

What Radio Means to Me

By W. FRANCIS GOODREAU

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

Longfellow.

SOMEHOW, whenever I think of radio I also think of these lines by Longfellow; they express so well something of what radio means to me. After having spent almost three years in a hospital, I know what a boon radio has proved to me and others in hospitals.

I entered the hospital in November, 1920. At that time radio was very little used for entertainment purposes. To take up my time and pass the weary hours away, I tried many things such as basket-making and reading, but nothing seemed to satisfy me for any length of time. Something else was needed to make my stay in the hospital more pleasant, something that would grow more interesting day by day.

I was wondering what to do next, when I was told that we were to have a radio concert. As I had never heard music by radio, I was naturally impatient for the concert to start. It was given through the kindness of Troop 5, Providence Boy Scouts. They used a set with a two-stage audio amplifier and loud speaker. The concert was given in a large ward, but the music could be heard plainly in every corner. The concert lasted only about one hour, but I received more enjoyment in this one hour than I had ever had in any one hour in the hospital.

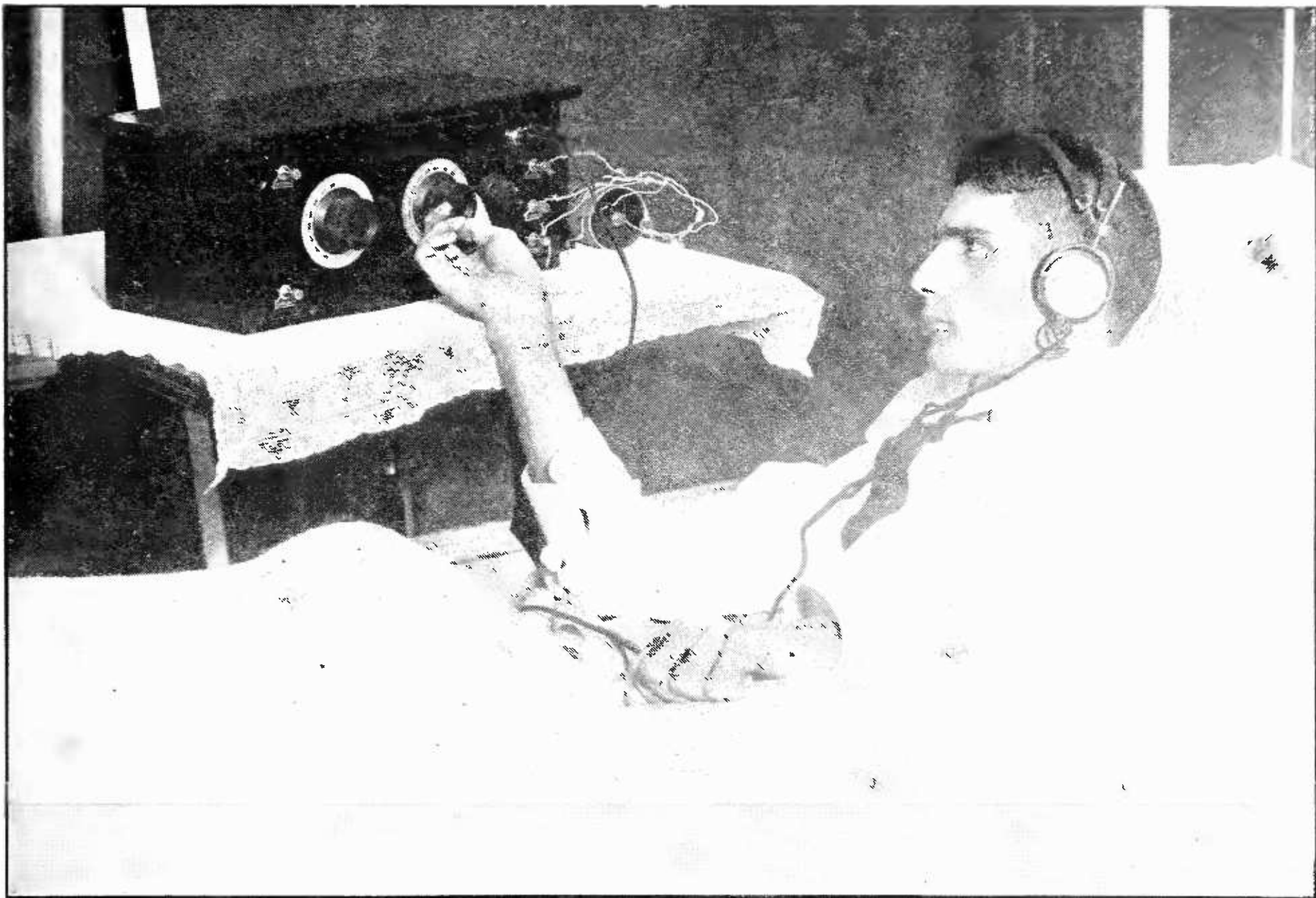
Thus I received my introduction to radio. From that day I have been, and always will be, a radio "bug." I decided I would have a radio set, but was a little puzzled how to get one. I had almost decided to purchase an outfit when I was told by a friend that it was easy to make a simple crystal receiver. That suggestion appealed to me, for I could while away much of my time in making it. By making my own I would be sure to get a better idea of radio and would perhaps enjoy a simple receiver that I had built myself more than one I might purchase. I secured several books on radio, from which I got at least a faint idea of radio sets and

how to build them. I decided that a two-slide tuner was what I wanted. I secured the material and built one. Strange to say, it worked, and I must confess that my first radio set gave me more pleasure than all the radio sets I have had since.

I used this set for some time and then decided that I had outgrown it. I had heard that a two-circuit tuner would give better results, so I built one. It worked splendidly, so I commenced to study radio in earnest; I studied radio books on an average of five hours a day. At last I had found what I had been seeking, that something which should pass time away and give greater pleasure the longer I worked with it.

In the daytime I studied my books and worked on my radio set; at night I listened to music until I became tired and went to sleep. I had been using this radio set (the two-circuit one) for about two months, when I thought I could undertake a tube set. I purchased several new parts and built a three-circuit regenerative set using a WD-11 tube given me by a friend. I was somewhat disappointed with this set because, like many other beginners with a tube set, I expected too much of it at first. I expected to hear stations a thousand miles away the first night, but I didn't. In fact, for the first week I heard nothing that I could not hear on my crystal set. However, as time went on, I became more expert. Soon I found no trouble in reaching every evening those stations that I had long wanted to hear.

To share my pleasure with the others in the hospital, I found I would need a two-stage amplifier and some kind of a loud-speaker. Well, the two stage was soon secured and a friend kindly loaned his loud-speaker. Permission was obtained for us to give a concert one Sunday evening in a ward. As there was a good program scheduled, we made our initial bow under favorable conditions. This



THE WIDE WORLD BUT TWO FEET AWAY

concert consisted of selections by one hundred harps, vocal selections, etc. The patients told me that they enjoyed it a lot. Some of them decided that they would like to have radio sets and asked me if I would help them make them. I did, and soon there were twelve sets in our ward. No one but those who have had the experience can ever know how much enjoyment radio is giving to those who are shut in.

To the person shut in, radio means more than just a new means of hearing music. Although the music we hear is excellent, the greatest benefit we derive from radio is *the feeling of intimate touch with the world*. We cannot go to the theatre nor the ball game, but

thanks to radio they can and do come to us. A turn of the wrist and we have our choice of entertainment for the evening.

Truly radio means much to me. Those in charge of our hospitals are coming to realize how much radio can help them in their great work, and as fast as they can, they are installing radio for the benefit of those in their care. Unfortunately, many hospitals have not the funds to install radio. However, I am sure when it is realized just how much radio means and how much good it can do, the funds will be found somehow. Radio began to interest me eighteen months ago and to-day I realize it has filled a place in my life that nothing else could ever do.

What Would You Like to Have in RADIO BROADCAST?

The editors would be pleased to hear from readers of the magazine on the following (or other) topics:

1. *The kind of article, or diagram, or explanation, or improvement you would like to see in RADIO BROADCAST.*

2. *What has interested you most, and what least, in the numbers you have read so far.*