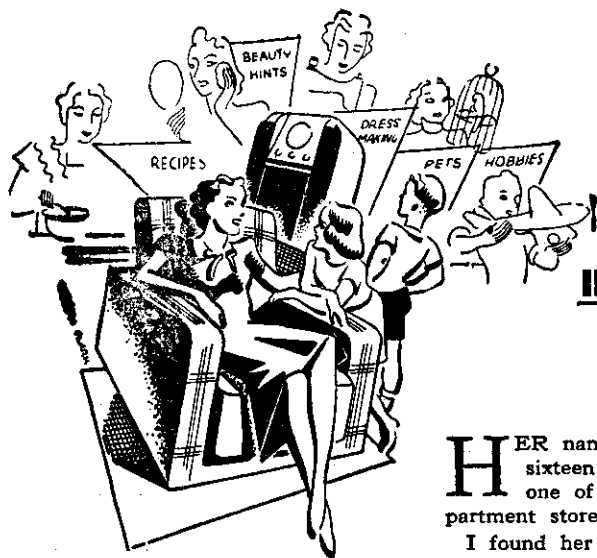


Women and the Home

Radio is the slender wire that brings the world and its affairs into the tiny kitchens and living rooms which hitherto had isolated so many housekeepers in the performance of their duties
—Margaret Bondfield



INTERVIEW

SIGN, PLEASE!

HER name is Netta Bodoni. For sixteen years she has worked in one of Wellington's largest department stores.

I found her quite by chance.

I was lingering by the lace counter, watching the girls serving their customers, when I saw this girl. She looked different, somehow, a fund of possibilities.

I sought out the floor superintendent, a slim, vital-looking woman, who readily agreed to my request for an interview with one of her girls.

"Have you anyone in mind?" she asked.

"Yes," I answered, "that girl over there."

"Funny," said the superintendent. "I was going to suggest her myself."

We were introduced.

A Real New Zealander

Netta's eyes and skin proclaimed her Italian origin, though she was emphatic that she was a real New Zealander. Both her father and her grandfather were pioneers in early Wellington.

She went straight to this job on leaving school—a little over sixteen years ago. In that time she has worked up from a junior — through the varying grades—to head saleswoman of her department.

Understanding the Customer

She regards her job as a profession. And she believes the only way to make a success of salesmanship is to apply practical psychology to it. Not the kind condensed to a formula that you find in text books, but the workable kind.

"Every person is different," she said, "and what would apply to one person would be useless with the next."

"Your job must be a trying one at times—on your patience, I mean?"

She answered seriously.

"No, I never remember feeling impatient. I always put myself in the customer's place—perhaps she's not feeling well—or perhaps she's had some upset at home. There are a dozen reasons to excuse an irritable customer."

"Then I've been wasting all my sympathy," I answered.

"Oh, no, not at all; that happens to be just my own way of looking at it. Others may feel differently."

"I suppose you get all types of customers?" I asked.

"Of course—and very few are disagreeable. But you have to be awake

and alert all the time, that is if you have any feeling of responsibility about your job. We get customers who know what they want—and can't express it, and others who know what they want—and won't say it. It is our job to advise and suggest till we find what they really need."

Daily Routine

"What is your routine here?" I asked.

"Well, we start at ten-to-nine, and we are allowed to do any personal shopping up to eleven o'clock. We have morning tea—and then lunch is taken in three shifts—from eleven-thirty to two-thirty."

"Tell me," I said. "I have often felt so much for the girls having to stand all day. It must be dreadfully tiring on the feet?"

"Personally, I have never been troubled," she said. "But of course we all wear suitable shoes. That helps."

"Never high heels?"

Netta's dimples showed.

"As a matter of fact, I change into high heels for the afternoon—so as to look pretty."

"That sounds perfectly reasonable," I laughed. "The girls, by the way, look a very nice lot."

"They are. I go round to shows with them at various times, and they are a splendid crowd. During the winter we have our own Social Club, and you'd be surprised what talent we have here in the shop. A number of us bring along our knitting, and we have a great time together."

Keeping Warm

A gust of chilly wind blew in at that moment from a neighbouring doorway.

"It must be cold for you here in the winter," I remarked, "not being able to move round and keep warm."

The dimples showed again.

"But we do move—we are seldom still—and we don't really notice the cold. The only things that trouble the girls are chilblains—they get them on their hands through contact with the glass counters. Still, even that is not a grouch."

"Are you responsible for the girls in your department?" I asked.

"Yes, but each girl has to see that the particular stock she handles is kept replenished." She nodded across to display tables. "We take a pride in keeping those tables attractive. They do look nice, don't they?"



★ **MARIA MARKAM**, Icelandic soprano, is annoyed with King Christian of Denmark.

Miss Markam has arrived in Sydney after a two-months' sea voyage from Copenhagen.

"Why did he not resist the German invasions?" she asked.

"I have not been able to sleep since I heard of the invasion. We heard the news on the ship. But I suppose the invasion could not be stopped. Denmark has so few people."

"My Iceland — surely the British will protect her."

I cordially agreed. They were attractive.

Ambition—and a Hobby

"Sixteen years seems a long time, Netta. What is your next step up?" I asked.

"A buyer."

"You'd like that, of course?"

"Ye—s — though you don't come in contact with so many people — I think I'd miss that."

This unusual young woman, putting her love of humanity before a more profitable post!

"Tell me," I asked. "What is your hobby—away from your work?"

"Oh, no one would be interested in that," she laughed.

"On the contrary, it is part of you as much as your job."

Netta leant forward and spoke in a whisper.

"I'm an entertainer. Songs at the piano and recitations—all that sort of thing. I do a lot of it."

And if you met Netta, you would realise that she would be just as successful at that as she has been in her job.

I said good-bye and wished her luck. "I hope you say something nice about me," she laughed back.

"Just you wait!" I shot back.

I have changed nothing but her name.

These Should Interest You:

Talks prepared by the A.C.E., Home Science Tutorial Section, the University of Otago:

"Figuring Out Our Best Lines." Monday, May 13, 1YA 3.30 p.m.; 2YA 3 p.m.; 3YA 2.30 p.m.

"Vitamin B for Appetite." Wednesday, May 15, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

"Most of Us Need More Milk." Thursday, May 16, 1YA 3.30 p.m.; 3YA 2.30 p.m.; Friday, May 17, 2YA 3 p.m.

"Fitting a Home for Children." Friday, May 17, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

"The Study of Signs and Symptoms": A Representative of the St. John Ambulance. Tuesday, May 14, 2YA 11.30 a.m.

"Fashions": Mrs. E. Early. Tuesday, May 14, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

From the ZB Stations

"The Celebrity Session." Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from all stations at 7 p.m.

"The Shopping Reporter" (Marina). Mondays to Fridays, from 1ZB at 11.30 a.m.

"The Home Service Session" (Mary Anne). Mondays to Fridays, from 2ZB at 2.30 p.m.

"Teddy Grundy's Travelogue." Sundays from 3ZB at 2 p.m.

"The Young Marrieds' Circle" (Breta). Mondays to Fridays from 4ZB at 4.30 p.m.

"Bringing Up the Small Child (3) Children's Fears": Mrs. Beatrice Beeby. Thursday, May 16, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

Talk under the Auspices of the Christchurch Branch of the National Council of Women. Thursday, May 16, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

"Music and Flowers: Flowers and Society": Baron George Wrangell. Saturday, May 18, 1YA 11 a.m.

"Music and Flowers": Flowers and Personality": Mme. Helena Rubenstein. Saturday, May 18, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

"Music and Flowers: Your Birth Flower": Myra Kingsley. Saturday, May 18, 3YA 11 a.m.

"Music and Flowers: Flowers and the Film Stars": Carolyn van Wych. Saturday, May 18, 4YA 10.50 a.m.