

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

Three Sisters Make A Movie

SHE was introduced to me as an Australian girl—who was on her way to becoming a good New Zealander. I was interested, because the introduction included a mention of a "film producer." And that term is intriguing in relation to a woman.

I managed to get her by myself for a little while—and then I fired my questions. Was she really a film producer? What pictures had she produced? And when?

She held up her hands.

"That is so much to answer," she said. "It's a long story."

I glared at someone who was approaching to intrude on us—and then I heard her story. It is a brave story; of three Australian girls who helped to pioneer motion picture production in Australia.

They Caught it Young

Their father was a well-known medico, and honorary surgeon to a well-known theatrical group. Quite early these young girls became infected with the glamour of the theatre, and while still in their teens, they planned that when they left school they would produce a picture.

The idea was never lost sight of. After they left school, they began to work seriously on it. One sister joined a local movie company to gain experience in film acting. One took a course in film direction, and the third sister, whom I interviewed, studied art direction and scenario writing.

In the meantime they had the misfortune to lose both their parents, and they were left now to make their own decisions—and to forge their own way ahead. Finance presented a difficulty. Picture-making costs money. Financiers, whom they approached with their project, smiled pityingly. They told these girls to run home and play. But they refused to be discouraged. Then something happened. One of those things that you read about in story books. An uncle in South America died suddenly and left them three thousand pounds! Their problem was answered. Within a fortnight they were "in production."

Planning the Details

"Don't imagine," she laughed, "that movie-making is as speedy as all that! For three months previously we had everything planned and in readiness—down to the smallest detail. So that when the big moment arrived we could start without delay. We had left nothing to chance. We had worked out our cost sheet down to shillings—and the amount required was £1,000; a ridicu-

lously small sum in view of American movie-making figures. But we had certain advantages and worked under unusual conditions."

"How did you manage for a studio?"

"Well, that is a little story in itself. We lived in a big old home on the Parramatta River. It was a huge place, with a great hall and rooms 30 feet long. We had a studio right on our hands! First, however, we had to get permission from the Council to install the Klieg lights, and I remember the first day, when we were working up to 6 o'clock, the council rang us up and said we had to cease work as the suburb

when we were working. Often we would have to drive away, pretending we had finished, and return a few minutes later to resume shooting.

"For one scene, I remember, we needed a train. So I bearded the Railway Commissioner in his den—and came away with a promise of the Ministerial train. Another time we wanted a luxurious office, so I approached the manager of one of the leading banks and asked him could we use his office for a scene? He was so surprised—he said yes. The same thing happened when we needed the lounge of a fashionable hotel. We secured permission, and at midnight we had 40 extras on the scene—and worked through the night till it was time for the hotel to open up next morning. The extras were all in evening dress and made a party out of it."

"Of course," I said, "only a woman could get away with that!"

She smiled. "Perhaps. Everyone was very good to us. We had seen the 'rushes' of our picture 'Those Who Love'—and we felt it was good. We did not choose an ambitious subject. It was a simple story of human interest."

The Governor Wept

Then the great day came—the last scene was shot, and now the girls got busy preparing their picture for public presentation. They hired the leading picture theatre, invited the Governor, Sir Dudley de Chair, to be present, and sent out 600 invitations to the Press and leading people in Sydney for the preview.

"I'll always remember," she said, "that morning we sat in the theatre and watched our picture unfold. There was not a sound in the audience—and I felt it a good sign—the picture was holding them. Then the Governor, who was seated beside us, lifted a handkerchief to his eyes . . . I looked round and was surprised to see others doing likewise . . . The story had moved them. . . It finished in a wonderful burst of applause; there was no mistaking its sincerity. I knew then that our picture was a success. . . That night the papers came out with the announcement—"Governor Weeps at Picture."—"Best Australian Picture Made to Date." It was a very wonderful moment for us; the knowledge that we had succeeded against big odds."

The sisters followed up their success. They made three other full-length pictures and several shorts, all of which were shown in New Zealand and England. Unfortunately, things happened which made it difficult for independent producers to carry on, and these girls were forced to lay their megaphone aside. But one day they hope to be behind the camera again.

Blow To French

Housewives

French housewives are up in arms at the moment. From Vichy, with the newly enforced food restrictions there, comes word that the "croissant" is to be banned.

The "croissant" is that delectable little crescent-shaped bread roll which has been for years part of the traditional French breakfast. Every visitor to France will be familiar with these fresh, flaky little rolls which with hot coffee, made up the French "petit déjeuner." One cannot conceive a France without the morning "croissant."

couldn't get a sufficient flow of electric light!"

"And did you film the entire picture there?"

"Practically all—except for two big crowd scenes, which we shot in a hired studio—the only one at that time available."

Picking the Cast

"How did you manage about cast?"

"Well, we had ideas about that. We insisted on a professional cast. All the actors, except our leading man, were from the legitimate stage."

"And the leading man?"

"Oh, he was a very good-looking boy. He had no film or stage experience—yet he fulfilled our belief in him—and walked away with the picture. Still, that was unusual. It was difficult for amateurs to be perfectly natural before the camera."

"How did you get on with your exterior scenes?"

"Well, the Australian sunlight looked after that! Our only difficulty was the curiosity of the crowds who collected

These Should Interest You:

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

"The Business Side of Meetings": Monday, October 14, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 2YA 3 p.m., 3YA, 2.30 p.m.

"Nature's Tonic: The Leafy Vegetable": Thursday, October 17, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m., Friday, October 18, 2YA 3 p.m.

"One Dish Meals Save Time and Fuel": Wednesday, October 16, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

"Economy in War Time—How to Stretch the Pound": Friday, October 18, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

Talk by a Representative of the Red Cross Society, Tuesday, October 15, 2YA 11.30 a.m.

From The ZB Stations

"Betty and Bob," at all ZB stations at 2.0 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

"Radio Clinic," at 3.15 p.m. on Monday, from station 1ZB.

"Feminine Fantasy," at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday, from station 2ZB.

"The Young Marrieds' Circle" (Dorothy Haigh), from station 3ZB at 4.30 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

"Christmas on the Moon," at 6.45 p.m. on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, from station 4ZB.

"Home-Making in N.Z. (3), Choosing the Building Material": Thursday, October 17, 1YA 7.35 p.m.

"Just Good-byes": Major F. H. Lampen, Thursday, October 17, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

"Spring and Summer Fashions," by "Lorraine," Thursday, October 17, 4YA 10.50 a.m.

"Help for the Home Cook": Miss M. A. Blackmore, Friday, October 18, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

"What Shall We Eat? Facing the Facts": Dr. Elizabeth Bryson, Friday, October 18, 4YA 7.12 p.m.

"Some Remarkable Women I Have Met" (1), by Mrs. Vivienne Newson, Saturday, October 19, 2YA 10.45 a.m.