

# If Women Arranged Radio Programmes

by

GWLADYS EDWARDES

Miss Gwladys Edwardes, who achieved distinguished success as a singer at many of the Australian broadcasting stations, recently returned to New Zealand. The accompanying article is both entertaining and provocative, expressed in everyday terms which, nevertheless, are bound to create discussion. This article is the first of a series to appear in the "Radio Record."

**H**AVING read the title of this article I imagine you expect all sorts of revolutionary things of me, so, if what I am about to outline appears commonplace, may I at once urge that even commonplace things often are the least obvious. After all, we see lots of things, but do we really SEE them?

It would seem that in order to satisfy everyone who reads these observations of mine, I shall have to adopt a composite personality, changing swiftly from myself in the country to myself (or yourself, if that were possible) as a city housewife, thence to the highly efficient stenographer in a big city establishment, to a worker in some industrial corporation, and so on. It seems very, very difficult of achievement—the mean average would appear the safer course.

Then, again, it almost looks like showing the other man (or woman) how the job ought to be done, but I've been asked to risk even that.

It is seven years since I left New Zealand for Australia, and in that time (both as a singer and a housewife) I had many an opportunity for remarking the way of life over there, and the manner in which Australian broadcasting was carried through the day.

**I** liked the early morning idea of cheery music with breakfast. My husband and I needed no cold showers to stimulate us in preparation for the sometimes frightful swelters of the day. We invariably switched on the radio at half past seven or eight o'clock, and while the meal was being prepared and eaten our sleepy steps were quickened by the latest in dance tunes from nearby stations.

We suffered sharp disappointment on our return to New Zealand when we learned that the stations did not open their eyes until three o'clock in the afternoon. Suggestion number one is, then, obvious—the breakfast hour music is a wonderful corrective for the blues.

As an alternative to music there were tabloid clippings from the morning papers. I am sure hundreds of wives and boarding house keepers blessed this introduction—

rarely was the milk jug overturned by a reclining newspaper since the morning's news was broadcast!

**T**HERE are lots of chatty little things which could come over the air to the busy woman in the house. No, I don't mean lectures on running the home—most of us know by instinct, and would resent that type of information—but crisp, intimate talks on what everybody seems to call "labour-saving devices."

This does not mean a restriction to vacuum sweepers and washing machines, but the many ways in which husbands and carpenters could so arrange or rearrange the kitchen that work



Miss Gwladys Edwardes, the accomplished author of the accompanying article. Miss Edwardes has travelled as much as she has observed, of which her pithy observations are a fair criterion.

would be minimised. Too many people, when talking of labour-saving, think only in terms of the drawing room, forgetting that the kitchen is the stronghold of the home; overlooking numberless little things which might obviate walking, stooping or reaching.

I am sure women would like to hear of these.

Gas cookery, and cooking by electricity, too, would be of great interest—provided the recipes did not call for a dozen eggs when they're marked at three-and-six the dozen.

I sometimes have the suspicion that compilers of cookery-books surreptitiously keep poultry farms somewhere, for they're simply profligate with eggs in their recipes.

Simple, practical recipes, retailed over the air in a simple, practical way would be inseparable from my broadcasting programmes.

**A**ND I would have fashion talks, too. This sort of thing: "I saw a delightful creation along Lambton Quay the other day . . ." Imagine the visions one would conjure for those who but rarely find their way to city streets; folk who are idea-hungry in the matter of dress fabrics and designs which may be adapted to their individual needs and purses!

And the afternoon? Well, short, happily-worded talks on a variety of subjects. Firstly, there is the fine work of our Plunket Society, and the system of mothercraft it has developed to such good effect. Young mothers in New Zealand's country districts, where daily work and a multiplicity of home interests often prevent frequent trips to the town, surely would benefit (and appreciate) from skilfully-worded lectures by competent authorities, whose very knowledge of their subject and humanity should ensure the subject being dealt with in a straightforward, simple manner.

General health talks, too, incorporating homely remedies for slight physical troubles.

For those of us who have to do our travelling by proxy; who sit by our firesides, thrilled with the adventures of men and women who braved jungle swamps and inter-national flights, there should be radio travelogues, bridging the distance between us and adventure—where the magic of conversation and relation of incident help us to live (even though momentarily) the experiences related through the microphone.

The lives of authors and musicians have an intimate interest for all of us. We read their books and are enchanted by their melodies, but of their lives, and loves, their frailties, their ambitions we know but little. I would insist upon a collation of these.

Finally, most women would be glad to hear the last of all those "grey-haired mummies" and "sweet Susies" which have found their painful ways into our songs. They seem ghostly beside the fine, broad sentiment of the ballad type, which does not mean there should be more of what are mis-called "classical" songs.

There is a host of other things one could mention, but . . .