

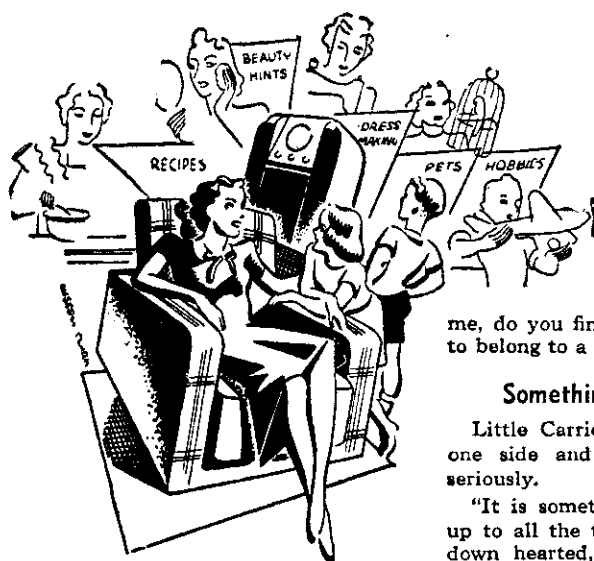
Women and the Home

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

LITTLE CARRIE MOORE



me, do you find it a help or a handicap to belong to a famous theatrical family?"

Something to Live Up To

Little Carrie Moore put her head on one side and considered the question seriously.

"It is something that one has to live up to all the time. When I get tired or down hearted, I think 'this will never do.' I've got to work hard to be worthy of my Aunts — Carrie Moore and Eva Moore — both world-famed actresses of their day. I'm staying here with my Aunt Eva while the show is playing in Wellington. She is a darling—and such a help to me in my work."

This little Carrie Moore already shows evidence of inheriting the family's histrionic ability. Before coming to New Zealand on this present tour, she memorised, within five months, the entire songs, dialogue, acting and dancing of nine Gilbert and Sullivan operas. She was given further responsibility when they appointed her ballet mistress.

"I think I do a bit of everything," she laughed. "I dance—go on in the chorus. Do a bit of stage-managing—ringing the curtain up and down, and so on. Coach some of the artists in morning rehearsals, and do two or three understudies myself in between times."

"Do you like travelling about?"

"Not really—it soon loses its novelty. We welcome a chance to settle down in one place for a decent period."

"Your Audiences are Wonderful"

Little Carrie Moore, who, almost from her baby days began to think and talk theatre, first visited New Zealand when she was eight years old. The show she appeared in was a pantomime, the proceeds of which were donated towards the relief of the Napier earthquake victims.

"I'm afraid," she said, "the experience is rather dim in my mind. The only memory that stands out clearly to me is Mount Egmont. On this present tour of the Gilbert and Sullivan Company I hope to see as much of New Zealand as possible. I'm loving the whole trip."

"What do you think of New Zealand audiences?"

"I think they are wonderful. Before I came over here, they told me I would find New Zealand audiences very restrained, but we have found them the opposite here in Wellington. They have been most enthusiastic and, on the last night—quite overwhelming."

The Good Old Days

We talked about the past days of theatrical glory that the movies delight so much in portraying — when chorus girls were just chorus girls, not "ladies of the chorus," as they are styled to-day, when the stage door gallants were almost as much a part of the theatre as the artists themselves, when champagne

flowed, and flowers and jewels were lifted in homage across the footlights.

To-day the stage has become a more serious and thoughtful business. The glitter and the glamour is still there, but its dazzle is subdued. A new type of girl joins the ranks of the chorus across the footlights. She must have looks and deportment. She must sing well and dance well. In fact, she must be good if she is to hold her place.

This same girl, if she had lived in those old days of theatrical glory would have remained quietly at home. She might have been permitted to visit the theatre—but to join the ranks of the chorus—never!

Except, perhaps, if you were another little Carrie Moore, burdened with the weight of a great theatrical tradition. Then probably you would go on—under any conditions—just because there was something bigger than yourself urging you forward. It is the way great stars are made.

Little Carrie Moore is lucky to have been born to this generation, for it is the day of the individual—and rewards go to the individual effort.

Five or 10 years hence—who can say?—this young Carrie may see her name twinkling in electric lights — as that other CARRIE MOORE twinkled years ago in leading theatres throughout the world.

That is the road on which little Carrie's dancing feet are set.

She knows it is not an easy path to follow. It means work and hard application, disappointment—and often heart-break. But she knows, too, that when the top is reached, all those early strivings were not only necessary, but are justified.

Good luck to her!

Study In Contrasts

Look at a modern Want Advertise-ment, then compare this one which appeared in a 19th century London newspaper:

"Wanted, for a sober family, by the Profane, denominated Methodists, a woman of light weight who fears the Lord and can drive a pair of horses. She must occasionally wait at table, join in Household Prayer, read a chapter in the Bible, she must (God willing) rise at seven in the morning, obey her master and mistress in all lawful commands, if she can dress hair, sing hymns, and play at cribbage, the more agreeable. N.B.: She must not be too familiar with the men servants of the House lest the flesh should rebel against the spirit, and she should be induced to walk in the thorny paths of the wicked. Wages, 15 guineas a year."

The grand old days!

Next morning, business like in their practice suits, they are back in the theatre. Rehearsal—dancing and singing till 12.30. If everything goes well, they will be free till the evening's performance, but if the stage manager thinks otherwise, there is a looming threat of another afternoon rehearsal.

Strenuous but Fascinating

A hard life? The slender, dark-eyed girl, who at 18 has been made a ballet mistress, shook her dark, curly head.

"Not really. We work hard, of course, but we love it. I remember my first pantomime, which, incidentally, was the first show I ever appeared in. It fascinated me so much that I couldn't bear to leave the theatre—even for meals. We played then two shows a day. I often used to bring in my tea and eat it in the dressing room. Such a dingy little dressing room it was, too, white-washed walls, and roughly boarded floor—but to me it was beautiful. On the last night, I remember, I wept when I saw the dresses being packed away in the theatrical baskets for the last time. They had become a part of us during the eight weeks we had played, and it was like being robbed of something personal and intimate. Now, of course, I have become much more practical—but the theatre never really loses its thrill."

"Particularly," I added, "for people who are born to it—like yourself. Tell

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