talking about me?"

And he said, "Yup."

My memory juke box might decide to give out next the story of Father Sharp, one of the most-beloved men who ever taught at Gonzaga University. Father Sharp came from Butte, Montana. Butte is not a panty-waist community today, and in those days it was even less so. Father Sharp went into the Jesuit order, then came to Gonzaga to teach. He was a stern disciplinarian, but a fair Joe. If you had it coming to (Continued on Page 88)

MURRAY GARRETT

Bob Hope and Bing joyously exchange insults. Bing doubts that his story contains any inspirational point of view, "but," he says, "it is certainly shot full of another favorite American commodity—luck."

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CALL ME LUCKY

(Continued from Page 19)

you, you got it. If you were innocent and could prove it, you were free and clear.

He had a leather strap made up. The out-of-line younger students in the high school operated by Gonzaga caught it across their behinds. The older students got it on the hands. When some of the older students who fancied themselves with their dukes demanded fistic satisfaction after such punishment, Father Sharp removed his collar and put on the gloves with them. He never blew a decision either, as I recall it.

In 1936 Gonzaga held a homecoming week. Part of that celebration was a football game with the University of San Francisco. I was asked to revisit the campus and do a radio show to raise money for the college library. I was also asked to take part in the ceremonies at the football game.

It was a three- or four-day affair, with functions each evening. The night before the game, one of these functions kept me up late and, what with the conviviality born of seeing so many of my old classmates, I woke up feeling rocky and with a case of the whips and jingles. I went out to the college for a late breakfast and afterward repaired to the locker room to wish the coach luck. As a restorative, I had with me a flagon of spirits, but since it had only a scanty drink left in it, I planned to save it until just before game time.

When the team ran out onto the field, I stepped into a little office off the locker room for a final belt at the bottle. Just as I lifted it to my lips, I saw Father Sharp coming down the corridor, and with an instinctive return to the habits of my student years, I stashed the flagon under a desk, hoping he hadn't seen me do it.

The game was about to start, and since I'd been asked to say a few words at midfield before the kick-off, I was growing restive. But Father Sharp showed no disposition to leave. Finally I decided to abandon the bottle, but just as we got to the door, he went back, reached under the desk, fetched the bottle out and took a swig which emptied it. "It wouldn't be right to let a soldier die without a priest," he said, his eyes twinkling.

No wonder we loved him at Gonzaga. It wasn't hard to love a fellow like that.

But if I'm to get on with my story, I'll have to rid myself of the feeling that my memories are a busted juke box and get them organized. I'll have to arrange them so they'll begin somewhere and end somewhere. The big thing is to grope around in my mind and pull them out and sort them. In the assortment will certainly be the letter my youngest son, Linny, wrote to me when he was nine or ten and I was back East.

In his letter he gave me a detailed account of the sporting news from the Pacific Coast. I forget whether football or baseball was in season, but I remember he closed: "Your friend, Lin." It's not every dad whose son thinks of him that way.

Then there'll be another scene featuring Linny. Leading into it there was some preliminary footage involving a Hollywood director who's a bigger ham than any actor I've ever known on stage, screen, radio or TV. He owns the traditional wardrobe: the camel's-hair coat, white, buttoned, pleated and belted; the spats; the cane; the soft gray hat turned down on one side à la Jimmy Walker. He has the sonorous, directorial voice larded with Barrymore intonations. When he calls "Camera" or "Cut," his delivery is dramatic in the extreme. He has a swagger and a flair which reek of the boards. He's a frustrated actor if I've ever seen one, and is endowed with a full portion of well-smoked Smithfield characteristics.

One evening when a fellow director who occupied studio space next to his entered his office after work, he noticed a gaunt shadow stalking to and fro in the dusk behind the building. Investigating, he discovered that the shadow was the ham-bone director.

(Continued on Page 90)

"I'm going out for a while. I'll leave you and mother to get acquainted."

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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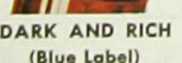


DARK AND RICH (Blue Label) LIGHT AND SWEET (Red Label) MAPLE-Y (Green Label)

(Continued from Page 88)

"What's the trouble?" he asked the stalker.

"My dear David, haven't you heard?" the Hamlet of the megaphone asked in sepulchral tones.

"No," David replied.

"It's my wife! She underwent surgery today."

"How's she feeling?" David asked anxiously.

The hammy one held out a hand, palm down, thumb extended, and wavered it like an airplane signaling with its wings. "Hovering," he said dramatically, "just hovering." Then he added, "By the way, do you have an extra seat for the fights tonight?"

I told this story around the house, and my boys got quite a jar out of it. A year or two went by and I forgot about it.

In the summer of 1946, when we were at our ranch in Elko County, Nevada, Lindsay, who was about nine, came down with a mysterious attack of fever. Twenty-four hours passed and he showed no improvement. In fact, his temperature rose, so I had Ralph Scott, a bush pilot who operates out of Elko, fly Dr. Les Morin out. When the doctor examined Linny, his diagnosis confirmed the suspicions which were already lurking in my mind. He had Rocky Mountain spotted fever, induced by a tick bite.

His fever increased and he became delirious. The doctor advised against moving him to a hospital, but he promised to fly out twice a day to care for him. For several days and nights the fever raged. During all that time Linny was unconscious. On the fifth day, in the small hours of the morning, he broke into a drenching sweat and his temperature fell. For a while he dozed, then he opened his eyes and looked inquiringly around the room.

"How do you feel, Lin?" I asked anxiously.

He grinned feebly and stuck his hand out, palm down, thumb extended, wavered it from side to side, and said in a quavering voice, "Hovering. Just hovering."

There are other memories of me telling my sons bedtime stories when they were very little. I tried to give those tales modern overtones and put things in them my sons knew about. In that way I hoped they'd be more vivid and would hold their attention. I had Little Red Riding Hood riding a scooter through the woods at Pebble Beach, where we had a house. Her basket was filled with chocolate bars and she was on her way to see her grandma, who was living at the Pine Inn Hotel. The wolf was tall, dark and sinister, wore a high silk hat and was passing through in a fancy car on his way to Nevada.

In my version of Don Quixote, Don was a taller and thinner edition of my sons' friend, Gary Cooper. His groom, Sancho Panza, was so dopey you wouldn't let him fool around your stable if you were in your right mind.

Still another of my most vivid recollections is of my first meeting with Paul Whiteman, known as America's greatest band leader. This meeting took place before Harry Barris teamed with Al Rinker and me as a team known as the Rhythm Boys. Rinker and I had left our homes in Spokane in a beat-up jalopy with twenty dollars in our pockets, and had chugged and spluttered southward to Los Angeles.

In 1927 we were playing the Metropolitan Theater there in an act we'd worked up, when Whiteman came to town with his orchestra and occupied the Million Dollar Theater down the street a piece from us. Whiteman didn't catch Rinker and me doing our routine, but some of the members of his band heard us and told him about us. He sent for us and we went to see him.

He had a little piano in his dressing room, and we did a few numbers for him there. During our audition he sat on an ottoman, fragrant with toilet water and wearing a silk dressing gown which must have cost *beaucoup* bob. He weighed three hundred and ten pounds and was eating caviar from a bowl which held a pound of those little gray eggs. And he had a silver-plated cooler of champagne beside him.

These, I thought, *are the habiliments of success. This fellow is really there. When you can eat a pound of caviar and drink champagne from a cooler in your dressing room in the middle of the day, you've reached the pinnacle.*

He asked us if we'd join his organization at the Tivoli Theater in Chicago when we'd completed our contract in Los Angeles, which had a couple of weeks to run.

Rinker and I hit a small pinnacle of our own when we joined the Whiteman band in Chicago. But as we rolled East, our routine began to seem countrified to us, and we began to wonder how we were going to put it over in a theater in a big city like Chicago, with a "sophisticated Midwestern audience." At that point we weren't looking far enough into the future to give thought to how "sophisticated" New York audiences could be.

When we reached Chicago we were definitely chicken, and Pops Whiteman gave us a fight talk before our first show to cure us of our shakes. We'd learned to call him Pops or Father Whiteman by this time. The rest of his band did too. Behind his back we employed more disrespectful words, such as "the Fat Fiddler."

"Music's the same all over," Pops said. "They liked you in Los Angeles and they'll like you here. You've nothing to worry about. Just do your stuff the way you've already done it."

We listened, and when we walked out there to face our first matinee audience, we were cocky on the outside, but inside we were still jumpy.

Pops introduced us by telling the crowd, "I want you to meet a couple of boys I found in an ice-cream parlor in Walla Walla." Afterward he told us he'd picked Walla Walla because its name sounded funny to him. Funny or not, it struck exactly the right note. We went out there, did our stuff, and if I do say it, we were very big. I'm confident that oldsters who attended the Tivoli Theater on Chicago's South Side in those days will bear me out in this.

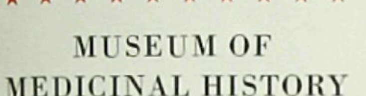
But after being very big in Chicago, Rinker and I laid an egg in New York so huge any chef could have made a soufflé with that one egg alone.

There'll be something in my story about how I was almost rubbed out by gangland bullets. There'll be much in it about horses and horse racing (I hope not too much for those who love horses) and a lot about golf (I hope not too much for those who love golf). There's a lot I'll want to say about the special problems involved in raising four sons—if you happen to be a movie star. And I'll want to tell about two of my favorite dolls, Ethel Barrymore and Carole Lombard. I'd like to tell these things so they won't seem jumbled and as if they'd wandered into my mind without being invited.

I especially want to be on top of this autobiographical kick of mine—instead of having it on top of me—when I be-

gin to tell about the gamest girl I've ever known. The first time I ever heard the name "Dixie Lee" was in 1929. I rolled it on my tongue like honey. Dixie's real name was Wilma Winifred Wyatt. She came from Harriman, Tennessee. She was raised in New Orleans, then her folks moved to Chicago. When she was a seventeen-year-old Chicago high-school girl, she won a Ruth Etting contest. Ruth Etting was one of the popular woman singers of the 1920's. The contest selected the Chicago girl "who sang most like Ruth Etting." Dixie's prize was a two-week singing engagement at the College Inn, a café-restaurant-night club in the Sherman Hotel.

She was working at the old Fox studio and I was one of Whiteman's Rhythm Boys singing at the Montmartre in Los Angeles. She came to the Montmartre on a date with Frankie Albertson, and Frankie introduced us. She came back several times after that. I couldn't tell whether she came back to hear the band or me. I wasn't sure. But I knew what I hoped.



MUSEUM OF MEDICINAL HISTORY

By Norman R. Jaffray

Each ointment, each capsule,
each powder, each pill—
Each doctor's prescription the
pharmacies fill—
Supplies a new item to swell the
deposit
Of seventeen years in our
medicine closet.

Some future explorer who digs in
the midden
Where all these remarkable relics
are hidden
Will wonder how men of our era
could thrive
When they had so much trouble
just staying alive.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The head man at Dixie's studio had fine, large, glittering plans for her. He told her that if she married me, it would interfere with those plans. That didn't influence her. She married me anyhow. One of the things they told Dixie was that if she threw in her lot with me, she'd have to support me for the rest of her life. She did support me for the rest of her life, but not in the way they meant. I was able to do somewhat better for her financially than the doubting Thomases predicted, but the kind of support Dixie gave me and her sons was more important than money. She was a faithful and loyal wife and a wise and loving mother. So far as we were concerned, her honesty was unclouded. We could always count on her for the truth about ourselves, which is a rare and helpful commodity in Hollywood.

Not only was there opposition from her studio, whose big wheels told her I was nobody going no place and she was somebody going big places, but her father took a dim view of me as a son-in-law. He thought, and with just cause, that rated on past performance I was a useless, good-for-nothing type. I hadn't been too industrious. I hadn't put out too much in the way of work. I'd played golf and had ha-l a good time. I couldn't seem to be serious about anything.

Our marriage was regarded as newsworthy by the press, but it was because of Dixie, not me. It was a case of Miss Big marrying Mr. Little. The papers knew so little about me that they fouled up the spelling of my name. WELL-KNOWN FOX MOVIE STAR MARRIED BING CROVENY, the headlines read. *Croveny*, yet!

When my name became better known, I could count on Dixie to keep my head from getting too big. Like any wise wife, whenever she thought my ego was getting out of hand, she had her methods for shrinking me to proper size. She'd say, "Listen to the Romantic Singer of the Songs You Love to Hear Blues." Or she'd call me "The Bumptious Baritone." Or, when I'd try ineffectually to lecture the kids, she'd say, "You've got your audiences fooled, but not them, hey?"

Jack Oakie, who's always been one of my favorite comedians, had another way of deflating me. In one movie, Mississippi, I was so pudgy I had to wear a girdle to pull my stomach in. Jack took a look at my two-way stretch; he thought of the hours Paramount's make-up men had spent gluing my jug ears back against my head, and attaching a toupee to my scalp to supplant my thinning locks, and he nicknamed me the Robot of Romance. But even such barbs as Oakie's couldn't cut me down to size like Dixie's wifely prodding.

What Dixie's studio and her fans didn't know was that she didn't want to go big places. She didn't like show business and the hokum that goes with it, and the necessity of being nice to people you don't enjoy being nice to. She never could bring herself to con people or soft-soap them, the way a girl breaking into pictures is asked to do to advance herself.

For this reason, it was no sacrifice for her to leave show business. She had a very good agent who did a terrific job for her after she came to Hollywood, but she hated the things he wanted her to do. As a part of pushing her career, he asked her to give out interviews or go to benefits or make radio broadcasts to exploit pictures. Then there was the business of being sweet to writers and producers and directors and other studio executives who, her instinct told her, didn't rate sweetness or even respect. She tried to do these things, but she died inside as she did them.

She was very frank and very outspoken. But she was also diffident and shy. She had little self-confidence. She never did think she was good in show business. I've known all of the others, and when it came to singing a song, Dixie had no equal. But it was a matter of life and death to persuade her to sing.

When we were going together before we were married, she did a guest-soloist spot with Ben Bernie on his radio show. She was almost in a state of shock when she finally stood before the microphone to do her number. She wasn't ashamed of the fact that facing people or working in public was an ordeal for her. She admitted it to her friends, but the public has never known this.

She cut a couple of records with me, but no one will ever know the ordeal I went through persuading her to make those records. Building the Pyramids would have been easier. She thought of scores of reasons why she didn't want to do them. All of them sprang from her shyness. She was an only daughter; she had been very close to her parents, and they'd sheltered her as much as possible. As a result, she'd never been

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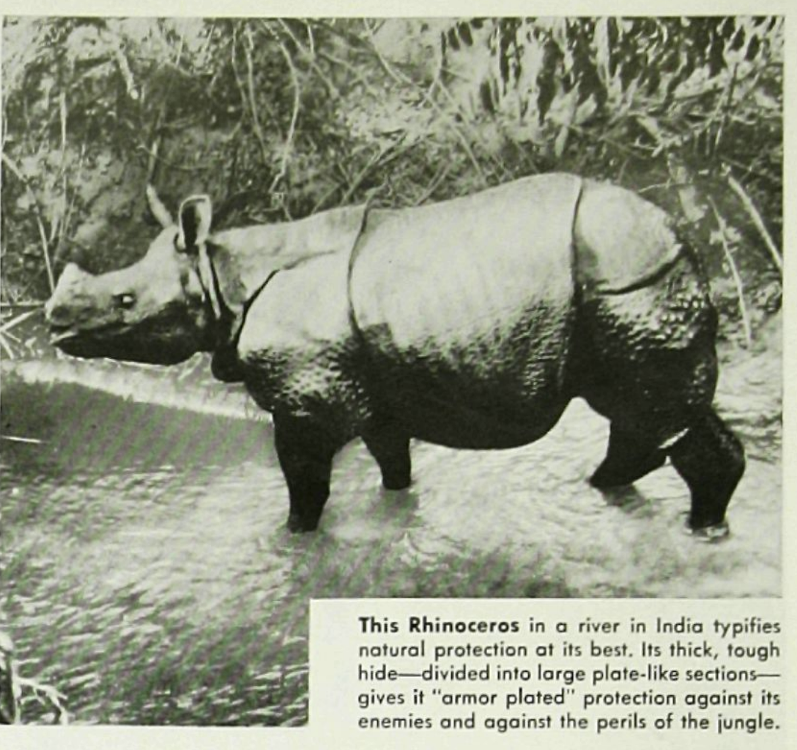

This Rhinoceros in a river in India typifies natural protection at its best. Its thick, tough hide—divided into large plate-like sections—gives it "armor plated" protection against its enemies and against the perils of the jungle.

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(Continued from Page 91)
before the public much prior to leaving home, and she never got over disliking it. She went into show business because she'd won that contest in Chicago for which a chum of hers entered her name without telling her about it. She followed through with it so as not to let her chum down.

She talked to our four sons as if they were her own age. She never talked down to them. Even when they were small, she didn't like it if they acted like babies. She always wanted them to have an adult point of view. I think the reason for this was that she didn't want them ever to be diffident, as she was.

She never got over her dislike of any interference with her private life or anyone prying into it. After she stopped being an actress and a singer, she gave only a few interviews to personal friends in the newspaper or magazine business. If a stranger tried to interview her, she was scared to death. She didn't want any part of the limelight. She just wanted to have her family and her home and her friends.

Even if she hadn't married me, she wouldn't have stayed in pictures. If she had married someone else, she would have quit movie-making just as surely and just as soon.

On the other hand, she was keen about show business from an audience point of view. She liked to go to movies and liked to hear about what I was doing professionally. She listened to all my programs and was the hottest record fan I had. I gave up listening to my records years ago, but Dixie had a standing order for every new one of mine released. She kept them all and played them. I've come home unexpectedly to find her playing records, and mine were generally included.

As far as my work was concerned, she was my most honest and intelligent critic. By the same token, she was the most helpful. It was Dixie who told me that I sing too loud of late, that I've lost the intimate quality I had. She played some of my old records back to me to prove her point.

She was right. I've fallen into the habit of trying to "deliver" a song too much, instead of "saying" the words the way I once did. For this reason my records haven't been too successful lately. I listen to my own voice too much when I record. When a singer of popular songs begins to listen to his own voice, nobody else will listen to him. He's lost his sincerity, his ability to create an image or a mood, and he's had it.

I hadn't planned to talk about Dixie so soon—or so much. I was going to tell about our life together later. When I do get around to that, I hope to keep it simple, honest and straightforward. She would have liked it that way. That was the way she was herself. Any mawkish sentimentality about her would have made her wince. She would have had more than one salty comment about it if I'd slopped over about her while she was still around to hear it.

I've had a lot of advice from a lot of different people about how to go about telling this tale. I've been told, "You want to keep in mind that the way the world is today, yours is a story that could happen only in this country."

There may be some truth in that notion. I couldn't sing my songs in Russia. They have no ideological significance. If I started to boo-boo-boo, I'd have to clear each boo with the Kremlin. Here, if I want to croon, I find a microphone somewhere and croon. I'm either accepted or stoned by the public. I'm not put through an MVD chopper.

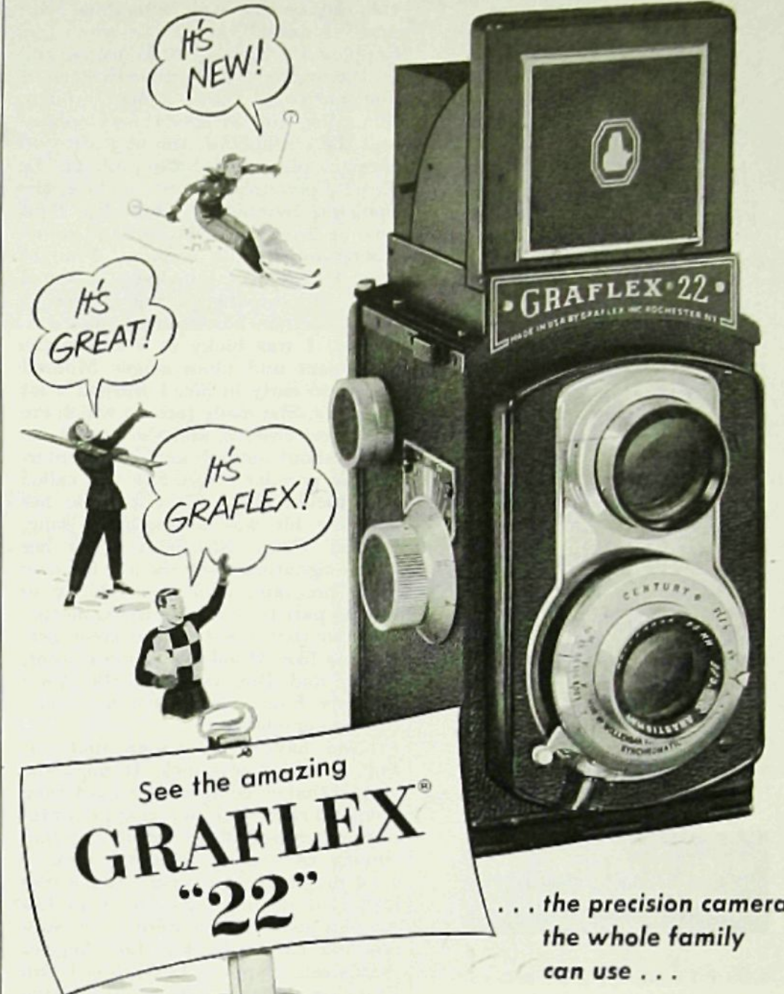
I've also been told, "Take a boy like yourself who started from humble beginnings and has achieved success—why, it's nothing short of inspirational." This idea sounds strictly out of the popper to me. In this country we like to tell our youngsters that the way to succeed is by hard work and self-sacrifice. If you read my story, it'll be obvious to you—it's obvious to me—that I haven't worked very hard.

The things I've done are the things I wanted to do. Doing them was no great sacrifice. And I've been heavily paid for having fun while I did them. Singing or movie acting has never been drudgery for me. So I don't know that my story contains an inspirational point of view. However, it is certainly shot full of another favorite American commodity—luck.

As I've gone along, I've come to a lot of crossroads and intersections.

"A trousseau, dear, is the clothes a bride wears for eight or ten years after she's married!"

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST



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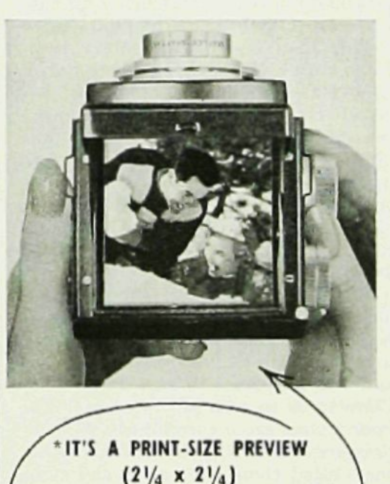

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Everybody comes to them. If you turn this way or that way, something happens or doesn't happen in your life. Suppose I'd learned to do a good roll on the drums in high school instead of one you could throw a dog through, like mine, and to play the xylophone and the vibraphone, the way all good timpani players do? I'd probably be playing percussion instruments in the Spokane Symphony Orchestra right now or drums in a dance band somewhere around the country. I might have had lots of fun doing it, but I don't suppose there's the income in that that there's been in crooning.

Also, I was lucky in knowing the great jazz and blues singer Mildred Bailey so early in life. I learned a lot from her. She made records which are still vocal classics, and she taught me much about singing and about interpreting popular songs. She was called the Rockin' Chair Lady because her first big hit was a wonderful song, Rockin' Chair. She used it for her theme signature when she had her own radio program. And I was lucky in having part-time jobs in Spokane theaters so that I got to see great performers like Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, Savoy and Brennan, and the Avon Comedy Four. They gave me something to emulate.

Even having Whiteman find out that I existed was luck. It might be argued that since Al Rinker and I were doing all right with our song presentations when he first saw us, having him employ us was not so much luck as good judgment on his part. But it was luck that he happened to be in Los Angeles just when we were there. Suppose he hadn't booked Los Angeles that week. Suppose he'd played San Francisco instead. We wouldn't have had a chance to audition for him and we wouldn't have had the opportunity to join his band.

Perhaps meeting Whiteman was the luckiest corner I turned in my road. If I have any ability as a song stylist or have made out musically, it's largely because of the associations I formed while I was with his band. I lapped up the opportunity to work with such masters of their trade as Bix Beiderbecke, Joe Venuti, the Dorsey boys, Mike Farley, Harry Perella, Roy Bargy, Mike Pingatore and the other fine, progressive musicians in that organization. I hung around them day and night. I listened to them talk. I picked up ideas. Although I wasn't a musician—I'm still not one—I learned to appreciate good things when I heard them and to recognize bad things and avoid them.

When my mother hears me say that luck has had a powerful influence on my life, she pooh-poohs such talk. She says, "Your luck has been my prayers and the prayers I've asked the Poor Clare nuns to offer up for you." The Poor Clares are a community of semi-cloistered nuns in Spokane. My mother has visited them ever since she came to that city as a young married woman.

She attributes any success I've had to the efficacy of prayer. I'm not scoffing at this theory. I think prayer is a potent thing to have working on your side. Some of my friends have noted the fact that when I pass a chapel or a church, I'm apt to say, "I guess I'll go in and bow a pious knee." It seems a good idea to me to go in, say a prayer and meditate for a little while upon what an oaf and lout I've been—as who hasn't?

But while my mother takes a poor view of luck, the luckiest thing that ever happened to me was being born to the mother and father I was born to, and inheriting the characteristics I inherited from them. My dad was relaxed and casual and believed in living in the present and having a good time. He had a full life and enjoyed himself no matter what happened. In his youth, dad had sung in amateur Gilbert-and-Sullivan productions. My mother had a sweet, clear voice. Their shared love of singing helped bring them together.

Dad was quite a lad when it came to plinking the mandolin. It was the big instrument of his day. You weren't a gay blade unless you could accompany yourself with it when you sang. Dad had a variety of songs on tap. One of his favorites was called Keemo Kemo. I heard Nat King Cole sing it not long ago on one of his broadcasts. But Nat's version was different from the way dad sang it. Dad played a little guitar, too—an accompanying guitar, just a four-string instrument, not a solo guitar.

Mother was the levelheaded one of our family, its business manager, the stretcher-outer of dad's modest salary. She was also our family disciplinarian. The small Crosbys got a healthy amount of corporal punishment dealt out with a hairbrush or a strap. But dad let mother do it. He could never get angry enough. When a licking was coming up, he ducked out of the house and didn't come back until he was sure it was over. My mother loved us as much as any mother loves her children, but that love included doing the things that were good for our souls, even if doing them hurt her.

While I was in grade school, I had a certain amount of trouble with the truant officers. If they caught a teen-ager around town during school hours, they'd assume that he was playing hooky, take him to the juvenile-detention ward and call his parents.

During one hooky session I had with some of my pals, we became involved in a rhubarb with Jesmer's Bakery, near our house. We waited until Jesmer's delivery wagon came back from taking pastries around to different stores and brought back what wasn't sold. When the driver went inside to hand in his slips, he left his wagon unprotected. This was an invitation to hollow-legged urchins, and we ran away with a couple of pies apiece, as well as bags of cinnamon buns. We ate all of them we could hold, but cinnamon buns are filling, so we had a number of them left.

We were down on Mission Boulevard pegging buns at motorists when one of the cars we pelted proved to be a car full of policemen going home from work. Its occupants tossed us into the pokey and called our mothers.

"Keep him there overnight," my mother said firmly. "It'll do him good." She didn't relent. I cooled my heels in that juvenile-detention ward all night.

I guess I'm a blend of my father and mother, although as far as characteristics go, theirs must have got twisted somewhere along the way. Rated off my father's ancestors, he should have been the reverse of the easygoing, generous, good-time type he was. Judging by my mother's effervescent and volatile forebears, it seems incongruous that she was so levelheaded, such a thrifty manager, so inflexible in training us in the right direction.

My father's family stemmed from a rock-ribbed, tough-minded Plymouth elder, Edmund Brewster, who settled in Massachusetts in the 1600's. His descendants lived in Massachusetts and other parts of New England for several generations. Most of them took to the sea, including my father's grandfather, Capt. Nathaniel Crosby. Nathaniel captained a ship for John Jacob Astor. More than once he sailed around the Horn to California, Oregon, Washington and China. Finally, leaving Astor, he bought his own ship. In addition, he entered into partnership with another man to buy and operate a ship-chandlery store. It was located in what is now the center of Portland, Oregon.

Captain Nathaniel made frequent trips to China. Each trip kept him away for a year or two. Returning from one trip, he found that his partner had sold the store, the property on which

(Continued on Page 96)

"And to his beloved sister, Miss Dilbert, here, he bequeaths the remaining nine tenths of his fortune."

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

"Mommy, why is it so warm in here when it's so cold outside?"

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

(Continued from Page 94)

it stood, and all the equipment, and had skipped. Captain Nathaniel could obtain no redress and had to start anew. Several years ago my brothers went to Portland to reopen the case and see if anything could be done about it. The property, in the heart of a big city, had achieved a fantastic value. But it was impossible to revive the case.

I have a picture of Captain Nathaniel's ship, The Kingfisher, taken from a painting done by an itinerant artist many years ago. Because of his many trips to China, Nathaniel had Chinese servants, as did his son—my father's father. Having been raised by Chinese servants, my father spoke fluent Chinese and could even sing a few Chinese songs. I remember him singing them as he twanged his mandolin.

My mother's parents, Dennis and Katherine Harrigan, came from Ireland. When they were very young they settled in Ontario, Canada. They moved to Stillwater, Minnesota, where my mother was born. When she was still a young girl they headed West and settled in Tacoma, where my Grandfather Harrigan became a building contractor.

He raised a large family, including my mother and her sister, Annie, and five sons: George, Frank, Will, Ambrose and Ed. Mother's brother, George Harrigan, was my boyhood idol. She had five brothers, but Uncle George was the standout. He was a very talented entertainer. As an Exalted Ruler of the Elks in Tacoma, he took part in theatricals around Seattle and in the Tacoma area. He picked up the song Harrigan, That's Me, made famous by Ned Harrigan, of the old-time vaudeville team of Harrigan (no relation) and Hart, and audiences all over the state of Washington insisted that he sing it wherever he appeared. He had a powerful Irish-tenor voice. It wasn't a lyric tenor like John McCormack's or Dennis Day's, but a powerful Irish tenor. Uncle George could shatter the crockery when he took dead aim at a high note.

He was a genius when it came to telling dialect stories. He could do French-Canadian stories, he'd picked up a store of Swedish stories from the loggers around Puget Sound, and he was wonderful at Italian dialect. At Irish-dialect stories he was nothing short of magical.

When he came to town the Crosby kids never left the house. We hung around and listened to Uncle George tell stories and sing songs. If he'd gone into show business he'd have been a hit. He was a handsome man with a shock of black hair, freckles, blue eyes and a colorful Irish personality. But he was a court reporter, he had a large family to support, and although he worked hard, he could never get enough cash together to have a fling at breaking into show business.

Uncle George kept my father company, diverted him with his best stories, and raised a comforting glass with him when I was born on May 30, 1904, in Tacoma, Washington. I've seen several dates listed for my birth in various publications, among them 1901, 1903 and 1906. I'd like to take 1906, but 1904 is the one I was stuck with.

In 1906 my family moved to Spokane. My father had accepted a job as a bookkeeper with the Inland Brewery in Spokane. My mother tells that when we moved to Spokane we arrived on very short funds, rented a house and ran up a sizable grocery bill as well as a large tab for fuel and other household necessities. But dad spent his first month's check on a phonograph. I remember that extravagance of his well. It had a big morning-glory horn. I recall some of the records it played. There were Cohen at the Telephone and songs by Henry Burr. And there were recordings by a baritone named Denis O'Sullivan and by Oscar Seagle, marches by Sousa, and others featuring other old-time concert artists, and songs from The Mikado.

At first we had no piano, but dad wanted us to have everything musical, and he went into hock to buy us one. Both my sisters "took" piano, but although we boys had our chance to "take," too, we couldn't find time.

One of my schoolmates, who is now Dr. Joseph Lynch, a famous neurosurgeon in the Northwest, has told me since that everybody in Spokane knew when I was coming because they could hear me singing or whistling. I suppose that was because of having a dad who was always bringing a new tune into the house on sheet music or on a record—I had a constant succession of them in my head. And I had to whistle or sing to get them out.

Editors' Note—This is the first of a series of articles by Mr. Crosby and Mr. Martin. The second will appear next week.

BILL MORROW

Dennis, Dixie and Bing last year, on a picnic with some friends in Palm Springs.

Call Me Lucky

By BING CROSBY as told to PETE MARTIN

As a law student, Bing just couldn't stop singing, especially when he found he could get paid as much as $3 a night for it. So he and Al Rinker lit out for California in a jalopy—and wound up causing a scandal on the University of California campus.

PART TWO

I WAS named Harry, for my father. My mother called me Harry. She still does. It was while I was seven or eight years old and still at Webster School in Spokane that I stopped being Harry Crosby, and became Bing.

There are two stories about how I got the name, but the real story is this. We lived next to the Hobart family. One of the boys in that family was Valentine Hobart. Valentine and I both liked a comic feature called the Bingville Bugle. It was edited by a man named Newton Newkirk, and in it was a character named Bingo. Somehow Valentine got it into his head that I looked like that character, and he began to call me Bingo. The *O* was later deleted. So I became Bing. It's been my name ever since.

There is another story that I pointed my finger or a wooden gun at things and said, "Bing-bing!" I don't think there's anything to that yarn. I never heard it until I grew up.

I had to grow up a little to not mind singing in public for an audience. One of my first memories is of a group of moppets from Webster School, including me, in some kind of musical production in which we were all supposed to be blocks jumping up and down.

Then there was a Christmas pageant in which I was dressed like a girl. I can't remember anything else about it except my hot shame at wearing such a costume. Other than that, having to sing in public embarrassed me until I'd almost finished high school—especially the nonpopular kind of songs which teachers usually forced upon kids. My mother once took me to a singing "professor" for a couple of lessons, and the professor took my popular stuff away from me and told me to practice breathing and tone production in a certain way. As a result, I lost interest in public singing for a long time.

Before I removed the professor from my life, I did make one appearance at a neighborhood function. I sang One Fading Hour. I didn't like it very much and I certainly didn't sing it well. It evoked only an apathetic response from the audience. That cured me of singing publicly until I began to fool around with drums and singing with a band. Then I liked it.

But there never was a time when I didn't love athletics. Webster grade school, where I took my early educational hurdles, was a block and a half from Gonzaga University. Gonzaga had fine football teams. When I wasn't at Webster, I hung around the Gonzaga stadium. I was so interested that when I went to high school I played baseball, basketball, handball and football. In high I played center and we had a good high-school football team. But when I reached college I weighed only one hundred and forty-five or fifty pounds. With that trifling amount of beef on my bones, no one took me seriously as college-football material; I wasn't big enough for center and I wasn't fast enough for the backfield.

Baseball was really my game. I was and am nutty about it. When I thought I wasn't appreciated around home, I used to say that I was going to run away to play baseball. But it was merely a youthful

Copyright 1953 by Bing Crosby

threat. I took it out in playing semiprofessional baseball with the Spokane Ideal Laundry team.

While I was in Webster grade school my athletics were confined to a personal contest or two. One of my sisters, Mary Rose, was a little on the chubby side or, to be honest about it, tubby. However, I resented any reference to her roundness by anyone except members of my family. One of the kids in the eighth grade at Webster school drew a picture on the blackboard of a big fat girl. Under it he wrote "Mary Rose."

I met him after school and questioned him. "Yeah," he said, "I did it. What are you going to do about it?" I told him I'd see him later. I got my gang together and he got his gang together, and we met in an alley back of his house. Eighty or a hundred kids gathered to see the battle, and a few truck drivers who came by formed them into a circle.

The other kid was strong, but he knew nothing about boxing. Since I knew how to box a little, I cut his eye and gave him a bloody nose. Every time he rushed me I stuck out my left and he ran into it. Then I'd throw my right. I couldn't miss. I'd learned that much about boxing from my uncle, George Harrigan, who was quite an amateur boxer. I took in all of the local boxing matches, so I knew something about using my dukes. My opponent didn't. He was older and bigger, and if he'd known even the rudiments of self-defense, he could have killed me.

Funny, the memories that stick to the inside of the skull. I remember that during that fight I wore a gray-flannel shirt. Before a couple of the truck drivers finally stopped it, the fight became pretty gory. I hit my sister's traducer in the nose and must have torn a cartilage, for blood spurted and got all over my gray-flannel shirt until it was more red than gray.

When I went home my mother thought the blood was mine. I had a hard time convincing her it was the other fellow's. When some of the kids who'd seen the battle backed me up, she believed me.

It's one of my mother's favorite stories about me, I suppose because in her eyes it made me seem chivalrous and gallant—a small knight in gray-flannel armor protecting defenseless womanhood from abuse. I'm loath to have her tell it because, as mothers do, she builds me up in it. But I'm not so loath as if I'd lost.

While still in short pants I got into another row over a dame. This time the cause of the trouble was not one of my sisters. Her name was Gladys Lemmon. I'd taken Gladys bobsledding on Ligerwood Hill a few times. She was a real doll with long, fluttery eyelashes. I'd hook my bobsled rope on the steps of a coal wagon. The coal wagon would take us up the hill and we'd slide down while Gladys

WIDE WORLD

Of baseball, Bing says, "I was and am nutty about it." Above, he sports a Gonzaga uniform.

squealed with entrancing shrillness and clasped her arms around my middle. It was all very idyllic until my brother Larry needled me about her at the dinner table one night. "Where've you been?" he asked. "Out squeezin' that Lemmon again?"

The family laughed uproariously and I saw red; I picked up a leg of lamb and let my tormentor have it, gravy and all. The laughter stopped and a scuffle began, but my mother quelled it. The lamb was retrieved, refurbished and repaired in the kitchen, and we attacked it instead of each other.

Another story my mother tells about me has to do with a personal contest I lost to Webster's principal, C. J. Boyington. He was affable and amiable, but he could be firm when he had need to. One day I brought a note home from school. It read: "If Harry doesn't behave better, the principal will have to deal with him." Several days later, when I came home, I said that I'd been called to the principal's office. "What happened?" my mother asked.

"He dealt with me," I told her. He had "dealt" with me by bending me over a chair and letting me have a few with a yardstick.

Leaving Webster, I entered Gonzaga High School. Gonzaga High is run by the Jesuit fathers of Gonzaga University in preparation for Gonzaga itself. When I went there it was a rugged school. Certainly it was not dressy. One pair of corduroy pants lasted all year, although my pair got a little gamy, especially in spring and summer. Once they've been broken in, corduroy pants are, as they say around a gym, very high.

My dad's wages as bookkeeper at the Inland Brewery were not munificent, so we Crosby boys had to work at odd jobs after school or in the mornings to help out. Mother and dad told us, "We'll provide a place in which you can live and we'll feed you, but you'll have to earn your own money for your clothes and athletic equipment and recreation."

The jobs I've held down were legion. I don't blame anyone who eyes me skeptically as I list them. My own kids give me a guffaw when I tell them what I've done. *That's dad for you*, that guffaw seems to say, *romancing about his youth again.*

I did work at a slew of jobs, although most of them were part-time and some of them petered out after a few weeks. While I was in grade school and high school, I had a morning-paper route for the Spokesman-Review. This meant that I got up at four o'clock each morning and went out to the intersection of Nora and Addison avenues to wait for the paper car. It was an area dotted with old cars discarded by the streetcar company. We stripped them for firewood, built a big bonfire and awaited the first car of the morning, the paper car. When it came, we folded the papers into throwable shapes by the comfortable warmth of the blaze we'd started. There were several ways of folding papers; the three-cornered, the dog-ear and the boomerang. My favorite was the boomerang. It had a tight twist in the middle which made it hug a porch when it hit. But I'm afraid my best shots were on the roof, under the porch and in the bushes.

Summers, when I was about twelve or thirteen, I worked on a farm. Among other chores, I milked the cows, cleaned the barn and mowed what little lawn they had. One summer I thinned apples near Wenatchee and Yakima. For two summers I worked in a logging camp. A cousin of mine was superintendent of a lumber company in Idaho, and I worked for him, which included doing kitchen-police duty and greasing his shoes. Another summer I worked at a topography (Continued on Page 71)

GENE LESTER

Paul Whiteman chimes in with his old Rhythm Boys: Bing, Harry Barris, Al Rinker. Bing got an early boost from Rinker's sister, Mildred Bailey.

GENE LESTER

Bing and his youngest son, Linny, at their Beverly Hills home. As a youngster, Bing held many jobs: paper boy, farmhand, janitor and logging camp KP.

CALL ME LUCKY

(Continued from Page 23)

job—as a member of a party locating new logging roads and sluices—for another cousin, Lloyd Crosby, who was a big wheel with the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company. I didn't last very long there—only two or three weeks. I laid my right knee open with an ax and when I got well I cut my other knee. I remember my cousin saying, "We'd better get this kid the hell out of here before he kills himself."

One whole winter I gave up the paper route in favor of a job as a janitor in a place called Everyman's Club. Everyman's was in the workingman's district and was a club for the loggers and miners in town, as well as other workingmen. It had a reading room, showers and bathroom facilities. I arrived there at five-thirty in the morning, after walking from our house, about a mile and a half away, and went to work cleaning up the joint. It was generally full of empty soup cans and snoose cans. Snoose is powdered tobacco put under the lower lip. There were also canned-heat cans. Some of the loggers used to get canned heat, take it into the washroom and put a match under it to liquefy it, since it came in a pasty or semisolid form. Then they drank it. It had a high alcoholic content. It also had a high blindness-and-madness content. If those who drank it didn't end up sightless, they were likely to fight six policemen and wind up in jail. My job involved a lot of hard work, but I stuck it out for a winter. What with that job and the paper route and going to early Mass at Gonzaga, I formed the habit of getting up at the crack of dawn. I've never got over it.

A job I liked much more than any of these was assistant or flunky in the prop department of the Auditorium Theater. Spokane's big opera house, the Auditorium, was the place where most of the touring theatricals played. They'd stay for maybe a matinee and a night, then go on to Seattle and Portland. It was there, I guess, that the first priming coat of show business rubbed off on me. I remember Savoy and Brennan playing there. I saw George White's Scandals, and Willie and Eugene Howard's shows, and Al Jolson in Sindbad and Bombo. Although Jolson was the star of those shows, he spent most of his time when he wasn't on stage rushing out to the box office and counting the take. The star of a show which penetrated that far into the hinterland had to be a businessman as well as a performer.

Later, when I got to know and work with Al, he remembered how industrious he'd been on those hegiras so far from Broadway, and we laughed about it. He didn't remember the lop-eared lad named Crosby who watched his every move, but I remembered him vividly. Spokane wasn't on the Orpheum circuit. Instead, we had Pantages' time, which was a cut under Orpheum time, but in my opinion then the Pantages circuit could have shown David Belasco, Dillingham and Ziegfeld a thing or two.

For a while I tried to sing like Al. Since dad saw to it that we kept abreast of the times musically at home, I had all of Jolson's records. I think we had one of the first radio sets in Spokane. My brother Ted had a mechanical turn of mind and around 1920 he built a crystal set with the help of Father Gilmartin, the physics professor at Gonzaga University. Ted and the father built the thing out of old wire and leftovers salvaged from the Gonzaga chemistry and physics labs. I heard some of the first broadcasts a jazz band ever made through the earphones of that set.

Another of my jobs was that of locker-room boy at the Mission Plunge, a municipal pool a half mile from our house. I did lifeguarding there on the side, which meant that I helped out with lifeguarding when the regular guards were at lunch. As a result, I learned a lot about swimming and diving I never would have found out otherwise. The head lifeguard taught me the Australian crawl—a new thing in those days. Being roly-poly, I was buoyant, and slid through the water like a submarine.

My earliest theatrical experiences which amounted to anything were the elocution contests in which I took part in my last year of grammar school and through high school. Elocution, oratorical contests and debating societies are very important in Jesuit schools. I remember reciting Whisperin' Jim and The Dukite Snake. The Dukite Snake was a grim story of an Australian family which carved a homestead out of the Australian bush. Then the father of the family killed a snake in the bush, and the snake's mate followed him home and did away with the entire family. It was a gruesome little number.

I recited many of Robert W. Service's things, such as The Spell of the Yukon and The Shooting of Dan McGrew. I remember sinking my teeth into Horatius at the Bridge and Spartacus to the Gladiators, classic pieces that seemed obligatory for all youthful elocutionists. I won a couple of awards with Horatius and Spartacus. I took those eloquent lines in my teeth and shook them as a terrier shakes a bone. I can't remember whether I carried off the first or second prize, but I was in the money. I did fairly well in oratorical contests too. I also belonged to the debating society, but the elocution contests were the big events. They were held in the parish hall and everybody in the parish came.

My teachers at Gonzaga never knew it, but I once had a chance to put their public-speaking course to practical use. It happened that I was on my way home one summer evening from the Mission Park swimming pool. En route I passed a political meeting. I stopped to listen and heard the speaker who was haranguing the crowd, giving them a rabid anti-Catholic speech. His theme was "Go to the polls and defeat the Pope." I asked him if I could speak. He said, "Go ahead." I got up on the podium and we had quite a debate. I remembered some of the things I'd learned from the Jesuits at Gonzaga and I don't think I finished a bad second. I got a good hand when I was through.

Some of my friends figure that all of that elocution and debating is one of the reasons why people can understand me when I sing. I wouldn't know about that. It probably helped. And of course, learning all those pieces by heart was good memory training. It may have something to do with the fact that I can learn a couple of pages of movie script fast. After reading them over once on the set, I've got them. It saves a lot of homework.

The education which seeped into my pores at Gonzaga—or maybe it was pounded through my skull—has paid off all through my life, sometimes in the most unexpected ways. In the film, The Road to Morocco, the plot called for Bob Hope and me to have trouble with a gendarme.

Hope asked me, "Can you talk French?"

"Certainly I can talk French," I said. Since the Road pictures are shot for the most part off the cuff or out of our heads, neither Hope's question nor my response was in the script. Nor was the long French spiel I ripped off.

It was the tale of Maître Corbeau—French for Mr. Crow—and the piece of cheese. Mr. Crow was holding a piece of cheese in his beak, and a fox came along and tried to slicker him out of it. Many French students will remember this fable. At all events, I did. It had been used in my second- or third-year high-school French classes for pronunciation, memory work and vocabulary.

Hope was tremendously impressed by the glibness with which I launched into a foreign tongue. To this day he thinks that I speak French fluently. He's visited France two or three times, but I don't think he knows how to say much more than "*Oui, monsieur*" or "*Oui, mademoiselle*"—especially the latter.

It seems to amuse my friends nowadays when they discover that I spent

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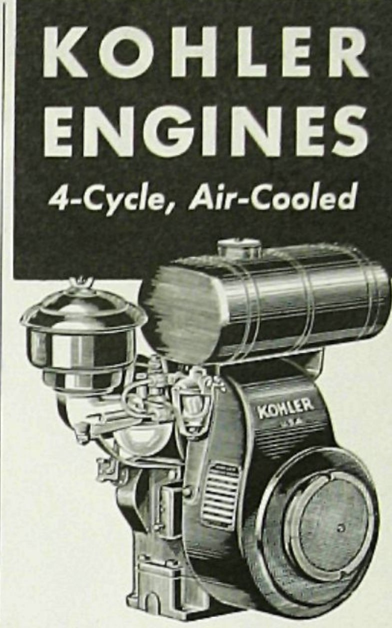
"Well, it ought to be about dry now, Harriet. . . ."

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST



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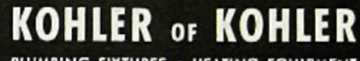

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(Continued from Page 71)

a lot of my time at Gonzaga in The Jug. I suppose that their amusement comes from the fact that later, when I'd left Gonzaga, being inside another kind of jug, presided over by a turnkey and guarded by men in blue, was an experience not unknown to me. But The Jug at Gonzaga wasn't a jail. It was a room where students who weren't behaving or who had broken some rule were sent to do penance. We were given something from Ovid or Vergil or Caesar's Gallic Wars to memorize or to write. If the offense was grievous, we had to memorize it backward. That was not easy. Easy or not, we memorized it just the same.

Part of my time in The Jug resulted from the fact that mathematics was my blind spot. Although I went through algebra, geometry and trigonometry and studied the slide rule, I still can't do long division. If I have to multiply more than two digits, I retire to my den and work it out where no one can witness my struggles. Occasionally we had to write essays on subjects selected by ourselves. Once I chose as my subject: Why Algebra and Geometry are Unnecessary in the Modern High-School Curriculum. I don't think I proved anything, but I put a great deal of heart in the piece.

We had some wonderful priests at Gonzaga—men like Father Kennelly, the prefect of discipline. He weighed in at two-eighty and we called him Big Jim. He stood in front of his office as we went by on our way to class. If we misbehaved, he brought his "discipliner" into play. He had a key chain ten or twelve feet long, with a bunch of keys on it. He kept this weapon coiled up under his cassock, and if we got out of line or were mischievous, he flicked out that chain and made contact on our anatomy where we'd feel it most. He delivered his shots with the accuracy and speed of a professional fly caster. Knowing this, when we passed his office we generally were doing what we should do, maintaining strict silence and watching our deportment. He was no sadist. He just tried to do his job conscientiously. He was always ready to tuck his cassock under his belt and play baseball or football with anybody who wanted him to.

And then there was Father Gilmore, the chemistry professor. He was another physical giant, who prided himself on his strength and always kept himself in shape. He invented a hair restorer and tried to get me to use it. Even then my hair was showing signs of becoming less than bushy. Out of courtesy, I promised Father Gilmore I'd use his invention, but I didn't. He'd be happy, I'm sure, to know that I've never used anybody else's either. That's belaboring the obvious, isn't it?

But though I learned virility under such men, and devoutness, mixed with the habit of facing whatever fate set in my path squarely and with a cold blue eye, I didn't have to learn a feeling for music and for rhythm. I guess I was born with that. If I wasn't, there was a lot of it at home for me to sop up. And inevitably I tried to make it contribute a few dollars to the income I made from odd jobs. Although it probably would have become the dominating force in my life if it had brought me no money at all.

In 1921, toward the end of my first year in college, I joined a group called the Musicaladers, a six-piece combo made up of Spokane boys, most of whom hadn't gone to Gonzaga, but had gone to other schools, like North Central High. I'd been part of an earlier 100-per cent Gonzaga musical group called The Juicy Seven, but the Musicaladers were more sophisticated and professional. We were Bob and Clare Pritchard; Jimmy Heaton, now a trumpet player at the Goldwyn Studios and on the musical staff there; Miles Rinker and his brother, Al Rinker, later one of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys; and me.

I'd been playing the drums a little and singing around Gonzaga with The Juicy Seven, when I discovered that Al was a genius at listening to phonograph records, absorbing their arrangements and committing them to memory by ear. For that matter, all The Musicaladers worked by ear. None of us could read music. But we gave our own interpretation to arrangements which had been originated by the Memphis Five, McKinney's Cotton Pickers, Vic Meyers' band from Seattle, the original Dixieland Jazz Band, Jack Chapman's Hotel Drake Orchestra, and other great bands. Since the only other bands around town were playing stock arrangements sent out by publishing houses, we were a novelty for Spokane. Ragged but novel. We weren't good musicians, but our technique was modern and advanced. The other musicians could read notes, but they couldn't play stuff the way we played it. Young folks liked us and two or three nights a week we got dates to play high-school dances and private parties. We made trips as far away as Washington State College at Pullman. We also got dates at Lareida's Dance Pavilion at Dishman, a few miles outside of Spokane. We played there three times a week. That was our first steady job. We pulled down three dollars apiece for a night's work.

We had only a small repertoire, but we stretched it by playing the same tunes in different ways. We'd change their tempo; we'd take a waltz and make a fox trot out of it. Or we'd learn a popular song, and if it was a big hit, we'd do it several times during an evening. Since most of the things we played were taken from records made by Dixieland-type orchestras, we specialized in instrumental numbers, for these Dixieland bands never had vocals. They went in for novelty effects—shufflin' sounds, steamboat whistles and paddle wheels chunkin'.

I don't suppose we Musicaladers ever had more than thirty numbers on tap. But the people we played for had never heard those thirty anywhere else, unless they'd heard the records we'd borrowed them from, and not many folk in Spokane had. I did any singing that was done, and played the drums. My vocals were stuff like Pretty Little Blue-Eyed Sally.

Our uniforms featured bright blazers. I'd bought my drums from a mail-order house. The bass drum was decorated with a Japanese sunset and was illuminated inside. It had spikes in it to make it stick to the floor when I was making it thump. Even with spikes, it was a highly ambulatory case. At the beginning of each number, when I'd begin to beat the foot pedal, the vibration made the drum gradually inch forward. I hitched my chair along after it until I was well out in front of the band. Then I'd have to move back to start the next number. I never did learn a professional drumming technique. I faked rolls with a wire fly swatter or I frim-frammed the cymbals with the swatter or a stick, instead of rolling, which was one way of sounding like an accomplished drummer in spite of a lack of technical ability.

Early in my association with the Musicaladers, before I had any drums, I'd borrowed those belonging to the Gonzaga Music Department. The department kept a nice set of drums in the basement of one of the college buildings. The Musicaladers had an engagement to play for a dance at the public library. It was a nondenominational dance and when I asked permission to use the Gonzaga drums, the priest-moderator in charge of the music department said the drums could only be used at Gonzaga functions.

After all, that was merely his opinion. To me, it seemed much more important that a Gonzaga boy who'd make an engagement should keep it. So I decided to spirit those instruments out of a basement window with a rope. We Musicaladers hauled them through a window, so we wouldn't be seen carrying them through the halls. We got them back the same way. However, the whole thing was a lesson to me. I saved up a little money, wrote to a mail-order house and bought my own set, the beauties I've described above.

Regardless of our lack of expertness, whatever else we were, we were different, and when Roy Boomer, manager of the Clemmer Theater in Spokane, decided to put on stage shows ahead of the pictures, he thought of us. Boomer was a progressive type, for stage shows were pioneer stuff then. We tried to do songs which would fit the pictures he'd booked. If the film featured the great outdoors or the Northwest, we sang By the Waters of Minnetonka, or Indian Summer, or Pale Moon. If it was laid in New Orleans, we sang blues songs. In short, we tried to give a prologue. Later on, Boomer decided he didn't want the whole band, so he cut it down to Al Rinker and me, and we did our songs in the pit.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Most people have no trouble keeping a budget—in a desk drawer.
—TOM CLIFFORD.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

For three or four months the Musicaladers had a job of playing twice a week in a Chinese restaurant. It had a dubious reputation, but was a favorite Friday and Saturday night hangout for high-school kids. There were rumors that alcohol was available to teenagers there, and my mother was purse-lipped about it. But the pay was more than I'd ever taken home before, and I was able to allay some of my mother's doubts about the respectability of the place by pointing to its respectable financial rewards.

Bailey's Music Company was the town's leading record store, and Al Rinker and I haunted it. Mildred Rinker, known professionally as Mildred Bailey, was Rinker's sister. She was not related to the family who owned the music company, but it may be that's where she got the idea for the name under which she sang. Mildred and Al's father had Dutch blood, and when I first heard the name it made me think of Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates. Mildred, the area's outstanding singing star, was singing in a Spokane cabaret, a fancy semispeak-easy spot. Before long she was one of the country's outstanding singing stars too. She specialized in sultry, throaty renditions with a high concentrate of Southern accent, such as Georgia and Rockin' Chair.

Bailey's Music Company was big about letting us spend all the time we wanted to in one of its listening rooms. We'd take a couple of records in and play them, and Al would memorize the piano chords while I remembered the soloist's style and vocal tricks. Then we'd rush home or to Al's house and practice before we forgot them. When a band came through Spokane we hung around them while they rehearsed, and we sneaked into their playing engagements and soaked up every note that they played. Spike Johnson's orchestra from Portland helped us a lot, both with new material and new songs, and showed us better ways to handle our instruments. I think I saw every vaudeville act involving a piano and singer which played Spokane. I couldn't afford those shows; money was short, but I got in, one way or another.

Back in the 1920's, lads—or even grown men—who sang with bands did so at the risk of having their manhood suspected. It was a time when tennis players or men who wore wrist watches were given the hand-on-hip and the burlesque falsetto-voice routine. I had a little trouble like that myself at Lareida's Dance Pavilion. A girl on whom I had a case was brought to Lareida's by a rival. They spent almost the entire evening dancing in front of my drums, while he poured out a steady stream of ridicule about the effeminacy of characters who sang the kind of songs I was singing. When the Musicaladers took a break, I invited him outside and I asked him to repeat his innuendos, which he did with frightening alacrity. I took a swing at him and he took a poke at me, but friends intervened before either of us was really hurt.

It was when I was singing at Lareida's that I fell into the habit of singing with my eyes closed. When I got to Hollywood and sang in my first pictures, the directors had a hard time getting me to keep my eyes open. It's a thing you do so you can concentrate on the meaning of the lyrics. But with the movie director's black-snake whips nipping at my calves, I broke myself of it quickly.

Gradually the Musicaladers disintegrated. Jimmy Heaton, our cornet player, went to California. The Pritchard boys entered Washington State and took up veterinary medicine. Only Al Rinker, his brother, Miles, and I were left. Miles was a happy-go-lucky fellow who didn't care for the effort and trouble of trying to get together another sextet. That left Al and me working our singing act at the Clemmer Theater.

In my third year of college I shifted to studying law, and worked part time in the law office of Col. Charles S. Albert, a legal counsel for the Great Northern Railway. My chief assignment was handling garnishments. That's another way of saying I was handling attachments placed on the wages of employees of the Great Northern Railway Company. It wasn't up to me to serve them personally, but when a garnishment came in, I had to make a record of it. I was also supposed to inform the paymaster at Hillyard, where a unit of the Great Northern shops is located, that a garnishment had been filed against the salary of so-and-so and that he wasn't to be paid any more until the judgment was satisfied.

Some of my friends worked at the Great Northern shops. If any of them drew a garnishment, I'd let them know first and give them an opportunity to draw their pay in advance, before I called the paymaster. I'd tell them if they owed the debt they ought to make

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an effort to pay it, but in the meantime I suggested that they draw out a little. This caper of mine was not strictly legal, but I was never caught at it. They were all young guys making small salaries, and I didn't want to work them a hardship.

Then, too, I used to type out briefs for Colonel Albert. But it began to dawn on me that I was making as much money on the side, singing and playing the drums, as Colonel Albert was paying his assistant attorney. This gave me to think: What was I doing pursuing the law when singing offered fatter financial possibilities? I talked it over with Al Rinker, and we decided to light out and head south.

My mother had just about given up on me as a law student. She faced the fact that I had a bug to go into show business. She knew that I'd be unhappy and restless unless I had a whirl at it, and though she didn't say so, I think she was confident I'd soon be home looking for three squares again. So she offered no adamant objections. By then Rinker's sister, Mildred Bailey, had moved to Los Angeles and we figured we could stay with her when we arrived there. And my big brother, Everett, was down there selling trucks. Mother was happy that we would have a place to stay instead of just being a couple of youngsters on the bum.

After all, I wasn't a child any more. She had a big family of daughters and sons, and I wasn't her only chick. Everett and Larry had been away to war, and I had been in and out of town on summer jobs at ranches and logging camps, so this wasn't my first leave-taking. It was 1925 when Al and I took off in a jalopy which had belonged to the Musicaladers. It had cost the Musicaladers twenty-four dollars, but it was kind of beat up. It was terrible-looking. It had no top, just a chassis. The top had disappeared long before. So we bought it for eight dollars. We were to change many a tire with clincher rims between Spokane and Los Angeles, which was quite a chore, and the inner tubes were almost entirely patches when we got there. But painted on that flivver was: "Eight million miles and still enthusiastic."

When we started we had twenty dollars in our pockets and my drums in the back seat. The nice thing about Al's instrument was that he didn't have to take it with him. He could find a piano anywhere we went. Our first stop was Seattle. We wanted to hear Vic Meyers' band at the Butler Hotel. We'd heard him on the radio and we'd met him when he played in Spokane. He gave us an audition and then he put us on at the Butler over a week end when the place was filled with University of Washington kids. The songs and arrangements we did were mostly fast rhythm songs and I sang a couple of solos. We also tossed some of Irving Berlin's waltzes into the hopper; the early ones—When I Lost You, All Alone—things like that. We got a good reception and we could have stayed there for a while, working a night or two a week, but we had heading south on our minds. We couldn't get it off.

It took us a week or more to drive from Seattle to Los Angeles. We hit Portland and San Francisco on the way. I've read stories about how our flivver stuttered and backfired, and that the stuttering and backfiring gave me the idea of boo-boo-booing. I don't remember that. Could have been, though. I've heard my own kids sing to the rhythm of our washing machine. Anything that gave a steady beat made them want to keep time with it.

I imagine my boo-boo-boo stuff started with humming. I'd have to do two choruses, and it seemed a good idea to do something at the first part of the second chorus to make it a little different from the first chorus, such as humming or whistling. I tried to vary my humming by imitating the kind of saxophone solo Rudy Weidoff and Ross Gorman produced when they played their ballad-type numbers. My notion was to make a sound which resembled the human voice with a bubble in it.

By the time we hit Bakersfield, California, our jalopy was held together only by youthful optimism. Leaving Bakersfield, we climbed a fifteen-mile grade till we reached Wheeler Ridge, the entrance into the Ridge Route. From there on it's about eighty miles into Los Angeles. When we reached Wheeler Ridge our flivver blew up. She started to fume and smoke and wheeze, and when she blew, she blew good. We just walked away from her and left her. But first we lifted out my drums. We thumbed a ride on a vegetable truck, threw the drums on, and when we got to the Padre Hotel on the highway leading into Hollywood, we called Mildred Bailey in downtown Los Angeles. She came and got us.

Mildred took us to see Mike Lyman, Abe Lyman's brother, at his café, The Tent. He liked us, but said he had no spot for us, adding, however, that if we'd come back a night or two later, he'd have Marco come and see us. Marco was head of the Fanchon and Marco circuit and was putting on stage presentations in thirty-five or forty Coast and Northwest theaters. We did our routine for him. Rinker sat at the piano and I stood beside him, and we did two or three numbers like San, China Boy and Copenhagen; then comedy songs like Paddlin' Madelin Home and Row, Row, Row, and Get Out and Get Under. He booked us into the Boulevard Theater in Los Angeles.

Even at this point I'd worked up a way of singing that people were calling "individual." At times I used a kazoo, sticking it into a tin can and moving it in and out to get a trombone effect in a trick I lifted from the Mound City Blues Blowers. It gave out a wah-wah-ing sound I thought jazzy. At the end, Al and I popped a few jokes—I use the term loosely—but at least they had catch lines.

The Boulevard Theater, where we went to work for Marco, was near the University of Southern California campus, and our audiences were mostly students. The type of work we did seemed particularly appealing to them. I don't think they knew what we were doing, and it was probably better that way. We couldn't have analyzed it ourselves, but what with my kazoo and the coffee can and our scatty way of singing and the new songs we'd worked up, they thought us something fresh and different.

Marco decided we had a pretty good act and booked us over the rest of his circuit. The shows included a chorus line and an animal act or gymnastics, or an acrobatic act or trampolin act. Then there was us singing, and there'd be a girl dance team. The whole thing added up to a forty-minute presentation. We went around the circuit two or three times for Marco, then signed for a show Arthur Freed was doing with Bill Morrisey, called The Morrisey Music Hall Revue. Freed wrote the songs and put up the money. Morrisey produced the show.

Marco had been paying us from $250 to $300 a week as a team. We got the same from Morrisey. The Morrisey Music Hall Revue played ten or twelve weeks at Los Angeles' Majestic Theater, although Freed and Morrisey renamed it the Orange Grove Theater for the occasion, thinking that tag would give it more verve. Finally, feeling that they'd exhausted the Los Angeles field, they took their show to San Francisco, where we played the Capitol Theater. In addition to our regular performances, we put on midnight shows to which the students from the University of California flocked from Berkeley across the bay. In the Morrisey Music Hall Revue I worked with Al Rinker in the pit. The spotlight picked us up there and we'd do our songs. We had a couple of songs we hoped were risqué, such as Where'd Ya Stay Last Night? but compared to the material used by some of our café performers today, they were terribly tame.

During the eight or ten weeks we stayed in San Francisco, I became quite buddy-buddy with a group of boys from a Greek House at the University of California, who came over to catch our midnight shows. One of my U. of C.

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pals was Bill Hearst, son of William Randolph Hearst. The idea was conceived that it would be quite a lark if we brought the whole show over by ferry some afternoon to meet the other members of the fraternity, have lunch and put on an impromptu performance. Not only Rinker and I were included in the invitation but the whole show, chorus girls and all. The chorus girls were very decent kids. Most of them were in their teens, and had come out of high schools and dancing schools around Los Angeles.

We went over in one of the ferries, were met by the U. of C. brethren, and were taken to their Greek hogan for lunch. The fraternity brothers felt that the consumption of a little punch would break down any barriers of reserve which might rear themselves between gown and mortar board and sock and buskin. They had a washtub filled with gin, a big block of ice and a solitary orange floating dejectedly about in it. It was punchy, all right. Unhappily, the chorus girls thought they were drinking punch and they sipped several saucers of the brew. By two o'clock everybody was feeling good, and about two-thirty, when a large group of outside students had gathered, we put on a show. We chose a secluded spot for our performance—or so we thought—in front of the famed Campanile, not realizing that it was the hub of the campus. Our show bordered upon the—shall we say *outré?*—and some of the faculty who had got wind of it and who had hurried down to catch it remained to tongue-cluck and head-shake. This frightened some of the saner minds in the Deke tong, who stopped the entertainment and spirited us back onto the San Francisco ferry.

Our gay doings were treated as if they had been an orgy, a far more sensational term than they deserved. It had all been outdoors in broad daylight and there wasn't anything orgiastic about it. But an investigation was launched on the campus, some of the boys were suspended, and the fraternity chapter almost lost its national charter.

The show closed shortly afterward. I don't know whether our frolicking at Berkeley had anything to do with its closing, but the authorities at Berkeley had issued a ukase that no more U. of Cal. students could attend our midnight matinee. Morrisey's Music Hall Revue played one more date, at the LoBero Theater in Santa Barbara, but there its sins and inadequacies caught up with it and the show expired on the old Camino Real, once traversed by certain other itinerants, the old dons and padres. Al and I were picked up by Paramount Publix. Jack Partington, who was putting on stage presentations for them, booked us into what is now the Paramount Theater in Los Angeles, only it was then called the Metropolitan. We were at the Metropolitan when Paul Whiteman heard about us, asked us to audition for him, and placed us under contract as a singing-and-piano-novelty act with his band.

Editors' Note—This is the second of a series of articles by Mr. Crosby and Mr. Martin. The third will appear next week.

THE RIDDLE OF ALFRED VANDERBILT

(Continued from Page 33)

He did not understand for a moment why his companion laughed.

The playboy role never quite fitted. In the first place he doesn't drink. He has tasted various forms of liquor, but doesn't like any of them. He will sip at a glass of wine or champagne if a host becomes too insistent, but he doesn't like that either. "I have no scruples, you understand," he said recently. "I might start drinking tomorrow. But so far, I haven't." Across the library, the sunlight was glinting cheerily through the bottles of an elaborate chromium bar on wheels.

For another thing, until the last few years, Vanderbilt virtually trained his own horses, though never officially. Training starts early, around six A.M. to seven A.M., so that it can be completed by 10:30 and the track readied for the afternoon racing. It's a little too much to stay up with a starlet at a night club and then get up with a horse at Belmont Park.

Now having found in William C. Winfrey a trainer in whose ability he has complete confidence, Vanderbilt seldom gets to the track before lunch, unless some favorite horse, such as Native Dancer, is working. He has the time to go night-clubbing now, but neither he nor his wife, the former Jeanne Murray, is interested in it except on a very occasional basis.

A man who knows nothing about horses is easy to train for. A man who knows a little bit about horses is a plague. Vanderbilt, having a very thorough knowledge of training—learned originally from his first trainer, J. H. (Bud) Stotler—isn't any trouble at all.

"I'll tell you," Winfrey said, when asked about this, "this man has spoiled me for anybody else. When I've got a problem I talk it over with him, of course. You know, whether to put a horse up or to race him another time or two, or something like that. But he always ends up by saying, 'Well, use your own judgment.'"

Vanderbilt's serious entry into racing came in 1934, when Discovery, which he had purchased for $25,000 the autumn before, was a three-year-old. Discovery could not quite handle Brookmeade Stable's Cavalcade that year, but as a four-year-old he proved to be one of the great weight-carrying handicappers of all time, and with other good horses to assist him, he made Vanderbilt the leading owner of 1935, the stable winning eighty-eight races and $303,605. No other owner won as much as $200,000 that year.

Discovery was just as good in 1936, but the handicapper was better—Discovery once had to carry 143 pounds—and the stable dropped to second place. In 1937 it was twentieth. As the crack Vanderbilt horses of 1935 gradually dropped out, very little came on to replace them. Vanderbilt had bred some good ones in the meanwhile, but because he was in the Navy he had sold his yearlings, and such horses as Knockdown, winner of the $100,000 Santa Anita Derby, and Conniver, one of the best mares of her time, raced for other owners.

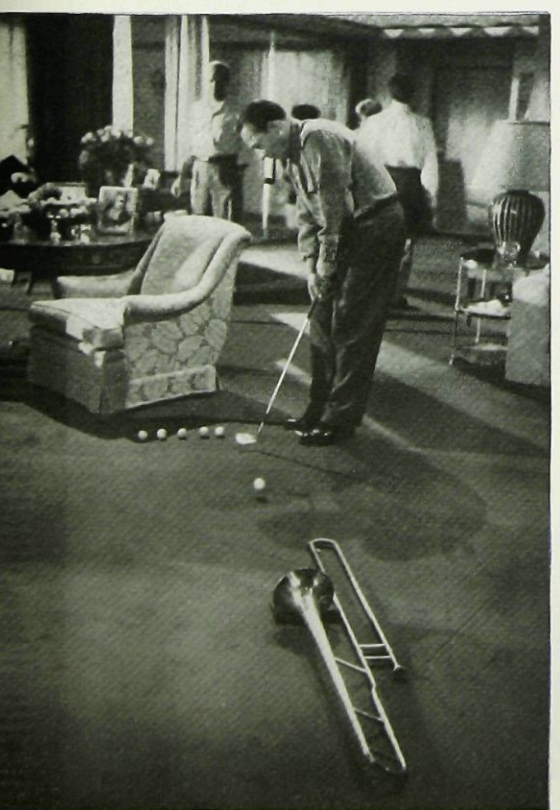
In 1947, when Newsweekly won the Babylon Handicap, a minor event at Aqueduct, Vanderbilt commented that it was the first stakes race he had won in New York since Petrify took the Matron Stakes of 1941.

In 1948, the stable was twenty-eighth on the owners' list, which is nowhere at all for a big stable. In 1949, which was Winfrey's first year, it

(Continued on Page 80)

GENE LESTER

Bing rehearsing for his radio show with jazz violinist Joe Venuti. While with Paul Whiteman, Bing played a violin—with rubber strings—between songs.



WIDE WORLD

During a lull on a Crosby movie set, Bing usually can be found trying to improve his golf game.

Call Me Lucky

By BING CROSBY, as told to Pete Martin

Young Bing had a job with Pops Whiteman and the world by the tail. Life was all fun and no work, until even good-natured Whiteman had enough of Bing's irresponsibility and fired him. But the Crosby luck held out: He got a break from Mack Sennett—and fell in love.

PART THREE

TO Al Rinker and me, it seemed incredible that Paul Whiteman—a man who in 1927 stood out above other American bandleaders as Mount Everest stood out above other mountains—thought us good enough to ask us to appear with his band. We were to join Whiteman in Chicago when we'd finished playing out our contract in Los Angeles. We mapped our own route, so we decided to break the jump by playing a week at a Spokane theater and seeing our folks once more.

By this time we had made a recording with the Don Clarke band, a group which played at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, and we took it for granted that the world was rushing in a body to buy this disk. Our egos shrank when we found that nobody in Spokane had heard of it. We worked a week in Spokane, grabbing $400 for the week, but somebody sneaked into our dressing room and stole our money while we were on stage; a heinous thing to do to a fellow in his home town. We lost everything we earned, but we didn't brood over it. We'd had such a wonderful time cutting up touches with our families and friends, showing our clippings and taking bows that we figured we broke even. Then we went to Chicago and made our debut with Whiteman in the Tivoli Theater there. We went into the Tivoli with misgivings, but, as I've said earlier, we came out of it thinking we had the world by the tail.

When we weren't putting on our singing and piano-specialty act, we sat with the other members

Copyright 1953 by Bing Crosby

of the band, pretending that we could play instruments, so the audience wouldn't wonder why we were doing nothing. I was given a French horn to hold against my lips. Al Rinker was allowed to hold a guitar with real strings, but he got overenthusiastic and strummed along with the band when he thought it was playing so loudly no one could hear him and I'd get carried away and blow a little wind into the French horn. Then the band would come to a pianissimo passage and the disharmonies Al and I were producing could be heard. Pops Whiteman finally gave us both prop instruments with rubber strings. Mine was a violin, and I got so I could bow with it right along with the rest of the boys—soundlessly, of course.

Heading east by way of Cleveland, we wound up in New York, where the team of Rinker and Crosby hit a giant clinker. We went on at the Paramount and did exactly what we'd been doing in all the cities, in which—to be immodest—we'd killed the citizens, but in New York, with the same songs, sung the same way, we died. I couldn't explain it then. I can't now. We sang the same stuff we'd put on our records and they had sold well. Whatever it was, the big city didn't want any part of us.

We were prepared to go back to Los Angeles or even to Spokane. If we'd never got anywhere or done anything, the blow wouldn't have been so stunning. But to come into New York, the apex of show business, full of hope and confidence, and end up with egg on our faces, just standing there in our high-button shoes with our teeth in our mouths, was heartbreak.

Pops Whiteman stuck with us for a show or two, but after that he was driven to dodges to keep using us. Among other things, we were put in the lobby at the Paramount to entertain the overflow. There was usually a crowd milling around there waiting for the next show, and Al and I went out with a little piano and sang to them, but we got even less response than we had on the stage. The people in the lobby were concerned only with how soon they were going to be seated, and they paid little or no attention to us, although some of the kinder waitees gave us a half bag of popcorn or a hunk of peanut brittle.

Pops also found other things for us to do. When his band opened in his own night club on Broadway, the proceedings began with two big curtains rolling back. Al and I operated those curtains. But we were feeling very humble, and were happy to be working at all, even if we were little better than stagehands.

As a part of its repertoire, the Whiteman band played the 1812 Overture. This involved a mixture of the Russian national anthem and the Marseillaise,

GENE LESTER

The original Paul Whiteman Rhythm Boys at a reunion: Bing Crosby, Harry Barris, Al Rinker.

with a background of bells ringing and cannons going off. For a while Pops had us whanging those bells in the wings. He had a big set of chimes, six or eight feet tall, and two hammers to play them with, and toward the end of the 1812 Overture, when the troops are at the gates of Moscow and the city is on fire and the cathedral bells are ringing, we gave those chimes a hard time. Whiteman had rented them from a music-equipment house, and every second or third day we had to have a new set.

Finally the manager of the band went to Pops and said, "How far do you want me to go buying new bells?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," Whiteman told him.

"Those kids are belting those bells so enthusiastically they're ruining them," the manager said, "and we're paying for them." During the balance of our two-week engagement, we were given soft hammers. We always thought that rendition of the 1812 Overture suffered considerably as a result.

Whiteman was doing a lot of recording, and he worked Al and me into the vocal ensembles. We cut a number of sides which afterward appeared in the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Album. We were in on a lot of recordings with the full orchestra, among them some musical-comedy scores. Then Whiteman and his band went to Philadelphia, where we played the Stanley Theater. Pops gave Al and me another chance there. We seemed to be going good, so he put us in the show again. We also made some recordings in Camden for Victor. We were over there two or three times a week, and I was given a couple of solos to do, Ol' Man River and Make Believe, in Whiteman's recording of the Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein, II, Show Boat score.

Those solos caused favorable talk and Pops gave me more of them. But I still didn't have a solo with the band on stage. Back in New York again, Al and I worked with the band's other singers, the great "Skin" Young, Charlie Gaylord and Jack Fulton. Together we did harmonic backgrounds for instrumental solos. Whiteman had progressive arrangers—a fellow named Bill Challis and the talented Ferde Grofé, who arranged vocal licks for us for records and for stage. In that way Al and I kept going, but our identity as a specialty act was gone. We were just members of a singing group. Pops tried us as a double a few other times in cafés, but we couldn't seem to get along. New York had us licked. Al and I had lost our confidence, and we communicated that fact to the audience. Since our routine was based on bounce and gaiety, the audience lost interest if we came out feeling whipped.

Most of the Whiteman band put up at the Belvedere Hotel in New York, and I ran up a bill there. When I didn't have the cash to meet my obligation, I brought an old show-business tradition into play. I told the manager I'd leave my trunk with him and he could hold it for security until I got back from a trip we were about to make with Paul. When I came back, I still didn't have enough money to pick up that Belvedere tab and, having acquired a new if somewhat scanty wardrobe in the meanwhile, I left the trunk there in payment. It may still be there.

Looking back, life then contained mixed colors; some light, some dark. On the light side was Matty Malneck's vocal arrangement of Wistful and Blue for Rinker and me. With his arrangement, Rinker and I created a new singing style. The best way to describe it is to say that it was a vocal without words. We sang voh-do-de-oh licks while Matty, who arranged the vocal and wrote it for us, played the viola as a third voice. (Continued on Page 42)

BILL MORROW

Bing and three of his four boys—Philip, Lindsay and Dennis. Setting out salt cakes is part of their summer job on the family ranch at Elko, Nevada.

DECCA

Judy Garland goes over a number with Bing at a recording studio. He made his first record hit in the late '20's with the novelty tune, Mississippi Mud.

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CALL ME LUCKY

(Continued from Page 31)

It gave an unusual effect. There had been nothing like it. It was very popular.

As it happened, a fellow named Harry Barris was playing in New York at George Olsen's Club, doing a single and singing scat. He played hot piano, slamming the top down from time to time to emphasize his licks. Pops Whiteman heard him and he decided he was a cute and clever kid. Barris was doing all right with Olsen, but Whiteman sold him the notion of joining the Whiteman organization. Presently Barris, Rinker and I were teamed together under the label of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys.

Barris had written a song called Mississippi Mud. Al and I learned it and the three of us made a platter of it. Mississippi Mud was a hot number in both of its versions. I say "both" because it was first copyrighted by Barris, then a second version was copyrighted by Barris and a guy named Jimmy Cavanaugh. Barris worked on three or four other songs, among them So the Bluebirds and the Blackbirds Got Together, and we put together a repertoire of numbers nobody else was singing. And Pops put us on the floor in the Whiteman Club, a night spot which bore his name. The Rhythm Boys left the customers in sections—we fractured them. As far as Crosby and Rinker were concerned, it was a return to our happy days at the Tivoli Theater in Chicago all over again.

Then Matty Malneck made an arrangement of From Monday On for us. In recording it, we were backed by one of the most remarkable trios ever assembled: Bix Beiderbecke, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey.

We began to play parties around town late at night, after the Club Whiteman closed. We played a couple of parties for Jimmy Walker and we also worked a few parties for Buddy De Sylva, and for other celebrities, among them Bea Lillie. I've never reminded Bea of this, although we worked together later in pictures, for we didn't do too well at her party. We couldn't seem to get the attention of her guests. There was a lot of elbow-bending and conversation going on in a big drawing room, and if you can't get a crowd like that to listen to you at the start, you're a blown-up tomato. We had two miniature white pianos, one for Rinker and one for Barris, and I stood between them, slapping away at a cymbal in my hand, and we set up quite a din ourselves. But the party had gone too far. Our noise wasn't enough to stop 'em. However, even though we were cool at Bea Lillie's, we were well paid.

About this time we were so flushed with success that inertia set in and we didn't bother to learn any new songs. When we weren't working, we spent time in Harlem at the Cotton Club listening to Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway, Ethel Waters and other Negro entertainers, and we didn't do too much rehearsing. Moreover, we got a little tired of each other—as youngsters will. We couldn't decide which of us was boss. Every three or four weeks we decided to break up, then the next day we'd get back together again.

That on-again-off-again routine wasn't conducive to hard work. The

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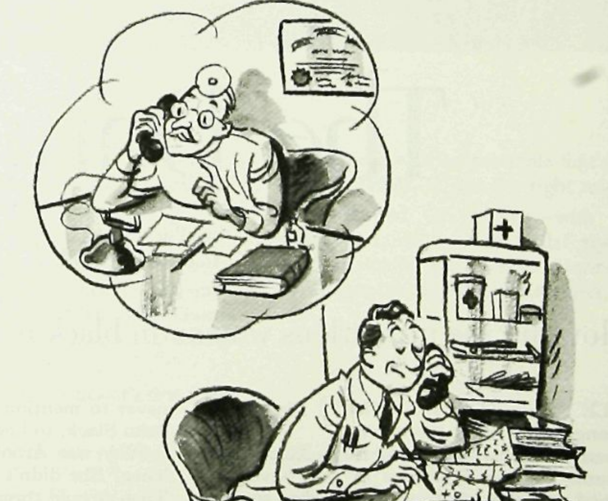
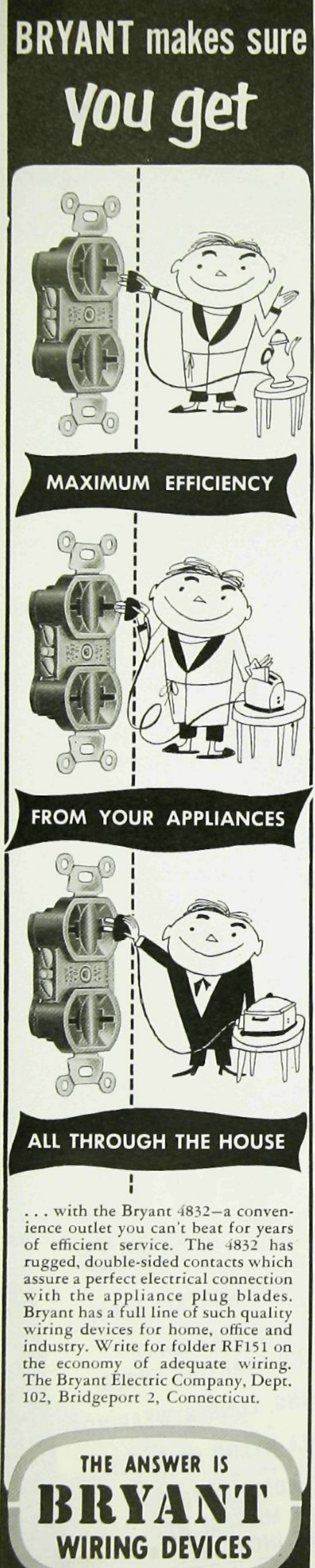


The Perfect Squelch

THE young general practitioner very seldom referred a patient to the specialist for treatment, but he often phoned him for free advice. During these calls he had the irritating habit of discussing at length each suggestion the specialist made. After one especially long call, in which he got detailed advice on the treatment of a very difficult case, the young doctor ended with a brisk, "Thanks, and I hope you don't mind my asking for this advice."

"Not at all," the specialist said dryly. "Just so long as you feel you're getting your money's worth." —DR. NORMAN KLASS.



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success of an act like ours depends upon developing new material all the time, for a piece of material which might be good when it's fresh can be useless in ten or twelve weeks. Naturally, Whiteman was disgusted with us. We were supposed to go on his next concert tour with him, but the stuff we were doing wasn't suitable for a concert-type program and, as I've said, we hadn't bothered to learn anything new. So Whiteman booked us for a vaudeville tour over the Keith-Orpheum circuit. He equipped us with a big cardboard figure of himself, and he made a recording of an announcement in which he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I take great pleasure in presenting to you my Rhythm Boys. I hope you are entertained by them and that you will give them a warm reception."

When the curtain went up, it disclosed the cardboard figure of Whiteman on a dimly lit stage, and his announcement blared at the audience through a loud-speaker. Then the lights went up and we were seen in the center of the stage, with Barris slamming the piano top down, me frimframming a cymbal with a wire fly swatter, and all three of us locked in a "righteous" beat. We were supposed to play thirty-nine or forty solid weeks. But we didn't play them very solid. There were times when we didn't show up at all. Being young, we were irresponsible. Life was our oyster or, to use a phrase popular then, our "bowl of cherries." We took a little time out to savor it.

There were trains we missed, and times when our baggage didn't arrive. We didn't let such mishaps interfere with our golf. We got in a game every morning if we could find a course. Once, when we were supposed to go to Columbus from Cincinnati, I got mixed up handling the transportation and we went to Nashville, Tennessee, a couple hundred miles out of our way. As a result, we missed the first three days of our Columbus engagement.

Because of such misadventures, the Keith office in New York with which Whiteman had booked us began to take a dim view of us and our future value, and after our week in St. Louis, Keith very nearly canceled us. We were supposed to do our regular singing act, but we'd been exposed to so many comedy teams on tour and had stolen so much material from them that our act had changed. We were doing an opening song, ten minutes of comedy, and a closing song. We had put on a gag mind-reading act, with Barris in the aisle working the audience while I was on stage wearing a turban. Cued by some remarkably corny and obvious hints from him, I guessed what was in people's wallets. Rinker played an incidental piano and helped Barris with the audience. We'd made this change in spite of the fact that a large part of our audience appeal lay in the fact that people who'd bought our recordings came to hear us sing. We ignored that in favor of our new conviction that we were sidesplittingly funny. I recall one of our sparkling interchanges.

Barris asked, "How can you cure a horse of frothing at the mouth?"

"Teach him to spit!" I replied.

The local manager must have beefed about us to Keith's New York headquarters, for after a few days of such hanky-panky he told us that he had news for us; either we went back to the original act Keith had bought or we'd be canceled. We promised to reform, but three shows later we weakened and returned to our "witty" stuff again. The curtain closed in front of us before our act was over. We ran offstage to put the blast on the stage hand who'd rung it down, and encountered the manager.

"That's all in this house for you, boys," he said.

He asked us where we were due next. When we said Rockford, Illinois, he told us, "You'd better change your act or you'll be thrown out there, too." Chastened, we went back to singing, and the populace of Rockford had to do without learning how to cure a horse of frothing at the mouth.

Barris was and is remarkably talented. He writes songs as easily as other folk write a letter. In addition, he can sing and he's a good comedian. But while he could do all of these things, he knew he could do them. And because he gave the impression of knowing all there was to know, Al and I called him "Little Joe Show Business." He'd started ahead of us. He'd worked a tour or two with Gus Edwards. This gave him more experience than Al and I had, and he dominated the thinking of our act—the planning of it and putting it together.

In the years that have elapsed since our Whiteman days, Barris has had a lot of good jobs. Not long ago he put together an act with three other songwriters; Shelton Brooks, who wrote Some of These Days; Archie Gottler, who wrote America I Love You; and Gus Arnheim, who's authored a number of hit songs. They called their routine: Then I Wrote. They sat at four pianos pushed out onto café floors. Their act was a tremendous hit. Acts like that are bound to be hits, since their tunes and melodies stir up such tidal waves of nostalgia that they're home free.

Barris has always fascinated me as a physical specimen. Twenty years ago, when I worked with him, he suffered from a racking cough. He slept little, and he didn't weigh much. I made up my mind that he wasn't long for this world. When I see him nowadays, although he still weighs less than a wet dishrag and he still coughs, he is just as enthusiastic as ever. He has a sheaf of music in his hip pocket he's just written the night before—or that day. I wish I knew what keeps him going. It would be worth millions. He operates on something I know nothing about—a new kind of fuel for the human motor.

Al Rinker was dark, curly-haired, soft-spoken. When he did speak, he didn't say much. His kind always goes over well with the girls. The fellow who does all the talking gets nowhere; the fellow who waits for the gabby ones to run out of gas, then moves in, does better. Al has always been very serious about music. He likes good music and knows it when he hears it. He plays good piano, although by ear. When the Rhythm Boys broke up, he continued to be successful. For several years after that he did radio work and produced shows on national networks.

With the conclusion of our Keith-Orpheum-circuit tour, we returned to Whiteman's band to discover that Hollywood was standing at the threshold of a new trend, one which was to affect my life powerfully—musical pictures. Urged by Carl Laemmle, Jr., Carl Laemmle, Sr., head of Universal Pictures, decided to film a mammoth musical built around Whiteman and his band. Since Whiteman was by far the most important and best-known figure in popular music, Laemmle thought if he could persuade him to do a picture, Universal would steal a march on all the other studios. In 1930, after lengthy negotiations, a deal was set for us all to come to California—the band, the singers, Whiteman, his valet, his business manager—and make The King of Jazz. Since we were broadcasting for Old Gold, Old Gold supplied a special train for us as an advertising stunt. Banners draped over the train plugged that brand of cigarette.

While we didn't know it, we were to make two such trips. When we arrived the first time, we were given a big bungalow on the Universal lot as a

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"Not much—what's new with you?"

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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recreation room. We all bought autos—or at least we made the down payment with money which Pops advanced to us, then deducted from our salaries. We loafed for a month while the big brains worked up a story which proved unsuitable for Whiteman. They made the mistake of trying to build him as a romantic lead. He was impressive looking, but what with his thinning thatch and his ample poundage, it was finally decided that he didn't fit the script, so we bundled back into the train, returned to New York and stayed there for a couple of months.

It was in the period between Whiteman's return to New York from his first trip to California and his second visit there that my irresponsible ways and overfriendliness with strangers got me into big trouble. Hoping to find a few congenial souls, I dropped into a speak-easy. Before I knew it, I had become pals with a couple of quiet strangers leaning against the bar. That is, their voices were quiet and their eyes were quiet. Their clothes weren't. I started to drink brandy with them, although I'd never tried that potent tipple before—nor have I ever tried it since—and I remember starting pub-crawling with my new companions. After that a haze set in and a couple of days disappeared.

When I came to, I was parked on a sofa in a strange room. Across the room, a group of men with padded shoulders, snap-brim black hats and sallow faces were holding a conference at a table. The group noticed me stirring, and one of them came over to me.

"Have a nice sleep?" he asked.

I shook my head. I felt terrible. My head was one big ache.

"Somebody must have slipped you a Mickey Finn," he said. "We didn't think you'd be safe with the money in your wallet, so we brought you here to sleep it off."

"Thanks for the use of the room," I said. "I'll be going now."

"You'll have to put up with us for a while longer," the man said. "While you were out on your feet, there was a shooting. Somebody got hurt and we holed up here. The boys think you'd better stay with us until we give you the word."

I sat there trying to think about it. My head wasn't functioning and my mouth felt as if full of hot cotton. I went into the bathroom and filled a glass with water. I didn't get it to my mouth. As I raised it there was a sound like six autos backfiring, the noise of plaster falling and choking screams from the next room.

I stayed in that bathroom for what seemed hours, until I heard new voices. Then large, flat footsteps came toward the bathroom door. I turned on a faucet and filled the glass once more. When a policeman opened the door, I was drinking thirstily.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"My name's Crosby," I told him. "I'm with Whiteman's band. I've just come from a recording date. I heard the shooting and popped in to see what was going on."

He looked at me doubtfully.

Many years later I was to win an Oscar for acting, but the acting I did to win that Academy Award was as nothing compared to the acting I did then. Wandering nonchalantly out of the bathroom, I mixed with the gawkers, lookers and detectives and newspaper reporters with notebooks and pencils in their hands who were questioning a couple of my companions with the padded shoulders and the sallow faces. They had been nicked here and there by machine-gun slugs and their faces were even sallower. The door of the room had been shot open. Bullet holes around the lock had done that. Someone had sprayed the room with lead slugs. One of the reporters who knew I was with Whiteman vouched for the fact that I was no gang member, and I was herded outside by the law with the spectators who had come to stare. There was no trouble herding me out. I let them do it one-hand easy.

The next day I discovered that I had been holed up with a prominent gang leader, Machine Gun Jack McGurn, and his mob. McGurn was said to have been involved in one of the most celebrated mass killings of the alky-cooking-and-running days, the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in a Chicago garage. When I read that, I wanted nothing more than to get out of New York, and I was glad when we got word that Universal had finally cooked up a story suitable for Whiteman and we all trooped back into the train and went back to Hollywood.

We worked on The King of Jazz for a coon's age. Picture techniques weren't developed then the way they are now, and musical numbers took as much as a week to shoot. Pops had promised me a song, Song of the Dawn, in the picture. I was to sing a verse and two choruses. It was a big production number and was a tremendous break for me. I rehearsed and rehearsed, then I took time out to see Southern California play California at Los Angeles. There was quite a shindig after the game in our recreation bungalow at Universal. The party involved some tippling, but not to excess. We got gay and exhilarated, but not stoned. Some young ladies were present and I volunteered to take one of them home in my flivver with its top modishly down.

She lived at the Roosevelt Hotel. When I tried to make a left turn into her hostelry—at seven or eight miles an hour—another motorist slammed into my rear and threw us out of the car. My passenger was cut up and I took her into the hotel lobby, found some towels and tried to stanch her blood. While I was thus engaged, a gendarme tapped my shoulder and asked if I had driven the car which had dumped us upon the sidewalk. I said I had. He also had in his clutches the fellow who had run into me, and he took us both to the calaboose for austere overnight lodgings. In the morning Pops Whiteman came down and bailed me out. The charge against me was "reckless driving and suspicion of drinking." My trial was set for a week later. The driver of the second car had to go back to college—his examinations were taking place—and his trial was set for a week after mine.

The day of my trial I'd been playing golf, and I appeared in plus fours, highly colored hose and a sweater to match. The judge, a visiting jurist from Santa Ana, was a militant prohibitionist, but no one had told me that. He asked me about the accident and I told him what happened. Then he said, "It says on the complaint 'H.B.D.' That means 'Had Been Drinking.' Is that true?"

"I had a couple," I said.

"Don't you know there's a Prohibition Law in this country?" he asked.

"Yes," I said, "but nobody pays much attention to it."

He snapped his mouth together like the lid of a roll-top desk closing, and said, "You'll have sixty days in which to pay attention to it."

"What's the fine?" I asked.

"There'll be no fine. Just sixty days." So I was flung into durance vile. After a couple of days my brother Everett came to see me. He told me that Pops Whiteman had tried to hold my song for me, but when I couldn't be sprung, they had given it to another singer, John Boles.

At first I was kept in the downtown jail, but finally Everett and Pops between them got me transferred to the Hollywood jail, where my friends could come to see me.

Toward the end of the picture a number with the Rhythm Boys had been arranged. We were to render it with the Three Brox Sisters; it was to be called A Bench in the Park. They couldn't find a suitable substitute for me, so the law let me out once a day in custody of an officer to work in the film. The cop had the time of his life. To him, being on a movie set was really living. I served about forty days before my sentence was commuted. When the other driver—the college lad—heard that the judge had thrown the book at me, he'd hired a lawyer and had pleaded not guilty. By that time another judge was on the bench, who gave him a suspended sentence.

Whiteman was sore about the whole thing, but when he cooled off he admitted that I'd been a victim of circumstances. I certainly wasn't speeding. I'd had a drink or two, but I was sober.

I have often wondered what might have happened to me if I had sung The Song of the Dawn in place of John Boles. It certainly helped him. On the strength of it, he got a lot of pictures after that. I must say, he had a bigger voice and a better delivery for that kind of song than I had. My crooning style wouldn't have been very good for such a number, which was supposed to be delivered "robusto," like the Vagabond Song. I might have flopped with the song. I might have been cut out of the picture. I might never have been given another crack at a song in any picture. Who can say?

When we finished The King of Jazz, we played theater dates with Whiteman in Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle and Portland. It was in Portland that I got into an argument with Pops over a bootlegging bill. A bootlegger who followed the band selling day-old popskull claimed that I owed him for a bottle of his sauce. I owed him nothing, and I said so, but Pops Whiteman paid him anyhow and took it out of my salary. I disputed this so vigorously that Pops said, "You don't seem to be too serious. You're just having a good

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE INNOCENT

By Kathleen Sutton

The full, expectant lips that give
An earthy promise to the dream
In Sara's eyes, disturb and seem
To challenge those who charier live.

The swirl of Sara's lacy skirt
Is no less circumspect than theirs;
Only the crimson rose she wears
Low in her bosom names her flirt.

But mouths of dowagers are stone,
And younger faces turn away
As Sara takes the treacherous way
The beautiful must walk alone.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

time touring and living off the fat of the land and getting arrested and costing me money. When we get to Seattle, we'll part friends and that'll be the end of it."

I don't want to say good-by to Whiteman in this tale without paying him a tribute for being so patient and long-suffering with me. Looking back over what I've said here about him, I'm impressed by how kind he was. When I was younger and more hot-headed, I used to think he should line my pockets with more gold. But I confess he owes me nothing. It's the other way around.

Also, it seems to me in reading back over what I've written here that there's been a great deal of talk about a character named John Barleycorn. If that's the way it was, that's the way it should be told. However, I'd like to insert a note to the effect that although I was guilty of a few youthful indiscretions in the late 1920's and early '30's, once I got those injudicious moments out of my system I have never let liquor interfere with my work or my capacities.

Nor do I want to go ahead without telling a little something about the jazz immortal Bix Beiderbecke. For a while Bix was part of Whiteman's band and I roomed with him at the Belvedere Hotel in New York. He was tremendously talented musically. The cornet was his instrument, but I sometimes think he played piano better than he did the cornet. He had a superb ear, an inimitable style and was a serious student of *avant garde* classical music. In that respect, as a jazz artist he was years ahead of his time.

Bix never liked to go to bed, so he always felt terrible physically. He had a bristly mustache straight out of one of the Bruce Bairnsfather "Better Ole" and the "Old Bill" cartoons, so popular in World War I. It looked like a bad windrow; however, it didn't interfere with his trumpet playing. It seemed to make his lip stronger, or at least that's what Bix claimed. His lip was always sore, but he said that if he shaved it, it would make it weaker.

He always carried his cornet with him, day and night, sometimes *sans* case, sometimes in a paper bag, and he'd sit in with orchestras any time anyone wanted him to. He rushed around to all the night clubs to play cornet with the boys, getting no rest and having more than a few beers. As a result, he generally felt pretty rough, so much so that if anybody asked him, "How do you feel?" he answered, "I don't ask you how you feel. Why do you ask me how I feel? You know I feel bad. Just leave me alone."

He wasn't bellicose about it; it was just that it annoyed him when anyone asked him how he felt. Anyone who's ever had a "black-dog-riding-on-the-shoulder" type of hang-over will understand his mood. He slept fitfully, and he liked a room equipped with twin beds, so that he could move back and forth from one to the other if he became restless. Every once in a while he'd wake me up in the middle of the night and make me change beds with him. He never exercised. He didn't believe in it. I don't think it fair to call him an alcoholic, because he'd go for days without touching the stuff, and he was seldom so under the weather that he couldn't navigate or play the piano or the cornet. In the end, it was his lack of sleep and his physical exhaustion which broke his health and killed him.

Bix was very intellectual, very well read, and as good an authority on new American symphonic music or classical music as anyone I've ever known. He was a student of the *moderne* compositions of such musicians as Cyril Scott. Bix could play their things on the piano with great fidelity of interpretation.

Because of his recordings, he had admirers all over the East. When he visited a town and took in a night club and his fans came rushing up to him, he could never remember whether he'd met them before or not. He had a very short memory. When they said, "Hi, Bix! Remember me, Bix?" he had a series of stock answers which could mean anything. He'd ask, "Are you still down there?" or "Are you still working?" If the one who greeted him was young, he'd ask, "Still going to school?" The guy would say, "Yeah, yeah, I'm still down there," or "No, I left there some time ago," and would go away impressed with how thoughtful Bix was to be so interested in his welfare. There was a cult for his music while he was still alive, but it wasn't so large or so vociferous as it is now.

At Seattle, Al Rinker, Harry Barris and I left Whiteman, and I wrote Bill Perlberg a letter asking him to see if he could find work for us in California. It was in 1930 and Perlberg was then one of a long procession of booking agents in my life. Bill scurried around putting the talk on people and got us a job at Eddie Branstatter's Montmartre Café in Los Angeles. The Hollywood whirligig of chance takes some eccentric turns. Perlberg is a big producer now. By an unpredictable turn of the wheel, he produced my last picture, Little Boy Lost.

The Montmartre was a favorite hangout of the film colony, and Barris, Rinker and I were fairly big there. For one thing, after Whiteman let us go, we learned a new song or two and our material improved. As sometimes happens with instrumentalists or vocalists, we became an overnight fad. Those who "discovered" us asked others, "Have you caught The Rhythm Boys at the Montmartre?" It's the sort of thing that happens to other people from time to time. It happened to a lad named Vallee and to a good-looking youngster named Russ Colombo. Much later it happened to Sinatra.

I'm glad it happened to me then because it brought one of Hollywood's most beautiful stars, Dixie Lee, the fair-haired girl of the Fox Studio, into the Montmartre.

Soon after, an agent named Leonard Goldstein was booking us. Under his aegis we moved from the Montmartre to the Coconut Grove. Gus Arnheim had decided to form a band and go back into the Coconut Grove, where he'd once been Abe Lyman's pianist. He signed Barris, Rinker and me, a girl singer, a tenor, and got together a band which could do comedy group singing. When we'd rehearsed for a while, we were a pretty useful unit. The Coconut Grove had a radio outlet two hours each night. We thought this a fine thing, but we had no conception of how wonderful it actually was. Through this new medium we built popularity all over California and as far north as Seattle, Portland and Tacoma. I found out later that even some of the people in the Midwest used to sit up until three A.M. to catch us.

The word "happened" looms large in everything I've touched or which has touched me. When radio became a popular medium, I *happened* to be working in a restaurant-night club in Los Angeles which *happened* to have a radio outlet, so I *happened* to get a crack at that medium. Suppose I hadn't been aired and had been involved in some other dodge at the time. I wouldn't have had that outlet.

I've been very lucky. I started with no particular aim—other than the vague general one of wanting to sing and be in show business. I was seeking no great achievement. I just did what I liked to do. The best way to get into singing and into show business seemed to me to go to Los Angeles, so I went there. Through a series of circumstances, I got jobs there and progressed from one phase of show business to another, with the accent always on music.

When we were at the Coconut Grove, Barris wrote his great song, I Surrender, Dear. I Surrender had an exceptional arrangement made by Arnheim's arranger, Jimmie Grier, and the record we cut of it was unusual for those days. Dance bands usually played a number in straight tempo, but our recording had changes of tempo and modulations and vocal touches in several spots. This had much to do with the popularity of the song. Week after week, people demanded that we sing it. We couldn't get off without singing it several times a night. I Surrender lit a fire under Barris, and he came through with hit after hit. His It Must be True also had a fine arrangement by Jimmie Grier, his At Your Command and Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams were other great songs Barris wrote when we were at the Coconut Grove.

Barris was writing now with a fellow named Gordon Clifford, who did lyrics. I put in a word or two myself, but my contributions weren't important. I helped write the verses, which nobody played. They were written because they had to be in the copy; I sang them for recordings, but I didn't sing them at the Grove. One of my Boswells has since made the statement that I "wooed my listeners with a husky whisper at the Coconut Grove." That could be true. Some nights, after singing four or five hours, including two on the radio, a husky whisper was all I had left.

With the coming of fame, we became regular callers at Agua Caliente. Since we had Sunday and Monday off, we'd go there occasionally for a week end. What with driving about 150 miles each way and playing roulette, golf and the races and belting a little tequila around, come Tuesday, when I stood or swayed in front of the microphone, my pipes were shot.

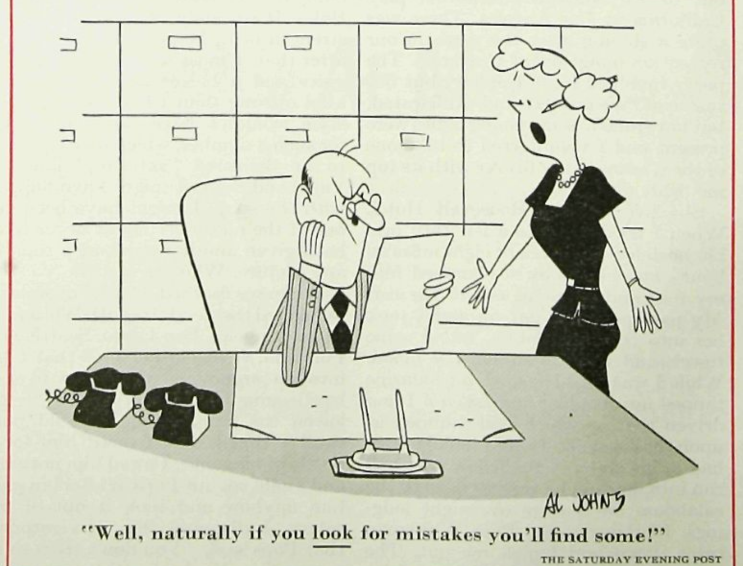
Toward the end of our engagement at the Grove we didn't take our responsibilities seriously enough to suit Abe Frank. Frank was running the Coconut Grove and The Ambassador hotel. But the Grove was his pet. He was an elderly, serious sort who disliked anything that disrupted the even tenor of the nightly routine at the Grove. When people were supposed to appear, he expected them to be on deck. So, when I failed to get back for the Tuesday-night show once too often, he docked my wages. Of course Abe was within his rights, legalistically speaking, but I thought he was pretty small about it, so I quit.

I was encouraged in this defiance by an offer from Mack Sennett to make a series of movie shorts for him. I had made one for him already, and working in pictures looked like easy money to me. I made a couple more shorts at Sennett's, then Abe Frank plastered a union ban on me, "for failure to fulfill the standard musician's contract." After that, union musicians weren't allowed to work with me. To get around the boycott, Sennett used a pipe organ or ukuleles or an *a cappella* choir in the background. Or we worked to canned music, which meant that I sang to a phonograph-record accompaniment.

The way we made those Sennett shorts reads like a quaint piece of Americana. For two days we'd have a story conference. I was in on it. In fact, everybody was in on it—actors, cameramen, gagmen and Sennett. We sat upstairs in Sennett's office, a large room equipped with plenty of cuspidors because Sennett was a muncher of the weed. For our title we used the name of the basic song in the picture, like I Surrender, Dear; At Your Command; or Just One More Chance. For our plot we'd start with a very social mother and daughter. I'd be a band crooner with a bad reputation, and mother didn't think me quite right for her daughter. Instead she wanted her apple dumpling to marry some respectable pup; some fuddy-duddy; some very disagreeable character; a young businessman or a rising young lawyer.

Once we had this nugget of plot, Sennett would start "writing." I use "writing" for want of a better word. He put nothing down on paper. His story was really a series of gags. We always wound up with somebody falling in a fish pond or some other device with "socko" possibilities. Sennett would tell me, "This is the scene where you

(Continued on Page 53)



"Well, naturally if you look for mistakes you'll find some!"
THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

(Continued from Page 50)
call on the girl, and you know her mother doesn't like you, and you're talking to the girl and her mother comes in and discovers you and tells you to leave the house, you louse, she doesn't want to ever see you again. So you go out, and you step into this laundry basket, and you get up with the laundry hanging all over you, and you make an ignominious exit."

"When do I exit?" I'd ask.

"When I drop my handkerchief," he'd say. He'd call "Camera!" and we were off.

From the corner of my eye, I saw his handkerchief drop. I said, "I gotta go now," and stepped into the laundry basket, took my fall and made my ignominious exit. The songs we used were usually shot against a night-club background or in a radio station or at a microphone. We weren't clever or adroit about working the songs subtly into the action. Sennett just said, "Now we'll have a song," and we had one.

He had an endless store of physical gags left over from his old Keystone Cop, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Wally Beery days. I'd be dunked in a tank and fish would get down my shirt front or quick-rising dough would envelop me in a gooey bubble bath. Sennett was a genius at devising things like that. He knew how to photograph them and how to stage them.

Those shorts had a running time of about twenty minutes. Sennett didn't shoot scenes over and over again. Once was enough. With a two-day shooting schedule, he couldn't waste time. At the end we wound up with a chase. I'd get into a car with the girl and we'd start out over the Hollywood hills with the cops or the irate parent in pursuit, while Sennett had his cameraman crank slowly to make it look fast. The finale was me singing the theme song, with the mother won over to my side.

My run-in with Abe Frank was the end of the Rhythm Boys. We lay idle a month or so afterward. I went to see Abe Frank a couple of times to see if he'd let us off the hook, but he said, "You'll either let me deduct your wages and come back to work or nothing doing."

Only a couple of hundred dollars were involved, but his attitude brought out the mule in me. I had my neck bowed like a balky jackass; nevertheless, I had to have work. I was married now, and I didn't want my good-provider routine to lay an egg. Despite the howls of anguish of almost everyone except the two most intimately concerned, in 1930 I had married the lovely, fair-haired star of the Fox Studio and carried her off into what the Fox "brass" prophesied would be a life of peonage.

I got $600 for each Sennett short, and while that didn't make me a millionaire, it made me feel that I could support Dixie Lee if she'd have me. I proposed to her over a plate of chicken in the Coconut Grove, and she said, "I think it would be a good idea."

Neither one of us brooded overlong about the seriousness of the step we were taking. We were very much in love. This was it.

About that time my brother, Everett, entered the picture. He began to handle bits and pieces of my business, and he stirred up interest in me on the part of the Columbia Broadcasting System's president, William Paley. Paley was looking for a singer with an unusual style, and Everett sent him the recordings of I Surrender, Dear, and Just One More Chance I'd made with Arnheim's band. Paley listened to them, got in touch with Everett and asked him to bring me to New York.

Editors' Note—This is the third of a series of articles by Mr. Crosby and Mr. Martin. The fourth, in which Bing tells about his first meeting with Bob Hope—in the early 1930's—will appear next week.

ANOTHER GUY'S GIRL

(Continued from Page 24)

month in El Paso, and that the pressure of play did very peculiar things to his stomach. He said he hadn't had anything to eat since seven that morning.

"That's ridiculous," she said. "Why do you punish yourself like this?"

"I hoped you'd ask that question," he said, and told her what a win on the tour could mean to an unknown pro like himself. The prize money, he informed her, was the least of it. A win would mean a really fancy offer from an expensive club, a fat salary from an equipment company and some pleasant small change in exhibition fees. "Call it forty thousand a year, not counting prize money," he concluded. "I try to avoid thinking about it."

"It's vicious," she said, and stood up. "Let's go for a swim."

They went down and swam for a while, and then Johnny discovered he was hungry at last. He started to get formal about leaving her, but she said she thought she'd come along. So he waited outside her hotel while she changed her clothes, and then she took her turn in the car at his rooming house. They ate steak in a big, highly polished place that was nearly empty at five-thirty in the afternoon.

Her name was Helen King and her father played the horses. There had been times when he'd played them so successfully that Helen had been able to spend a whole year at the kind of school that had provided her accent, but then there had been other years, like the one when she was seventeen, when things had been so bad she'd run off and got her first job. That was seven years ago. She'd had a long series of strange, low-paying jobs in New York, and now she had a good one behind the scenes in television. She was taking a rest in Florida, she said, to get over a bug. Just a wisp of a cloud floated over her blue eyes when she said this, but Johnny let it pass without question. His certainty about her was there, but he was playing it carefully, one shot at a time.

He had to get his starting hour for the second round, so they drove out to the club. Play was over for the day, but a few people were still around, studying the board. Middlecoff had treated himself to a 67, there were a pair of 69's, and then there was J. Ware at 70, with three others. The only other point of interest was Snead's 74, but old Sam would be chipping away at that tomorrow.

"I recognize the money smell," Helen said. "I grew up on it at race tracks all over the country."

She looked small and defiant, and so right for him that he wanted to cry. He led her down to the car and drove out of the parking area into a sandy road that wound back through the course. He pulled up near the first green and shut off the motor.

He asked, "Why did you say what you did to me back there on the beach? About no one winning alone?"

"It was the way you looked. Like dad when he'd put the whole roll on an outsider."

He stared at her, not getting it.

"You looked frightened, Johnny. No one can disguise fear. Not to me, anyway."

"You think I'm still frightened?"

"I know you are."

He looked out over the fairway, considering it, and suddenly he realized he was looking at a golf hole like a piece of landscape, and not as something to be studied like a problem in math. He couldn't remember when he'd ever done such a thing. It bothered him.

"I guess we'd better leave it like that," he said. "For the time being, anyway."

"Yes," she said. "Now you might take me back to the hotel."

He took her back to the hotel and told her he'd see her tomorrow afternoon, here or at the beach.

"All right, Johnny," she said. "Here or at the beach."

It was still light when he got back to his room, but he took off his clothes, brushed his teeth and climbed into bed. Now was the time to say farewell to Helen King and her bright blue eyes and get back to his trade. He played the course slowly, each hole from every possible angle, and when he'd been around three times he fell asleep.

His drive was long and to the left, where it caught a little roll in the fairway, and his seven iron was on the flag all the way. When he bent down over the eight-footer he'd left himself, the cup looked as big as a pail. He dumped it in without a tremor, and from there on he could do no wrong. When he got to the eighteenth he needed a measly little twenty-five-footer for a 62, and be damned if he didn't curl it in! There was a yell from the gallery, and that was what woke him up.

When he looked at his watch he was pleased to find it was almost four. He'd had a pretty fair sleep. He lay back, trying to doze, but the pressure was starting to climb, and not even Helen King was any use to him now.

It was no miracle dream round he played that day, but he managed to knock in a long one for an eagle on the eighth, and on the way home he got a couple more he didn't deserve and—well, it was a 68, and if he wasn't the halfway leader by nightfall, he was a cinch to be as close as he'd ever been before.

The photographers wanted some pictures, just in case, and it was while he was demonstrating the powerful Ware wood shots that he began to shake. He made it into the locker room in time to part with his breakfast, and he was sitting there with the clammy hands clutching his throat when kindly old Ed Brinkle found him. Brinkle was with a club somewhere over on the Gulf coast, his touring days behind him, and he was just playing in this tournament for laughs. He'd been in Johnny's match that morning.

Brinkle began to talk about the season of 1945, the last year he'd gone on the circuit. Byron Nelson had won eleven straight that winter, and eighteen out of thirty tournaments for the year. All this was not exactly news to Johnny, but the moral of Ed's story was simply this: Nelson had always had a terrible time with his stomach, and if Lord Byron could have that trouble and win, why shouldn't Johnny Ware?

"Where are you staying?" Brinkle asked suddenly, and when Johnny told

Bing comments on Bob Hope's golf game with a disrespectful salute. They met on the stage of a New York theater in the '30's. "At that juncture," Bing recalls, "we hadn't begun to bully each other."

Call Me Lucky

By BING CROSBY as told to Pete Martin

Crosby—the boo-boo-boo crooner—was making a name for himself on radio and records. He sang nearly sixteen hours a day, straining his voice until it sounded like a gravel mixer. Then a doctor warned him he might never sing again.

GENE LESTER

Young Linny Crosby gets a good-night kiss from singer Rosemary Clooney at a party.

GENE LESTER

Actress Terry Moore pins an emblem on Bing's hat during golf matches at Pebble Beach, California.

PART FOUR

SINCE it was my brother Everett who had got William Paley, president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, enough interested in me to ask us to come to New York to talk about a deal, this seems a good time to talk about the part Everett has played in my career. It would be dramatic to say that if it hadn't been for Everett I'd be lying somewhere with my head on a curb. It would also be an exaggeration. Everett didn't save me from Skid Road. But he fired me with a spirit of git-up-and-git at a time when things were static for me. He came into my picture when I was disgusted and had little faith in my future. He supplied the ambition I seemed to lack. I'm glad I went along with him for the ride.

Everett's a good mixer. He's a hustler. He knows how to deal with people. He was able to reach Paley and equally important people in the broadcasting business and sell them on my possibilities as a radio singer. Later, he was able to do the same thing in Hollywood and convince the keepers of the keys in the film-flam capital that I'd be a success in motion pictures. He's tireless at negotiating with motion-picture companies, motion-picture producers, radio sponsors, advertising agencies—anyone who feels that he needs my services and with whom it is necessary to strike a contract or revise one already made.

He seems fond of bickering with these people, and he'll drag the discussions out happily for days, weeks, months, even years, if he thinks he can get me a better shuffle. He loves to go to their offices or have them come to his, where he pounds the table and hollers and shouts and walks up and down. He's a trifle hammy about it, but there's nothing hammy about what he's accomplished on my behalf.

If I had to deal with those people my patience would soon be exhausted and I'd accept the deal they were trying to get me to accept or maybe go for a compromise which wouldn't be good for me. But Everett yells and screams and argues until he gets a reasonable facsimile of the arrangements he's trying to secure.

Perhaps it's because he's such a good bargainer that he's not always popular with those for whom I work. They don't like to deal with a fighter who goes the limit in trying to get what he thinks I ought to have. As a result, he is sometimes called "The Wrong Crosby."

When Everett and I went to New York early in 1931 to meet Paley, he worked out a deal for me to go on the radio on a sustaining basis when, as and if I could get the ruling against me lifted. For the benefit of those who came in late, this ban had been slapped on me at the instigation of Abe Frank, my boss when I sang at The Cocoanut Grove, because he wanted to dock my wages for missing one night's performance. It meant that no union musician could work with me. I had had a lawyer trying to straighten out the situation for me in California, but because of my stubbornness, he hadn't been successful. We got hold of that lawyer, had him go to Abe Frank and make a settlement. Then I was free to go to work for Paley.

There have been many versions of the snafu which interfered with my first broadcast. One version had me not showing up for it because I was suffering from a hang-over. A second had me taking a powder because of stage fright. A third said I failed to put in an appearance because of laryngitis.

This is the way it was: While waiting for the negotiations to be completed between my lawyer and Abe Frank, I'd fallen into the habit of dropping into four or five night clubs a night. Like a zany, I'd been singing in each of them for the kicks, instead of saving my voice for my radio debut, and my pipes had taken a terrible lacing. To put a complete K.O. on my throat, just before the show I rehearsed in an air-conditioned room. It was one of the first air-conditioned rooms I'd ever been in, and singing in cold air, I tightened up so that when I was ready to go on I couldn't push any noise out. It wasn't that I was nervous or had any other kind of shakes, including alcoholic ones.

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GENE LESTER

Bing once entered a talent contest as Charlie Senevsky and was beaten by a fellow imitating Bing Crosby. Here, he and his writer, Bill Morrow, trade laughs.

How could I have had stage fright when I'd been singing for hours each night at the Cocoanut Grove? I don't think I have ever had stage fright or what we in the trade call "flop sweat," in my life. The pipes just gave out because I hadn't had enough sleep and I'd been singing too much, and the unfamiliar air conditioning put on the clincher. I might have been able to go on and sing badly, but I would have sounded terrible, so I said, "Let's not do it until I'm ready."

When I finally did appear, I was a new voice with a different style and I stirred up interest. But there would have been no interest if I'd sung my first CBS numbers with a throat ceiling zero. I did my first commercial for Cremo Cigars. For a while I was on a CBS sustaining program, but sustaining or singing for Cremo, no one ever had a hotter orchestra accompanying him than I had. Freddie Rich was the conductor, and he was backed by such musicians as Joe Venuti, Artie Shaw, Eddie Lang and Manny Klein, to name a few.

In addition to my stint for Cremo, Everett booked me into the Paramount, the scene of my biggest soufflé when I made my first New York appearance with Whiteman. By this time I had managed to build a little radio popularity and was no longer a sleeping pill at the box office, and the Paramount management kept me for twenty-nine weeks. It was during that period that I discovered that there are such things as nodes. It seemed that I had a sprinkling of them on my vocal cords.

I was doing five or six shows a day, plus a couple of broadcasts in the evening, plus benefit performances and recording. I was also hitting the night clubs, singing in them for the fun of it and not getting too much rest. It is no overstatement to say that most of the time I was singing daily over a sixteen-hour stretch. What with all that wear and tear, I began to sound like Andy Devine with lobar pneumonia singing Chloe. So I went to a New York specialist, a Dr. Simon L. Ruskin, a very fine throat man and a disciple of the great Philadelphia laryngologist, Dr. Chevalier Jackson, who developed the bronchoscope.

Doctor Ruskin peered into my throat and described what went on there to me. He said that my vocal cords were like two harp strings—mine are probably off of Harpo Marx's instrument—and when I talked or sang, the noise I emitted was produced by the vibration of those two strings. My trouble was that I had overused them. As a result, my vocal cords had sprouted calluses which resembled warts. A chronic case of such calluses is called nodes. I was not unique; no physiological freak. Other singers have had them too.

Doctor Ruskin said I could visit Chevalier Jackson in Philadelphia and have my nodes removed, but that it would be a delicate operation. Maybe the technique has developed now to a point where it isn't so delicate, but the way things were then, Ruskin said he couldn't guarantee what kind of a voice I'd wind up with when they'd trimmed off my nodes. "It might make you a boy soprano or you might sing as low as Chaliapin," he said. "And of course you might not sing at all."

I thought of a few cracks such as "I've always wanted a job in a harem" and "not wanting to cut off my nodes to spite my voice," but those cracks died in the making. Somehow I didn't feel funny. Doctor Ruskin had still another suggestion. He thought that if I cut down my talking to a minimum, the rest would be good for my warts, and the irritation which had inflamed them would subside. For about two weeks I did as he suggested, and my voice started to come back. Only it came back a tone or two lower than it was before. I've never had a recurrence except after singing too long in an air-cooled room or after hollering at a football game.

The Paramount used me as a master of ceremonies. I sang a song or two and conducted the stage numbers, introducing the other acts. Being an emcee was not the brute of a job I'd feared. I found I could be quite a gabby fellow. I was seldom at a loss for *le bon mot* or *le mot juste*, as the case might be. This may have been due to the fact that in college and high school I'd been fascinated with words and their meanings. I'd discovered **(Continued on Page 87)**

CALL ME LUCKY

(Continued from Page 37)

that there was a book called a thesaurus, and I'd carried it around with me. I'd not only looked up word meanings but their antonyms and synonyms.

I still get a kick out of words. I may use them badly, but I enjoy trying them for size. As a writer, I'm an amateur who, left to his own whim, leans toward alliteration and other fancy devices to make what I write sound unusual and give it zing. As a part of this semantics kick of mine, I've read everything I could get my hands on, some of it good, some bad, but now and then I revert to normal and toss in a slang or jive word. I can go only so far with the big words; then I have to return to the vernacular to finish what I have to say.

Since my 1932 engagement at the Paramount lasted twenty-nine weeks, we strove to devise something spectacular every week in the way of a production number. The party in charge of staging the shows was a whip at cooking up strange new ways for me to sing a song. One week he had me perched on a giant crane. The machinery for the crane was in the pit, and when the mechanism reached for me on the stage, I climbed into the seat. The crane swung me out over the heads of the audience with a spot focused on me, and I sang my song dangling in space. It was probably something suitable, like Penthouse Serenade.

I did this crane number on New Year's Eve when the place was full of drunks and sailors. As the crane swooped low, the sailors reached up, held it and took off my shoes and socks. They were working on my pants when the crane operator switched on enough power to bring me back to the stage, where I finished my song in my bare feet, clutching my belt. It was a big smash, but I didn't repeat it.

Another humbling experience grew out of an argument I had with two friends, Les Reese and Artie Dunne. Reese and Dunne were a piano-voice duet who were appearing at a Baltimore theater. Happening to be in Baltimore, I visited them backstage and we got to kidding about all of the imitators of Columbo and Vallee and me who'd popped up. It still happens. A Perry Como comes along and somebody imitates him. I ventured the opinion, "It's not difficult to imitate me, because most people who've ever sung in a kitchen quartet or in a shower bath sing like me."

As a part of their appearance, Les and Artie were running an amateur-talent contest, and they said, "Oh, no. If you went out on the stage and sang tonight under another name, you'd be a big hit. On the contrary, if some guy came on who wasn't Bing Crosby and sang the same song, he'd lay an egg."

"Why don't we try it right now?" I suggested.

"Are you game?" they asked.

"Certainly," I said.

So I went out and they introduced me as Charlie Senevsky, an unknown who'd entered the contest. I belted a song or two around, but aroused only apathy in the audience. Les and Artie had two other entrants whose stunt was "imitating Bing Crosby." One of them won the contest. I ran out of the money.

My second tussle with the movies was even more abortive than my original caper with the medium when I was one of the Rhythm Boys. Paramount brought me West to sing a song in a picture called Confessions of a Coed. But when the picture was edited, I wasn't even on the screen. I was only an offstage voice; nor can I remember now the name of the song I sang.

But some of the studio's brains must have heard me on the radio, for when Paramount conceived the notion of a picture featuring radio performers who'd attained prominence, they signed Burns and Allen, the Mills Brothers, Kate Smith, a treacle-voiced performer known as The Street Singer—and me. Someone fluffed up a story called The Big Broadcast which would permit the use of our various talents. Paramount did four or five of those Big Broadcast films before they gave them up. I was in two or three of them.

When I came back to New York from Hollywood, I took an engagement at the Capitol Theater. It was there that I met Bob Hope, who was on the same bill. At that juncture, Hope and I hadn't begun to bully each other. That was to come later. At the end of my hitch at the Capitol I went back to Hollywood again, this time to stay. My next movie, College Humor, was a throwback to the late, gay 1920's. In spirit it was a mélange of coonskin coats, Stutz Bearcats, hip flasks and cutie-pies in rolled hose. The picture was, as the title implies, based roughly—very roughly—on the John Held, Jr., version of college life which was even

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

An old-timer is one who can remember when the only people who paid income taxes were those who could afford them.—DAVE CROWN.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

then becoming *passé*. The title was borrowed from a humorous publication of the time. Its hit song was The Old Ox Road. That title was a bit of symbolism. The Old Ox Road was a petting pit or a smooching station on any campus. There are several places at big universities known for their lollygogical traditions—places the students go when they want to pitch a little woo. The soft implication was that The Ox Road was like Flirtation Walk at West Point.

That song still means something special to many a Scott Fitzgerald era, balding ex-Joe College and former Betty Coed who's having girdle trouble now. To many such, it means their first inkling that life could be gay, mad and bad; it means tumbled, shingled hair and wrinkled plus-fours. But to me the song means a couple of other things. One of them was a damp, pink bundle, Gary Evan Crosby, who arrived about that time. It also means the first home my wife, Dixie, and I built. It was on Toluca Lake, where the San Fernando Valley begins on the other side of the mountains from Hollywood. Gary was born in 1933. As the children kept coming, that first home at Toluca grew too small for us, so we built a bigger one near the Lakeside Golf Course, on Camarillo Street.

My next movie was Too Much Harmony. It had Toby Wing in it, and two rememberable songs, The Day You Came Along, and Thanks. Not Thanks for the Memory; just Thanks. Too Much Harmony was up to its ears in comedians. There were Jack Oakie, Skeets Gallagher, Harry Green, Ned Sparks, and I don't know how many others. I ran in the middle. I'll never forget the first day of shooting. About all I managed to get in was a few nods, and Oakie dubbed me "Old Hinge Neck." There was very little opportunity to get a word in edgewise, competing with such experienced comedians and ad-libbers.

Oakie was my idea of terrific, and is my nomination for one of the all-time motion-picture greats. He must have studied the silent comedians like Ford Sterling, Chaplin and Harold Lloyd, because his timing was marvelous. And he could mug with anybody I ever saw. When he was younger he was good-looking, had a nice figure, a wonderful smile and an ingratiating manner. He looked the part of "the lad who gets the girl," or at least a serious rival for the girl, so lots of parts were available for him, plus important pay checks.

But he let himself get so pudgy that by comparison he made Oliver Hardy look sleek as a cat. He grew eight or nine chins, and the number of roles he couldn't be cast in because he wouldn't be believable increased.

Since he knew all the tricks, he was tough to work with in a scene. He was a master at upstaging and twisting you around so that his face was in the camera while you talked to the backdrop. After he'd had his way with me, all the audience could see of me on film was my ears, although I admit they are an imposing vista. Jack needed watching closely. But I didn't care. If he got the laughs, that was all right with me. Sooner or later there'd be a spot in the picture in which I'd sing a song and Jack wouldn't be around. So, if I had anything to deliver, I did it without worrying about whether Jack was upstaging me. If I'm doing a comedy scene with a great comedian I like to throw the scene to him and play it straight myself. That way we'll get a good scene, and if we get enough good scenes, we've got a good picture. All any actor whose head is not a blob of bubble gum should care about is to be associated with a good picture. If he ends up with most of the footage and the picture's a turkey, what's he accomplished?

Next along my way was one of Marion Davies' last flings at movie making. The picture was called Going Hollywood, and it had a musical score by Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown. This picture was a pet project of William Randolph Hearst. He wanted his protégée, Marion, to make a musical, and since I'd had some success as a singer and a leading man, he borrowed me from Paramount.

Brother Everett made the deal with Hearst. It was a clash of two great dealers, but while their haggling ended as a photo finish, it turned out to be much better than that for the *frères* Crosby. Our arrangement with Hearst was made on a weekly-payment basis, which proved to be a stroke of genius on Everett's part. For it was the most leisurely motion picture I ever had anything to do with. It took six months to complete.

Marion's dressing room was a large bungalow on the lot, complete with kitchen, dining room, dressing room, and office for her secretary. The picture was directed by Raoul Walsh. We called him Rollicking Raoul because his natal town was Rockaway Beach, New York. I'd been told that Raoul was a man who liked to live thoroughly, without stinting himself. If this was true, he must have undertaken this picture with relish, because it was one which gave him leeway to indulge his natural bent.

Our average day's shooting went like this: I'd show at nine o'clock,

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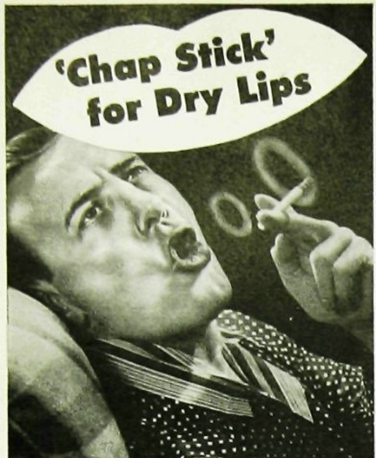

Smokers have them, indoor workers have them, early risers have them—most everyone has *cracker-dry* lips off and on. Licking them won't help, but 'CHAP STICK' *will.* Its soothing comfort is swift and lasting. That harsh dryness vanishes in a twinkling—your lips feel fit.

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(Continued from Page 87)

made up and ready to shoot. At about eleven Marion would appear, followed by her entourage of hairdressers, make-up ladies, secretary and—a hold-over from the silent days—a five-piece orchestra. This band was not on hand to help her achieve a desired mood. It was there because she liked music, and wanted an orchestra around to keep things lively and to entertain her between shots. If a conference was coming up, they'd get a cue from Marion, take five and knock off. Otherwise they played all day.

When the orchestra showed up at eleven with Marion, it broke into her favorite songs by Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart and Gershwin. We enjoyed the musicale until eleven-thirty; then we'd discuss the first scene with Raoul, who, up to that time, might have been leading the orchestra, or practicing driving golf balls into a canvas net on the set, or playing blackjack or rummy with a prop man and an assistant director. By that time it was twelve-fifteen or twelve-thirty. Luncheon was announced for the heads of different departments and the leading players, and we repaired to Marion's bungalow for a midday collation.

Those luncheons were something. Her servants either brought prepared items from her home or cooked something in the bungalow kitchenette. There were Rhine wines and *pâté de foie gras*, or chicken in aspic, or Bombay duck. Hearst might pop in for lunch or maybe he wouldn't; either way there was a plethora of conversation and an interchange of ideas about current events or social activities. But very little talk about the picture.

Lunch dawdled on until two-thirty. Then we went back to the set. Marion's make-up would have to be renewed—which would take time—and I'd need a repair job myself. About three the orchestra would launch into a few more *divertissements*. At five we'd be ready to shoot the scene when Marion would suggest something refreshing. Nobody was ever loath, so, thus restored, we'd get the scene shot and start thinking about the next scene.

It was now six o'clock and, flushed with the success of our first scene, ideas for a second were abundant. But Mr. Hearst could, on occasion, be pretty snug with a buck, and the prospect of the crew going on overtime, double time and "golden hours"—quadruple time—was not one he fancied. So all the creative minds were rousted out of the gate and sent homeward.

It's my guess that in an average day of such toil we wrapped up as much as a hundred and fifty feet of usable film. Maybe not that much. However, there were days when Mr. Hearst laid down the law to us. After such a chastening, we chugged along at a pretty good clip and accomplished a lot. There were a number of musical numbers in the thing, among them a wonderful song called Temptation. A lot of singers have got effective mileage out of Temptation since it was first sung in Going Hollywood.

Temptation was my first attempt at presenting a song dramatically. In the picture I played an entertainer "with faults." Marion had given me the air for my misdeeds and I'd gone to Tijuana to get away from it all. There I'd gone on a tequila diet, knocked around in a succession of bordellos—in the picture they were called "Tijuana hot spots"—grown a beard and become a derelict. As a derelict I sang Temptation to a glass of tequila, while tears dripped into my beard from the circles under my eyes. Through trick photography, a dame's face appeared in the glass of tequila; then, at the end of the song, I flung the glass at the wall and staggered out into the night. It was all very Russian Art Theater.

Going Hollywood put me in the first ten of the Box Office Poll, along with such people as Will Rogers and Wallace Beery. It was the first time I'd come within smoke-signaling distance of that hallowed circle. For, in spite of all the monkeyshines in the making of Going Hollywood, it turned into a rather good picture. While Raoul Walsh had fun on a set and had kidded around, his record over the years shows that he can be counted upon to make pictures with entertainment value—lusty epics, pictures which draw people to the box office. Going Hollywood was no blot on his directorial escutcheon. Although it took months to make, the result was satisfactory. It certainly was for me, since I was on a weekly-pay-check basis at $2000 a week. Over a six months' period that ran into a tidy sum.

Nor do I mean any of this as a blast at Marion Davies. I've told it merely as an example of the way the big movie queens of a bygone era—stars like Barbara La Marr and Gloria Swanson and Pola Negri—sailed into action. In its day it spelled glamour. I got in on the twilight of this colorful era. It was quite an experience.

Of all the people I've met in show business, Marion Davies is the most generous. She came from a Brooklyn family and her heart is as big as Santa Monica. She has a host of friends for whom she is constantly doing anything and everything. There were always a lot of laughs wherever she was, and I never heard her put the knock on anybody.

My next cinema, We're Not Dressing, was based on an English play, The Admirable Crichton, which had been made into a silent picture. The story of We're Not Dressing had to do with a shipwreck and a butler whose ability to meet the problems of living on a barren island after a yacht was wrecked was such that he wound up in charge of things. Before long, his employers were waiting on him. It had been decided to have another crack at the story, this time as a musical. Carole Lombard and I were its costars. Burns and Allen, a bear, and Ethel Merman—who is quite a bear herself—were the featured players.

Carole could lay tongue to more colorful epithets than any other woman I've ever known, and more than most men. Oddly enough, you never were shocked when she swore. You felt the way you feel when you're with a bunch of men who are fishing or working and one of them bangs his thumb with a hammer or gets a fishhook in his pants. Under such circumstances, if they swear nobody pays much attention because they're entitled to let off steam. That was the reaction I had to Carole's profanity. It was good, clean and lusty. Her swear words weren't obscene. They were gutsy and eloquent. They resounded, bounced and ricocheted.

She had one of the best senses of humor I've ever known; she was one of the screen's greatest comediennes and, in addition, she was very beautiful. The electricians, carpenters and prop men all adored her because she was so regular; so devoid of temperament and showboating. They felt that Carole was just one of the boys. The feeling of non-gender camaraderie Carole gave the men who worked with her was a victory of mental attitude over matter, the matter in her case being curvy, blond and melting. The fact that she could make us think of her as being a good guy rather than as a sexy mamma is one of those unbelievable manifestations impossible to explain. All I can say is, that was the way it was.

This led to an experience on her part I'm sure no other woman has ever had. For when one of the lads in our entourage decided to play a strictly male locker-room practical joke on her, it seemed the most natural thing in the world. The way it came about was this. The shipwreck in We're Not Dressing was shot at Catalina near the St. Catherine Hotel, where we stayed for two or three weeks. It was in November, the water was very cold, and we had to jump from a barge out of camera range into water up to our necks and wade beachward toward a camera on another barge while five or six thousand tourists and people from Catalina were standing back of a rope watching the scene.

Carole dressed in a tent on the beach. Some Katzenjammer-joker type in the company told her that if she was afraid of cold water she ought to get a bottle of oil of wintergreen and rub it over her entire body. Just before the camera began to roll, Carole went to her tent and dutifully doused her body

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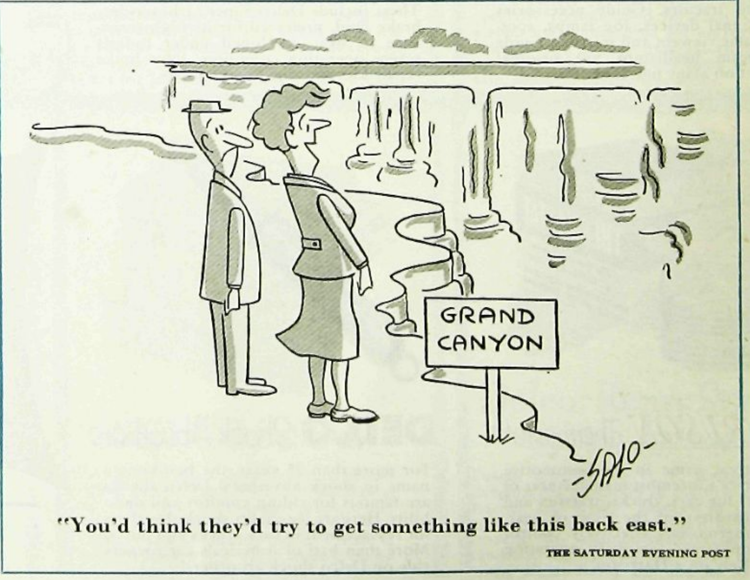

"You'd think they'd try to get something like this back east."

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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with wintergreen. As many a footballer and track man has learned to his bitter sorrow, wintergreen applied indiscriminately to the skin creates an intolerable burning sensation. The victim instinctively dashes for the nearest shower and turns on the cold water, only to discover that cold water increases the burning sensation, while the playful pals who have suggested the oil treatment roll in helpless mirth on the floor.

The doors of Carole's tent burst open, she appeared practically unclothed, flew to the beach on the dead run, squatted down and began to splash water over herself. Anybody else would have been embarrassed by the eyes peering at her from behind the ropes. Not Carole. She had something else on her mind. Besides, people never did bother her, whether she was in dishabille or not. She didn't understand people who leered. Her mind didn't work that way. She was the least prudish person I've ever known.

For a while she made shrill noises like a narrow-gauge locomotive laboring uphill. Then recognizable words emerged from her. The eloquence of her invective surpassed anything she'd ever achieved before, and the rest of us stood in awe-struck admiration. We also looked around for places in which to hide. But our supposition that she had a man's point of view was right. Once the wintergreen began to wear off, she began to laugh. I can think of no other woman star who would have gone ahead with the scene after such an ordeal. Carole went back to her tent, dressed, emerged once more, and said, "Now, where were we?" When I think of her I find myself saying, "What a woman." They haven't made many like her.

A lot of old maids and widows living on small pensions or small fixed incomes were staying on Catalina at the St. Catherine Hotel. It was a family-type hostelry, and our movie company was an exciting experience to the guests. I imagine they wrote to their friends and relatives, "We have a number of Bohemians stopping with us." Our movie company ate at two or three huge tables in the dining room. The smaller tables were occupied by the regulars, who strained their ears to drink in the racy things they were sure we were saying. Carole was annoyed with this constant surveillance and eavesdropping. We were eating breakfast one morning when she came slinking in with that feline walk of hers. All eyes swiveled around to watch her, and she decided that this was the time to make up something shocking. She was the girl who could do it. She had an inventive turn of mind. She called across the dining room, "Bing!"

"What?" I asked.

"Did I leave my nightie in your room last night?"

The spinsters almost dropped their teeth. I've never heard such tch, tch, tching and gasps in my life. After that they gave us a wide berth. Some of them even stopped eating in the dining room.

We're Not Dressing gave me a chance to try acting as well as singing. The script writers had carpentered a good screen play from tried-and-true material. The story had solidity and continuity. It offered more chance for characterization than the usual musical. Another story about Carole proves this.

In one sequence, Carole and I were supposed to have an argument. During that argument she was to say something that justified my slapping her face. The script writer had written a diatribe for her so violent that the character I played was justified in taking such drastic action. She asked me not to slap her during rehearsals and, of course, I said I wouldn't. We rehearsed the prop and camera movements until we had them all set.

Then she said, "I'm ready. Go ahead and slap."

When we reached the climax, I let her have one. A light came into her eyes the like of which I've never seen in a woman's eyes before or since. She tore into me, threw me down, jumped on me, kicked me, bit me and scratched me, all the time screaming imprecations at my prone figure. The director was so flabbergasted that he forgot to say "cut." Finally the crew members, realizing that what was going on wasn't scheduled, pulled her off.

She wept hysterically, then calmed enough to tell me she had prayed that she wouldn't react that way, but that ever since she was a little girl, if anybody touched her face, even if it was just a pat, something inside of her snapped and she went berserk. It probably stemmed back to some episode in her childhood, the kind of thing psychiatrists nod knowingly about. "Thanks for telling me," I said, dabbing my wounds with a handkerchief.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

There are two kinds of colleges: Those that wish they had fired the coach last fall and those that wish they hadn't.

—F. G. KERNAN.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

When they ran off the rushes the next day they had to hang out an S.R.O. sign. Watching it, I realized for the first time that she had torn off my toupee too. I couldn't tell whether she kicked it off or bit it off, for we were a blur of flailing arms and legs, but it went flying. The scene looked like a remake of the famous fight in The Spoilers between Tom Sanchez and Bill Farnum. For days Carole was apologetic about the whole thing. It was easy to forgive her. But I saw to it that there were no retakes of that scene. My forgiveness didn't go that far.

About this time I imported the rest of my family to California. Everett was already there, but it seemed a good idea to close the Crosby ranks and have Larry and my father and my mother by my side too. There was no possibility of advancement for dad at the brewery in Spokane where he'd begun as a bookkeeper. He was getting along in years, and since my youngest brother Bob had struck out for himself and my sisters were married, nobody was home with dad and mother. It occurred to me that it would be nice to have my parents taking it easier in a more clement climate. I took a house for them and put dad in charge of handling my banking and taking care of the securities I'd squirreled away. He came in about ten each morning, had lunch and worked until two. Then he went to a ball game or to the races.

He took some trips to New York and went to the Kentucky Derby every year. He was able to do all the things he'd wanted to do all his life, but was never able to do because he'd been too busy feeding seven mouths. The last ten or fifteen years of his life were happy ones for him. Being able to make them that way gave me more satisfaction than anything I've ever done.

Living in California has done a thing to my mother I get a jar out of. She has very high moral principles and is almost puritanical about "the way people ought to live," particularly members of her family. She had some brothers who were a little on the tosspot side, and for that reason she hates strong drink, although she doesn't mind beer in the house. She is also a cigarette hater. She still doesn't allow my sisters to smoke in her presence, although they're grown women with children of their own. In fact, one of them is a new grandmother. My mother claims that if they want to attract men or hold the ones they already have, they can attract them better by refraining from puffing and inhaling and exhaling.

But since she came to California she's become a devotee of the race tracks. During the local race meetings she goes every day and plunges a two-buck show bet on the favorites. She and her girl-friend cronies take off in the morning, eager and sharp as tacks. They buy all the newspapers, study the selections of each expert in each paper and buy all the tip sheets available and the Racing Form and the Daily Telegraph.

After they've done their homework they agree upon a "consensus opinion." This means that they select one horse in each race with the overwhelming majority of selections in his favor. Then they back their choice with a deuce in the third hole. It's not a very desperate procedure, but they squawk as if they'd been defrauded when their favorite runs out of the money. Sunny Jim Fitzsimmons used to say, "There're a hundred and one ways a horse can lose a race." My mother knows them all and she never fails to comment upon them. She knows all of the stock beefs: The jockey pulled the horse. The horse wasn't trying. Its owner wasn't trying.

Her little weakness is most amusing to her sons. Betting on the races is no indication of a lack of moral principles. But it is gambling, and gambling in her book had always been a nefarious activity. If anyone had told me twenty years ago that she would end up betting on the races, I'd have told them they were off their rocker. Now I think it's wonderful that at her time in life she's able to find and enjoy such an interest.

One of the activities my family was able to help me with when they rallied around me was handling my financial affairs connected with my recordings. When I started to make records with the Brunswick Record Corporation, Jack Kapp was the recording manager. To my sorrow, Jack is no longer among the living, but when a disk outfit called Decca was born, Jack went over to Decca from Brunswick and wound up as its president. It was Jack who formulated my recording plans. He even selected the numbers I sang. He was wise enough to have me work with a variety of bands and sing duets with different artists, so as to give the listeners a change of pace. This policy helped keep me alive as a recording artist long after the average performer is washed up.

Jack's progressive plans for me were due to the fact that he had a much higher opinion of me than I had of myself. He was always striving to make me the top figure in recording. He selected things for me a cut above ordinary popular songs, although I sang those too. In fact, Jack saw to it that I achieved a musical variety very few other recording artists—with my limitations—were able to. I sang hillbillies and blues, ballads and Victor Herbert, traditional songs and patriotic songs, light opera and even an opera song or two.

Jack wouldn't let me get typed. He kept me spread out. In addition to his desire to make money for Decca, he took a personal interest in me. This resulted in my getting the cream of the recording dates and opportunities to work with practically every band on the Decca labels not tied up with someone else. Whenever a good arranger or a good band was free and without previous contractual obligations, Jack grabbed them for a few dates with me. If there was a chance to get the Boswell Sisters, or the Andrews Sisters, or the Mills Brothers, or the Dorsey brothers, or Woody Herman, or Duke Ellington, or Louis Armstrong, or Louis Jordan, Jack gave me an opportunity to work with them. That kind of backing contributes a lot toward the success of a record. This is particularly true of Louis Armstrong. On any record we made together, I was really supporting Louis instead of vice versa.

Jack had a lot of trouble talking me into recording Adeste Fideles. Being only a crooner, I felt that I didn't have sufficient stature as a singer to sing a song with religious implications. But Jack insisted that Adeste Fideles was more a Christmas song than a religious song; he felt that through the years it had virtually become a Christmas carol. So I recorded it. I'm glad I did.

Silent Night was different. I didn't feel that it fitted into the carol category. Moreover, I thought it would be wrong for me to take income from the sale of such a record. The way I saw it, it would be like cashing in on the Church or the Bible. But brother Larry came up with a suggestion. He set up a fund for the children then being taken care of by American missions in China. The plan was to take the royalties from Silent Night and pour them into this fund. In that way I'd avoid cashing in on a religious song. We helped clothe and support those kids until the Government, looking for fresh tax money, ruled that our scheme was illegal. By that time we'd probably put a quarter of a million dollars into that worthwhile cause.

I had something to do with another song, Irving Berlin's White Christmas, which has become a modern Christmas carol by popular acclaim. Every Christmas it booms out of department-store loud-speakers over the heads of shoppers and street-corner Santa Clauses. In the trade, White Christmas is known as a standard. Anything heard seasonally is a standard, and White Christmas certainly deserves that classification. It's a great song with a simple melody, and nowadays, anywhere I go I have to sing it. It's as much a part of me as When the Blue of the Night or my floppy ears.

It was no sacrifice on my part to be loyal to Jack when other recording outfits tried to lure me away. The idea of working for anyone else was preposterous to me, and I never gave those other offers serious consideration. With Jack I felt that I was in the hands of a friend and that whatever he told me to do was right. It always was. Not that we didn't come some recording croppers together, but we had some good ones, too, and the good ones were usually songs Jack picked out.

Editors' Note—This is the fourth of a series of articles by Mr. Crosby and Mr. Martin. The fifth will appear next week.

GENE LESTER

Bing at a Pebble Beach, Calif., golf match. His studio once made him glue his ears back, but "for everyday use" he preferred to let them flap.

Call Me Lucky

By BING CROSBY *as told to Pete Martin*

Hollywood looked at Bing Crosby's big ears and thinning hair and said, "There's no future for you in pictures." Here's the story of Crosby's big battle with the make-up men—and how he became a star in spite of his looks.

PART FIVE

IT was in the 1934 film, She Loves Me Not, that I made my brave stand against having my ears glued back to increase my beauty. This nuisance stemmed from the time when I was courting Dixie and was having my trouble with Abe Frank. I was playing a lot of golf then with a Broadway actor, Dick Keene, who was working at Fox, and it was his notion that I'd be a good bet for picture work. He took me to see Jim Ryan, the casting director at Fox's Western Avenue studio. Ryan had me sing a couple of songs and read a few lines. He seemed to like the way I did them. But after looking me over, he said, "I'm afraid there's no future for you in pictures."

"Why not?" I asked.

"They could never photograph you," he said. "The ears are wingy."

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I thought he said, "The years are winging," meaning that I was getting old. I wasn't very old and I flipped.

"I don't mean your age," he said. "Your ears protrude. They stick out too far. A camera pointed straight at you would make you look like a taxi with both doors open. They'd have to photograph you three-quarter-face or profile, and that would put too much of a limit on the cameraman. I'm sorry."

Dick and I went out feeling pretty crestfallen.

Seven or eight years later I became a parishioner of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Beverly Hills. Jim Ryan is a member of the congregation and we sit near each other. I always get up and go out before he does, and I never fail to bat my ears significantly at him as I go by. We both grin, because in the time which has elapsed between the meeting in his office and the time I became a parishioner of Good Shepherd, I'd made some highly lucrative connections.

When I went to work in The Big Broadcast, Paramount shared Ryan's view of my ears as a photographic problem and they insisted on gluing them back against my head with spirit gum. I must admit that I was surprised at what the gluing did to my appearance. I looked streamlined, like a whippet dashing after a mechanical bunny. I put up with the spirit gum for a long time. Then they tried adhesive; then they went back to spirit gum. George Raft's ears were batty, too, but he'd had a muscle cut behind his ears which made them fall back against his noggin without having to be pushed by a make-up man. I wouldn't go for such an operation. I liked my ears the way they were—at least for everyday use. However, I was resigned to pinning them back for screen purposes, although both the glue and the adhesive were disagreeable. Then, too, no matter how firmly they were pinned back, they kept popping out all the time, much

UNITED PRESS

Bob Hope and Bing at a Philadelphia war-bond drive in 1943. "It was Hope," Bing claims, "who thought up the vulgarization, 'groaner.'"

GENE LESTER

Off-screen, Bing lays aside his "scalp doily." At this Crosby party, entertainment was furnished by guitarist Perry Botkin and other jazz musicians.

to the annoyance of Paramount's make-up department.

One of the scenes from She Loves Me Not had to be heavily lighted, and the heat kept loosening the stickum until my ears popped out eight or ten times. The tenth time I said, "This time they're going to stay out."

"I've got orders not to shoot you that way," the cameraman told me.

"They're out and they're going to stay out," I said. "I'll be at the Lakeside Golf Club. If the studio changes its mind, tell them to call me there."

That first tee at Lakeside is my refuge when the studio is obdurate about what seems to me a reasonable request. If I'm convinced that they are being bullheaded or are pulling rank on me, I retire there to await developments. Finally a man at the studio called. "We'll shoot them sticking out if you feel so strongly about it," he said. So She Loves Me Not was shot partly with them out and partly with them in. In the first part I looked like a whippet in full flight. In the second part I looked like Dumbo. They've been out ever since.

But though I won a victory over stickum back of my ears, I capitulated to another nuisance—cake make-up. This nuisance was wished on me by Harry Ray, a make-up man. He was never around when we needed him, so we called him Mile-Away Ray or The Seldom-Seen Kid. He'd make me up in the morning, then disappear, and my face would grow shiny. We spent a lot of time figuring where he vanished to. There was one theory that he hid in a restaurant several blocks away called the Health Center. An alternate theory was that he flitted around the lot visiting other sets, playing Run, Sheep, Run and Prisoner's Base with the scouts and posses we sent to look for him.

When he was on deck, we engaged in a running debate because I refused to wear cake make-up. I'd used the professional kind in my vaudeville days, but my skin was dry, and it had made my face itch. After it had dried and I'd had it on a while it seemed to grow flaky and I'd go around all day screwing my face up like a man with a tic. I'd developed quite a hatred for it. In the end, The Seldom-Seen Kid played on my college loyalty. Gonzaga was coming to town to play Loyola, and Mile-Away Ray lured me into making a bet on the game. The bet was that if Loyola won I'd wear the make-up he wanted me to wear. Loyola won and I wore it.

Robert Hope, of the nonclassic profile and the unlissome midsection, is sometimes goaded by a knowledge of his own lack of physical charms into referring to me as "skinhead." I don't have to specify what he means. It's generally known that for screen purposes I wear a device the trade calls a "scalp doily," "a mucket" or "a divot." The technical name for it is a hair piece.

I hate to put it on, and I'm always trying to have interior scenes photographed out-of-doors, so I can wear a hat. Before he died, Buddy De Sylva, former head of production at Paramount, promised me that if I would do a favor for him—I forget just what it was now—he'd buy a story for me in which I could play a rabbi and wear a hat all the time.

Each morning when I get a script, I look through it to see if there's any way I can get through the day without donning a mucket. Not that it's such a chore to put on, but the glue in it makes my forehead itch and I can't scratch the itching places without pulling it off. I'm always plotting ways to do a love scene wearing a hat. In one scene I was to meet a girl at a railway station and greet her with a big embrace and a kiss. "You'll have to take your hat off for this one," the director said firmly.

If he thought I'd give up that easily, he'd misjudged me. "Not me," I said. "This fellow's so excited at seeing his girl he doesn't remember to take his hat off. He's deeply in love with her and hasn't seen her for a long time, so he has no time to think about the social amenities when she arrives. He just grabs her, and after that he's too busy to take his hat off."

Speaking of muckets, Wally Westmore of the fabulous Westmore family, identified with the make-up end of the picture business almost since its inception, has kept me in pictures many years longer than I would ordinarily have endured. It was he and his brothers, the "Marryin' Westmores," who developed the mucket—or "bowser," as it's sometimes called—which saved many an actor whose thinning thatch would otherwise have doomed him to an early theatrical demise. Who but Wally could have been taken on a trip to Paris for exterior-location shots on my last picture, Little Boy Lost, on the unlikely possibility that I might be induced to doff my chapeau and need a hair piece? It was Wally's first trip to Paris and some mornings, following expansive evenings, he got it on backwards, sideways or tipped rakishly.

Another prop for my manly beauty was forced upon me in a 1935 movie (Continued on Page 113)

PARAMOUNT

Bing and Dorothy Lamour rehearsing a number for the movie Road to Bali, latest of the "road" series.

BUD FRAKER

Film star Gary Cooper exchanges back slaps with fellow "Oscar" winner Crosby.

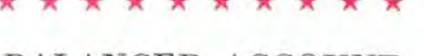
CALL ME LUCKY

(Continued from Page 41)

called Mississippi. It's fairer to say that I forced it upon myself, for I'd let my weight creep up to 190 pounds. I was eating a lot and getting lots of sleep, and it had been a long time between pictures, so I'd blown up to an unfashionable one-nine-o. Mississippi was a period picture—Civil War—and the pants I had to wear in it were so tight that my extra suet was conspicuous. As a result, I had to be strapped up, and I soon found out why women are so anxious to get out of their girdles.

Mississippi was the first time I'd worked with W. C. Fields, although I'd met Bill on the golf course and in the local *bistros* and he was one of my idols. His comedy routines appeared spontaneous and improvised, but he spent much time perfecting them. He knew exactly what he was doing every moment, and what each prop was supposed to do. That "my little chickadee" way of talking of his was natural. He talked that way all the time.

Bill was getting along, but he was still hard to shave on a golf course. He



BALANCED ACCOUNT

By Georgie Starbuck Galbraith

When I'm gloom-decked
That through the years
My fairest hopes
Have failed to bloom,
I recollect:
My blackest fears
Have met the same
Unseemly doom.

couldn't hit a long ball, but he was marvelously clever with his hands. And he was a terrific putter. I guess he got his superb co-ordination from having been a juggler in his vaudeville days. He played a cagey betting game. Looking at his brightly blossoming nose and his graying locks, more than one optimist figured he could take him, but Bill made a lot of tax-free coin on the golf course.

During the war Los Angeles had a mysterious and never fully explained "Jap-air-raid" scare. The antiaircraft guns around the airplane plants fired for hours and made a terrific racket. Bill was no type who walked briskly home from the office each night in a chesterfield and bowler, carrying a tightly rolled umbrella and a brief case full of sales reports to analyze. He was more apt to roll home lit with inner alcoholic fires, his progress sounding like the passage of a frigate firing broadsides. Some wag explained the commotion by saying, "Those weren't AA guns. It was just Bill Fields going home late from Dave Chasen's restaurant."

Bill had a house on the shore of Toluca Lake near the Lakeside Golf Club. His lawn went down to the edge of the lake. He had a small arbor there where he sat and drank bourbon and practiced his comedy and juggling routines. Toluca Lake attracted flocks of geese and Bill complained testily that he had to quit practicing because they hissed him.

Speaking of hissing brings me to the day in 1939 when Robert Ski-nose Hope came along. He'd come to Paramount originally to make B pictures, but he caught on fast and became a favorite. Then one day someone decided to team us in a picture called The Road to Singapore. It was a lucky hunch for everybody involved. The widely publicized Hope-Crosby feud was not a planned vendetta. It was a thing we fell into. It grew out of the fact that when we appeared on each other's radio programs and in the Road pictures, it seemed easier for our writers to write abusive dialogue than any other kind.

When our Hatfield-McCoy routine became a byword with the public, we did nothing to derail it. We expanded it and pitched in merrily to think of insults to hurl at each other. When we're doing a radio show, Hope shows up at the studio with libelous comments about me penciled on his script. He writes more during rehearsal. I do the same. We may even think up a few verbal barbs after the show goes on the air.

Hope's very nimble at this sort of thing and I can only remember sticking him once, but I'm proud of that once, for I had him really blubbering. He had made some disparaging remark about my figure, and I said, "I just got a load of your rear when you walked away from the microphone, and you looked like a sack of cats going to the river." He went dead for almost a minute. He thought up a rebuttal later, but in our league, if you don't come up with a reply right away, it's no balls, three strikes and sit down.

Our first road picture baffled its director, Victor Schertzinger. Victor is a nice fellow and he'd directed some fine pictures, but he'd had no experience with comedy. He was an experienced musician and, although he knew nothing about hokum, Paramount signed him to direct the first Road picture because of his musical background. He was a quiet fellow, used to directing his pictures in leisurely fashion. His awakening was rude. For a couple of days when Hope and I tore into a scene, ad-libbing and violating all of the accepted rules of movie-making, Schertzinger stole bewildered looks at his script, then leafed rapidly through it, searching for the lines we were saying.

When he couldn't find them he'd be ready to flag us down and to say reprovingly, "Perhaps we'd better do it the way it's written, gentlemen," but then he'd notice that the crew was laughing at our antics. He was smart enough to see that if we evoked that kind of merriment from a hard-boiled gang who'd seen so many pictures they were blasé about them, it might be good to let us do it our way.

So we had more trouble with our writers than with our director. Don Hartman, now production head at Paramount, was one of the writers. The other was Frank Butler, who still writes Road pictures and who collaborated on our most recent tour, The Road to Bali. Hartman and Butler didn't like the way we kicked their prose around, and it didn't help that when they visited our set we ad-libbed in spades. When Hope called out to Hartman, "If you recognize anything of yours yell 'bingo!'" Don left the set in a huff to register a beef with the production department.

We were curious as to what the front office thought of our antics, so when the eleven-o'clock rushes were run off, Hope and I sneaked up to the projection room. All the studio executives were in there; the door was ajar, and we could hear those inside guffawing. They even roared when Hope stopped the action and talked directly to the audience, a most unorthodox procedure. So we knew we were in.

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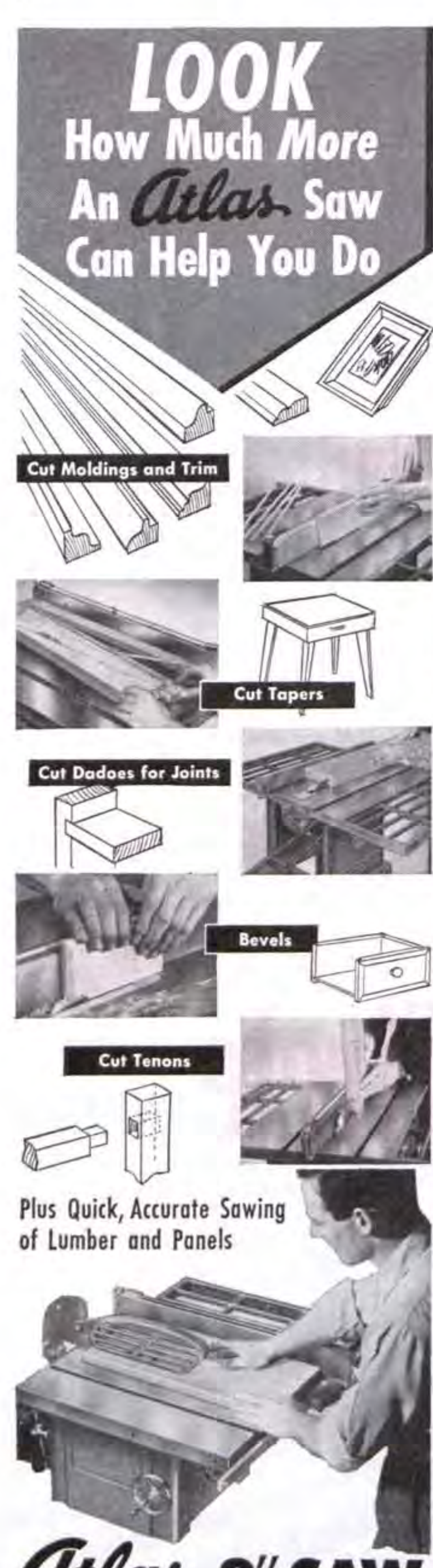

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The basic ingredient of any Road picture is a Rover-Boys-type plot, plus music. The plot takes two fellows, throws them into as many jams as possible, then lets them clown their way out. The jams are plotted in the script, and although they're bogus situations and on the incredible side, they're important because they hold the story together and provide a framework for our monkeyshines. Gags can't be played against gags; they have to be played against something serious, even though the serious stuff is melodramatic. Hope and I invent many of these gag escapes from predicaments as we go along, and to prevent our imagination from flagging, we prevailed upon Paramount to employ a pixie in human form, Barney Dean. Barney looks as if he'd posed for one of the seven dwarfs in Disney's Snow White—not Grumpy, but one of the merry ones—and he's just about their size. He showed up on our set one day peddling Christmas cards.

Hope and I remembered him from our vaudeville days. Barney had done a dance act with a party named Tarradash. Barney's real name was Fradkin, so the team bore the improbable title of Fradkin and Tarradash. I don't know how Fradkin and Tarradash ever got bookings. Tarradash could tap a little, but Fradkin just shuffled. If Tarradash grew tired or wasn't feeling too well, the audience heard no taps at all. When the booking shortage grew so acute that no food was coming in, Barney gave up dancing and formed another act with another pal, Jim McDonnell. In this new act he played a pesky little stooge, and McDonnell was a big, tall, suave straight man. Every time Barney pulled an inane line on McDonnell, McDonnell hit him and Barney crashed to the floor. They broke their act in at a theater in Chicago, a house where knockabout, baggy-pants, putty-nose comedy went over big because the audiences liked their fun gamy and unrefined.

When the Paramount-Publix circuit talent scouts caught the Dean-McDonnell act, the audience was unusually riotous, so they booked them. Unfortunately for Dean and McDonnell, they opened their new booking in Montreal in a neighborhood house before a sedate family audience. When Barney told his first joke and McDonnell hit him and Barney hit the stage floor, the audience made a noise not unlike "tsk-tsk." When Dean and McDonnell kept right on knocking themselves—and each other—enthusiastically out, the tsk-tsking turned into an ominous booing.

That was the last of them as a team. Barney returned to New York, then came to Hollywood as a stand-in for Sid Silvers, who was making a picture at Metro. As it happened, Silvers was at war with the director, the production staff and the writers on the picture, and Barney was constantly striving to pacify him. He was afraid that Silvers would talk himself out of a job, and if that happened, Barney would be out of a job too. "Take it easy, Sid," he begged. "You're flirting with my job."

When, despite Barney's frantic flapping of olive branches, the job finally flickered out, Barney took to selling Christmas cards. He'd dropped in, hoping to sell us some. Hope and I were reminiscing with him when he pulled out one of those bits of pasteboard with your fortune printed on it that you get from a penny weighing machine. Barney's read: "You are gifted with great business acumen. You are very well fixed financially. There's nothing in your future to indicate that you'll lose your great fortune."

"If I go back to my hotel and find they've locked me out of my room," he told us, "I'm going to sue the weighing-machine people."

"Why don't we have Barney sit around on the set and if he thinks of anything amusing, suggest it?" Hope suggested. "Even if we don't use it, it may serve as a springboard for another gag." Which was why we used our influence with the brass to have him put on the payroll as a writer. He was given an office with a secretary, but he'd never seen a secretary except on the street, and he was afraid of his. Day after day, his secretary sat alone in his office, until we told him, "You can't let that poor girl stay there all alone. Why not at least write a letter to your mother?"

For a moment Barney looked frightened. Then he said triumphantly, "But I haven't got a mother!"

When we finished shooting that first Road picture, he stayed with us, and if Hope's not making a picture, Barney works on one with me.

Barney had quite a time in 1947 when we were on location for The Emperor Waltz—a non-Hope picture—at Canada's Jasper National Park. Jasper Park is like Yellowstone. A lot of animals, including black bears, wander around loose. These bears are fairly tame and tourists feed them sugar, but they can be mean if the sugar is taken away from them too fast or if there's a cub about. I don't think that Barney had ever trod any wilder surface than a pavement before or had seen many wild animals even pacing around in zoos. We arrived there after dark, and were walking from our bungalow to the main dining room when a big hulk came lumbering along in the dark, followed by a couple of cubs.

Barney, who still shows traces of the fatherland's accent when he gets excited, asked, "My Gott, vat's that?"

"Those are bears," I told him.

"Who needs them?" he asked querulously.

He's very good at thinking up visual gags, but he does more than that. He keeps us from using things which might be considered in bad taste. Influenced, no doubt, by his Montreal fiasco, he is instinctively sensitive to such material. Sometimes, when Hope and I get going in a scene, we are carried away and, before we know it, we say things we wouldn't say if we had time to think about them calmly. That's when Barney speaks up. He had quite a battle with Hope once over a line in which a booby trap in the way of a possible *double-entendre* was concealed. Hope thought it was harmless, but Barney said he couldn't use it.

Finally Hope gave up and said to me with awe in his voice, "Just think. We raised this little Frankenstein ourselves."

It was Hope who thought up the vulgarization, "groaner," for the word "crooner." I've been asked, more times than I could shake an answer at, when the word "crooner" was invented. As far as I know, Rudy Vallee was the first to be called that, although a case could be made out for the prior claim of the vaudeville-and-night-club headliner, Benny Fields. As for defining the word, it originally meant someone who sang with a band and crooned into a small megaphone or made mooing noises into a microphone. In France they call a crooner a *chanteur de charme*. I suppose this means a singer of charm, although it seems a loose term to describe me.

Crooner connotes a slurring of words until they're mashed together in a hot mush in the mouth. When I'm asked to describe what I do, I say, "I'm not a singer; I'm a phraser." That means that I don't think of a song in terms of notes; I try to think of what it purports to say lyrically. That way it sounds more natural, and anything natural is more listenable.

Time was when I let lyrics roll out of me without thinking how they sounded. Playing some of the records I made in the '30's, I notice that in many of them I was tired; my voice was bad and had a lot of frogs in it. The notes were generally in key, but sometimes I barely made them and they sounded strained. But I paid no attention to whether they were bad or good when I made them. And they sold. They were popular. When I play back some of the records I've made in the past year or two, they're too vocal. They're oversung. I'm listening too much to what I sing when I sing it, and it makes me self-conscious.

For the same reason, I've never liked the title Mr. Music, which Paramount gave to a picture I made in 1950 with Nancy Olson. That label made me self-conscious too. The picture didn't do too well at the box office, and I've

(Continued on Page 117)

"Wonderful place to dance—too bad there's no music!"

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

(Continued from Page 114)
always thought it was because its title was unfortunate. Any time you name anybody Mr. So-and-So, you're in trouble. It sounds as if the one named is claiming more than he's entitled to. I fought against that Mr. Music title because I thought it would put me in a position of claiming to be a leading figure in the music world. But the studio thought otherwise. In fact, that "leading figure in the music world" angle was the one their ads and their exploitation played up.

I think it soured a lot of people on me. Pin a name on a stage or screen actor like America's Boy Friend or The Orchid Man, or Mr. Music on a singer, and he's behind the eight ball. People go to see him with a "he's-gotta-show-me" attitude. It's easy to turn such a label into a gibe. It can bounce. That Mr. Music title took in too much territory for anybody, especially me, since I know relatively little about music.

However, if a movie actor makes enough pictures, he's bound to get lucky once in a while, not only in his titles but in his material, his songs and his directors. I thought Here Comes the Groom, made in 1951, was a funny picture. Frank Capra, who directed it, starts with a good script, but if he feels like it, he varies it as he goes along. If an inventive mood strikes him, he's quite likely to think up something better, as he did in It Happened One Night.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Nowadays the hardest thing to cut down to your size is your debts.
—HOMER PHILLIPS.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

He has an unusual feeling about the music in his films. He won't allow any of it in one unless it comes in naturally. He says that in real life people don't carry orchestras around with them. To his audiences it appears that a character in a Capra picture actually makes any music they hear on the sound track. If Frank wanted me to sing a song while I was riding a horse, he'd have me playing a guitar or banjo or an accordion and accompanying myself, or he'd have somebody ride beside me playing. For this reason, he's had many fights with music departments and with song writers who like to hear their songs supported by a big string orchestra. Me, I take a neutral position. But it seems to me that if it's O.K. to score a picture for music, it should also be permissible to use an unseen orchestra when somebody's singing. On the other hand, the way Capra staged the song, In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening, written by Hoagy Carmichael and Johnny Mercer for the film Here Comes the Groom, helped it win the Academy Award as the best song sung in a motion picture in 1951.

One of the best things that's happened to me is a 145-pound Irish leprechaun named Johnny Burke, who's written the lyrics for such songs as Pennies From Heaven; I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams; Moonlight Becomes You; Sunday, Monday or Always; Swinging on a Star—an Academy Award winner for 1944—Annie Doesn't Live Here Anymore; and An Apple for the Teacher. Johnny had known Dixie when she worked at Fox and he'd written a song for her then called the Boop-Boop-a-Doop Trot. Later Dixie and I had a lot of laughs over that title, but in the late 1920's it was considered very jazzy.

Johnny's appearance is deceptive. He looks guileless, but he's the most enthusiastic rib artist I've ever known. A good rib artist never lets sentiment or friendship interfere with his rib. During the last World War a number of fliers from an airfield near Monterey were in Hollywood on leave. I'd done a few shows at Monterey for those fliers, had put in a little golf with them and had sat in on several jam sessions with them too. So, in an effort to return their hospitality, I invited ten or twelve of them to Hollywood to tour the studios and to attend one of my broadcasts. To climax their week in town, I threw a party for them. It was a nice party; I'd lined them up with dates, everything was going great, and they seemed to think I was a good guy. But the truth is, I was having as much fun as they were.

Burke chose that moment to have an attack of ribitis. He found two or three of my guests leaning against a bar, and asked, "Having a good time?"

"Wonderful," they said.

"You know, of course," he told them, "that Bing just does this for publicity. Actually, he's quite a louse." His rib began to pick up pace, and he ran me down in every conceivable way. For a while they tried to laugh it off; then they began to see red. Finally they swung on him and he yelled for help.

Johnny wouldn't have minded a poke on the kisser. A genuine rib-steak artist thinks it a mark of distinction to have a black eye; this means that his rib was highly successful; but two or three sets of fists coming at Johnny at once were too many for him.

What with this and that, Burke's reputation is synonymous with that of the lad who got his kicks calling "Wolf, wolf," which brings me to the day of January 2, 1943, when my house burned down. The story has been told, but always by others. I've never told it. I had a date to play golf with a friend of mine, Dick Gibson, late in the afternoon. Then, since I wouldn't be home in time for dinner, we planned to move on to the Brown Derby. The house burned down in midafternoon and I was paged by telephone around town, but since no one knew where I was golfing, I couldn't be reached. Burke, who was a neighbor of ours then, did most of the phoning. Finally he reached me at the Derby and said, "Bing, this is Johnny. There's nothing to be concerned about, everybody's fine. Dixie and the kids are all right, but your house just burned down."

I thought it a very light rib for him and a bald approach for a guy who was supposed to be so clever at ramming home the needle. "All right, Johnny," I said. "Good luck to you too. I thought you were more adroit than that!" Then I hung up. No sooner had I sat down than the phone rang again. It was Burke once more. This time he repeated his tale with such passionate sincerity that I believed him. He reported that the fire was out and that he was with my family at Bill Goodwin's house, two doors down the street from us.

When I finished dinner I drove out to view the ruins. The house was a shell; the staircases were still there, but the roof was gone. It was during the racing season. I'd won a little on the races and I had $2000 in cash stuck in the toe of a sport shoe in my dressing room. The ways of the human mind are peculiar. There I was with my home gutted, but as I got out of my car and walked through the ruins, I was thinking only of that loot in my boot. The firemen

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and the fire chief met me upstairs and followed me down the hall through what was left of my house. I went into my dressing room, picked up a shoe, reached in and took out the choker I'd stashed in it. I'd had a cabinet made for my shoes so that their toes would fit into slots. The fire had scorched the heels of some of my footgear, but the toes were intact.

I said good-by to the firemen, who'd watched me, bug-eyed, at my treasure hunt, and joined my family at Bill Goodwin's. We were feeling pretty blue trying to figure where we'd live when Dave Shelly, a friend, sauntered in. He'd passed the ruins of my house on the way.

"Hi, Bing," he said brightly, "what's new?" It relieved the tension. Somebody got out a bottle of beer, we had a meal, and assumed a "so what, it was only a house" attitude. The next day we checked in at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Then we moved into one of Marion Davies' houses — one she didn't happen to be using at the time.

Johnny Burke's only trouble as a lyric writer is that, if anything, he's too literate; he hates to write anything obvious. But I remember once when his erudition paid off. A 1941 Hope-Crosby picture, The Road to Zanzibar, had been laid in an unidentified country and for political-good-will reasons the studio wanted Johnny to write a song in a language at which no nation could take umbrage. This might have stumped a lesser man, but to Johnny it was a breeze. He brushed up on his knowledge of Esperanto, and wrote the song in that universal language. He even made it rhyme.

It's impossible to think of Johnny without thinking of Jimmy Van Heusen too. For several years now, Jimmy and Johnny have teamed together and have produced some outstanding hits. Jimmy's real name is Chester Babcock, but he thought it so unglamorous that he jettisoned it. When Jimmy went into the song-writing business his first song was called Shake Down the Stars.

I like to spoof him about that song. "It's the most violently wasteful song I've ever heard," I tell him. "A guy rips down the whole firmament because some flutter-brained dame doesn't love him. He sounds like an H-bomb scientist gone nuts." But Jimmy takes all of his exercise, violent or mild, out in song writing. He abhors physical exertion. One day I asked him to go for a walk.

"Not me," he said.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Walking's corny," he replied scornfully.

The things I find myself remembering about the people I've worked with are the small, human things, not the serious and important things. The same thing is true about the movies I've been in.

One of my favorite movies was The Birth of the Blues. It was made in 1941, with Mary Martin as my leading lady. The story paraphrased the career of the Original Dixieland Band and was set against a New Orleans background. In it, a song written especially for the film, The Waiter, the Porter and the Upstairs Maid, was buttressed by such classics as Melancholy Baby, Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nelly, and the St. Louis Blues; an array which was, as they say in France, formidable. But my principal recollection of that picture is the great jazz trombonist, Jack Teagarden, cast as one of the members of a band and sitting with his legs over the tail gate of a wagon — the way the New Orleans bands once played — while he made with his sliphorn. Those wagons toured the streets of the Crescent City, the blaring music advertising various bordellos. These tail-gate musicians even played on their way to and from funerals. They didn't play dirges or laments at such times. They figured the one who was gone would like something with an upbeat.

I remember Holiday Inn because in it Fred Astaire danced himself so thin that I could almost spit through him. In Holiday Inn he did one number thirty-eight times before he was satisfied with it. He started the picture weighing 140 pounds. When he finished it he weighed 126. In Holiday Inn I danced a little too. At least, I did a modified buck-and-wing shuffle, with off-to-Buffalo overtones. But when you're in a picture with Astaire, you've got rocks in your head if you do much dancing. He's so quick-footed and so light that it's impossible not to look like a hay-digger compared with him.

I remember a 1940 picture called Rhythm on the River because of Jimmy Cottrell, a prop-man pal of mine. I'd gone to school with Jimmy in Spokane, but when he left school he became a fighter and I'd lost track of

(Continued on Page 121)

"I said . . . 'How were the pancakes?'"

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

(Continued from Page 118)
him. In his prime, he had fought in the Hollywood stadium, taking on pugs like Mushy Callahan and other main-eventers. I ran into him again in Hollywood when he quit fighting and was looking for something to do, and I helped him land a job at Paramount as a property man. He's been there ever since.

When Rhythm on the River came along, Oscar Levant's name had become one with which to conjure in the entertainment world. Oscar was on Information Please, he'd done concert tours, he'd appeared as a soloist with some of the country's biggest orchestras. He'd written a humorous book and it had had a respectable sale. His quips and cracks were grist for the Broadway and Hollywood column mills. It so happened that in Rhythm on the River there was a character who matched Oscar's personality, so he was hired for the role.

The first day of shooting, Cottrell was busy readying his props when Levant shambled onto the set looking like a treeful of owls. He's a chain smoker and his hands were stained with nicotine. His blue serge suit was so thickly covered with tobacco ash that it almost covered the spots where he'd spilled coffee. He drinks fifty or sixty cups of coffee a day, and what with caffeine and nicotine plucking his

* * * * * * * * * *

The trouble with patching up a quarrel is that it may turn out as good as new. —MARY ALKUS.

* * * * * * * * * *

nerves like a harpist, he sleeps only in fits and starts. He's also a thoroughgoing hypochondriac, and his pockets are stuffed with pills and tonics. His collar is usually half open, he wears a black string necktie, and his cuffs are frayed. He won't mind my describing him this way because if he were describing himself, he'd do an even more corrosive job.

Lowering himself into a chair, he yelled for coffee, and Cottrell brought it to him. A few minutes later he yelled for more coffee. This went on for some time, while Cottrell eyed him critically. He hadn't quite dug Oscar. He was still casing him.

Finally he asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm in this picture," Oscar told him.

"What part do you play?" Cottrell wanted to know.

"I play the part of Starbuck," Oscar told him.

Cottrell shook his head as if wondering what stupidities the studio would commit next. "You're playing Starbuck, eh?"

"Yeah!" Levant said.

"I can't see you in that part," Cottrell said, and walked away, leaving Levant smoldering at having a prop man lay into him like that. Usually it's Oscar who pushes people into the grease.

Cottrell came over to me and asked, "Who's that joker over there with cigarette ash all over him who's ordering coffee like he owned the joint?"

I said, "Levant," but it meant nothing to Jimmy. It rang no bell.

"Who's Levant?" he asked.

I tried to tell him, but Jimmy is a great one for original impressions. He said, "He's not going to get much of a ripple out of me."

Several days of armed neutrality and glaring went by; then Oscar discovered that Cottrell had been a boxer. Levant's an avid boxing fan and this knowledge began to temper his ire at Jimmy's treatment. Next he found that Cottrell had been a baseball player, and next to boxing and music, Levant loves baseball. This gave them another common bond, and at the picture's end they were very buddy-buddy. It has always seemed hilariously incongruous to me that Levant, the dilettante, the sophisticate, the musician, the saturnine pundit, should establish a Damon-and-Pythias relation with an ex-pug. But to them it doesn't seem peculiar. They still correspond voluminously. It's my bet that their letters would make absorbing reading. I'd rather have their collected correspondence on my bedside table than the exchange between George Bernard Shaw and Ellen Terry.

Cottrell identifies himself to those he meets with, "I'm the fellow who taught Bergman how to box in The Bells of St. Mary's." Under his tutelage, Ingrid became real handy.

During my last year of high school and my first two years of college, a boy named Leo Lynn was one of my classmates at Gonzaga. Then, one day in 1931, when I was new at Paramount, I was going into the studio and I saw Leo behind the wheel of a foreign-made limousine. He was wearing a chauffeur's cap. But I recognized him right away. I couldn't forget him. He'd been a real shenanigan character in college, putting on impromptu entertainments and mimicking various actors and athletes.

When I'd said hello, I asked, "What are you doing?"

"I'm driving for the English actor, Clive Brook," he said.

"How'd you like to work for me?" I asked him.

"You've hired a man!" he said.

Brook wasn't annoyed at my theft of his chauffeur. Leo found a substitute to take his place, and Clive is so aloof in the traditional English manner that I don't think he knew Leo was gone. In addition to chauffeuring for Dixie and acting as a factotum in the Crosby household, Leo was my stand-in. Contrary to the public's understanding of such things, a stand-in doesn't have to resemble the one for whom he stands in. Leo has my skin pigmentation and he's about my height. That's all the cameraman requires.

Leo is grateful to me, too, and perhaps the best way to describe how he feels about me is to report a thing that happened when I was at Pebble Beach playing in the annual invitation tournament. Trying to do any good for yourself in that event is about as tough as doing it in the National Amateur. The Pebble Beach draws almost the same field that the National attracts and it's played over one of the world's toughest courses. I'm lucky if I qualify, let alone beat any of that field.

While I was at Pebble Beach, Leo ran into Johnny Burke in Hollywood.

"Where's Bing?" Johnny asked.

"He's up at Pebble Beach for the tournament," Leo told him.

"How do you think he'll do?" Johnny inquired.

Leo looked at him scornfully and said, "If he's feeling good he'll win it." Leo's loyalty is unreasonable and illogical, and I have been careful never to disillusion him. A man needs all the people like that he can get.

Editors' Note—This is the fifth of a series of articles by Mr. Crosby and Mr. Martin. The sixth will appear next week.

Before; left. After; above. Typical Kawneer grocery store modernization.

"Since you remodeled your store, filling orders takes all your time. I'm glad you're making good, but I do miss our chats, George."

George probably misses those chats, too, in a sense. But if you're in food retailing, you know time for chats means slow business. Like you, George wanted business, but even his most faithful customers were drifting away. Then George decided to call on Kawneer for help.

He phoned a nearby Kawneer dealer. George learned how Kawneer store front materials and entrances combine to quickly and completely modernize a store's appearance at low cost, and how they invite shoppers inside to buy.

Together, George and the helpful Kawneer Dealer developed an easily-installed new front for George's store. As usual, Kawneer modernization did the trick.

Now George is busy serving old customers and welcoming new. He doesn't have time for chats.

Kawneer Dealers are store front modernization experts. They are prepared to apply customer-building techniques to all types of food stores. Kawneer Dealers are listed in the telephone directory's Classified Pages. Call yours today. Or write Kawneer, Niles, Michigan.

Kawneer gave this market a new look.

A Kawneer bakery, coffee-shop example.

Kawneer drive-in dairy application.

UNITED PRESS

Bing blasting his way out of a sand trap at St. Andrews, Scotland. Casual Crosby credits golf with providing a relaxation that has kept his mental batteries recharged when he puts too heavy a load on them.

Call Me Lucky

By BING CROSBY *as told to Pete Martin*

Bing gives his own version of his adventures as a golfer, the shellackings he took as a race-horse owner, and the weird midnight show he, Bob Hope and Jerry Colonna put on in a snake-pit-style night club near Fort Worth—for a total audience of twelve.

PART SIX

I'VE been told that I'm relaxed and casual. If I am, I owe a lot of it to golf. Golf has provided relaxation that has kept my batteries recharged when I put too heavy a load on them. It doesn't seem to matter what my professional or personal problems are, when I step onto that first tee I get a sense of release and escape. When I concentrate for three to three and a half hours on trying to play a good game, the studio, my radio hour and the fact that the latest oil well in which I've invested is spouting water are unimportant.

It's my opinion that competition on the links has removed more carbon knocks and emotional burs from human minds than all of the psychiatrists' couches put together. I know I'm a fanatic on the subject, but golf is a game which not only brings out the best in individuals but also makes them ready and willing to channel it into paths which contribute to the public weal.

For the past six years I've sponsored a golf tournament at Pebble Beach, California. Play is held on the three golf courses in the area and the proceeds are donated to local charities. The event kicks off at the Cypress Point Club; then, the second day, the field plays the Monterey Peninsula Country Club. The third and last day the competition tangles with the exacting championship course at Pebble Beach.

I personally pick up the tab for all expenses incurred in connection with the tournament, including prize money. The entire proceeds—gallery receipts plus program and advertising sales—go toward building recreation centers for youth in the area and for the clinical needs of the community. In six years we've raised $150,000 and have built or have helped build recreation centers in Carmel, Monterey, Seaside and Pacific Grove.

Although there are cash awards for each professional on his own ball, the tournament is a pro-amateur event. I select and invite the amateurs, who play at their regular club handicap. The competing amateurs are given watches or trophies of similar value, but I see to it that they are not cup-hunter types. Most of them come to Pebble Beach for a good time and to get in some good golf in the company of the nation's best professionals.

The professionals who show up are naturally interested in the financial rewards, but the tournament also has many attractive social aspects. It's a merry week and the field is an unwieldy one to get around a golf course in a day. This makes it necessary to set starting times as early as six forty-five A.M. Six forty-five in the morning can be a little cold and dewy at Pebble Beach in January. It's a sobering

Copyright 1953 by Bing Crosby

PENGUIN

Jerry Colonna officiating at a Crosby-Hope golf match. Bing modestly calls their play on the links "just good enough not to make real golfers retch."

GENE LESTER

Golf pro Al Besselink and actress Terry Moore at Bing's annual Pebble Beach tournament that has earned $150,000 for California youth centers.

GENE LESTER

After a radio-show rehearsal at Fort Ord, California: writer Bill Morrow, singer Rosemary Clooney, Bob Hope and Bing.

sight to see some of the athletes stagger from their beds at that unearthly hour—some of them hung over from the preceding night's wassail—and move on to the first tee ready to sweep the dew.

There are many house parties in the locality during the week end and guests come from all over California and the Northwest and even from points East for fun and golf. Not only is Pebble Beach one of the toughest golf tests in the world but it takes a stern competitor and a rugged team to survive the extracurricular activities which go with the tournament. The players are entertained lavishly with cocktail parties, dinners and late-evening shenanigans.

One year a damsel who was rather on the adventurous side took in the tournament. She was a spectacular and racy-looking beauty, and dressed to the teeth. The younger, unattached players in the field hung around her like a bunch of jackasses around a thistle patch. But the only fellow who seemed to be making time with her was a quiet young professional—diffident and shy—whose attentions, we supposed, only went as far as buying her a sandwich now and then.

Now this chick wore a hat calculated to make Hedda Hopper flip in frustration. It was one of those wide-brimmed straw affairs popular with tourists returning from Mexico. It was decked with straw ornaments and bangles dangling from its brim and from its peak. Naturally she became known to all the cognoscenti as "Madam Hat."

Going into the third day's play, the shy young professional was one of the leaders in the field. But on the night before the final rounds he took the lady, hat and all, to a movie. Next morning he announced that he'd gone directly home after the flick because he wanted to get lots of rest and be prepared for his final championship effort.

He was paired with another leader in the tournament and the two of them were followed by a tremendous gallery. On one of the holes he hit a diving hook off the tee. The ball disappeared into an almost impenetrable jungle. He worked his way into it, followed by those members of the gallery hardy enough to battle the brambles. They wound up in a glade deep in the wildwood. There, under spreading cypress branches, was the hat. Not the lady—just the hat. The galleryites eyed him inquiringly and the silence was thunderous. Such was his embarrassment that it took him three strokes to get out. He couldn't have done worse if he'd played the hat. After that he took four or five bogeys in a row.

I don't mean any of this to indicate that the tournament is a big ball with everybody getting baked while they're there. A lot of serious golf is played—even some beautiful golf—by the world's greatest players, and I take considerable pride in the assistance the event gives to deserving projects in the Monterey-Pebble Beach area.

Then, too, as the Scotch say, "Goff's a humblin' game." You play over your head one day, and the next you're just a hacker, and you don't know why. Anyone who lets himself get egotistical about his game is building for a fall. There are bound to be days when you simply can't move that rubber at all, and this provides a constant challenge which you can meet in pleasant surroundings and in good company.

This is just as true of the exhibitions I play with Hope and with various professionals as it is of a nine-hole tussle with my son Linny. Over a period stretching from '41 through '45, Hope and I played for the Red Cross, for other wartime charities and for bond drives. When we played for bond drives we held a bond sale on the eighteenth green at the conclusion of our match. Our articles of golf apparel, the balls we'd played with, our clubs, anything we had in our baggage, were auctioned off. The money went for bonds.

We played so many cities that I lost count of them. Sometimes we'd tour with a couple of pros—Byron Nelson and Ed Dudley; Jimmy Demaret and Lawson Little; Jug McSpaden and Toney Penna. Sometimes Hope and I took on a couple of the local pros or a brace of leading local amateurs.

It must have been good for our game. It gave us a chance to play before lots of people, under divers conditions, and on all kinds of golf courses. And it gave us an opportunity to play with good players. Being something of a mimic, I was able to ape some of their good shots, their swings and their style, and this didn't hurt my game. However, I wondered sometimes if watching our game didn't set the stars we played with back a few years.

In New Orleans, when we were staging a bond auction sale at the conclusion of a match, the winning bid always seemed to be offered by a Miss Gustafson. When our things were auctioned off, a Miss Pearl Gustafson bought something. Then a Miss Ginny Gustafson came up with the high dollar, Miss Angie Gustafson topped the rest, and so on. When the sixth Miss (Continued on Page 119)

CALL ME LUCKY

(Continued from Page 37)

Gustafson came forward, Hope asked if all of the Gustafson girls were sisters. She said, "Yes."

"Good grief!" Hope asked. "Didn't your father ever hear that hot milk cures sleeplessness?"

This crack broke up the bond sale for a few moments, I promise you.

On one occasion, during the last war, Hope and I were entered in the Texas Open. We were in company considerably over our heads. Ordinarily the tournament committee would have given us a cold shoulder, but since the proceeds were to go to the AWVS, we were allowed to play. The hope was that our antics and our attempts to play topflight golf would attract more paying patrons than those who usually attend open events in Texas.

On the first day, Hope and I were paired with Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan. Our gallery was a sizable one. The caddie I'd drawn for the afternoon was a tall, lean colored boy. He stood about six feet four; his feet resembled a couple of Gladstone bags. An irrepressible twinkle of good humor gleamed in

REFRESHING CANDOR

The hotel notice read, "The best
Is none too good for you, our guest."
They spoke the truth as all men should;
Their best was really none too good.

—HARRY LAZARUS.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

his eye. To the surprise of the gallery, Hope and I managed to get off the first tee fairly well. It was a short, par-four hole, and we had second shots of about a hundred and forty yards. What was even more surprising, Nelson put his ball out of bounds and Hogan drove into the rough and found himself an almost unplayable lie. For his second, Hope hit a good shot, but it caught the top of the trap and kicked down into the sand. Hogan came out short of the green. Nelson put his on the back green, but he lay three. I happened to catch a second shot with the right quiver of my legs and arms, and it finished about six feet below the hole; an easy putt for a birdie.

As I fought my way through the gallery to the green, I could see the headlines in the morning sports pages: CROSBY OPENS TEXAS OPEN WITH A BIRDIE.

I reached the green and stood there leaning nonchalantly on my putter, while the other members of the foursome holed out. Bob lagged his up for a five, as did Nelson. Hogan pitched on about twelve feet above the hole, missed it and took five. My great moment had come. I had to wait until my caddie got through the gallery, but he finally ambled through an aperture walked onto the green and sized up the situation.

We went into an intimate colloquy. "You know this shapes up as a birdie," I said, "and I'd sure like to make it. But I want to get the right dope on the break and the speed of the green. You've been caddying around here for quite a while. You ought to be able to give it to me."

"Well, now, let's see," he said, putting my bag down on the edge of the green; "you want me to give this the full study?"

"If you will," I replied.

He walked up to the hole and surveyed the terrain above and below it. Then he got down on his knees and studied it from both sides, while the crowd of seven or eight thousand waited. I took my place back of my ball and waited for his report. Finally he shuffled over to me.

I whispered, "Which way shall I putt it?"

"Maybe we'd better go out this way a little the first time," he said, waving his hand to the right. That "first time" unnerved me; and there was a second time too. My first putt carried past the hole and I had to make a four-footer for a par coming back.

On the fifth hole I had a chance to get on the green with my second shot, but the distance puzzled me. I called him over again and asked, "What do I need to get home?"

"Mr. Crosby," he said, "I don't even know where you live."

I eyed him sharply. I wondered if he was getting his material from Hope, but he was such a dead-pan character I couldn't tell.

I played pretty well for me, and was fairly happy with the round until the sixteenth, where I drove two into the water, dumped my fifth shot into a trap guarding the green, blasted the next one over the green, and got down in twelve strokes. On the way to the next tee I asked my caddie if he had put down my score for that hole.

"Couldn't do that," he said.

"Why not?" I asked.

"I can't spell 'chaos,'" he said. No one has ever been able to convince me that Hope hadn't rehearsed that one with him.

Another one of my golfing recollections involved one of the most popular and better-known song duos of the late 1920's, Pepper and Salt. Pepper's real name was Edward Culpepper, but his professional name was Jack Pepper. I never did know Salt's real name. This pair, while probably not so well known or so well paid as Van and Schenck, commanded a good salary in vaudeville. They played only the top circuits, and had been seen and heard in a couple of first-chop Broadway productions.

I crossed paths with Pepper and Salt several times in vaudeville. I became pals with one of the members of the team, Jack Pepper. Jack hailed from Dallas, Texas. He had been married for about ten minutes to Ginger Rogers, who was then a dancer. In the early 1930's the Pepper-and-Salt team split up. Salt wound up in charge of a radio station, a job which also included singing as well as running programs.

Pepper clung to vaudeville. He did a single and played night clubs. But as his girth increased and his thatch thinned, demands for his talents dwindled despite the fact that he could sing like a bird. Jack had an expansive conviviality. Jolly times meant more to him than split weeks. I have known him to turn down cushy vaudeville routes so that he could be present for the racing inaugural at Saratoga in August. Jack's favorite expression was "Have fun now; get the bread later." Many a time when I met him around New York and I asked him how things were going, he replied, "Lots of laughs; lots of bread in the house."

He sang an occasional song in Jack White's Club 18 and did straight for Frankie Hiers or Pat Harrington. Or

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35 YEARS OF LUBRICATION PROGRESS

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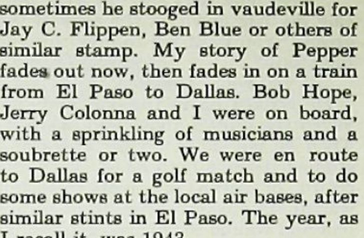

sometimes he stooged in vaudeville for Jay C. Flippen, Ben Blue or others of similar stamp. My story of Pepper fades out now, then fades in on a train from El Paso to Dallas. Bob Hope, Jerry Colonna and I were on board, with a sprinkling of musicians and a soubrette or two. We were en route to Dallas for a golf match and to do some shows at the local air bases, after similar stints in El Paso. The year, as I recall it, was 1943.

One midafternoon our gin-rummy game was broken up by the delivery of a telegram addressed to Hope and me. When the porter handed it to us Bob opened it. It read:

DEAR CHAPS: I am the owner and operator of a night club, an exclusive dine-and-dance spot on the outskirts of Dallas. Would you two fellows and Colonna make an appearance for me there tomorrow night and help me get a little bread in the house.

YOUR OLD BUDDY-BUDDY, JACK PEPPER.

We studied the schedule of events laid out for us for the following day in Dallas. We had a luncheon date with the mayor and other civic officials; a Red Cross golf match in the afternoon; an appearance at an air base in the evening. But that appearance should be over about nine o'clock. This seemed to allow us ample time for an appearance at Jack Pepper's Club, so we went back to our gin game and gave the matter no further thought.

Next morning Pepper greeted us at the depot in Dallas. His figure had grown aldermanic. His face was red and perspiring, and he was obviously laboring under a burden of anxiety.

"Why didn't you answer my wire?" he demanded.

"It wasn't necessary," I told him. "We're all set. We'll go out tonight and do a show for you."

"That doesn't do me any good now," he complained. "I've had no opportunity to publicize it. If you'd wired me yesterday, I could have had it in the newspapers this morning and on the radio stations last evening."

"Well," I said, "let them bang away at it on the stations this afternoon. Here's another idea: Print about ten thousand circulars announcing our appearance, and give them away at our golf match. What with the circulars and intensive by-word-of-mouth steaming up, you ought to be able to entice loose members of Dallas café society into your deadfall."

Except for a few glimpses of Jack and his shills, racing around the course handing out bills and making announcements over the public-speaking system that the Hollywood stars, Colonna, Hope and Crosby, would appear that night at his night club, we didn't see him again until nine o'clock, when we'd finished our show at the air base. Jack met us there, bundled us into a car, and we started for his bistro.

He should have described the location of his night spot as on the outskirts of Fort Worth, because it was almost a sleeper jump from Dallas, but once we'd glimpsed it, I could see why Fort Worth might have objected to that. We arrived before a rustic lean-to which looked, I imagine, something like Daniel Boone's first outpost. It was flanked by a postage-stamp parking lot where we were greeted by a gangling western type introduced to us as "Waxahachie." Jack described "Wax" to us as not only the master of ceremonies of the floor show but as electrician and spotlight man on the side. When not thus occupied, he parked cars.

There were no cars in the parking area, and no patrons had arrived when we entered the club. The orchestra, composed of a girl drummer and an organ, was wailing away at Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree With Anyone Else but Me. The dance floor was a hole in the ground about twenty feet square and ten feet deep. Stairs led down to it. It reminded me of snake pits I'd seen at carnivals. The patrons—once they arrived—would sit around the rim of this hole in the ground, on rustic furniture, before rustic, lamplit tables.

"How about a little belt before the people arrive?" Jack queried us nervously. When we said we were agreeable, he darted into the kitchen and returned with a bottle of something which he jovially described as Old Whipping Post or some such buck-and-a-quarter potion. We sat around for a while, hacking gingerly away at this leopard sweat until ten-thirty or quarter to eleven, but the place was still empty. Pepper noticed our looks of concern, and said reassuringly, "Dallas is a very late town. People never come out until eleven or twelve o'clock, but once they come out, they throw their loot around and stay up until the last dog is hung and the pup shot."

The telephone rang and Pepper answered it. We heard him engage in a conversational exchange with the party at the other end of the line. Jack's voice said, "Yes, they're here—all three of them—Hope, Colonna and Crosby. . . . You don't believe it? Wait a minute; I'll put one of them on."

Taking his cue, I went to the phone and identified myself. A feminine voice laced with a jigger of rich Texas accent asked, "Haow do I know you're Bing Crosby? Sing me a little song."

I gave her a few bars of Blue of the Night.

"Oh," she cried, "I can't tell whether it's you by just those few little bitty old notes! Sing me a whole song!"

"What song do you want to hear?" I asked.

"I Surrender, Deah," she said.

So I sang it to her—the whole song—even throwing in the high finish. Not good but high. At the conclusion I could hear a pattering of applause from the other end of the line.

Then she asked, "How do I know Bob Hope is there? Put him on."

I called Hope to the phone which was no trick; he'd been fighting for it since I'd picked it up. He went through the same routine, only he substituted a five-minute monologue for a song. Next Colonna went on the Bell Network. He sang On the Road to Mandalay and did a few crossfire gags with Hope and me.

Pepper, who was sweatingly impatient for us to finish, snatched the phone and asked, "How soon will you be over, and how many are in your party?" He heard her reply, and his face fell. He put the receiver back on the hook and came back to our table, his brow heavy with care.

"What did she say?" I asked.

"What did she say?" he repeated bitterly. "She said now that she'd heard the show she wouldn't have to come over."

We went back to belting away morosely at the Old Whipping Post once more. It wasn't long before the phone rang again. This time we were smarter. We merely identified ourselves without giving sample performances. As a result, we lured a party of twelve out to Pepper's place. They arrived about midnight. When they showed, we put on an hour's show in the snake pit and they bought eight dollars' worth of drinks and ham-

burgers. Pepper did some bits with us, and Waxahachie was featured heavily too. It was a small audience but enthusiastic, and we scored nicely, even if Pepper's take was a little light. However, what with Old Whipping Post soothing and sustaining him, he didn't brood long, and at one o'clock when we closed up and started for the depot, where our train was waiting to take us to San Antonio, Pepper had appointed himself a member of our troupe.

Three days later he was still with us. When I asked him what would happen to his club in his absence, he said casually that near the end of our evening there he had bequeathed the place to Wax, mortgage and all.

I don't think Jack's ever been back deep in the heart of Texas. After that he went with Hope to Europe and to the South Pacific on entertainment tours, and landed quite a bit of work in vaudeville and night clubs. As far as I know, he's still up to his eardrums in fun and laughs and plenty of bread in the house.

Now that Hope and I have got our discharges from bond drives and Red Cross fund raising, our golf still seems an easy way to earn money for worthy causes. Our game is just good enough not to make real golfers retch, and our miscues and flubs are funny enough to give nongolfers a laugh. In September of 1952 we played a match against two English opponents, Donald Peers and Ted Ray, at the Temple Golf Club in Maidenhead, England. The contest raised 7600 pounds for the English Playing Fields Fund.

After three or four holes the match turned into a mad melee. Maybe Hope reminded them of the loins of pork or the roasts of beef they don't see so much of these days, for when 10,000 or 12,000 spectators planted themselves in front of us and we asked them, "How about giving us a little elbowroom; we'd like to shoot down your way," they yelled, "We don't want you to shoot! We want to look at you!"

As we ducked under and around the crush, and when we could get our breath and some attention, Hope and I essayed an occasional jocosity, but the most amusing remark of the day was made by one of our opponents, Ted Ray. Ray is an English comedian with a ready wit. At the sixth hole the gallery left us an alley only fifteen feet wide down which to drive. None of us was very expert and that sea of faces leaning over the ropes, peering down at the tee and watching us didn't make us feel more accurate.

Ray addressed his ball, waggled his club a few times and looked down the narrow lane of bodies. "Either stand back a little," he hollered, "or shut your mouths! I've had four balls swallowed today!"

A London journalist, Charles Graves, wrote what seemed to me a funny story about our match. He treated it as if we were a party shooting grouse on the moors. "Hope got three," he wrote. "Crosby got a brace, but one of Crosby's was winged on the rise, which is a really sporting shot."

We did wing a few people, but, luckily, nobody was hurt. For one thing, we didn't hit the ball hard enough to injure anyone. Besides, it was a chilly day and almost everybody had on extra garments. You could fire a shot from a squirrel gun into the kind of coat called a British warm and never pink the wearer.

I think we got in eight or nine holes over a three-hour stretch, although the players were seldom simultaneously on the same hole, and at the conclusion of the confusion it grieves me to record that Peers and Ray were one up, and the annual routs of the British Walker Cup Team were partially avenged. My handmaiden and I want them again, next time alone and at Lakeside. However, it did give a warm feeling to know that such a great, good-natured crowd of well-wishers would journey far into the country to cheer and applaud actors from another land; although they say, of course, that an Englishman will do practically anything to get out into the country.

That night we pulled another 15,000 pounds into the Playing Fields Fund with a show in a London theater. The theater deal was Hope's venture, but I did a guest appearance for him. Taken all in all, we thought it a pretty satisfactory day's work.

I might as well get my affair with another sport off my chest. I don't see how I can tell my story without bringing in my love of horseflesh. I took an unmerciful ribbing about it for years from Hope on the radio. The ribbing has diminished, but I still own a few horses.

"He's trying to tell us something!"

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

ALEMITE

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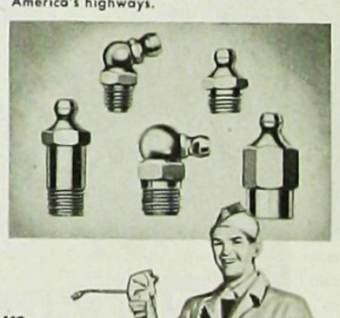

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I've owned them ever since 1935. The first horse I owned was Zombie, a steed of peerless lineage but dubious ability, which I bought from Jock Whitney when he was racing in California. I became interested in racing because I'd bought stock in the Santa Anita track. Also, I met a famous jock, Albert Johnson, from my part of the country—the Pacific Northwest—who had ridden for Colonel Bradley and many of the big stables in the East. Johnson had won a couple of Kentucky Derbies and other big stakes, but he'd retired from riding and wanted to go into the training end. I put him in charge of my one-horse stable. Only, like most one-horse stables, it ballooned to twenty-one horses before I was through.

I was to find out that even for people who put lots of money into it racing is a parlous thing, almost a pure gamble. A heavy financial outlay doesn't necessarily produce winners. One big manufacturing family is an example. They've had horses for years and years, have spent millions on the family stable, but as far as I know, they have never produced a truly great horse. It wasn't that they didn't buy the nucleus of a good stable or what seemed to me the foundation for a successful stud farm. It was the way their luck turned. On the other hand a man named Charlie Howard bought a horse named Seabiscuit for $7500, and Seabiscuit proved to be one of the top-money-winning horses of all time. That's the way it goes in racing.

Still, getting into it the way I did, on the cheap side, decreased my chances of having a notable array of winners. And when Hope began to kid me about it on the air, it became legend that my horses were diseased with the slows. I played along with this for the laughs, and laughs are hard to come by. Hope is always short of good material, and if my horses supplied him with a little radio fodder, it was all right with me. My horses co-operated too.

Then I went into a racing-and-training partnership with Lin Howard, the son of Charles Howard, and after that Hope's kneeings in the groin didn't seem so funny. My partner, Lin, claimed Hope's bum raps for our horses hurt our market. We planned to sell the colts we raised, and Lin said bitterly, "It's hard to sell them if you and Hope go on the air week after week and laugh at them." Lin and I brought a four-year-old horse named Ligaroti from the Argentine and raced him at Santa Anita. But he was fresh from a seventy-seven-day trip on a slow freighter and he wasn't himself. The following summer we took him to Hollywood Park, where he won every stake that track offered for older horses—among them the Sunset Handicap and the American Handicap—and he knocked down prizes of $25,000 and $35,000.

Encouraged by his success, we imported more horses, among them a couple of pretty good mares. One of these lassies, Etolia II, won the Vanity Handicap at Hollywood Park. Our other feminine importee, Barrancosa, won two or three handicaps around California. Then we sent her East, where she dead-heated for first place in the Beldame Handicap with Mr. Woodward's Vagrancy, which was considered the best mare of that year. The Beldame is the top Eastern race for fillies and mares three years and up.

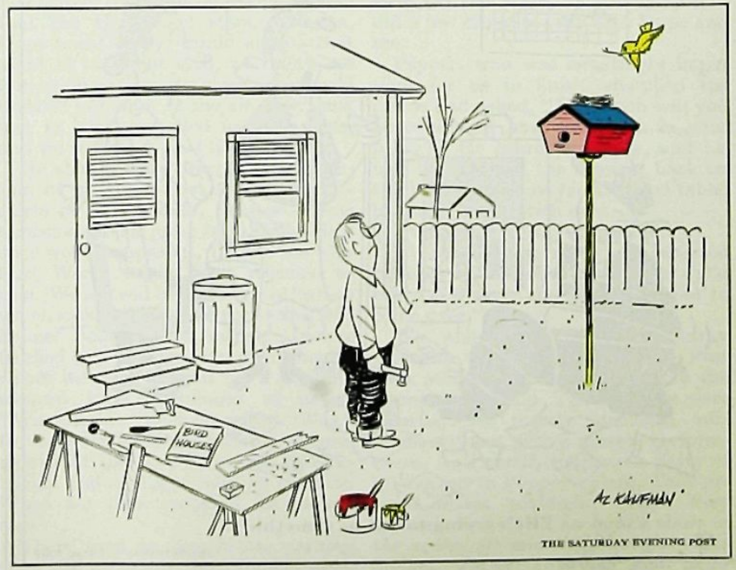
We also had Don Mike, who won two or three big handicaps in California. Ligaroti's half brother, Don Bingo, won the big race at Belmont Park, the Suburban Handicap. But the nonracing public didn't hear much about these successes. Wins don't make for funny talk on the radio.

I'd got interested in the front-office end of racing when Santa Anita opened in December of 1934. Bill Quigley, a California racing official, came to me and said that the directors of the Twenty-second Agricultural District of San Diego County, California, wanted us to form a group to put on racing at Del Mar in San Diego County. It takes a lot of money to build a race track, but the Agricultural District people said they'd supply the coin and give us a lease on the plant.

Quigley and I formed a jockey club, made financial commitments and began to build a racing plant, only to find that the Agricultural District couldn't get up the money. We went in hock for it ourselves and eventually got the place built. The Agricultural District helped by taking a lease on it, and over a period of years that rent paid us back what we'd put into it.

However, at the outset it was very tough going, and we lost money for a season and a half. Also, we were roundly criticized for our choice of a site. Actually, Del Mar isn't a very good site unless it can hold races in July or August, for, with the exception of those two months, not many people go there. In winter the track is a quagmire if it rains. When those Southern

(Continued on Page 124)



(Continued from Page 122)

California monsoons come along, that part of the country gets so muddy at times that if only a few more drops of moisture are added, horses, jockeys, and spectators carry snorkels.

To add to our difficulties, it was hard to get good horses to ship there. When the Eastern horses were through at Santa Anita or Hollywood Park, they were sent East for the summer season at Saratoga and Belmont Park; at Aqueduct and Jamaica and Empire City. We were in a bit of a box. Without good horses, it was difficult to pull a big attendance. Without a sizable attendance, the mutuel handle looked like a dice game in the caddie yard.

But gradually we began to build interest and the place gained in popularity. Saturday nights we served big dinners and put on shows at the Turf Club. For those dinners we imported bands and such artists as Wingy Manone and Louis Armstrong, or maybe John Scott Trotter would portage in a Dixieland Group, and we brought down picture people from Hollywood like Charlie Butterworth, Pat O'Brien, Ken Murray, Bob Hope, Connee Boswell, Jerry Colonna and Phil Silvers. The shows were impromptu. Any of my buddies from tinsel town who happened to be on deck would get up and do his stuff ad-lib. The fun might last four or five hours. It might go on till dawn. One morning about five o'clock, Wingy Manone was playing Muskrat Ramble, when a committee of trainers came over from the stables to complain that the strains of his horn were disturbing the horses. They were shagging and lindy-hopping around their stalls and losing their rest, just like people.

Buster Keaton was one guest who got up and did an act for us. Being a comic of the old school, Buster had a routine of taking sensational falls from the piano or from anything handy, but he knew how to take them so it would look as if he were almost killing himself. Actually, he was breaking his falls with his wrists or his elbows, and was suffering no injury. Pat O'Brien decided to emulate Keaton and cut himself in on the applause.

Charlie Butterworth, whose deadpan delivery and dehydrated wit made him—to me, at least—one of the funniest actors who ever lived, watched him for a while, then said, "You'd better get that O'Brien out of here. He's breaking his falls with his veins."

However, in the end the whole Del Mar deal became a burdensome chore. Bill Quigley passed away and much of his work—he was the one who had done most of it—fell on me. Never being one to relish responsibility or work, my course was obvious. The chance came for me to get out, not only with the money I'd put in but with a profit, so I sold. As it turned out, I would have made a lot more money if I'd waited. Del Mar has been more successful since I left than while I was a part owner.

To me, a race track is for people who can afford to go there once in a while for an enjoyable afternoon of watching good horseflesh compete and losing only money they won't miss. Anybody who goes to the races thinking he'll make money consistently is flat loco. If he continues to go day after day and bet day after day, he'll take a beating. Hope calls a race track a horse-drawn vacuum cleaner. You can beat a race, but you can't beat the races. I've never won any big bets at the tracks. I bet, of course, but I've backed my own horses and wagered just enough on them to make it interesting. If I had twenty dollars I didn't think I'd miss, I'd bet it on an animal, but I never let myself get into the habit of "doubling up to get even." That's the route to insolvency.

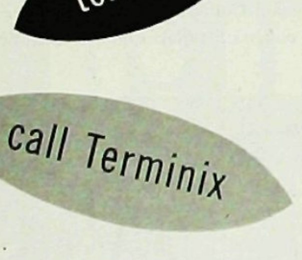
I commend the following stories to those who are knuckleheaded enough to believe that racing results can be consistently figured with any degree of accuracy—even by "those in the know." One of the first colts I ever bought was sired by Mars, a son of Man o' War. Among my golfing friends in those days was Ford Palmer, who'd been a great end at Southern California, and Marshall Duffield, a great ex-USC quarterback. As a gesture of friendship to them, I named the colt Fight On, after the University of Southern California fight song.

Fight On worked well, but as luck would have it, the day of his first race—three furlongs—the track came up muddy. In the paddock, Albert Johnson, who'd trained him for me, told me that he wouldn't advise me to bet. He'd never worked the horse in the mud and didn't know if he could stand up in that kind of going. So I risked nothing on Fight On's chances. But Duffield and Palmer were with me, and although I did my best to dissuade them, they felt sentimentally obligated to have some kind of a bet down. So they went for ten on the untried two-year-old.

Fight On got out of the gate on top and came down to the wire in a driving finish, leading a cluster of three or four other horses to the wire. He won by a distended nostril and paid $242 for $2.00. Like all race followers with a bet on a horse in a close one, Duffield and Palmer leaned instinctively toward the finish line and waved their arms in that direction to pull their horse in. After the race they told me accusingly that I'd applied my body English the other way, and that I'd waved Fight On back because I couldn't stand seeing him win with nothing on his nose. Since then, when I've been to the Coliseum to see a football game and the Trojan band breaks into the Fight Song, I wince.

As most of the habitués of night clubs know, Joe Frisco, the stuttering comedian, is an inveterate, even an incurable horse player. Once Joe and his buddy were rooming together in Hollywood in a furnished room. Their luck had gone from bad to worse. They were down to five dollars between them. It was nearing Christmas, and his buddy said, "We're not going to bet this five dollars on a horse race. Let's spend it on something with a little Christmas spirit. In the window of the delicatessen down the street there's a beautiful turkey with all the trimmings. It's cooked. It's ready to serve. It costs five dollars. You go down and get the turkey," he continued. "I'll get some plates and knives and forks from Mrs. O'Leary down the hall. I'll get a couple of bottles of beer from the saloon downstairs—they'll trust us—and we'll have a nice Christmas dinner."

Joe said, "O.K.," took the fin and departed for the delicatessen. But the store was six or seven blocks away, and en route he passed a room where they were betting horses. Entries from all over the country were posted on blackboards, and a loud-speaker was giving the results of each race. Joe stuck his head in to see if there was anybody in there he knew, and having done that, he stepped in to see what the prices were on the horses. Lo and behold, he found a horse entered at a Florida track which owed him a little money



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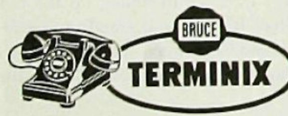

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because of unhappy bets he'd made on him in the past.

The race was starting in five minutes. The horse would pay about 5 to 1; and Joe had visions of a twenty-five-dollar profit. He couldn't resist. He bought a five-dollar-win ticket on this horse. It wasn't long before the loud-speaker said, "They're off in the fourth." Joe's horse was in front. He was in front down the backstretch. He was in front coming home. Then the loud-speaker said, "Here are the winners," and it announced three other horses. Joe's horse had quit at the wire. Joe went back to the apartment and opened the door.

His roommate looked at him and asked, "Where's the turkey?"

Joe said, "Th-th-th-the turkey's still in the stretch."

Not long ago Joe took a job in a San Mateo club. Knowing his affinity for the turf, I'm sure the big inducement was that he could be near the Bay Meadows Race Track. When he'd been there a few weeks, I talked to him on the phone and asked him how he was making out with the nags.

He said that it had been murder, and that he hadn't had a winning day since the meet opened, but yesterday he'd gone real good.

"What happened?" I asked.

"I g-g-got a ride home," he replied.

I've staked Joe quite a few times. Whenever he saw me at Santa Anita he touched me for five or ten. It always seemed worth while because I knew I'd get some laughs out of it. On one occasion I got to the track early to find Joe waiting for me at the Turf Club entrance.

"Bing," he asked, "can you l-l-let me ha-ha-have twenty bucks?"

"That's quite a large sum, Joe," I said. "Why so much this time?"

"I have the Singing Kid's markings," he said. "He never gave them to me before and he's been awful h-h-hot at this meet and I think I'm going to have a real good day if I just get a start, and I need about twenty bucks."

I gave him the twenty dollars, three or four races went by, and the news began to come up from the grandstand: "Joe Frisco is riding a big streak. He's had four straight winners. Parlayed them all. He's won six or seven hundred dollars and he's buying wine for everybody at the bar."

I thought I'd go down and see if this was true, but something interfered and two or three races went by before I started. On the way I bumped into a friend.

"That Frisco," he said, "he hasn't had a loser. He's had them all on the nose. He's parlaying them, relaying them every which way; round robins and everything else. He must have twelve or fifteen hundred dollars in his kick."

There he was in the grandstand bar, surrounded by thirty or forty admirers. Not only was he buying drinks, he was playing the big-hearted Otis and giving this pal five and that pal ten. I went up to him and eyed him suggestively, as if asking, "How about my twenty?" He looked at me, said, "Hi ya, kid," and went right ahead with his Mister Bountiful routine.

"Joe," I said, "how about—er—you know?"

He peeled off twenty and said, "Here kid. Here's t-t-t-twenty dollars. Sing me a chorus of Melancholy Baby." I was so taken aback I sang it.

When I first went into racing, my trainer, Albert Johnson, who, as I've said before, had ridden for Colonel Bradley, told me a story about the colonel that I've never forgotten. The colonel had a sensational two-year-old. He brought this phenom back to New York for the spring racing season and entered him in an overnight allowance race for two-year-olds. He'd been telling his friend, Harry Sinclair, what a great horse he had, and Sinclair, thinking that he'd been let in on a good thing, arranged for large sums to be bet on the colonel's hopeful all over the country.

While Johnson was saddling his horse in the paddock, the colonel told him, "Mr. Sinclair's sitting in my box. He has sizable wagers on this horse and I'd like to give him a little thrill. Don't let the horse win too easily. You and I know he's probably the best two-year-old in the world and that there's no question but what he should win as he pleases in this field. But if Mr. Sinclair's going to make a killing, I'd like to see him sweat a little."

"O.K.," Johnson said, "I'll draw it a little fine."

The field was small. Only four or five horses were entered in it. It was a short race—six furlongs—and the Bradley horse went right to the front. After a quarter of a mile Johnson thought he'd let out a wrap and really let his mount run. As he did, another horse came up beside him and the other jockey let out a wrap too. At the half mile, Johnson let out some more wraps, but the second horse still stayed with him. When they turned for home, Albert went for his bat, but the other horse wouldn't be shaken loose. They thundered to the finish line as a team, with Albert whipping and doing his best and the other jockey doing the same.

There was a delay before the winner was announced, but the final decision was that the Bradley horse had finished first. Bradley sent for Johnson after the race and gave him a dressing down. "I asked you to make it close," he said, "but not that close. You might have blown the race. I thought Mr. Sinclair was going to have a stroke." Johnson tried to convince the colonel that he had been doing his best and so had the horse, but he couldn't sell that idea then or afterward, no matter how hard he tried.

"How much was Mr. Sinclair betting?" Johnson asked Colonel Bradley.

The colonel replied, "A quarter of a million dollars!" and it was Johnson's turn to almost have a stroke.

As two-year-olds those two nags were virtually unknowns, but the Bradley two-year-old was Bubbling Over, which later won the Kentucky Derby. The horse that finished second was Sarazen, which also became one of the greatest horses of the era.

Albert Johnson told me that it was the last time Colonel Bradley ever told him to "make it close." Whenever the colonel put him up on a horse after that, his instructions were, "Go to the front and improve your position."

Editors' Note—This is the sixth of a series of articles by Mr. Crosby and Mr. Martin. The seventh, in which Bing tells about his wartime adventures, will appear next week.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A CHILD'S EXCUSE

We don't disapprove of it being a lame one,
So much as the fact that it's always the same one.

—STEPHEN SCHLITZER.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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GENE LESTER

The sports-minded Crosby boys (Philip, Linny, Dennis, Gary) have Bing's promise of a trip East in a private railroad car—when Pittsburgh cops a pennant.

Call Me Lucky

By BING CROSBY as told to Pete Martin

The characters this crooner has known! Brooklyn Dodger fan Ethel Barrymore, the tough paratrooper who demanded—and got—a special show of his own, Joe Venuti, who once ate a violin—and the strictly unbelievable Hammerhead Jones, who plays Nola on his bald skull, with hammers!

PART SEVEN

ONCE the studio lights are out, the cameras are still and the film is in the can, the things that stick in my mind about the making of a movie are the little human things; the day-by-day byplay. When we were shooting Little Boy Lost in Paris in the fall of 1952, we had trouble blocking off streets long enough to make the shots we needed. Parisians are traditionally jealous of any invasion of their personal liberties, and Bill Perlberg and George Seaton, who were making the film, had to use a lot of diplomacy and tact.

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One day, after spending hours trying to shoo spectators away from the camera, we succeeded in dislodging everybody except one fellow. He stood his ground like Horatius at the bridge. Apparently he saw in us a threat to *liberté*, *égalité* and *fraternité*. "I was in the last war!" he declared proudly. "I shall not move!" Nor did he. We had to pick another location.

The traffic in Paris is a highly confused operation, a sort of automotive poker game in which each driver tries to bluff the other. We were waiting for the rain to stop so we could get a shot near the Place de la Concorde, when a two-car accident occurred. The driver who was in the right went up to a traffic policeman and I heard him ask for the arrest of the fellow who'd caused the accident.

"Please!" the traffic policeman said with dignity. "I direct traffic. I do not witness accidents."

That night I got into a traffic jam myself about seven o'clock and I asked my French driver where all the traffic policemen had gone. "At this time of the evening they go home in disgust," he said. "It becomes just too confusing."

Most of us in show business are bedazzled by the luster which surrounds the name "Barrymore." There was the brilliant and incorrigible John; there's Lionel, the reliable and steady; and last, but not least, there is the regal and imperious Ethel. I've

known John and Lionel casually and have worked with them on occasional radio programs. I've also worked with Ethel on the radio, but it wasn't until I made a picture, Just For You, with her that I had the opportunity to know this great lady, close-up. Shortly before the picture went into production, an incident at Romanoff's Restaurant gave me an inkling of what she's like. Across the restaurant, Miss Barrymore was dining with friends while the princely Mike and his *maître d'hôtel* were engaged in a whispered colloquy back of my booth.

"She has to be told!" I overheard.

"I'm not going to be the one to tell her!" the *maître d'* said.

"It isn't right for us to keep it from her until she's finished dinner," said Michael.

"You tell her," the *maître d'* said.

"Not I," said Mike.

So it went; then they separated and went their ways. Just what was it they didn't want to tell her about, I wondered. Perhaps it was a death in the family or some serious illness of an old friend. Later, when Mike stopped by my booth, I asked him the meaning of the muttered conference.

"Haven't you heard?" he asked.

"No," said I.

"Brooklyn was licked today in the play-offs," he said.

One Take Was Enough for Ethel

It was my first indication that the queen of the Barrymore clan is a deadly serious sports fan. Later, when we began to shoot Just For You, we had had a radio installed on the set and were listening to the Los Angeles Rams play the Forty-Niners. Ethel approached just in time to hear the announcer say, "Oops—there's a fumble down there."

She said, in deep disgust, "Sounds like we're back in the Ivy League." And this in spite of the fact that the dreams she gave the bushy-haired Eastern All-Americans of the early 1900's must have interfered with their pregame sleep.

I noticed that when Ethel was rehearsing her scenes for the picture she apparently was not concerned with her lines, the business or the props. But when the director finally said, "Let's take it," her first take was perfect. Past experience with other actresses hadn't prepared the director for such perfection, and he asked for another take as a matter of course. The more the scene was shot the worse Ethel became. Like any true champion, she'd built herself for one major effort, and that was it. She was amazed that the director insisted on taking the scene over and over.

"Is he making a collection of these things?" she asked me with some puzzlement.

Earlier in this story I talked about making Going My Way, but I haven't mentioned the public's reaction to the priest I played in it. There were unexpected repercussions to that role. Not everyone approved of the fashion in which the young priest was humanized. I'd gone to a Jesuit school and I'd always found priests very human and not unlike the boys they taught, but in some South American and Latin countries moviegoers objected to the priest I portrayed wearing a sweat shirt and playing baseball. I got a sizable amount of critical mail from those countries, reproving me for my "undignified conception of the role of a priest."

However, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, saw the picture and wrote a letter in which he described his enjoyment of the film, and said he thought it good to have the priesthood so humanized.

I'd heard of the public identifying actors and actresses with roles, but this was the first time I'd got the full treatment myself. Not long after the picture was released, I attended a dinner party at the home of my friend Jack Morse. Before dinner, cocktail canapés and hors d'oeuvres were served, among them toasted frankfurters on toothpicks. They were served by a gray-haired, motherly-looking maid from the Ould Sod. It happened to be Friday, and when I absent-mindedly took one of the frankfurters, I thought she'd have a stroke. "Why, Father Crosby," she burst out, "you're not going to eat one of those!" Obviously she was subconsciously thinking of me as the priest I'd (Continued on Page 92)

GI's in France "capture" Bing during his World War II tour there. Ike had to cable, "Call off the (hominy) grits," after Bing told newsmen of the general's yearning for that Southern dish.

GENE LESTER

Rosemary Clooney (back to camera) and Bing at a rehearsal of his radio show. Bob Hope once called those who appeared on the program "slaves of the potbellied lamp" (meaning Bing).

BILL MORROW

Bing at the Longchamps Racecourse in Paris, surrounded by mannequins displaying furs and gowns. During World War II, Bing flew to Cherbourg and followed our troops through to Metz.

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CALL ME LUCKY

(Continued from Page 39)

played, and the fact that "Father O'Malley" would eat a meat canapé on Friday upset her.

The other guests collapsed with laughter, and she retreated in confusion to the kitchen. I was a little confused myself. I carried that hot dog around with me for a half hour, then dropped it surreptitiously into a potted plant.

It wasn't long after that when an aunt of Dixie's came to visit us. She hailed from a small town set deep in the hills of the South, where the citizenry seldom get to see a movie, and when they do, they take it to heart. She'd been with us for a week when she heard me say that I was planning to play golf with Humphrey Bogart.

"Good heavens," she protested, "you wouldn't play golf with such a man!"

"Why not?" I asked.

"I saw his last picture and he's the worst man you've ever seen! The idea of a priest and a gangster getting together on a golf course!" she snorted.

The maid and Dixie's aunt weren't unique in confusing me with Father O'Malley. From Africa and from China and Japan came letters addressed to me as Father Crosby or the Reverend Crosby. All kinds of communities and towns wanted me to drop whatever I was doing, visit them for a while and form little singing groups for children to keep them out of trouble, the way I'd done in Going My Way.

Some dreamy joker at Paramount made the suggestion that it would be a great gag if I bobbed up for a moment in Bob Hope's next movie garbed as a priest. Now and then we make a fleeting appearance in each other's pictures for a laugh, and, laughs being hard to cull, we're always ready to use any suggestion that might pull even a light rumble out of an audience. But I was unhappy about this particular touch of comic genius. I was sure it would prove offensive to a lot of Catholics, as well as non-Catholics who didn't feel that the character I portrayed in Going My Way should go for clowning around in other people's movies for laughs.

Shortly after I'd turned this idea down with a resounding thump I happened to be visiting in Spokane and I discussed my decision with Father Corkery, the president of Gonzaga University and a classmate of mine. He was glad that I had felt the way I did about it, for in his opinion—as in mine—the stunt would have been in very bad taste.

The Bells of St. Mary's brought me another Father O'Malley-type role. Also, it meant a chance to work with Ingrid Bergman, who played a nun in that production. Ingrid's one of the best actresses I've ever worked with, and one of the hardest workers. Talking about Bergman makes me think of a quotation from the poet and divine, John Donne. One of Bergman's successes was a movie version of Ernest Hemingway's For Whom the Bell Tolls. That title was taken from one of Donne's Devotions. The rest of that essay made the point, "no man is an island."

Donne had something there. Every man's life is the result of what happens when his life touches the lives of others, and a long list of people have influenced my life in one way or another. Sometimes, like Jack Kapp, of Decca Records, they've helped me achieve things I never would have accomplished otherwise. Others have made life more stimulating, and have run up the score on the lighter side instead of the somber side.

No story about me would be complete without some mention of four men whose lives have touched mine in one of these ways: Joe Venuti, the Fabulous Fiddler of Paul Whiteman's band; John Scott Trotter, the daddy of my radio-musical family; Bill Morrow, who has guided my radio fortunes and has been my companion on many a junket; and my attorney, John O'Melveny, who has kept me solvent and has thereby made possible Bob Hope's heavy-handed jesting about my being a human Fort Knox.

The Whiteman outfit was loaded with characters who have become legendary to jazz lovers. Joe Venuti was one of the most fabulous of these. Whenever musicians lay down their instruments to take five during a jam session, the conversation turns to Joe, and someone always comes up with a story about him. I have contributed a few such bits of Venutiana myself.

Joe's a voluble, volatile and violent Italian. He's very loud, very noisy and very given to telling fantastic stories about himself and his family. Nevertheless, he's a great artist on the violin. I don't think his equal exists when it comes to playing popular music on his chosen instrument.

When Joe and I were in Hollywood with the Whiteman orchestra in 1929, working on the Old Gold radio program, Charlie King was our guest star on one program. Charlie was an attraction because he'd been featured in one of the first musical talkies. The Old Gold show ran for a whole hour. We rehearsed for it afternoons at the old studio KHJ in downtown Los Angeles. In those days radio was regarded as a frighteningly technical medium and we approached it much more seriously than we did later in its development. We rehearsed and rehearsed to make sure everything would be perfect. The soloists had to learn their positions at the microphone; the section mikes had to balance; the opening had to come off with split-second precision. As part of this intensive preparation, we were rehearsing with Charlie King. Charlie was a singer of the old school. He was a great guy, but in the opinion of such irreverent individuals as myself, he was far better as a comedian and dancer

(Continued on Page 95)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GANGWAY!

By Loyd Rosenfield

Most dawns the singing of the birds
Seems earlier and louder;
Most dawns it's difficult to hit
The toothbrush with the powder;

Most dawns I'd like to suffocate
That noisy weeping willow;
Most dawns the dearest thing in life
Appears to be my pillow;

This morning's dawn invigorates;
It has a hidden meaning;
I'm up and off just like a shot—
Today she starts spring cleaning!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

(Continued from Page 92)
than as a singer. He was what we call a ricky-tick singer today—meaning that his style was a little on the razzamataz side.

During rehearsal, when he began to give out with that "Just bring a sma-aile to Old Broadway" stuff, Venuti was fascinated and he kept his eyes on Charlie throughout the rehearsal. Before the show we had an hour break, and when we went out to find something to eat, Joe disappeared. He came back just before we went on the air.

There was much tension before the show. Then voom! the red light was on and the awful moment had arrived. The show started well, and presently it was time for Charlie King's solo. He stood up to face the mike. As he took his place, Joe opened his violin case and pulled out an old blunderbuss of the vintage of 1870, and drew a bead on Charlie. We began to laugh. We didn't really think that Joe would shoot King, but you could never be sure with Venuti. He was wholly unpredictable, and I remember thinking that King was in some slight jeopardy, even if the weapon was loaded only with rock salt.

Joe kept the gun on him, as if daring him to send one more corny note soaring from his larynx, and I thought Whiteman would have a stroke. He'd lost control of the band; we were laughing so hard we were *hors de combat* and Charlie King was singing *a cappella*. But toward the end some of the more sedate instrumentalists rallied and mustered enough breath to give Charlie a finishing chord.

Undoubtedly Venuti helped age Whiteman. Paul once gave him a violin-solo assignment. The occasion was a concert. For the most part, the audience wore white ties, with only a sprinkling of the more *dégagé* black. When Joe came forward, he said to Paul in front of the audience, "Let me use your violin." To avoid unseemly argument, Paul handed it to Joe. Joe played a number, then pretended to get his bow tangled in the strings. Finally, in exasperation, while the audience went into hysterics of mirth, he chewed up Whiteman's fiddle, crunching it with his strong white teeth and spitting out pieces of wood.

One of my favorite Venuti stories has to do with the bass-fiddle player he got "right off the boat from Italy." Joe had his own band then and was working for Tommy Guinan, Texas Guinan's brother, in a box bearing the gay name Tommy Guinan's Playground. When Tommy and I see each other nowadays, we laugh about that engagement Joe played for him. "That buddy of yours put me out of the café business," Tommy says. "I was going great until I signed him."

For years Joe had wanted to import a bass player direct from Italy. It was his theory—an invalid one as far as I could see—that such a musician would have a way of playing a bass fiddle that would fit in ideally with a Dixieland combo. Finally, after much finagling, Joe went down to Ellis Island, fetched such a character back with him and put him in his band for the opening night at Guinan's Playground. There was a sellout audience on hand and everything seemed to indicate that the joint was on its way to a long and successful operation. Joe played a couple of solos and the band went very big. Bix Beiderbecke showed up, carrying his cornet in a paper bag, and sat in with Joe's musicians. However, the freshly imported bass player became hungry. He'd been on the bandstand only an hour when he yelled at a waiter to bring him a steak. The waiter brushed him. He had other and more important things to do, such as waiting on people who were actually paying for their food, and also tipping.

The bass player got hungrier and madder. At last he said to Joe in Italian, "If that fellow don't bring me that steak quick, I'll kill him!"

Never at a loss for an uninhibited notion, Joe said, "The next time he comes near the bandstand, pick up your bass fiddle and hit him over the head with it. That'll teach the ——"

The fiddle player with the steak yen nodded. When the waiter came by, he lifted his bass fiddle and—boing!

It started a riot. The waiters came out swinging and tore into the musicians. The patrons departed for calmer surroundings. Tommy Guinan's Playground opened and closed the same night.

Joe could never resist a spot of violence. He loved it more than music. On another occasion, he was playing at a roadhouse night club near Cincinnati. It was a country-club-type operation with a band and a floor show, but because of its spaciousness, it was difficult to heat, and Joe complained that it wasn't warm enough. "I can state without fear of contradiction," he announced, "that I am no penguin." The manager kicked the heat up a degree or two, but it was still too frigid for Joe. He kept right on complaining, but the manager did nothing about it. One night Joe brought a lot of apple boxes and packing cases with him when he came to work, broke them up in the middle of the dance floor, and started a bonfire on its waxed surface. The owner summoned the fire department, who turned hoses on everybody. When it was over, Joe was looking for a new job.

There's only one rule with Joe. If he says he's going to do a thing, you'd better believe him, because it's a certainty, no matter how goofy it sounds.

Before I call it a day on Joe—a theme which I willingly admit has me under its spell—I must mention his discovery, Hammerhead Jones. I first heard of Hammerhead when Joe came to our house one night for dinner. It was after our North Hollywood home had burned; we were living in a Beverly Hills house we'd rented from Marion Davies. Some of her living-room chairs had seats made of tough wicker. After Joe dug into some spaghetti smothered under a blanket of meat balls, we fell to discussing those chairs. Joe said that although they were made of very tough material, he'd bet that he could break one of them with his head. Overconfidence has given me nasty spills before, but I said, "Let's see you do it."

Joe took one of them, raised it, crashed it against his skull, and his head popped through.

I said stubbornly, "I bet you couldn't do it to a whole dozen."

"For how much?" he asked.

"For five dollars?" I said.

Without a change of expression and while I sat transfixed, he did it to all of them. Then he told me, "That's nuthin'. I've got a guy in my orchestra called Hammerhead Jones who makes me look like an egg-head."

"What does he do?" I asked.

"He's a feature performer I picked up in an amateur contest down South," Joe said. "He's bald. He comes out and he reaches into his pocket and pulls out two of those hammers with a little ball on the end—ball-peen hammers. Then he plays Nola on his skull with them."

"How does he get the notes?" I inquired.

"He opens his mouth wide for the low notes and closes it tighter for the high notes," Joe said. "He plays

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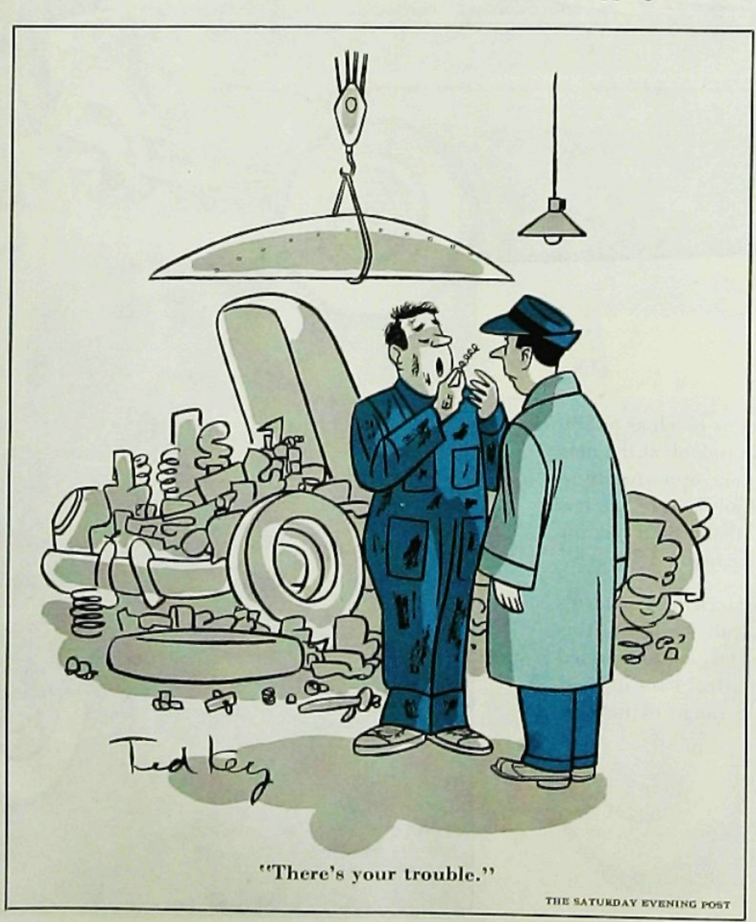
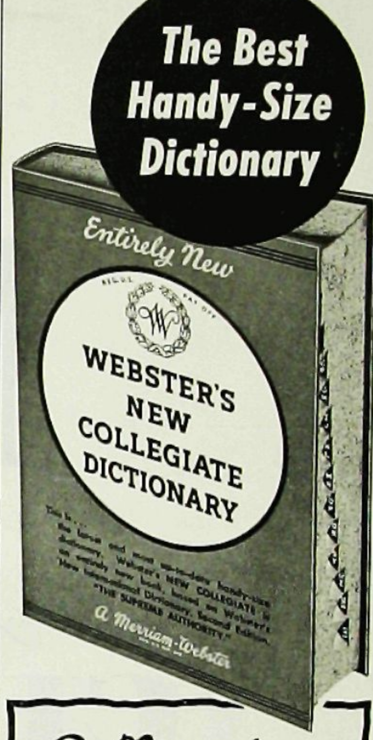


"There's your trouble."



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(Continued from Page 95)
Flapperette as an encore. Flapperette is very good on the skull. But if he takes two encores he gets a concussion and has to lay off for a week." I'm afraid Hammerhead is only apocryphal. Joe swears he exists, but nobody has ever seen him. Joe explains this by saying, "We just use him when we're on the road. 'Fraid someone will steal his act."

John Scott Trotter joined my musical family at the beginning of my Kraft Music Hall series in 1930, and he's been with me ever since. I'd known John in New York when he played piano and made arrangements for the Hal Kemp band. Both Hal and Johnny were products of the University of North Carolina. John—as everybody who listened to our radio program knows—goes about 295 pounds. But I've never heard him use profanity during the most tiresome rehearsals. Sometimes rehearsing for a radio program or a record date is pretty aggravating. Things can go wrong with an arrangement. And if you keep a thirty-piece band around for five or six hours and they get fidgety and fussy, their attention wanders; side interests develop.

I've never heard John raise his voice or upbraid his musicians. Once, when they really got out of line, he rapped with his baton and said, "Gentlemen!" The bandsmen were so shocked that he'd said anything at all that they calmed down and he had no more trouble with them.

Trotter is a real gourmet, dedicated to the pleasures of the table. He follows food the way some people follow the sun. Between 1937 and 1945, we went on the air live instead of as a transcription, and the only free time John had was between programs. But sometimes he'd do a few arrangements in advance, then fly from Los Angeles to New Orleans for oysters Rockefeller at Antoine's, or to San Francisco for cracked crab when it was in season, or to Olympia, Washington, for Olympia oysters. He'd go anywhere to get delicacies which couldn't be obtained in any other town or at any other time of the year.

On one occasion in the early 1940's he was serving terrapin he'd had flown in from Baltimore. His whole dinner was planned as an overture for the *pièce de résistance* and John was in a tizzy about it. He warned us that there would be no drinking at his party. "Perhaps a little wine," he said, "but I won't have any cocktails or highballs. You're not going to cauterize your taste buds with red-eye before you eat my dinner." So we reverted to our college days. We brought flasks along with us in our cars and sneaked out for an occasional *apéritif*.

John Scott's very precise about everything he does. He is even methodical at swimming, which is the only exercise he takes. He gets into the pool at the Racquet Club at one o'clock in the afternoon and swims until supper. He swims to one end, then back to the other, hangs onto the edge for a while and talks to people. Then he swims up and down a few more times. He says that this is the only thing that keeps him slimmed down to just under 300 pounds.

Another of the group Bob Hope once called "the slaves of the potbellied lamp," (meaning me), is my radio-script writer, Bill Morrow. Other radio writers consider him just about the best radio writer in the business. Bill's a little eccentric. He travels with more gear than any man I've ever heard of. He feels naked on a trip unless he carries cameras, typewriters, film, flash bulbs, fishing tackle, boots, waders and tripods. When he starts to the depot he looks like a foray moving out to harass the enemy. He's also hat-happy. He lugs a small haberdashery of assorted headgear with him; mostly Italian-made velours in winter and Panamas in the summer. Quite naturally he's God's gift to the airplane lines, for the extra fare he pays for excess baggage must amount to a sweet sum annually.

I call him The Pack Rat. When he checks out of a hotel, the management runs a bulldozer into his room to scoop out the accumulation of old paper, old bottle tops, old tin foil and old sandwich crusts. When he rooms next to me, I can hear him digging in his things at all hours of the night. When he goes into a hotel room he takes all his gear and throws it at the wall. Then he spends the rest of his visit digging and scratching for the things he wants. No matter when he gets home at night he puts on his pajamas and robe and starts digging, scratching and looking for something he needs, perhaps a little scrap of paper on which he's written a memorandum. Whatever

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A good secretary always keeps one jump ahead of her boss, especially at an office party.
—HAROLD F. BLAISDELL.

* * * * * * * * * *

it is, he's mysterious and vague about it when I query him on it in the morning.

As I've said, Bill's a brilliant radio writer, but he's also a deadline writer. He never has his script ready until fifteen minutes before I go on the air. I've suggested, "Why don't you sit down to the typewriter and knock out a few scripts and get ahead of the game? If you do that, maybe the next time we get ready to do a show there won't be a mad rush with everything topsy-turvy."

"Don't worry," he tells me. "I've got things in mind. There's no hurry. It'll be done." Three or four weeks later we've got two or three days to go, and I ask, "Have you got anything yet?"

He gives me his stock answer: "It's building. I don't know which direction it's taking as yet, and I don't want to put anything down because I may go off on another tangent." Finally my songs are set, I'm holding out my hand for the script, and Bill shows up at the studio—with nothing. Thirty minutes before we go on the air, his script starts coming in, a page at a time, from the mimeographers via runner from NBC.

Somehow it always comes out all right, and the fact that his dizzy system works cools some of the heat out of my criticism. All I know is that being a Morrow-type writer would drive me crazy. He might have had his script in his head all along, but I doubt it. For one thing, he never tells it to me, and there's no reason to keep it a secret from the one who's going to say what he writes.

He drives his secretaries crazy too. He has a five-room apartment in Hollywood where he always has an old mulligan stew or beans simmering in his kitchen. He pads around in a Japanese kimono and flip-flopping slippers looking like a bald Shirley Booth, giving whatever's cooking a stir while his secretary sits alerted behind a typewriter. She comes in at nine o'clock and takes her place, her hands poised over the keys, ready to take down his gems.

Bill says crisply, "Page One, Crosby script. Crosby says —— Just a minute; I've got to go out to the kitchen." Then he disappears and fools around until the phone rings, and it's an old pal from out of town; perhaps it's Society Kid Hogan from Chicago. Bill tells the Society Kid to "come right up," and the resultant gab fest lasts until noon. Then Bill says, "I guess we'd better have lunch." After lunch somebody else like Bob Ruark or Bill Corum—if they happen to be in town—drops in, and at five o'clock Bill's secretary is still poised. Then she goes home and another girl appears as his second shift. By then it's dinnertime and she has to wait while he dines.

After five or six days of this, he still has on paper only the words: CROSBY SKETCH, PAGE ONE, CROSBY SAYS —— This is my cue to drop in and look at him reproachfully, but I get so nervous waiting for him to write another sentence that I have to leave. He not only has a second secretary, he has a third one for pinch-hitting purposes, but none of them do anything until the last day, when a deadline's sitting in his lap. Then he fires stuff at them like a machine gun. He has one of them typing, another running to the mimeographers with his product, while the third works with John Scott Trotter on music cues. At the last moment Morrow is as busy as a one-legged man at a pants-kicking contest.

His secretaries are all shell-shocked when they've been with him for six months. Very few of his girls last longer than that. They have to have stoical temperaments to survive even that long. That's Morrow, the traveling companion and calming influence of my radio moments.

His social contacts go by fits and starts too. On tour, he can be counted upon to pick up some very unusual travel pals. Once we were en route from Boston to New York on the early-morning train, after a big night. Fortunately, a car attached to the train offered breakfast and a drink or two to restore our wasted tissues. We were having a little corned-beef hash and a bottle of ale laced with Worcestershire sauce and a raw egg, when Morrow noticed two girls in the car. Each of them was six feet tall and rugged in an opulent sort of way. They could have been backing up the line for the Green Bay Packers.

It wasn't long before Bill engaged them in conversation. In an even shorter time he was jotting down their telephone numbers and addresses in his little black book. They downed an ale or two and were waxing gay when the conductor called, "New London"; the two dolls grabbed their handbags—or their welding kits—and got off. When Bill came back from saying farewell to them, I asked, "Now what was that all about?"

"They're very nice girls," he replied.

"I know they were very nice girls," I said, "but why were you taking down their names? After all, they live in New London and you live in California."

"They're clam openers," he said. "I may be through here someday and want some clams opened. You never know."

A switch from Morrow to a more stable influence in my life is my attorney, John O'Melveny. Everyone knows I've made a lot of money out of show

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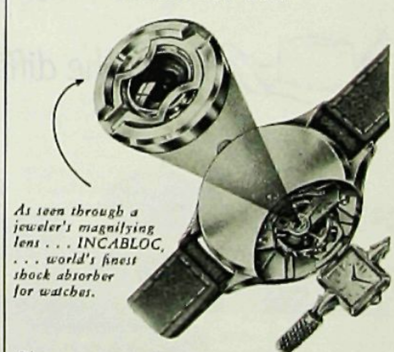
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business, but the fact that I've been able to save any of it is directly due to his guiding hand and his astute management. O'Melveny is a genial and expansive Irishman. He's been at the helm of my fitfully tossing career ship for some twenty years now. Every penny I've made, after taxes, he has taken and has husbanded carefully. In some cases he has not only husbanded them but has increased them appreciably. For instance, he tells me that the income from my oil leases alone would take care of me comfortably for the rest of my life.

I have no intention of dulling this story up with an interminable summary of my assorted business enterprises, even though they are extensive. Among other things, I'm interested in a frozen-orange-juice concern, a national ice-cream-distributing setup, a production company turning out TV short films, and a project which is a brain child of Brother Everett and which bears the excessively coy name, Bing's Things. There's also a corporation called the Bing Crosby Enterprises, set up as a catch-all for the capital gains made by the various endeavors in which I have a finger or to which I've lent my name.

Some of these capers have made a little money—some have lost a bit. I'm active also in two different partnerships. I'm in one of these with Pat Doheny, the other with R. Hope and Monty Moncrief, a Texas golfing pal; for the leasing and drilling of oil lands. Pat and Monty are oilmen with long records of success in their field, and I leave my end of the oil business in their capable hands.

I even have business interests I know nothing about. For instance, Dennis O'Keefe, touring in Europe, sent me a card of the Ristorante Bing Crosby, located in Firenze, Italy. He said the restaurant was so identified by a giant sign in front, and pictures of me in various poses adorned its walls. Next time I'm abroad I must drop into the Ristorante Bing Crosby and try to get a cup of Chianti on the cuff.

As long as I am mopping up the business department of my narrative, I might mention the Pittsburgh Pirates, in which club I've invested a bundle of what the financial lads call "venture money." It's my fervent hope that the Pittsburgh fans will be rewarded for their long-suffering patience with a team of which they can be proud. Hurry, day! In a careless moment I promised my four baseball-maniac sons that if Pittsburgh ever got into the World Series, I'd charter a private car and transport them and a party of their friends eastward for the big event. I hope I'll have to spring for that train ride yet.

Seeing the Pirates the champions of the National League would be a most satisfying and rewarding experience. But as exciting as it would be, it wouldn't hold a candle to an experience which stands out above all others in my mind: my trip overseas to entertain the troops in England and France during the last war. If I never do anything else, I'll always take satisfaction in knowing that I helped some of our soldiers relax for a few moments when they needed amusement and entertainment.

If there were enough lads in Uncle Sam's Army of the same kidney as the paratrooper I met on the Ile de France on my way overseas, it's small wonder we Americans helped our Allies win the last war. He was a very determined character, indeed.

The Ile de France had been converted into a troopship. In peacetime it carried between 1200 and 1500 passengers, but on this particular crossing they were packed together like a bride's spoons. They slept in relays. They'd sleep eight hours, then get out of their bunks, go up on deck, and let somebody else hit their sacks for eight hours.

I had a little cubicle in which I slept. It was just big enough for a bed. My door opened onto a space where paratroopers were quartered; about a regiment of them. They were a rugged-looking bunch, with crew haircuts and polished high boots. Most of them bore scars acquired during their training period. They worked off their excess energy by getting into fights nearly every day. Two or three of them climbed up into the crow's nest and

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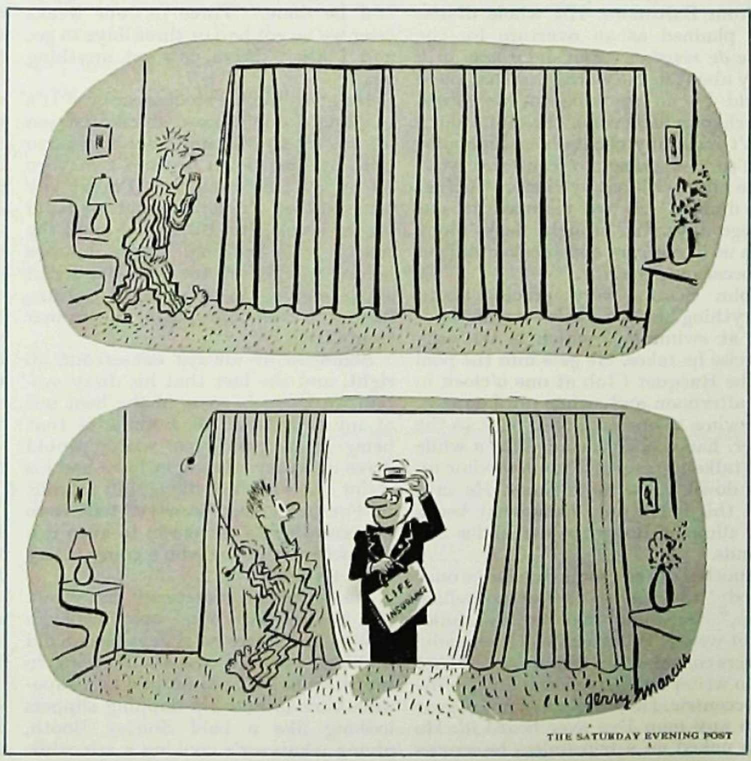

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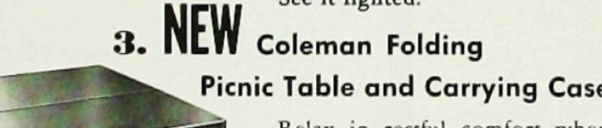

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wouldn't come down until they had seen their fill of the sea, orders or no orders. A big blond, tough, Boston-Irish paratrooper, with a chin like a landing barge, stationed himself outside my door and waylaid me.

When I came out, he said, "Sing me a song!"

"I haven't got any accompaniment here," I said. "I ought to have at least a guitar."

"Oh, yeah?" he said. "You don't want to sing me a song. The hell with you."

Our troupe was made up of a comedian, a girl singer, a girl dancer, an accordion and guitar player, and me. We did five shows a day on five different decks. We started mornings and worked through until after dinner, with time out for meals. But every time I came out of my cubicle, the blond rock from Boston was waiting for me and saying, "Come on and sing me the song!"

Each time I said, "Why don't you catch me later when my troupe is all together and we're doing a show?" On the last night, just before we were to land, I got hold of a guitar player, found the Boston strong boy, got him out in the hall, the guitar player struck a few chords and I sang him a solo. I selected Sweet Leilani for the occasion. When I was done, he harrumped, "Not bad," turned on his heel and went back to the crap game.

Evidently he'd been trained not to give up until he'd obtained his objective. I'll say for him, he had Situation Crosby well under control.

When we landed in England, we did a few transcriptions for the troops with Glenn Miller's band at the Air Force Command. Then we toured the English air bases—all the American installations, the bomber groups and the fighter groups.

The inhabitants of the British Isles are a stanch and sturdy—but to Yanks, an incomprehensible—breed. When I arrived at Greenock, a troop-debarkation town in Scotland, I ran into Fred Astaire, and we went to Glasgow together to take a train for London. Glasgow is off the beaten path for ordinary transatlantic travel. Even in peacetime it's unusual for anyone in show business to go through that city on the way to London, Paris or Rome. So our appearance in Glasgow—if I may be so immodest—was a sensation. I can only conclude that the last actor seen there before Fred and I hit town was Tom Mix or John Bunny. It seemed to us that people came out of the braes and glens who hadn't been in Glasgow for years.

The police estimated that there were 35,000 or 40,000 people milling around the depot where we made our stopover. It wasn't a big depot, and because of the pushing and crowding, Fred was afraid someone might get hurt, so we got the police to lock us in the baggage room for protection until the train left. The crowd grew more demonstrative and announced that they wanted me to sing and Fred to dance, but they filled every inch of space and there was no room for us to do either. The train was made up and ready to go, but we couldn't board it because we couldn't shove through the press. The policemen waggled reproving pinkies, but although a bobbie's slightest wish is usually law in Great Britain, it made no difference in this case.

The crowd continued to surge around the baggage room for forty-five minutes. Fred and I were desperate. We had performance dates in London; it was important for us to take the train, and it couldn't be held for us much longer.

In this crisis, I peered through a window to see a figure striding down a ramp. He was dressed in striped trousers, a frock coat, a wing collar, the inevitable Ascot scarf and a high silk hat.

Confronting the crowd, he said, "Stand clear! Do you hear me? Stand clear!" He pronounced it "cle-ah."

An amazing thing happened. The crowd fell back like a receding wave. We made our exit from the baggage room and walked down the ramp while our guardian in the high hat held up his hand portentously, like Moses giving the word to the Red Sea. When the train pulled out, and the conductor came through, Fred and I asked, "Who was the fellow who had such phenomenal contrôl over the crowd? Was he the Minister of Transport?"

"That," the conductor said, "was the stytionmawster!"

I don't know how that stationmaster rates with his wife, but I know one

(Continued on Page 107)

"Your father will drive you to the party, but don't let him get out of the car."

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thing: To everyone else he's the most important fellow in Glasgow.

After the slight delay in Glasgow, our troupe flew to Cherbourg. We landed there a month and a half after D day and worked our way up the peninsula, following our armed forces to Paris. Then we went on to Nancy and Metz, where the fighting was still going on. We did three shows a day. Between shows we visited field hospitals or other places where the wounded were cared for.

We were on the tour four or five weeks, but it seemed only four or five days to me; we were always on the move and there was so much excitement. The look on the faces of the men we entertained was better than money from Paramount. They were so glad to see us. Despite the mud and the jouncing equipment we rode in, the girls in our troupe always managed to pour themselves into an exciting-looking gown for each show and to do their hair real pretty.

Our big number was White Christmas. Christmas wasn't far away, and the chances of anyone in our audiences getting home for it were so remote that it was a tough song to sing, but it was asked for wherever we worked.

Shortly before my tour was over, I visited General Eisenhower's headquarters at Versailles. I'd found a memorandum in my hotel mailbox which said: "A Colonel Galt wants to see you. Please call him." I was so busy I didn't have a chance to call back right away, but when I mentioned the message to a friend, he asked, "Do you know who Colonel Galt is?" When I said, "No," he told me, "He's one of Eisenhower's aides. Chances are the general wants to see you."

"I'd like to see him too," I said, "but he must be very busy and I don't want him to think he has to entertain every itinerant minstrel who happens along."

"If you do see him," my friend said, "and if he asks if there's anything he can do for you, why not see if he'll lend you an automobile for a couple of days?"

Automobiles were at a premium. Civilians couldn't get them. The subways had broken down and the French were all on bicycles. Colonels drove up to the Ritz in small cars, took out chains with links as big as horseshoes and a giant lock, and locked their cars to hydrants before going in for lunch. I got in touch with Colonel Galt, and the upshot was that our troupe went out to Versailles and did some shows. Then we had luncheon with General Ike and his staff, and since he liked to sing barbershop harmony, we got up a quartet. Ike sang baritone.

When I was leaving, he asked, "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"You could let me have an automobile for a couple of days if you've got one handy," I said. I told him I wanted to go to Fontainebleau to see a friend from California who'd married a Frenchman and who'd been stranded there since the war began. It was true enough.

"Take my car and driver," he said.

"When do you want them back?" I asked him.

"When you're through with them," he said.

That was on a Wednesday. The general got his car back on Saturday. It had five stars painted on it, and I'm afraid that those five stars were parked in front of a few gay spots where the general wouldn't have appeared.

When I returned it, I asked, "Is there anything I can do for you when I get home?"

"Yes," he said. "You might send me some hominy grits. I can't seem to get any over here." When I returned to New York, I mentioned those grits at a press conference. A month later I got a cablegram from Eisenhower. "Call off the grits," it said. "I've got grits spilling over all this area."

Kindhearted ladies from the South had responded; some of it was cooked, some of it was raw, some of it had sauce, some even had red gravy on it. I hate to think what those cooked, sauced and gravied grits must have looked like and smelled like after days or weeks en route from Dixie to Versailles.

I've read that Ike, like any man in his right mind, hates war. Could be that that message I relayed home for him about grits has something to do with his strong love of peace.

Editors' Note—This is the seventh of a series of articles by Mr. Crosby and Mr. Martin. The eighth and last will appear next week.

"I can see the improvement already!"
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