Trends

FROM experience we have learnt that the average W.V.S. member vastly prefers to do her job, rather than tell anyone what she is doing. Perhaps she thinks her activities are only of interest to the people whom she serves. The average W.V.S. member is quite young. She would be surprised to know the interest with which news of her activities is awaited, not only by her own Centre, County, Regional and Headquarters Offices, but by quite a number of people outside W.V.S. For, however dull, however small, however unimportant she may believe her job to be, when it is added to the million other jobs done by W.V.S. throughout the country, the total provides a pretty interesting picture of certain sides of life to-day. W.V.S. Centre Organisers, however, are careful always to jib at writing Narrative Reports, and many of them we understand, believe these reports, once written, are never read by anyone. They too are wrong. The reports are read with interest, and a master "Trend Report" compiled from them. Part of the "Trend" for August follows.

We hope you will be interested in reading of what you have been doing— or at least of as much of it as you have thought to tell us.

GENERAL SURVEY. Six subjects in the Narrative Reports this month are again mentioned 100 times, and, in most cases, over 100. The first six are as follows: Clothing Exchange, Clothing, the 10th Anniversary of W.V.S., Clubs and Savings.

The new National Health Service is mentioned a good deal in this month's reports, National Insurance less, though a fair amount of enquiries have been made about this. The Hospital Car Service seems vastly affected by the former. One C.O. says their Service has not been asked to undertake a single journey since July 5th, where, formerly, six cars were in constant demand; whilst another writes that "a great deal" of work is being done by the Hospital Car Service since the new Health Act came into force and that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find enough drivers. Probably it is much too early yet to get a stabilised opinion on this subject.

The housing shortage is still causing great hardship, though in one report mention is made that the increased allowance for building repair, decoration and war damage is easing the strain on householders. There are many references to W.V.S. members being asked to serve on Road Safety Committees.

BLIND PEOPLE. Blind people are still being visited and helped in various ways. A Trolley Shop has been opened at two branches of St. Dunstan's. W.V.S. members in charge of the trolleys are careful always to put the articles in the same places so that the men know where to feel for what they want.

BLOOD TRANSFUSION. Interest in this service appears to be on the increase. In one Centre, W.V.S. have been asked by the Red Cross to organise the Blood Transfusion Service, which they have agreed to do.

CANNING. This activity is now being worked on a practical basis and appears to be very popular with the public. The response to this Scheme was so great in one Region that people wishing to have their fruit canned had to be divided up into groups, according to the letters of the alphabet, so many each day.

CLOTHING. This most useful work goes on continually, old people, children and invalids being helped. Emergency cases are also constantly being aided, including that of a lion-tamer who lost his luggage. W.V.S. supplied him with an overcoat for which he was very grateful.

CLOTHING EXCHANGE. A great deal is being done in most Regions, as usual, though a few C.O.'s report that they are not so busy with this Scheme, partly owing to the holidays, no doubt, partly to the relaxation on coupons. At one Centre it is difficult to meet the demands for boys' clothing, the garments brought in for exchange are very poor. The general feeling is that boys usually wear their clothes until they are unwearable! An Exchange has been opened in a Polish Hostel and is extremely popular. Most of the exchanges seem to be for the "under fives."

CLUBS. These continue to flourish. International Clubs are much appreciated and educational (lessons in English, etc.) and social activities are arranged. Old People's Clubs give unqualified pleasure. A growing feature of these is the wish of the old people themselves to help in various ways, they are very public-spirited. A new idea has been started at one Club, if any member is ill at home, or in hospital, another member of the club visits him or her. These visits are much enjoyed. Many more successful days' outings are reported.

ESCORTS. This work is of great value; B.V.W.'s are constantly being escorted to different parts of the country. Children are daily being met and seen off on journeys. The same applies to people who have to be escorted to hospital.

FORCES. Parcels of books, games and magazines are sent regularly to the Club in Athens which W.V.S. has adopted, also to the Military Hospital, Hong Kong. One Centre keeps lists of addresses of furnished rooms and flats, suitable for all ranks of the Services. This was first undertaken during the war, in reply to many appeals to W.V.S. It was later expanded at the request of the Commander-in-Chief because of its great value, and has continued ever since. These lists are in daily use. Some magazines and books sent to Germany, have gone to camps for the men maintaining
the air-lift and 170 magazines were despatched during one month to Malaya. A large proportion of these were technical journals. A certain amount of Army mending is being done, but not a great deal, judging from the reports.

FOOD. The distribution of Welfare Foods continues. W.V.S. took full responsibility for this task when a local Food Office was short-staffed, owing to illness and holidays. When petrol cuts affected the delivery of food to old people and invalids, two W.V.S. members secured two old pram and wheeled the food round.

FUEL. This work is being pursued on its uphill path. Short “snappy” fuel talks have been given at a Darby and Joan Club and were much enjoyed.

GARDEN GIFTS. Seeds from overseas were sent to schools. A market gardener presented one Centre with 4,000 vegetable seedlings. Some were urgently needed for a Polish Hospital. Letters were written to people opening their gardens to the public, asking them to display “Gift Gardens” posters and to give their surplus plants. A very good response was received.

HOME HELPS. The work is increasing. In one or two places W.V.S. has taken over the whole Home Help Scheme since July 5th. The local authorities give them every support and all is running smoothly.

KNITTING. Knitting continues well, but this month there are several references to wool shortage. In spite of this, one Centre supplied 103 garments for the Forces, 16 pullovers and 87 pairs of socks. Three volunteers, sisters, whose ages range from 73 to 84, have knitted men’s cardigans, women’s cardigans, socks and gloves.

MEALS ON WHEELS. This scheme is exceedingly popular. In one place the Town Clerk has arranged for W.V.S. to have a “permanent” loan of two gas stoves, and the Borough Council has made a £20 grant towards equipment. One Region gave details of good jackets they have made to keep food containers hot. Another Centre has started “Static Feeding” of old people. The latter bring their knives, forks, etc., and are waited on at trestle tables. The old folk are delighted with their Is. dinner.

At a Welfare Committee Meeting it was stated that there had been a marked improvement in the health of the old people who were having these regular meals and, in one Region, steps were being taken to provide more suitable fare for the very old and somewhat “delicate Customers.”

PIE SCHEME. This has increased greatly during the last two years and approximately 63,000 pie meals have been issued in 16 rural districts during two months.

RATION BOOKS. This subject figures largely this month. Old people have been helped with their new Ration Books, which baffle them very much; in one area 28,500 new ration books were issued by voluntary workers, in another, W.V.S. ran two Centres for a week, two shifts daily, and were warmly thanked by the Food officials for this assistance.

SALVAGE. Gallant efforts are being made in this direction, and—in the Centres where it is well organised—satisfactory results are being obtained. Two reports speak of a great improvement, one saying that their collection had been a marked improvement, they have ever had; but a note of depression creeps into some of the other accounts. C.O.'s complain that it is very difficult to arouse any enthusiasm in their Centres.

SAVINGS. A great deal of work is being done all over the country and a Savings Group has been planned in a Darby and Joan Club. Despite all this energy, fears are expressed in some quarters that the extra Insurance will hit the small savers.

Sports News

W.V.S. has pioneered again! By hook or crook, persuasion or perseverance, W.V.S. finds itself in many out of the way places, though this is generally for more serious reasons than those which called some fifty members to the green lawns and clipped hedges of Wimbledon on the 22nd of September. Taking a look at the smiling faces, there could be no doubt that this was an occasion for us to let down our hair and abandon dull cares to the gentle winds and the sunshine. This is no mystery story, so you should know that the All England Lawn Tennis Club had generously flung open the gates of the Club to W.V.S. for the afternoon and given them the hospitality of the grounds and the clubhouse, so that the first W.V.S. Tennis Tournament could be played. The most lovely silver rose bowl was given to us by a relative of one of our members, as a trophy which is to be competed for each year, and the name of each year’s winners will be inscribed on a silver band on the plinth.

The organisation of the tournament was left in the expert hands of a member, who is herself no stranger to the Centre Court, and it is a tribute to the work she did that the bus taking the players to Wimbledon moved off from Headquarters at 1.16 p.m. — one minute after the deadline—having left no one behind! The players changed in the comfortable quarters so often used by past and future Wimbledon stars— presided over by the groundsman’s wife, who cosseted, chided or encouraged as the need arose. Having by this time no suspender belts to hitch into place, the stalwart fifty pulled up their socks or tucked in their blouses, and took to the courts.

The play may not have been Centre-court standard, but the enthusiasm and enjoyment of everyone taking part was hard to surpass. The competitors were split up into four groups, playing each pair in their group a total of seven games—thus as soon as any couple were two games up on their opponents they gave “fifteen” in the subsequent game and so on, until the two games lead was reduced to a one game lead. This really made it impossible for any couple to be defeated seven love, and was an understanding way of encouraging the out-of-practice and the

(Continued on Page 9)
"My fuel bill was a pleasant surprise—come inside and see how I save!"

**ATTIC** Lagging cold water tank and pipes keeps Jack Frost out. Insulating over the ceiling joists keeps the whole house warm.

**BEDROOM** We never light the fire except in case of illness, and have fitted draft-excluders around window frames and door.

**BATHROOM** The rule is "Go easy on the water level." Of course, my hot water tank is lagged.

**LIVING ROOM** By fitting fire-bricks and banking up with slack when advisable we get warm fires and use much less fuel.

**KITCHEN** When I've a lot to tackle, whether it's laundry, ironing or cooking, I do it in one go. That saves time in the end and saves fuel too.

For interesting booklet on money saving at home, write to Information branch (Dept. No. 33a), Ministry of Fuel and Power, Millbank, S.W.1.

You save money when you

MAKE YOUR FUEL GO FURTHER

Issued by the Ministry of Fuel and Power
The name "Malaya" has occurred in almost every R.B.C. News Bulletin for several weeks now—usually in connection with less peaceful subjects than gardening! From one of the W.V.S. members in the N.A.A.F.I. Canteen at Taiping, however, comes an account of a proposed gardening scheme in which any of the men who expect to be staying in the neighbourhood for more than a day or two may care to take part.

"Suggested times of gardening—when you feel like it, i.e. on your day off or a few hours before sundown," announces the notice pinned to the Canteen board; followed by the wise advice: "Do not be discouraged by thoughts of digging in the heat, for a part-time caboon follows by the wise advice."

An experiment of another kind is also being tried out in Malaya, this time in a Boys' Home by the Save the Children Fund. Here 146 small boys are being given a home, education and vocational training. The boys (either orphans or rescued from undesirable surroundings) consist of "... approximately 50 Malay, 50 Indian, 20 Chinese, one Japanese—and the remainder are Siamese, Javanese and Tamil." Not only are the children taught English and all the usual school subjects, but each child's special abilities are studied and training is provided for the trade for which he shows the greatest aptitude: tailoring, carpentry, basket making, fish-raising and net-making, gardening, mechanics and cookery.

The W.V.S. member who sends us this account tells of the efforts of W.V.S. to interest some of the B.O.R.'s in the idea of spending some of their free time at the school, giving instruction in boxing, wrestling and other subjects not at present covered by the resident staff. Already one Sergeant has undertaken to take Art Classes with the boys; another is keen to start up a small plastic industry inside the school; and a third has promised to give boxing lessons. The report continues: W.V.S. feel that not only will the School derive much help from these men, but the men will gain not only experience in teaching and in youth welfare but will acquire a great interest outside their everyday Army life which may well bear fruit when they return home. The Superintendent is arranging all transport and even, wherever convenient, for the men to stay out at the School overnight if they wish, thus giving them a real break from Camp life. Other crafts in mind for possible development at the School are toy-making, sweet-making and, at the suggestion of W.V.S. (with an eye to Club needs!) jigsaw puzzle-making—for which W.V.S. are assiduously collecting all the coloured pictures available.

**Overseas News**

The Ministry of Health have long recognised that Home Help Services run by Local Authorities form an essential part of the comprehensive public health system. Although it is not yet obligatory for every Local Authority to have a Home Help Service, the National Health Act of July, 1948, required that all authorities should submit at least their plans to the Ministry.

During the past three years a large number of Local Authorities have in fact launched and developed flourishing schemes, providing a panel of Home Helps for cases of sickness, accident, and especially for maternity and child welfare.

The key point in any Home Help Scheme has been found to be the local Organiser who works under the direction of the local Medical Officer of Health. Her duties include recruitment, training and welfare of Home Helps, interviewing and assessing where there is need applicants for domestic assistance, arranging complicated time-tables of work, "hinging" with the various officials and welfare authorities, etc. The job is exacting and calls for a trained welfare worker who has considerable administrative ability, is possessed of initiative, firmness and tact, who can meet equal sympathy to rich and poor alike when they are in difficulties, and who can keep her head when emergencies upset a laboriously arranged time-table.

There are, as yet, very few women in the country who have the necessary training or experience in running Home Help Schemes, and Local Authorities frequently have to appoint a likely candidate and hope she will acquire the necessary technique and knowledge.

W.V.S. are the largest single agency in the country engaged in promoting Home Help Services. They already run about 100 schemes for Local Authorities and their experts have advised over 250 authorities in setting up independent schemes. The knowledge and experience thus gained is beyond price and with the backing of the Ministry of Health W.V.S. now run regular residential courses at Leatherhead for Home Help Organisers.

During October, thirty-five "students" from all over England and Wales assembled at The Priory, Leatherhead for one of these Residential courses which last for a week. Some of the "students" are prospective organisers, others have been working on the job for some time. Discussions therefore are seldom theoretical but are concerned with the solution of definite problems.

The speakers are all hand-picked experts in their subject. W.V.S. provide from Headquarters, from a town, from a county, members who have worked out successful schemes in different kinds of areas. The "know-how" of how to recruit, how to organise a new scheme, publicity, how to run the office, how to look after the training and welfare of Home Helps; all are dealt with thoroughly and practically. Speakers from outside W.V.S. include experts from the Ministry of Health, from Local Authorities, the National Institute of Houseworkers, etc., who deal with such subjects as the background of public health, both nationally and locally, the work of associated welfare officers, e.g. Health Visitors, Hospital Almoners, and how to promote the standards of Home Helps, etc.

At the end of the course the student returns to her work or sets out for her new job, armed with knowledge, confident that she can obtain assistance in any problem which may confront her, and no longer feeling she is an isolated pioneer, but that she is part of an alive and efficient body.
“Women in Green”
(The story of W.V.S. in Wartime)
by Charles Graves.

To be published by Heinemann early in December.

Charles Graves has covered every aspect of the work of W.V.S. from its earliest days until the end of the war, and tells his story sympathetically and with a deep understanding of the spirit of W.V.S. This is a book which will bring back memories which are sometimes tragic, sometimes humorous, but which cannot fail to be of interest to all members of W.V.S., whether or not they themselves were actually working in those days.

For those to whom W.V.S. is only a name this book will give a picture of the variety and volume of the work undertaken and of the immense organisation which grew up at such speed under conditions of the greatest difficulty.

Twenty-five photographs of W.V.S. members actually carrying out their jobs under war-time conditions give added interest to Mr. Graves' descriptive story.

ORDER NOW...

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London Region

LONDON PRIDE is no upstart growth. For a thousand years this proud City has been the heart of the British people, and the mainspring of their dearest liberties. Unthreatened by disaster, London is not a single City so much as a collection of ninety-six small villages, ninety-six boroughs as different in manners and outlook as is a Midland manufacturing town from a sleepy Dorset hamlet. It is this diversity in unity that makes London so important to the Londoner. It is impossible not to feel the undertow of history as well as the thrust of the future in every turn of a London street. The Regimental Bands and the A.R.P.; the Beefeaters and the Life Guards; Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament looking across the Thames at County Hall—these all are London. Each area, with its own Local Authority and its own significant passions and prejudices is a unique entity. Each Town Hall is an expression of local aspiration—but in spite of fierce individuality each is a part of that cosmos which is London.

Generation after generation, its citizens rediscover their heritage under the stress of contemporary events. In this generation the first bomb that fell on the city awoke all the latent pride and irrepressible sense of humour of every true Londoner. Overnight they became members of the fraternity of the bombed. They felt like a family—they swapped family stories and developed, as all closely linked families do, a kind of verbal shorthand. Everyone knew just what lay behind the statement that it had been “a bit fruity round here last night” and everyone knew what it meant to “get a crack on the napper.” A deep sense of comradeship lay behind this mastery of understatement and W.V.S. teams who went out on Enquiry Points or handed round cups of cocoa after an incident were proud to be “Mum” or “Mother” or “Ducks” to anyone in need of help.

A Regional Administrator from the North, who came to the East End to see the Re-homing Scheme in action, was asked by the local Centre Organiser if she would “muck in” with the rest. Of course she chose to “muck in” as everyone gladly did in those grim years and it was that fellowship—born of terror and suffering—that halved misery by sharing in it, that made the seemingly impossible sometimes possible and gave the Londoners the fortitude that upheld them for five long years.

It is that fellowship which W.V.S. is struggling now to maintain in this post-war scramble of conflicting interests and “catch-as-catch can” opportunism, when bitterness and frustration, envy and inequality are threatening to destroy spiritual unity and mutual co-operation. Unique among post-war organisations, the W.V.S. policy of mutual service and of pooled resources can maintain the fellowship of the war years. W.V.S., with its borough representation and its natural background, can and does cut across all frontiers and boundaries and unites the East and the West, the genteel and the bawdy, the suburb and the slum, in a common enterprise.

The London Region has another claim to being peculiar if not unique. The work at Regional Headquarters is sharply divided into routine work versus emergency calls. In common with all the other Regions, London tries to meet the permanent need of old and young, sick and unfortunate, but peculiar to London are these claims that must perpetually recur in a capital city.

There is an endless succession of jobs which may call for a number of volunteers from every borough or
for two helpers from one borough. There are visitors from abroad who want to see a Clothing Exchange in Islington and a Derby and Joan Club in Lambeth. There are immigrants from Latvia or Estonia to be met and taken across London. There are unhappy refugees from Palestine to be helped and introduced to ration books and clothing coupons. There are gifts parcels to be unpacked and children to be escorted from station to station.

There are jobs which need tact; separating an old lady from her very old bed. There are jobs which need brains: addressing a meeting of Town Clerks. There are jobs which need brawn: the distribution of Swiss furniture, and there are jobs which need unsentimental efficiency, such as the twenty-four hour emergency welfare service at Holloway Prison. For every type of work an appropriate member must and can be found.

The London Region is a microcosm of the feminine population of Great Britain. No age or interest or group or type is unrepresented, and a London Meeting is indeed Democracy in action.

It would be almost impossible to pose a problem which would not be met by expert advice from some quarter. It is almost impossible to put forward a request for a grand piano or a fortnight’s holiday for two children or a canary for an old lady which is not immediately met.

The Butcher, the Baker and the Candlestick Maker, Art, Law, the Kitchen, the Theatre, Medicine, Education and the “New Look” and the old are here gathered together united by a common purpose and bound in a warm and well tried comradeship.

Here indeed is London and here is London Pride.

Food News

Christmas seems alarmingly near and the good housewife is now turning in her mind what she can stage this year in the way of variation of Christmas fare. Last year’s cake recipe was so popular we feel we cannot improve upon it, but we suggest an alternative Almond Paste. Anyone who would like a copy of the Christmas Cake recipe may get it on application to Headquarters.

Almond Paste:

\[ \begin{align*}
12 & \text{ oz. Semolina} \\
10 & \text{ oz. Sugar (Icing or Castor)} \\
4 & \text{ oz. Margarine} \\
2 & \text{ Shell Eggs} \\
2 & \text{ teasp. Almond Essence}
\end{align*} \]

Rub fat into semolina. Add sugar and flavouring. Bind with eggs and knead very well. No cooking required.

FREEZING MIXTURE:

When arranging a party, so many feel handicapped by not having a refrigerator. Here is a simple freezing mixture. It is quite harmless, non-poisonous and costs only a few pence. Two strengths of the solution are given:

(a) For freezing—

\[ 4 \text{ oz. Nitrate of Ammonia} \]

\[ \frac{1}{2} \text{ pint water} \]

(b) For chilling only—

\[ 2 \text{ oz. Nitrate of Ammonia} \]

\[ 1 \text{ pint water} \]

Stand the dish containing the food to be frozen in this liquid, leaving a good safety margin at the top to make sure none of the solution gets into the food.

FRUIT JELLY:

\[ 2 \text{ oz. Gelatine} \] (Or less, according to the directions on the gelatine being used, as different makes vary in strength.)

1 pint Fruit Juice or Squash.

Sugar to taste.

Bring fruit juice to the boil, add gelatine previously dissolved in a little water. Stir well. Pour into wetted mould and leave to set.

The jelly can be used effectively to decorate cakes or cold sweets. Place well set jelly on a chopping board and chop into small crystals. Sprinkle a very little cold water over and mix lightly. Put into piping bag and pipe in the usual way.

Coffee Shortbread Fingers:

\[ \begin{align*}
4 & \text{ oz. Self Raising Flour} \\
2 & \text{ oz. Peanut Butter} \\
1 & \text{ oz. Margarine} \\
2 & \text{ oz. Sugar} \\
1 & \text{ tablesp. Coffee Essence} \\
3 & \text{ tablesp. Water}
\end{align*} \]

Mix dry ingredients thoroughly. Add coffee essence and water to make a stiff paste. Roll out and cut into fingers with a straight fluted-edged cutter. Bake in a moderate oven for 20 mins. until golden brown and fairly firm to the touch. Cool on a wire tray.

Apple and Cranberry Salad:

\[ \begin{align*}
4 & \text{ lbs. Apples} \\
4 & \text{ heads Celery} \\
1 & \text{ lb. Cranberries} \\
6 & \text{ oz. Sugar} \\
1 & \text{ stick Celery} \\
1 & \text{ Bayleaf}
\end{align*} \]

Mix mayonnaise for garnish.

Prick the cranberries and cook gently with the sugar and sufficient water to cover until tender, but not broken. Drain and cool. Peel and core the apples and cut into small pieces. Mix celery and apple with a little mayonnaise and pile on to a serving dish. Sprinkle cranberries on top. Garnish with watercress.

Old Folks Soup:

\[ \begin{align*}
1 & \text{ quart Stock} \\
\frac{1}{2} & \text{ lb. Sausages} \\
2 & \text{ oz. Dripping} \\
1 & \text{ each Carrot, Turnip, Onion and half-leek} \\
1 & \text{ stick Celery} \\
1 & \text{ Bayleaf}
\end{align*} \]

Seasoning to taste.

Prepare vegetables. Cut into small pieces. Melt dripping in a saucepan, add vegetables and fry well. Add flour, mixing all together. Add the stock gradually and stir until boiling. Season to taste. Cover saucepan and cook gently until vegetables are tender. Meanwhile remove skin from sausages and make meat up into small balls, first flouring the hands. Add balls to the soup and cook for a further 15 minutes. Serve with pieces of toast.

Womens’ Home Industries

During the last three months orders have increased to such proportions that all the people who volunteered to work for W.H.I. are being used, and more knitters are wanted.

Orders are being received from first-class American stores and wholesalers such as Hattie Carnegie and Mainbocher, and special work is being undertaken to Clair Potter designs which are distributed to stores through a well-known wholesaler.

Anyone who feels that their work is of a high enough standard to be used by W.H.I. should send in a sample addressed to 41, Tothill Street, London, S.W.1, including in it their name and address. The sample will be returned to them with a notification as to whether or not the standard of their work is high enough. If it is, in due course they will be sent a garment to knit, given full instructions as to the pattern and told the amount which will be paid according to the usual trade rates.
Replacing a Library

WHEN I was a girl the young were offered much counsel on what they should read and how they should collect a library. There was almost overmuch guidance for the immature reader who desired to create a worth-while collection.

My own tastes have always been for the desultory rather than the planned literary life; and while I read these counsels with respect and studied the lists with interest, I was temperamentally incapable of collecting a library according to a set scheme. The result was that during the first twenty or twenty-five years of my intellectual life my ever extending shelves carried a heterogeneous collection of books, representing successive whims and casual chance wanderings rather than an organized system of reading. There was much dross among the gold, but almost every volume represented a phase of interest, a period of intellectual life, upon which I could look back as upon a milestone in my progressive realisation of how little I had read or would ever be able to read.

Just seven years ago to-night, a German airman travelled up the lane in which my husband and I lived, dropped an incendiary bomb and burnt out the whole of our home and library. We, to whom that little library was dukedom large enough, now possess very few books made for reading and re-reading—the core and heart of a library—and so, to-day, in the middle of life's journey, we are faced with the almost insoluble problem, the almost insoluble, of re-building from the beginning.

Present day finance and the immediate need to replace our more material losses make it impossible for us to spend munificent sums on quantities of books; but we would not, even if we could, replace our library in the mass. That is, or should be, no real hardship; for while we have often longed for more and more money to spend on books, we have never had patience with those who, having the cash, simply build many shelves and fill them with books by the thousand. A library should be an intimate, personal possession: each volume should be bought carefully after wise thought; we have never spent sixpence on a book without carefully weighing the question: "Is it worth while?" Unless a book is worth something to its owner, spiritually it is a mere encumbrance.

Yet, a library we must have. But what are we to buy? Where shall we begin? What shall be the basis? Easy to say, the Bible and Shakespeare, the poets and prose writers of the ages—but whom? what? how?

Our first reactions are negative; we will not be swayed by the current fads of current literary philosophies. Are we to criticise a novel because its subject is out of date? So, then, are the subjects of Homer, of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Daniel Defoe, the Book of Ruth. That attitude of criticism—and criticism must be the basis of our selection—we reject entirely. It smells too badly of that new and false belief, which has poisoned the literature of the past decade, that poetry should concern itself with propaganda, that unless your poems versify one of the political or social theories which darken this dismal hour it is useless and out of touch with life. According to this attitude of mind, "Gather ye roses while ye may" is sheer romanticism; and when Matthew Arnold lamented his friend with "Soon will the high midsummer pompoms come on," he was simply ignoring the facts of life and death.

But that reminds me: Thyris must be among our earlier acquisitions:

"Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go? Soon will the high midsummer pompoms come on, Soon will the muck carnations break and swell, Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon, Sweet William with his homely cottage smell And stocks in fragrant glow; Roses that down the alleys shine afar And open, jasmine-muffled lattices, And groups under the dreaming garden trees, And the full moon, and the white evening star."

No fire can ever burn away the memory and the thought of that loveliness; the possession of it in printed form will compensate, largely for the garden we have lost; the garden which to-day lies all gold and brown with sunflowers and hellebros, purple with Michaelmas daisies, and touched with vermillion by the flame-coloured snapdragon. And the verse gives hope; of another spring, another summer, a lovelier world, a return to beauty, a lifting of the clouds, a restoration of the sanity of books and gardens. The romances were not so untropical, after all; and we can find the well-spring of truth in poems other than those which deal with the scullery and the midden, the economic theory and political phantasm.

But I am leaving the point: what shall we buy? The Greeks? The Latins? Shall we, immediately, replace our Shakespeare, our Shaw, our Hardy, our Forsyte Saga, our Rabelais—the list is endless. History makes some of the best reading to-day, dispelling with its illusions and analogies and ironies the depressing illusions of to-day. Shall we concentrate for the moment on history and wait for Thyris?

The idea is attractive—but we are haunted by an underlying doubt. It seems too much like planning, and the world is too full of planners. Politicians want to plan our social life, economists to plan our economic existence—and, they are having their way—but the precious life-blood of master spirits cannot be planned; you cannot produce a Shelley by practicing the dull science of eugenics. We will reject the idea of planning. There is little leisure to-day; even less mental leisure, freedom from strains and stresses, than mere time-leisure. Yet the best way to spend what little we have will be in and around the bookshops, picking a book here and there, reading this volume and being led on to the next.

If ever we are to have a real library again, a library in the true personal sense, a collection of books which will reflect ourselves, part of us as was our burnt collection, then it must be created in this way.

The masters are marshalled before us; they await our pleasure, our interest—yes, and our energy, for although they are servants they are also our masters and we must strive if we are to be at one with them. But the world of books is open to us. We can take nothing for granted; cannot pass by that copy of the Shropshire Lad with the thought, "But we have one." We have no copies; we need everything. But each volume must be selected with care, handled with love; for every book we buy will represent an endeavour to heal a wound, to replace a lost treasure that which has been burnt out of us by the fire of the enemy; for in losing our library we have lost by violence something of ourselves; the wound is still open; dressed only with the anodyne of memory and hope; and we must heal it with the balm of good writing, fine print and robust binding.
Report on September Competition

The Competition on “Circulars” seems, on the whole, to have engaged the attention of our more hilarious readers. One or two entries treat the subject with the seriousness which should be the correct approach; but on the whole, much more levity and cheerful exasperation is shown than any attempt to solve the problem of these ill-loved bits of paper. Theo Humphries, in her entry “Mere Male,” asks: “Is there any other way of conveying information to harassed women?” But neither she nor any other competitor, supplies an answer. “Mere Male” even suspects that an answer would not be welcome, since “W.V.S. are brought up to Worry Very Seriously.” A. Y. Larminie, in addressing a pleasing poem to W.V.S. Headquarters, plainly feels they get the best of the bargain, since Circulars bear so curious a name.

They come from you to me, but never go Full circle back to those from whence they came.

On the whole, we feel our handsome waste-paper basket must be awarded to “HiYa Tothill” from Region 10, whose article is printed below. Although she has rather overrun the limit set for length, her point of view delights us, and we send her our congratulations on the formation of the C.C.C.C.C. Since she is not a member of the W.V.S. Club, we regret her inability to qualify for the other half of the prize.

One of the troubles about circulars is the ease with which they can be perpetrated. Too many people rise after a good night’s rest, take a deep breath of the crisp morning air, and say “Gosh, I feel fine this morning; I think I’ll do a circular.” Unfortunately they generally adhere to the hasty resolution, and two hours later, armed with a typewriter, paper, strong coffee and the Encyclopaedia Britannica they keep thinking of one thing after another which can be chiselled into the circular without rendering it totally meaningless. The success of some of them in this direction is astounding.

The Cultural Committee for Clear Concise and Complete Circulars (C.C.C.C.C.) recommends that all circulars be summarised and then a summary made of the summary. If the result cannot reasonably be put on a post-card the author is advised to do one or two things: (a) start again at the beginning (da capo); or (b) go for a nice long walk (da ta-ta).

From the foregoing some people might conclude that I do not like circulars; but I assure you that such is not the case. In fact I often think that I should thoroughly enjoy them if only, in my younger days, I had learned to read and write.

“HI-YA TOTHILL.”

CIRCULARS.

Circulars are so called because, like the circle, there is no end to them. They are first-cousin to the snow-ball letter and the father and mother of half the headaches in Britain. They were never invented but came direct from Pandora’s Box.

Formerly, when it was customary to write on one side of the paper only, circulars were fifty per cent. useful; but now, when both sides of the paper are filled to overflowing and margins have length but no magnitude, considerable ingenuity is called for if any use is to be found for them. As office-table decorations they are an improvement on a half-knitted jumper, and it is useful to be able to take hold of one and turn over a few pages while wondering what to reply to a difficult enquiry. A heavy pile of them is also useful for pressing ferns and flowers.

COMPETITION

“If you had lost all your books and could only replace ten, which ten would they be?”

A prize of “Women in Green” is offered for the best article on this subject. Entries must not exceed 250 words and should reach the Editor of the Bulletin, 41, Tothill Street, London, S.W.1 by 30th November, 1948, and must be accompanied by the adjoining Entry Form. The Winning Entry will be printed in the January issue of The Bulletin.

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(Pseudonym may be used if preferred, but full name and address must be given as well)
**News Flashes**

**ACCRINGTON.**—A very old crippled lady wrote to this office saying that it was impossible for her to go out and she knew nobody who would wheel her in her bath chair to the Park. She is now most happy as W.V.S. frequently take her out.

**BATTERSEA.**—Plants and lily bulbs have been received for pre-fabs. These have come from benefactors in Lincoln who kindly adopted Battersea for this scheme.

Canteens at Battersea General and the Bolingbroke Hospital are still working very well, many new helpers have been enrolled.

**BEDFORD.**—An escort acted for the Ministry of Labour to a Displaced Person with two children who were found a home near the father. The following letter was received from the mother about a month later, and enclosed was a beautifully hand-woven bookmark as a present:

"Thank you for your kindness. We have now a good lodgings. Already three weeks I work at Mrs. Jones, sorry only that I understand not the language. My children Majia and Andris are joyful that they are eaten. I send you Majia's work—book-mark.—Yours faithfully, ANNA KALNARE."

**BEVERLEY.**—Godmother Scheme report rapid activity and the children are very happy with their Godmothers.

**BLOFIELD AND FLEGG R.D.**—The two villages have almost completed collecting 1 ton 4 cwt. of salvage since the beginning of June.

**BORDER RURAL, CUMBERLAND.**—In response to an appeal to help the victims of the Flooded Areas of the East end of the Borders of England and Scotland the Border Rural W.V.S. were given large quantities of clothing, beds, 25 blankets, linen, china, etc., and £25. This money has been sent to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh's Fund and the household goods and clothing are being distributed by the local W.V.S. to the people of Cumleugh by Duns, Berwickshire.

**BOURNEMOUTH C.B.**—450 old people and children from Institutions have been taken on boat trips. Trips were arranged with W.V.S. escorts.

**CARDIFF C.B.**—The "Say-It-Without-Flowers" Scheme is still operating on a small scale, and is popular with those who use it.

**CHORLEY.**—Plenty of work at this centre, but we prefer to quote a story of good faith which was included in their report. "A mother dangerously ill in hospital was worrying about certain domestic difficulties which had arisen through her illness—her young son visited her in hospital—he then rushed into our office saying 'Mum's in hospital—I've been to see her—she says, 'tell W.V.S. they'll be able to help somehow. I'm sure.!' W.V.S. have not failed!"

**CHISLEHURST AND SIDCUP.**—The Sitters-in-Scheme is so appreciated here that one parent sent a W.V.S. member tickets for two stalls for a London theatre, saying that W.V.S. had restored her husband's faith in human nature because "They do things for nothing!"

**DARLINGTON C.B.**—This centre reports great activity on all fronts! Welfare Food Distribution continues very satisfactorily. Recently a R.A.F. man called at the office and asked if it were possible for us to call with his baby's food and vitamins. Meals-on-Wheels served 396 dinners last month, and one recipient of over 80 has written a poem dedicated to W.V.S.

**DEPTFORD.**—"A Wedding Has Been Arranged." Members acted as Guard of Honour at St. Peter's Church on July 17th when a Darby of 73 years and a Joan of 72 years from All Saint's Darby and Joan Club were married.

**DONCASTER C.B.**—Twelve children from St. Christopher's Church of England Children's Society Home have returned to the Home after a most enjoyable fortnight's holiday with Godmothers.

**DOWLAIAS (MERTHYR TYDFIL).**—Here is an extract from their report: "To end last season before closing for August, Dowlais (Merthyr Tydfil) W.V.S. Group gave a sumptuous 'high tea' party to all the old folks who received hot meals under their Feeding Scheme. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and some Councillors came to give the Council's blessing, and about fifty guests enjoyed a very happy evening."

**EASTBOURNE C.B.**—The Army Canteen at Neumunster in Germany has been adopted by this centre. A large notice is in the window asking for contributions of magazines, papers, etc. Many passers-by have made offers of reading-matter and one bundle has already been sent off.

**HACKNEY.**—Escorts busily engaged; Old people, children and the Blind are being taken to Stations and many other destinations.

**HAMPSTEAD.**—National Savings doing well. The takings at the Selling Centre this month amounts to £906 14s. 6d.

**HASTINGS C.B.**—On behalf of the Mayor, W.V.S. distributed 680 individual parcels from Hastings, New Zealand, in three days.

**HORNCHURCH.**—The visit of eight Polish girls and a boy was arranged by W.V.S. and local hosts were found for them by the ex-Centre Organiser for Hornchurch. Aim of the visit was to give the children a complete change from camp life which they had been living since they came to England.

**ISLE OF WIGHT.**—Seeds from the United States have been given to children to grow and local gardeners have given vegetables to the Darby and Joan Clubs for distribution to members. Five of these clubs are now flourishing on the island.

**KINGSBridge RURAL DISTRICT.**—Salvage is doing well. Sale figures are over £100. Jam jars and bottles are well up to average with just over one hundred dozen of each, paper including cardboard, magazines, bound books, etc., 8 tons 7 cwt., rags 7½ cwt.; non-ferrous metals 6½ cwt., jam jars 102 dozen, bottles 104 dozen, all of which were sold for £105 14s. 11d.

**LEOMINSTER.**—The Cadet Canteen is much appreciated by the boys and their officers. W.V.S. has lent a Thermostat urn and a boiling urn as the officer in charge of the cadets has most kindly, but rather inadequately, provided one small electric kettle to do service for tea-making and washing up.
LEWISHAM.—Old Age Pensioners Clubs still progressing. Twenty-five members from each club are now allowed to go to the Lewisham Hippodrome in excellent seats at reduced prices. The total number allowed to go each Monday is 200. Our Darby and Joan Club, Boone Street ask their members to bring along their newspapers which are then sold for salvage. The money goes to the benefit of the club.

LOUGHBOROUGH.—An Agricultural Show was held here recently and W.V.S. were given a stall. This was manned all day by members, and plants were promised for the Garden Gift Scheme. The Leicestershire Chairman of the Rose Hips Scheme sent us showcards and bottles of Rose Hip Syrup which helped to adorn the stall.

MAIDENHEAD.—W.V.S. were asked by the M.O.H. to find interpreters for a week to two German doctors (who were in England studying our Health Services). Two were soon found, one of whom acted as interpreter for the whole week.

MANCHESTER C.B.—An E.V.W. formerly an opera singer and now working as a cleaner at an E.V.W. canteen, was entertained by a W.V.S. member at her home. This gave her tremendous pleasure and she kept touching things with sheer admiration muttering “How lovely are these, and how beautiful an English home.”

PORTSMOUTH C.B.—W.V.S. Social Club is discovering up-and-coming talent! At a recent “Members’ Day Party” varied musical items were contributed and a clever impersonator gave us some outstanding impressions—an entirely unsuspected gift!

MASHAM.—This Centre has just been re-opened, E.V.W.’s have been visited in the district, and a Rose Hip collecting station has been started.

RICHMOND RURAL, YORKS.—English lessons have just started at Hartforth Grange for the European Volunteer Workers and proving highly satisfactory. The several nationalities include people from the Baltic Provinces, Ukraine, etc.

RICKMANSORTH.—Thirty depots have been established in Herts for Rose Hips. The Manager of the Odeon Cinema has allowed the Centre Organiser to appeal to the children through their Children’s Club.

A “Pricking” Competition has been arranged. Odeon are giving two prizes, also W.V.S.

SAFORD C.B.—Fifteen members regularly send newspapers of all kinds overseas. A few odd blankets and baby clothes have been given to urgent cases sent through the Local Health Authority and the N.S.P.C.C.

SHAFTESBURY.—The distribution of 900 tins of Gift Food in the rural district received last month was completed in good time. Services Welfare have received our attention recently—magazines and papers having been sent to Hong Kong and six parcels weighing 20 lbs. each were also posted.

SHEFFIELD C.B.—Spectacular canning achievement! 600 cans have been filled in two weeks. As this centre has only one boiler, one sink and one gas stove, we wonder whether the target has been reached?

SOUTH SHIELDS C.B.—This Centre still has a few vacancies for “Aunties.” The “Aunts Scheme” for children is in operation for P.C.H.A. home in the town. Two W.V.S. Aunts recently took a party of 20 children for an outing.

STOKESLEY R.D. SOUTH.—Each week W.V.S. give the local Army authorities a telephone call to ask whether the men want their socks darned, and needless to say, the men are delighted with the gesture and keep us busy!

STOURBRIDGE.—The Clothing Exchange has been well advertised here by window-displays and a slide at the local cinema resulting in a good response. Membership of our Darby and Joan Club has grown from 45 at its inception in March, to 120 with an average attendance of over 80. Recently a party of 86 went on an outing to Stratford, Warwick and Leamington, and about the same number were entertained at a garden party “at home” of a member of the Local Authority.

SUNBURY.—Our 73 year old member organised a Children’s Regatta and handed the proceeds of £4 14s. Od. towards an outing which we hope to arrange for the Darby and Joan Club.

TORQUAY.—Yachting Events of the XIV Olympiad Torquay Roy Scouts Association requested W.V.S. help with the feeding of 130 Sea Scouts who came from all over Britain to help the yachtsmen during the Olympic Yachting fortnight. Members enjoyed this work.

TWICKENHAM.—The Working Party helpers are cutting up useless woollen skirts from the Clothing Exchange and making splendid hot water bottle covers from them.

A present of gift wool has been very quickly transformed into comforts for old people, and Darby and Joan Club members are helping in this work.

WARWICK COUNTY.—Forty-six car drivers are now in the Hospital Car Service and a start has been made with a Mobile Children’s Clothing Exchange operating at the same time as the Welfare Food distribution.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE.—This centre has undertaken to do the mending of the E.V.W. (Agricultural Workers) at the Uphill Camp.

WHICKHAM URBAN DISTRICT.—The Work Party have been doing wonders. Have recently converted old overcoats into suits and many other similar achievements.

WINDSOR BOROUGH.—One W.V.S. member has been driving for an old man of 86 years who recently bought a car, but had no one to drive him. She has now instructed his grandson, and he has just passed his test.

WORCESTER C.B.—One of the cleaners in the town has made this Centre a present of unclaimed clothes—about 400 garments. These are being distributed between E.V.W’s and Army Families Camp.

ERRATA.

In the article on the New Pattern of Social Services in the September Bulletin it was stated that an insured man would receive a retirement pension of 26s. and his wife 20s. The figure for the wife should be 16s.