

take stock of herself. She went away alone in order to be quiet and to think things out.

One result of this temporary retreat was that she decided to make the Catholic religion henceforth the centre and mainspring of her life. The other result of her stocktaking was that she totally gave up the idea of becoming an opera singer. Immediately and ironically a telegram arrived, offering her a student vacancy in a well-known company. She refused it without a qualm.

Her position was thus the exact opposite of most brilliant young people who had just left the University. She had worked on her spiritual position, but she had not the faintest idea of what roads she was going to take in the world.

Within a few months of coming down from Oxford she became, at someone else's suggestion, a University Extension Lecturer. Her subject was the one that had begun to interest her at Somerville—foreign affairs. She is an excellent linguist and, when she was abroad, she had always had the "feel" of a country without being at all politically conscious. Now her knowledge was to become wider and deeper. For three years she lectured in the winter and travelled in the summer, visiting Germany, Austria, Italy and

Turkey. Lecturing showed that she had a quite remarkable gift for public speaking. Her singing lessons had taught her to produce her flexible and attractive voice; her acting experience helped her to make real contact with her audience. If you have only heard her on the Brains Trust, you have no idea what she can do when she is speaking to people in the same room. Without any tricks, or the least straining or over-emphasis, she can rouse the sleepiest audience. There are times when she really seems to be inspired.

From Platform to Paper

In 1937 (she was then 22) Nelson's asked her to write a book. Once more, you notice, the suggestion came from outside. The result was *International Share-out*, which dealt mainly with Colonial problems. The book, which appeared in 1938, was a success and Barbara found that she could convince on paper as well as on a platform. It only remained for an editor to notice that here was someone with the makings of a first-class political journalist. Quite soon an editor did so.

In 1939 Geoffrey Crowther invited her to contribute free-lance articles to *The Economist*. By 1940 she was assistant-editor, specialising in Foreign Affairs.

Another new field opened in 1940, one which gave her scope to express her deepest convictions. Cardinal Hinsley, in

founding *The Sword of the Spirit*, launched a movement to rally Catholics behind the nation's just cause and rouse them to co-operate with other Christian bodies in studying the great social questions of the day. From the first, Barbara took a leading part in it. In the intervals of her hard, full-time job on *The Economist* she went all over the country, usually travelling by night, speaking at "Sword" meetings, especially during the "Joint Christian Weeks." Barbara has an intense personal religion. She believes, however, that Christianity is not a private spiritual luxury, nor something to be kept apart from daily life, but a living force to be applied to public affairs as well as to private conduct.

The Brains Trust

In 1943 Barbara said "Yes" once more; this time to the BBC. I asked her what she considered the real point of the Brains Trust programme, which is second only in popularity to Tommy Handley. Her answer was, "It isn't supposed to be a fount of information but a lesson in conversation."

So far, on her way through life, Barbara Ward has encountered neither opposition nor failure. Her personality is so charming that people instinctively want to smooth her path. Yet her genuinely childlike quality may conceivably

isolate her too much from the darkness and complexity of ordinary human nature, from those confusing factors for which any reformer must allow if he is not to end in disillusion. There are many things which she now knows only by hearsay, and which she may have to discover painfully for herself, as she rediscovered her faith, working against the grain instead of, however efficiently, with it. The time may be coming when she will have to say "No" to much that she finds delightful and interesting and take a path where the going is rougher and the rewards less immediate. One feels that she realises this herself and that, at thirty-one, she may be on the verge of another stocktaking.

She is one of the most striking figures of her generation, she has already collected more laurels than most women collect in a lifetime, but I, for one, wait with intense eagerness to see what Barbara will be doing when she is forty.

IT is more than a year since Major Glenn Miller, known as "the Army's swing Sousa of World War II," was lost in a plane crash. But in January last 34 of his G.I. musicians, now civilians, opened on Broadway, still calling themselves the Glenn Miller Orchestra. A public that had not forgotten Miller packed the house.

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