

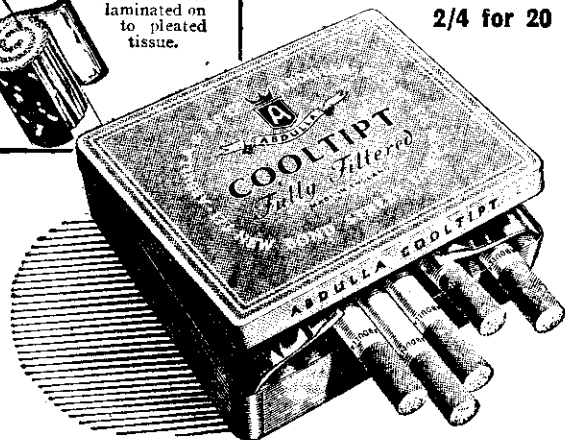
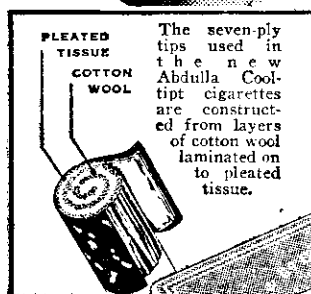


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Two Nice Girls

MEET *Ada and Elsie*—the two indefatigable spinsters who present half an hour of light-hearted entertainment for ZB listeners at 9.0 p.m. on Monday nights. They are old-fashioned girls who bustle into all sorts of ludicrous situations and blithely pat-ball their way out again. They take in a lodger, they have an argument with their not-so-bright grocer, Mr. Hercules, who suffers with "travelling pains," they snort disapprovingly at the behaviour of the "hussy" next door, not inaptly named Miss Plunge. A man, any kind of a man, is a thrill to *Ada and Elsie*, and that goes for Mr. Grassmeadows, a frightfully sporting type, played by Frank Strain, who doubles as the redoubtable Mr. Hercules.

The characters of *Ada and Elsie* are unchanging and sharply delineated. Their wide and warm appeal stems from the hearty but unsophisticated humour their show purveys. Sample:

"Do you think I should marry him if he asks me?"

"Oh, yes, dearie. But he's a man with scruples."

"Oh, well, I could nurse him through those."

The show's recipe is a simple one, bearing a strong resemblance to the old favourite *Gert and Daisy*. Each of the bachelor girls is a little man-struck, each a little more fond of a glass of sherry than she cares to admit, and each is ingenuous enough to believe that her transparent intentions are opaque even to her closest friends. Even in their best laughs there is some pathos, something rather old-face which makes them more human than mere caricatures. There is an echo of it in *Ada and Elsie's* Christmas preparations. *Elsie* says, "Are we going to send cards this year to all the men we've been in love with?" and *Ada* replies, "Yes. But I think we'll cross W. G. Grace off the list. That one keeps coming back unanswered."

In the flesh, *Ada and Elsie* are very different from their radio characters. *Elsie* is Rita Pauncefort, an Australian who married into a trouper's family with stage associations as old as those of the Lupinos. *Ada* is Dorothy Foster, a bright, vivacious Tasmanian who has



ERIC PARRANT, who compères "*Ada and Elsie*," and (at top of page) the two nice girls themselves—Dorothy Foster (left) and Rita Pauncefort

been connected with Australian radio since it first began to become big business.

Dorothy is the author of the *Ada and Elsie* act. She mothered it from its puny infancy, was a little surprised at its lusty growth and completely astounded by its long life of over twelve years. It has grown into the highest-paid female act on Australian radio and is relayed every week over a large chain of stations in every State. Previously a part of a sponsored show, it now occupies air-space in its own right.

Originally, it was just a patter session between two women, with Dorothy Foster playing the comic, the other woman the "feed." However, Dorothy secured Rita Pauncefort as her partner and her personality and adept handling of the part edged the act into its present form in which each woman is complementary to the other.

Ada and Elsie is compèred by Eric Parrant, with Frank Strain and Audrey Teesdale as the supporting comedians. The show has an interlude for song, presented by Betty Prentice, who played leading roles in the recent tour of New Zealand by the Australian National Opera Company, and Robert Montana, Viennese tenor, who sings popular ballads.