

# THE COUNTRYWOMAN

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## U.S.A.

The *Bulletin of the Garden Club of America* describes one of several gardens which have been created for the enjoyment of the blind during the past few years. A guide rail leads the visitors into the garden, following the paths on the sides away from the walls. Labels in Braille are attached to every tree, shrub or clump of flowers. All plants are chosen for their fragrance or texture. Many offer interest to the blind in a way which would not occur to a person with sight, although the feel of the velvety leaf of lamb's ear (*Stachys Lanata*) is appealing to everyone.

"Blind children linger, spelling out every label, relishing every plant, burying their faces in lavender, testing the cool softness of *Artemesia Frigida*." Beyond, in the wood, guidance is needed so that the visitors can enjoy the shady peace under the old trees and listen to the birds and the sound of a small brook. The texture of the different tree barks may be investigated, the varied shapes of the leaves, and the fronds of the ferns.

In contrast to this intense appreciation of natural beauty another article in the same issue draws attention to the devastation caused by cheap building projects in rural areas. For as long as the standard of living stays high people tend to move out from the towns to a "better environment in which to raise their families". The usual steps are: purchase of land: hire of land-clearing contractor, with a modern bulldozer, who strips the property of any living thing; laying out of streets: building of a few model houses: an offering to the public by advertisement to buy quickly at sensationally low prices and enjoy "an idyllic rural life!"

"What can be done to reduce this deplorable waste of trees, top-soil and other natural resources, the very presence of which motivated the new home-owner to move into the country? Only a concerted programme of public relations and education will change this trend of demolition . . . Preserving existing trees adds to the building costs—rarely exceeding \$,500—but many buyers won't pay the additional expense. This is a tragedy as the innocent new owner could spend several times that figure in an effort to landscape and provide shade, and almost never improves on the selective conservation of the original growth."

personal shopping; she likes to have a hair-do; she enjoys a visit to the pictures. So off she goes to the town and comes back refreshed in mind and spirit to her task of home-making and house-keeping. Surely this is not unreasonable?"

So the S.W.R.I. continue to approach the appropriate authorities and one step taken to re-inforce their case was a questionnaire to Institutes in areas "where bus services are unknown, but desired."

## Gold Coast

Our Constituent Society the **National Federation of Gold Coast Women** has been discussing the problems which arise in the markets where many of their members sell their goods. First a first-aid centre is needed. Evidence showed that if one had existed, miscarriages and accidents, which in some cases proved fatal, could have been attended to with first-aid treatment before being taken to hospital. Next came the provision of a

## India

"There are two main facts about India: Religion and Poverty" . . . "No endeavour that is great is likely to succeed in India unless the springs of action are derived from the living fount of religious feeling. No aim of the State can be so great as the abolition of poverty." (All India Rural Credit Survey.)

An article on the Survey in the *Madras Journal of Co-Operation* explains that one of the objects of rural co-operative societies is to free the cultivator from the toils of the money lender. But marriage always creates a problem. "Indian village custom demands that a boy and girl shall be married by a certain age, and caste demands that so large a sum shall be spent on the marriage that few can find it without borrowing." These loans inevitably become a source of arrears, and strictly speaking co-operative loans are not available for marriage celebrations. Yet to refuse is bound to send the co-operative members back to the money lender. Some Committees are therefore considering the organisation of special contributory funds to meet this family problem—not unknown in other countries when custom or 'what other people will say' drives parents to spend more than they can afford on weddings!

## France

Enquiries come from all over the world to the **School of Nutrition** at Cretail (Seine). Replies go back, in four languages, to the many questioners who ask: How to overcome scarcity and famine? If there are diets to avoid and, or, cure cancer, tuberculosis, diabetes, plague, cholera, beri beri, typhoid, leprosy, smallpox and leukomia (which is becoming more serious and widespread); or for growing fatter or thinner?

Some of the questioners get discouraging answers—"Is there a diet to cure stupidity?" Reply—"Nothing can be done, it is incurable!" Other cries from the heart quoted were: "Is there a diet to take the place of a husband?"; "Can one live on love, fresh water and fruit?"; and "What should one eat so as not to get inebriated when one drinks too much?"

sufficient number of housekeepers. Girls train at the Division's school of Domestic Arts, afterwards they may act as Junior Housekeepers, but the *New Zealand Countrywoman* explains they are so capable by then that they soon get married to the neighbouring farmers and more housekeepers have to be found!

Again the **W.D.F.F. Rest Home** at Awapuni is made to serve a double purpose. Members go there for rest periods and holidays but the matron is also training Maori girls as housekeepers. (Their services, as Junior Housekeepers, have been especially appreciated by sick mothers with young children.)

Another issue of the magazine publishes an article by ex-W.D.F.F. housekeepers in the hope that it might help to answer the constant question "Why should it be so hard to find Housekeepers, and hard to keep them when they are found?" They agree the work is satisfying where a real need is fulfilled and the employer is properly grateful, not to them, but to the Division. Most problems can be overcome if the Housekeeper-Secretary and the members of the local W.D. Branch take a personal