



MRS. SYDNEY GREENBIE
She makes it seem natural

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at all times and go out in the evenings to help with productions as I had before."

"So you took to books?"

"Well, yes, though not exactly deliberately. I think I was first asked to write a book embodying some of my ideas after I had been holding forth on some social occasion. A publisher asked me if I could put my ideas down in book form. *Personality* was my first popular psychology venture, and it was followed by four others: *Arts of Leisure*—that is mainly on manners—*In Quest of Contentment*, just a homely way of putting over home truths, *The Art of Living in Wartime*, and *Be Your Age*."

From psychology Mrs. Greenbie graduated to history. She planned to write a popular history which would show the contribution made to American history by local groups of people. She planned also to write the history and literature of the American dream of a better life. That took her to the Local History Room of the Library of Congress, and there she found a mine of relatively untouched material. The result was *American Saga*, followed by *My Dear Lady*, a biography of Anna Ella Carroll. Her most recent book, *Lincoln's Daughters of Mercy*, an account of the organisation which was the forerunner of the American Red Cross, has just been published.

The Children Flourished

And where did the children come in? Mrs. Greenbie and her husband have not "stayed put" long in any place, and so the children have had what Mrs. Greenbie calls a "complicated" life, but I was assured that they flourished on it. "The chief difficulty was the formal preparation for college, but the war has intervened, anyhow, and the boy is in the Army now, and both are married."

In fact Mrs. Greenbie is a distinctly proud grandmother of a 14-month toddler, and very pleased to talk babies and baby feeding with anyone. I was no longer surprised at the copy of *Feeding and Care of Baby*, by Sir Truby King, which I had previously spotted on her bookshelves. As for bringing up her own family, well, yes, it did have its own complications. The feeling that she had that the children needed a quiet and stable home background led her to take a job for some years as a university lecturer at Holyoak College. "The papers gave me a lot

of dreadful publicity," said Mrs. Greenbie. "They had headlines like 'She Takes a Place Where the Children Can Play,' and I suppose it was mainly true. Anyhow, the children got the background they needed, and I was able to get a nice college girl from time to time to mind them. But we missed the life and stimulus of a big city, so did not stay too long."

Feminists in America

I could not leave without a question on the rights and status of women in America. Have women succeeded in gaining equal rights with men in America? Mrs. Greenbie explained that there were two groups among feminists in America, those who pressed for absolute equality in every sphere, and those who were anxious to guard women's interests. "I belong to the latter group, and as you can see, it is not quite the same thing. We feel that if we press for equality too far we will lose all sorts of women's privileges, and that special protective measures will go. And as for opportunity, we feel that in the States women have got all sorts of opportunities politically and in all sorts of spheres which perhaps they have not got in many other countries."

It was only as I was making my way home that I realised that although we had talked for quite a long while, there were still a whole lot more things that I would have liked to ask about: that astonishing tour round the world in aid of a Wesleyan pageant, her life in Japan (for she has been there, too), more of her opinions on combining careers and children, or even what she thinks of US. However, she has come to make a home in Wellington, so I may yet get my answers.

—S.S.

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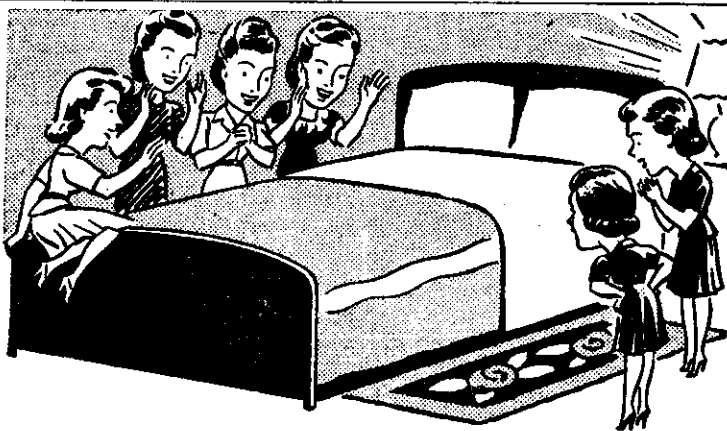
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