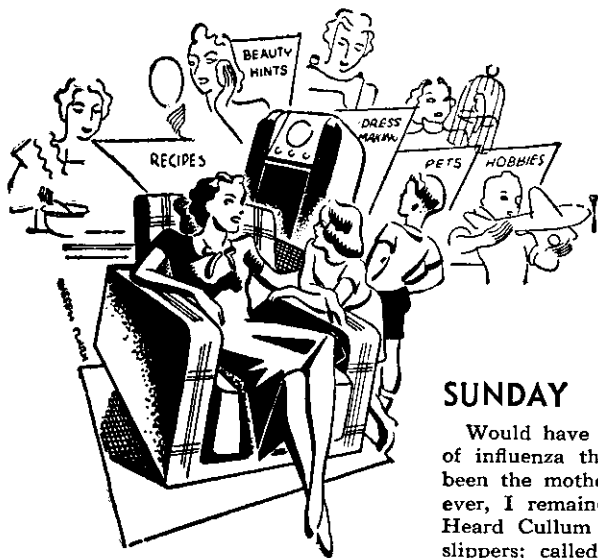


Women and the Home

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



THE DIARY OF A WOOLGATHERER

This diary by "Woolgatherer," of Green Island, is the second of those selected for publication from entries sent by readers who were invited to improve—if they could—on Betty's Diary.

These Should Interest You:

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

"Renovations and Remodelling of Clothing." Monday, August 5, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 2YA 3 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.

"Why Not Eat Your Own Vegetables?" Wednesday, August 7, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

"How to Save Fuel." Thursday, August 8, 1YA 3.30 p.m.; 3YA 2.30 p.m.; Friday, August 9, 2YA 3 p.m.

"Making Household Equipment Last." Friday, August 9, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

From The ZB Stations

1ZB: at 8.45 p.m. on Monday, August 5, "Pageant of Empire"

2ZB: at 5 p.m. on Sunday, August 4, "Storytime with Bryan O'Brien"

3ZB: at 2.30 Mondays to Fridays, "Home Service Session" (Jill)

4ZB: at 3.45 p.m. Saturday, August 10, "Wide Range Melodies"

2ZA: at 9.0 p.m. Sunday, August 4, "Film Hits of Yesterday"

Talk by a Representative of the Wellington Red Cross Society. Tuesday, August 6, 2YA 11.30 a.m.

"Fashions": Ethel Early. Tuesday, August 6, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

"Cooking by Electricity": Miss D. McStay. Wednesday, August 7, 4YA 11 a.m.

"Talks by a Biologist: Diseases Caused by Animals" (2): Althea Solomons, B.Sc. Thursday, August 8, 1YA 11 a.m.

"Spring and Summer Fashions," by "Lorraine." Thursday, August 8, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

"Help for the Home Cook": Sara McKee. Friday, August 9, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

"Cooking by Gas": Miss J. Ainge. Friday, August 9, 4YA 11 a.m.

SUNDAY

Would have treated myself to a bout of influenza this morning if I had not been the mother of five children. However, I remained in bed for breakfast. Heard Cullum being scolded about his slippers; called out that one had been lost for days. Surprised later to find that both slippers had been found. When I asked Father where the slipper had been found I was told that I was spoiling Cullum who should be made to do things. On asking Cullum was told tearfully that Daddy had made him find it. There is much in a father's firm hand, but would like to know where the slipper was found.

MONDAY

Decided to wash when I saw that weather had decided to clear up. Tried to make up for lost time and was annoyed to see roadman working near gate. This meant morning and afternoon tea. Watched him vindictively from wash-house window and thought that if he could talk so long to a neighbour without working I need not provide tea. Quarter of hour later was conscience-stricken to see how steadily he was working. Put on kettle.

Towards night remember that Cullum's only warm pyjamas are still on the line. Air them in the oven. Result a fearful scorch, and fearful screeches from the owner. For some reason that I could not understand he was absolutely afraid to wear them. Wonder what dreadful complex I have planted in his subconscious mind. My hope is that there is safety in numbers—if there are enough complexes they'll straighten one another out.

TUESDAY

To-day Cullum came in covered with mud and smelling of fresh growing violets. Washed him and hurried out to see if there were a few violets in flower, but found nothing. Began weeding, and the smell of crushed marigold leaves and a few out-of-season wallflowers carried me back to childhood as only flower smells can. After being lost for half an hour remembered I had more important work to do inside. On my way in I found an empty talc tin and solved the mystery of violets. Violets evidently need to be mixed with earth to prevent that over-sweet and cloying smell they have when picked. I wonder if Kingsley was thinking of grubby little boys when he wrote "Like children with violets playing."

WEDNESDAY

Called to-day to see Lou and admired the newly-painted kitchen with its cream ceiling and cream panelling; but she said it was like living in a

modern afternoon tea room—that there was no incentive to sit and think; that there wasn't a single dark corner where one could rest one's eyes and thoughts. She said that even the spiders looked self-conscious crossing the ceiling. We had an argument over the question whether spiders could walk on the ceilings like flies, and I asked why encourage spiders at all. She said it seemed uneconomic to kill flies with one hand and to kill their sworn enemy with the other.

Returned home wondering why pessimists were supposed to be depressing.

THURSDAY

David returned from school with hang-dog expression. Was terribly worried, but remembered the fate of the mother in the ballad who asked too many questions, so kept my curiosity hidden.

After tea David made a clean breast of everything: he had to write a composition on King Alfred. Was so relieved that I planned and practically wrote the essay, gleaned the facts from Mrs. Markham's "History of England." After David went to bed I returned to Mrs. Markham and was rewarded with the following about a prisoner of Henry I.: "Edgar, however, was considered no formidable enemy and was soon set at liberty and spent the rest of his life in harmless and enviable obscurity. His Saxon blood, and his mild and amiable disposition, made him the idol of the English; while his imbecility and want of enterprise rendered him too insignificant to be feared by the Normans."

FRIDAY

Went shopping in the city. Fascinated at afternoon tea by two women at the next table. They were beautifully groomed, with gaunt faces, hard eyes, very red lips, and ruddy nails, and had a baby in a pram! It was an ultra-modern baby, for instead of a rattle it had a well-scrubbed and bleached knuckle bone. Occasionally the mother would pick up the bone with her crimson-tipped fingers and wave it in front of the baby. The whole performance faintly suggested ghouls and vampires. I strained my ears to catch their conversation, and felt surprised to hear a motherly discussion on scalloped versus plain hems on babies' frocks. As I went out I peeped at baby and was relieved to see a charming fair-haired blue-eyed ordinary baby. Wondered for a long time after how with so young a baby, the mother had managed those nails, and felt very guilty about my own.

SATURDAY

Mrs. L. came to-day and a discussion arose about the weather this time last year. After a long argument, and the hauling out of half-forgotten memories,

Mrs. L. said she could easily find out by referring to her diary. I confessed that I also kept a diary. Another argument arose about when I had bought some sheets. She suggested I should refer to my diary and find out about last year's weather as well. Confessed that neither sheets nor weather figured in my diary. Shocked and surprised she asked what was in it. I quickly changed the subject. How unfair to use a diary in an argument. Anyway my diary would always prove me wrong.

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