



INTERVIEW

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

INTERLUDE IN CHINA

These Should Interest You:

"Our National Heritage and What We are Doing With It," by "Belinda." Monday, January 13, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

Talk by a representative of St. John Ambulance. Tuesday, January 14, 2YA 11.30 a.m.

"Fashions," by Ethel Early. Tuesday, January 14, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

"Dear Dirty Dublin": Diana Craig. Wednesday, January 15, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

From The ZB Stations

"Weekly Women's Session": 12B, 4.15 p.m., Mondays.

"Song Hits of To-morrow" (Reg. Morgan): 22B, 3.30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"Fashion's Fancies": 32B, 8.0 a.m., Mondays to Saturdays.

"Krya and Barend": 42B, 8.30 p.m., Sunday, January 12.

"Listeners' Requests": 22A, 7.30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"Cooking by Electricity": Miss D. McStay. Wednesday, January 15, 4YA 11 a.m.

Three talks by Major F. H. Lampen. Thursday, January 16:

"Four Kings and a Queen." 1YA 11 a.m.

"Just Our Village Again." 2YA 10.45 a.m.

"Just Snags." 3YA 11 a.m.

"More Bits and Pieces," by "Isobel." Thursday, January 16, 4YA 10.50 a.m.

"Help for the Home Cook": Miss J. M. Shaw. Friday, January 17, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

"Women of the West": Michael Terry. Friday, January 17, 4YA 7.15 p.m.

"A Few Minutes with Women Novelists": Margaret Johnston. Saturday, January 18. Featuring "Mrs. Gaskell" from 1YA 11 a.m., and "Some American Writers" from 2YA 10.45 a.m.

"A Shelter in Your Garden": Mrs. Prior. Saturday, January 18. 3YA 11 a.m.

CHINA! A civilisation as old as the world itself; a culture and a heritage of art that has never been surpassed.

To know a people—to know a country, you have to live in it—speak the tongue—be at one with them. I was privileged to meet such a person—a woman; a slight, feminine person with alert, vital eyes that expressed all her appreciation of life and people. She is Sister Dawes, now of the Wellington City Mission.

She has been back in New Zealand only a short time. She came straight from China where, for six years, she has been working with the Anglican Mission in Peking.

At the mention of China, the present slipped away from her. I could see she was back there in heart and spirit, for you cannot live for six years in China without the country leaving its mark.

Sister Dawes's attitude was characteristic.

"I was extremely sorry to leave—but that experience was not wasted—no experience in life is ever wasted. Besides, I was coming back to a new and interesting field. It is a coincidence that I should be working in a Chinese district here, but as far as the language is concerned, I am all at sea. These people speak Cantonese and my experience is confined to Peking."

Speak the Language

It is essential, she told me, if you work in China, that you should speak their language.

"The first year I went to Peking. I did nothing but study the language. The second year was devoted half to study and half to work—then the following year I was a fully fledged missionary."

"Did you find the language difficult?"

She smiled reminiscently.

"Very much so—at first. It was like starting school again as a small child and learning to speak. Diplomats, other missionaries, and various people who were obliged to learn Chinese were included in our class. The Chinese language contains very little grammar; nothing really tangible that you can study. It is all a matter of tone. There are four tones to every word—and each intonation has a different meaning. It took me a long time to become attuned to it."

The City of Peking

She described to me the city of Peking—and I knew she was seeing it, remembering it with the detail of something that had grown close to the heart.

"You look down on Peking," she said, "a small city four miles long by three miles broad, yet holding within

its eighteen square miles the population of all New Zealand. Your impression of it is a grey city. Grey walls surrounding it, grey houses, grey roofs. Forming a square within the heart of Peking lies the Forbidden City, where the old Emperors lived and held court. It is an oasis of glittering colour in that universal greyness. The first sight of it is unforgettable. Ringed by a vermilion wall, the royal buildings are of exquisite design and aglow with colour. Vermilion, gold-tiled roofs; every conceivable colour blended in perfect harmony."

In this day of a Republic, she said, the Forbidden City is now merely a show place, peopled by a few officials and thrown open to the tourists. All the native buildings of Peking are one-storied, for it would have been con-

"You like the Chinese people?" I asked.

Her smile was expressive.

"It was a case of I came—I saw—and was conquered. In a teeming population like Peking there is a great deal of poverty, yet the poorest and lowliest Chinese possess a native simplicity, grace and dignity. I think I can best describe it as poise. It is something instinctive and fundamental. If you enter the humblest home and they are too poor to dispense tea, they will serve hot water with all the ceremony of the national tea-drinking. They never fail in courtesy."

"Do you think the Chinese women attractive?"

"Very. They have such clean, flowing lines, and are wise enough to keep to their national dress. Their hands and feet are tiny and exquisite."

Missionary Work

"What was the nature of your work in Peking?"

"Evangelistic work," she said. "Poor relief and medical aid. I had to take my degree in general nursing and maternity before going to China. Naturally, among such a widespread poverty, there is much disease. They manage to exist on so little. In northern arid China, rice is practically unknown, and their main diet is millet porridge and bread made from millet grain. Meat and green vegetables are luxuries which, by careful hoarding, they sometimes manage to achieve on special festivals such as the Chinese New Year. It is amazing really how the poorer people exist. Sometimes you will find ten or twelve in a family living in a tiny dwelling round a common courtyard. The furniture may consist of a single kang, a wide stone couch on which the entire family live and sleep. The only other furnishing may be a small charcoal burner."

Love of Family

The Chinese, she told me, have an intense love of family. It goes deeper than mere sentiment. It is a fundamental part of their philosophy. They look on life as a flowing stream that they have received from their forefathers—and which they in turn hand on to their children. Kinship is not just a word in China—it is, perhaps, their real religion.

Sister Dawes with her knowledge of the Chinese character, believes that China will be a force to be reckoned with in the future. They believe in their destiny, and they have the knack of exploring new methods, selecting the best and discarding the worthless. Their essential qualities are an unswerving patience and reasonableness. They are passionately grateful for a service—and they do not easily forget an injury. These are national characteristics and they must play a part in the ultimate destiny of China.



sidered a mark of ill-respect if any other building had been constructed high enough to look down on the City of the Emperors.

Colour in the Homes

The Chinese, she told me, love colour, yet in the barren north where, for four or five months of the year, the plains are a hard brown surface, not a blade of grass or glimpse of green is to be seen. They contrive, however, to get colour into their homes, and it is a common sight to see tiny pictures even painted on the end of roof beams.

Sister Dawes was in Peking when the war with Japan broke out. Fighting began eight miles outside the city, but fortunately she escaped the worst. Peking was surrendered quietly with nothing more serious than some street fighting.