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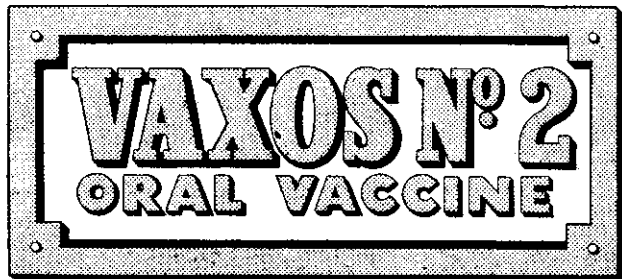
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MEDICATED FOAM BATH

BACKGROUND TO BARBARA WARD

BARBARA WARD is already fairly well known to our readers, both as a broadcaster and as assistant-editor of "The Economist," and she has once appeared on our cover. She figures in the new BBC "Brains Trust" series just beginning from the National Stations and will be heard in the session from 2YA on Friday, May 3, at 8.28 p.m., so our readers should be interested in this biography of Miss Ward—"one of the most striking figures of her generation"—which we reprint from "Picture Post." It was written by Antonia White.



Left: BARBARA WARD at the microphone

notable figure in so many fields. Yet she is aware that it may be a dangerous habit and one which might lead to the dissipation of her powers.

Happy Childhood

Her childhood must have been among the happiest on record. She has ideal parents, a Catholic mother and a father with Quaker sympathies, who live in such harmony that she never remembers hearing an angry word at home. They are, moreover, firm believers in liberal education for women. Barbara had the chance of discovering and developing all her talents in a varied training which included a convent school in England, the Lycée

BBC photograph

ABOUT two years ago, having heard a good deal about Barbara Ward, I went to a "Sword of the Spirit" meeting at which she was to speak. On the way into the hall, I saw a nun I knew talking to a slim, attractive, very well-dressed girl of a type you rarely see at pious or political gatherings. The nun stopped me and said, "I don't think you've met Barbara, have you?"

Most celebrities on such occasions greet one with some muttered politeness and an absent eye. But Barbara immediately began to talk to me as naturally as if she had just run into an old friend at a cocktail party. I had the impression, not effaced by many subsequent meetings, of freshness, frankness, radiance and a curious innocent sophistication. Also of disarming, childlike confidence, a very warm heart and a very determined will.

On the face of things, no one could be more successful or more enviable than Barbara Ward is at this moment. Only thirty-one (and looking considerably younger), she has made a triple name as public speaker, broadcaster and political journalist. She is pretty, full of life and zest, and she seems to have an infinite capacity for making and keeping friends. All her life she has found it easier to say "Yes" than "No," as is natural to someone so versatile and so sociable. Without this characteristic she would not be a

Molière, the Sorbonne, one year in Germany and three at Oxford.

The odd thing is that Barbara never had any intention of adopting any of the professions she now so successfully practises. She decided on her future while she was still a child, and all through that long and liberal education she never wavered in her ambition. Among her many gifts she has a charming, pure soprano of considerable range. At Oxford she read Philosophy and Political Economy, and was the only woman of her year to take a first in Modern Greats. When the Principal of Somerville sent for this brilliant student to discuss her career, Barbara replied without hesitation, "I want to be an opera singer." The Principal's only comment was, "In that case, I fear we can do nothing for you."

Influence of Religion

When she went down, at 21, she had arrived at a critical point. At Oxford she had been a decorative and ubiquitous figure. Not only had she worked, but she had ridden, danced, sung, fenced, acted, and gone to all the parties. Mainly through the influence of Margery Fry, she had become interested in politics, especially in international affairs. She had also become intellectually dissatisfied with the Catholic religion and no longer believed or practised it. Now she felt the time had come to stand still and