

Charwoman's Early Morning Remark Goes Over The Air

*Diana Du Cane, With
"Roberta" Company,
Relates an Amusing
B.B.C. Incident*



There's a reason for the cheery smile—an engagement less than a week old! The girl is Diana du Cane, one of the principals of the "Roberta" company and an English stage and broadcasting star of some importance, and the man is Ian Maxwell Gibson, Sydney socialite and keen golfer. They were snapped by a "Radio Record" photographer in Auckland the other morning. An interview with Miss du Cane appears on this page.

DIANA DU CANE, in New Zealand with "Roberta," is not the sort of girl to let the grass grow under her feet. It's about six weeks since she landed in Perth from London and, in that time she has played in four shows—"Roberta," "High Jinks," "Our Miss Gibbs" and "Yes Madam" (she has Binnie Hale's part in this show), travelled over a great deal of Australia and New Zealand, and got engaged. It was this last little matter that seemed uppermost in her mind when the "Radio Record" called on Miss du Cane at her Auckland hotel. The engagement had only "happended" the day before, the man in question being Ian Maxwell Gibson, "well-known in the social life of Sydney and a keen golfer," to quote the "Auckland Star." That's about all we know about Mr. Gibson but we can tell you a lot more about Miss du Cane.

Firstly, she hails from London, hasn't been on the stage very long, has dark hair and a lovely speaking voice and might be the twin sister of Jean Sutherland, a lass well-known in Wellington social circles. She was engaged by J. C. Williamsons to play Binnie Hale's part in the Australian production of the London Hippodrome success, "Yes Madam," but when Elaine Hamill was taken out of the cast of "Roberta" to play the lead in "The Shining Hour" in Melbourne, Miss du Cane stepped into her rôle.

"My stage career's been musical comedy mostly," she said, "though just before I left England I had been playing in pantomime—a pantomime with a really notable cast, including Sir Henry Lytton, Dave Burnaby and Stanley Holloway. It was the grandest show and we couldn't pack the people in quickly enough.

"Oh, my broadcasting work would probably interest your paper. I've done a lot of work for the B.B.C. and frequently broadcast in the Empire transmission to Australia and New Zealand. It's rather a weird sensation, coming down to the studio about four in the morning and sending your voice out over thousands of miles of ocean to countries where the people are just finishing their day's work. One morning I was singing into the microphone when a charwoman came into the studio and shouted out, 'Orr right, dearie.

I won't be 'arf a mo' to another charwoman. This was duly broadcast to the colonies, and I believe several letters were received remarking on it."

"What does the average Englishman think of the B.B.C. programmes?"

"Not very much. After all radio is definitely entertainment—just like the stage and the talkies—and if broadcasting isn't giving the public what it wants, then the public is perfectly right in complaining. My first broadcast was in one of John Watt's programmes, 'Songs from the Shows.' This series was very popular at Home and was eventually recorded. Have you ever heard any of them out here?"

"And talking of England I love the way everybody here calls it Home. I think New Zealand's grand—at least, I've only seen Auckland yet, but the green trees and the streets and the people all make me think of England."

"Christchurch people wouldn't like to hear you describing Auckland as English-looking. Down there they think Auckland is very much like Sydney (which, boiled down, means 'too American') and that their own city is the most English place outside of England."

"Yes, I'm looking forward to seeing Christchurch. It's rather like Cambridge, isn't it?—and I adore Cambridge. Your people here are much more English than the Australians."