

PORTRAIT OF AN EDITOR

*PERHAPS in solitary, awful state he sits,
Like some lone eagle on his craggy throne,
Remote beyond his silent ramparts from
The world that seeks him. Brooding there alone,
Hemmed in by countless words, by endless streams
Of would-be writers' cherished hopes and dreams.*

*PERHAPS with weary eye he swiftly scans
The songs to spring, outpourings to the moon,
And wonders why some scribe could not aspire
To write a sonnet to a steak at noon.
The while his pencil, merciless and blue,
Makes mincemeat of the spring and love that's true.*

*AND maybe he is human after all,
No rough-hewn eagle on his craggy shelf,
But just a man who knows the lonely road
Because he climbed each cleft and rise himself.
He kills our hopes and tears our dreams to shreds
That we may weave again, with finer threads.*

—Nancy Bruce

which these restaurants could be re-opened on a permanent basis, and sponsored by municipal authorities. The standard meal is a simple but well-cooked two-course dinner costing about 1/6."

"Do these extend to the suburbs?"

"There are not enough in the suburbs. Generally they serve the more congested areas. My husband's plans for the community settlements include all sorts of facilities. (She made a rapid sketch on a piece of paper.) The tendency with towns is to plan them on the grid-iron pattern—rows of houses in straight lines, but why? We would like to see towns on the Reilly Green plan—blocks of houses, not flats, built on a petal-like plan with all the community facilities in the centre of the flower so to speak. Each block of houses could be built to enclose a large oval green where children could play without fear of their running away and without any need to cross roads. For each block of houses there should be a communal kitchen and a permanent cook who could be helped out by the group of mothers. There should also be a nursery school and infant welfare centre and meeting hall—in fact all the facilities which would make living easier for the community.

Day Nurseries and Part-time Work

"Day nurseries of course were very important to women during the war. Some of these closed after the war but there are many still functioning. They are a great relief to mothers of small children, and child psychologists generally agree that a day nursery is actually good for a pre-school child for some hours of the day through a full-time day nursery is usually too much for the young child."

"Hasn't it been too much for the average mother of a family to take on outside work?"

"It was found during the war that a good method of utilising the services of married women was to give them part-time employment. It proved very satisfactory. For example, one factory I visited—it made the tail assemblies for the Lancaster bombers—was with the exception of six full-time workers, entirely staffed by women working part-time. The manager was even surprised to find that two women working four-hour shifts produced more than one woman on for eight hours!

"In the U.S.S.R. it is, as we know, government policy to provide every facility to enable women to work. Every woman has three months' leave

with pay when she has a baby and the right of reinstatement in her job afterwards. There is also full provision for day-nurseries and part-time employment, and women do every sort of job.

"In Sweden there are the same sorts of inducement to encourage women to go back into jobs—especially industrial jobs. For the better-off there are, for instance, the community houses. These are big blocks of flats with very full facilities for hiring cheaply every sort of electrical, labour-saving device for cleaning, polishing, washing, or ironing. There is in each block a single-room flat kept for a woman cleaner, and downstairs there is a communal dining room where you can eat or order food to be sent to your flat. There are also, as a matter of course, nurseries with trained staff, and a garden. This sounds rather in the luxury class but strong attempts are being made to get these community houses with rents pegged down to working class wages."

The Future Outlook

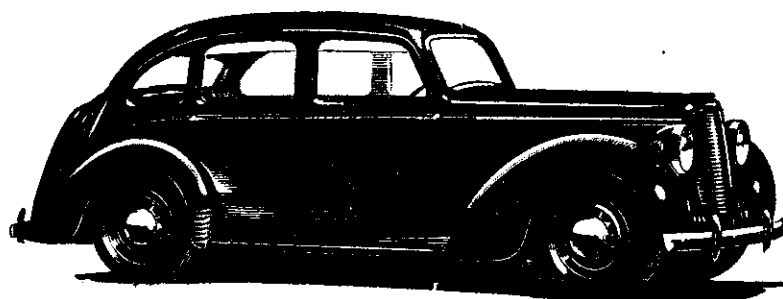
"And the future outlook for women?"

Mrs. Williams-Ellis is hopeful: "Things are going our way," she said. "We may wonder why the women of last century, who were pioneers in universities and the professions, did not make a better showing, but you must remember that many of our modern sciences (and our 20th Century outlook) just didn't exist. Take for instance social science and psychology: these are primarily concerned with people. The 19th Century considered things more important than human beings. Production was more important than producers. Coal mattered more than miners. Education was based on subjects. I've seen an almost complete reversal of this. Take Mary Somerville's slogan: 'It isn't what you can teach but what they can learn.' In the 20th Century it is the human factor that is seen as the limiting factor. This change of attitude is very important for women because it is these things that demand qualities such as are associated with women. Women are interested in their fellow workers; they are sensitive to social atmosphere. The organic sciences, where in recent years there has been immense progress, are those where women particularly shine. But the important thing is that they be given the chance to shine."

Mrs. Williams-Ellis ended where she began: "The world to-day can't afford to lose the talents and special abilities of half the human race," she said.

—S.S.

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