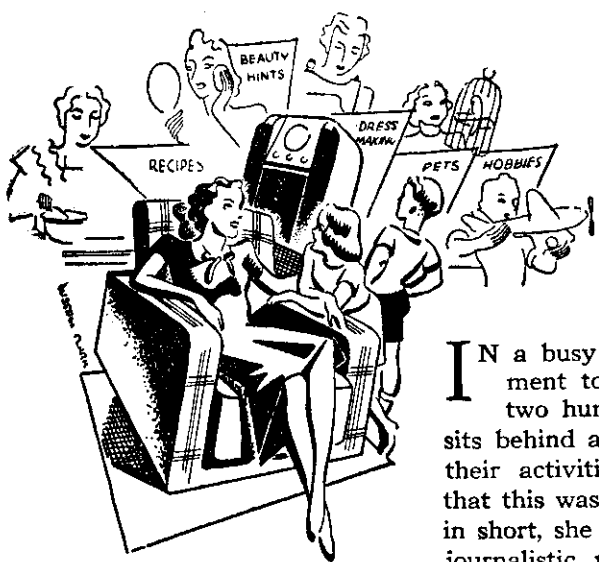


Women and the Home

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

KIT OF ALL TRADES



These Should Interest You:

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

"A Few Weeks Till Christmas." Tuesday, November 26, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 2YA 3 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.

"The Art of Cooking." Thursday, November 28, 1YA, 3.30 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.; Friday, November 29, 2YA 3 p.m.

"Controlling Household Pets." Friday, November 29, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

Talk by a representative of St. John Ambulance, Tuesday, November 26, 2YA, 11.30 a.m.

"Just Snags": Major F. H. Lampen. Thursday, November 28, 1YA 11 a.m.

From The ZB Stations

"The Lost Empire": All ZB stations, 9 p.m., Sundays.

"Tea Time Tattle": 1ZB, 4.45 p.m., Monday, November 25.

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

"With a Smile and a Song": 3ZB, 11 a.m., Thursday, November 28.

"Stealing Through the Classics": 4ZB, 3.15 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

"Station T.O.T.": 2ZA, 7.45 p.m., Saturdays.

"More Bits and Pieces": "Isobel." Thursday, November 28, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

"The Latest Reports of Women's Voluntary Services of Great Britain": Miss M. G. Havelaar. Thursday, November 28, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

"Speaking Personally: Listen Ladies," by Phyllis Anchor. Thursday, November 28, 4YA 10.50 a.m.

"Some Remarkable Women I Have Met": Mrs. Vivienne Newson. Saturday, November 30, 1YA 11 a.m.

"A Few Minutes With Women Novelists—George Eliot": Margaret Johnston. Saturday, November 30, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

"Mary Makes a Career: More Household Accounts." Saturday, November 30, 3YA 11 a.m.

IN a busy Government department to-day, in an office of two hundred girls, a woman sits behind a desk and supervises their activities. I already knew that this was no ordinary woman; in short, she had a story, and my journalistic nose led me to her lair.

It was a very charming and very comfortable lair. And this woman was the dominating figure in it. I liked her—her frank eyes, her humorous mouth, her broad shoulders encased in a grey tweed tailor-made. All her life people have called her Kit; an abbreviation of her own Irish name—Kathleen. The diminutive was strangely incongruous with her tall physique and forceful personality. Yet to those who know her, she remains "Kit."

And So She Began

Yes, she had a story—and what is more, she could tell it. I explained my weakness for beginnings, so good humouredly she started in from her sixteenth year. As the story progressed, I found myself marvelling; for this woman, by sheer force of will and character, has reached places that any man might envy.

At sixteen, while living in London, she took her first job with a typewriting firm. The salary was £2 a week, quite an amount in those early days. But Kit regarded this position merely as a pipe-opener. Her next job was with the London branch of a leading New Zealand refrigeration company. When she started there, she had improved her salary by 5/-. Then came 1914—and the war, and as most of the men were called up, it fell on Kit's shoulders to engage and train girls to fill their places. Finally, the leading salesman was called up, and Kit asked for his place. She got it.

A Bold Step

"It was most interesting work," she said. "I was usually up at 4 a.m., making the rounds of the meat markets. The men soon got used to a woman working amongst them, and they accepted me as one of themselves. It was grand experience. During this time, another big meat firm offered me a job with them at £800 a year. A fortune! I had no intention, however, of deserting my own firm, but I decided on a bold step. I bearded our manager in his office, and asked him for the £800 a year instead! Dumbfounded, he asked me why? I was only a girl, how could I expect such a salary? I said, be-

Vanity, Thy Name Is — ?

Lady Astor, on one occasion, was hostess at a large banquet. During the evening, she remarked that men were much vainer than women. Her statement met with a storm of protest from the masculine element.

Lady Astor adroitly changed the subject to men's fashions, then she said in a loud voice:

"It's a pity the most intelligent men attach so little importance to the way they dress. Why, right at this table, the most cultivated man is wearing the most clumsily knotted tie."

Instantly every man at the table put a hand to his tie.

cause I'm worth it! It seemed a pretty good answer to me. After a great deal of arguing, he consented to cable the home office—and the answer came back approving my new salary. After that, I drifted to managership of the London branch. The conditions were extraordinary, of course, with all the men called up for service. But it gave me my chance."

She Came Back

So Kit, at the youthful age of twenty-five, sat on meat boards, attended deputations, and generally distinguished herself. Then she got an idea in her head that she would like a holiday—a paying holiday. She accomplished this by securing a transfer to the firm's New Zealand office. She had a glorious trip out, with a memorable month spent in America en route.

Once in New Zealand, she settled down again on her job. She liked New Zealand. A couple of years later, she took a trip Home—but she returned. This was her home.

"Then," she said, "a new job presented itself. Some meat companies carry a soap factory, fed by their surplus fats. My company was putting a new soap on the market, and I asked for the job of exploiting it. I got it. And what a thrill that was! Planning my publicity campaign—getting everything in readiness!"

Selling Soap

"With another woman canvasser, we set out in the car for one of the southern towns. My companion was in charge of the door-to-door canvassing—while I tackled the grocer's shops. I remember driving round the block, getting up courage to make my first call. My luck was in, though, and I brought off a big

order. After that, the going was easy. We made a great success of our campaign, and repeated it in other cities."

This ambitious young woman worked so hard in all types of weather that she eventually went down with rheumatic fever.

"It was a pretty rotten spin," she said. "I was on sick leave for eight months, and to me, the inactivity was almost worse than my illness. Meanwhile, the depression had gathered, and as my old firm was feeling the pinch, I decided to look round for another job. This time it was a new departure. I became a motor-car saleswoman—selling mostly to women."

Cars And Insurance

Kit was on this job a year, and made a great success of it, then the car firm was hit by the depression, and most of its employees were dismissed. Kit was among them. She was out of a job a week. Then she answered an advertisement for an insurance salesman one bright, early morning. . . . She found a queue of three hundred men ahead of her—all with the same idea. Kit slipped away to a 'phone, and made an appointment to see the manager. The outcome of that interview was a good job organising women's group insurance.

Here, once more, she was in her element. She eventually took on the task of organising group insurance among women teachers throughout the Dominion.

"This meant constant travelling," she said. "I motored from the North Cape to the Bluff. I lectured to schools, stayed in funny little out-of-the-way hotels—I had breakdowns and every kind of adventure—and I loved it all."

Still "Going Places"

But a heart, left weak through her bout of rheumatic fever, now began to trouble her, and regretfully she was obliged to give up her insurance work.

But to Kit there was always an open door ahead. She is that type of person. She stepped into her present position.

She is 50 years of age—and looks 40. Her vital, eager mind will never let her grow old. She has been "going places" since she was sixteen years old—and she is still on her way.

A Crick in Your Neck

One of the greatest buildings in the world is the Empire State Building in New York. It is a mountain of steel and stone, which houses 25,000 people, covers 2 acres and shoots into the sky 1248 feet above the sidewalk. It has 6400 windows and 63 passenger elevators. The express elevator to the observation roof on the 86th floor rises the 1040 feet in one minute.