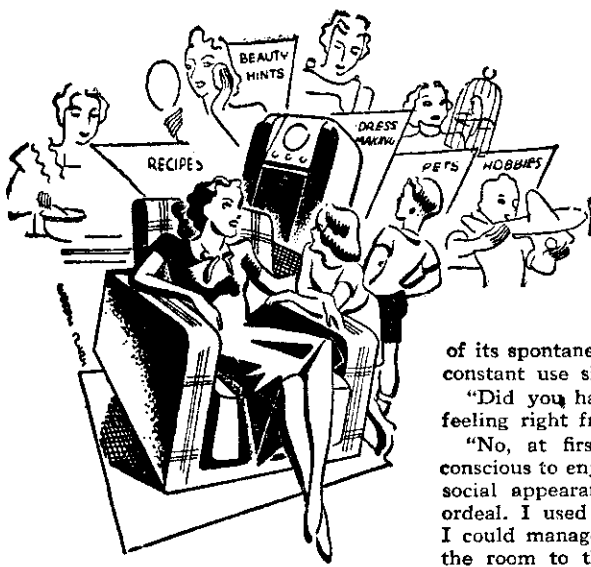


Women and the Home

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 TIMES A QUEEN

*"Then one of us will be a queen
And sit on a golden throne,
With a crown instead of a hat on her head
And diamonds all her own.
With dozens of beautiful shoes to wear
Upon her dainty feet
With endless stocks of beautiful frocks,
And as much as she wants to eat."*

THUS sang Tessa and Giannetta in *The Gondoliers*. But their dream of queenship was never realised. Some 50 years after the first appearance of the contadine, a small girl roaming in a Wellington garden had, in common with most other little girls of the same age, the same idea. But her wish, unlike most wishes, was realised, and to-day, instead of being merely Miss Joan Young, she has been solemnly crowned as Queen Joan — on three successive evenings, too, in the Wellington Town Hall.

Top of the World

She came into my office to-day. "Aren't you tired?" I asked. After three months of hard work and consistently late nights, a girl may be forgiven if she has dark rings under her eyes and a tendency to collapse into the nearest chair. But Queen Joan — the winning, Public Services, Queen in Wellington's recent patriotic carnival—looked a picture of radiant health and energy.

"No, I feel on top of the world," she said. "People always say 'Aren't you tired?' but I don't feel the slightest bit that way. It's been so marvellous I can't bear to think of it ending, and I feel I could go through another three months campaigning and pose for a health-food advertisement at the end of it." She smiled, and her smile has lost nothing

of its spontaneity in spite of its being in constant use since February.

"Did you have that top of the world feeling right from the beginning?"

"No, at first I was really too self-conscious to enjoy myself properly. Every social appearance was something of an ordeal. I used to wonder how on earth I could manage to get from one side of the room to the other. But now I can face large mobs of people without a tremor."

"I should have thought the speech-making would have been the worst ordeal. I remember that the first time I heard you I was amazed because you sounded so confident, and because you didn't need to resort to girlish embarrassment to cover up the awkward gaps which occur in most female speeches."

"I Certainly Was Frightened"

"It is surprising that there weren't many gaps in the ones you heard. I certainly was frightened. The first speech I had to make was the one in which I thanked my Queen Committee for appointing me as their candidate. There were a lot of awkward pauses in that. When I made my tour of Government Departments, I began by writing out my speech and then learning it. But after a while I found it was a fairly simple matter to answer the speech of the person before me. I always had a fair idea of what I had to say."

"Hadden't you had any previous experience?"

"I once spoke in a New Speakers' Debate at Victoria University College, but I read my speech from notes and then unfortunately lost the place."

"I had forgotten you were a student."

"Well, I've just started again, but the carnival has taken rather a lot of my time. I hope to complete my B.A. next year, and then I shall try to get a job as private secretary somewhere. Meanwhile, I'm doing shorthand and typing."

The Head That Wears a Crown

"Wasn't it rather a bother about clothes?" I asked. "Every time I saw you, you seemed to have some new and

exciting garment on. And as a fellow civil servant I'd love to know how you did it."

"I didn't get many new frocks for my public appearances. Usually I had a different audience on each occasion, so I was able to wear the same outfit perhaps several nights running. That wasn't so big an expense as things like hair sets. As a matter of fact, I'll have to have one this afternoon."

"When the carnival started, did you think there was any likelihood of your winning?"

"At the beginning I really had no idea. Then a week before the final I thought Commerce would win, and that we would be a close second. At twenty to twelve on the final night, my committee, my princesses and I were waiting to hear from our treasurer as the final votes came in. I had to get to the 2ZB studio at 12 p.m., but before I left our headquarters, I knew we were in the running again. All the same, I couldn't believe it when Mr. Annand-Smith, the secretary of the Queen Carnival Committee, came up and said, 'You've won!'"

At The Coronation

"I suppose that was the climax of the whole campaign for you?"

"It's rather a difficult question. Last night at the coronation, I think was the culminating point. It was a marvellous scene—one blaze of gorgeous colour. I suppose I didn't get the whole effect, because I was on the stage, but it was all so splendid and rather solemn, in spite of the fact that it wasn't a real coronation and I wasn't a real queen. And the people were wildly enthusiastic. I knew that it wasn't for me they were cheering, it was for what the whole Queen Carnival stood for, and I felt very proud and very humble."

"And what did you enjoy most in the earlier part of the campaign?"

"Another difficult question. I loved the Friday procession. Do you remember that? My princesses and I rode down Lambton Quay in a carriage drawn by two white horses. It sounds like something out of a fairy tale, doesn't it? And I smiled at all the children because they

always smiled back. And at other times, the thing I enjoyed most was being greeted by policemen and ordinary people in the street. People were so nice to me, and it gives you such a warm feeling. And soon I'll be just an ordinary person again and nobody I don't know will say 'Hullo' to me in the street. I'll have to resign myself to obscurity. I'll be even worse off than the Duke of Windsor because from now on I shan't even be addressed as 'Your Royal Highness.' She sighed.

I sighed. It was rather depressing. "What will you do," I asked, "live on your memories?"

"Yes," said Queen-for-three-days Joan. "And if those fail, I'll still have my scrap-book."



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