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August this year London staged an exhibition to commemorate Cook's setting out on his long voyage a year and eightmonths before he reached Australia. We should be able to make a gesture worthy of the event so important in our history. Pageant, exhibition, the distribution of information to schools and other organizations, speeches by appropriate people, plaques and monuments come to mind. A fresh idea would be welcome. Any suggestions, reader?

THE UNPOPULAR OCCUPATION

A local newspaper - the Brighton "Southern Cross" of 1874 contains a news item which is a comment on what has perhaps always been Australia's most unpopular occupation - domestic service. The paragraph reads "A servant girl wanting a situation inserted an advertisement. She received fifty replies. An immigration of thorough servants would be a decided boon to many families in the colony and we hope that steps will at once be taken to obtain them."

Australia, of course, inherited the servant from England were for centuries she, and often he, were part of the social structure. In the country the squire and the yeomen farmer employed many men and women on their estates and in their homes, (sons and daughters often succeeded parents for generations as cooks or footmen or parlour maids); the wealthier citizens in the towns did likewise; lower ranks kept half a dozen or one or two servants; only the wives of the labourer, the factory worker and the miner did all their own work. At first settlers of any substance in Australia repeated the pattern. Convict labour in and out of the house was common until past the middle of the nineteenth century, and many poor immigrants were glad to find jobs, at least at first, as servants. The first book about Australia printed in England - a copy of it is in the National Library - contains a passage deploring the shortage of servants for work in house and garden in this country and urging immigrants to enrol themselves at these tasks. The flood of Irish immigration in the fifties and sixties relieved the shortage temporarily though the lassies from Cork and Kilkenny needed much knocking into shape to suit the mistresses of mansions in Sydney and Melbourne. They were paid 10/- to £1 a week and their keep. Until well into the twentieth century Australian mothers of large families kept a "girl" to help in every kind of task in the house.

But something in Australian conditions or atmosphere has always made domestic service unpopular here; perhaps it was being at the mercy of one person or the lack of company of their own age which made Australian girls prefer shop, office or factory. A few advertisements still appear in our newspapers, usually beginning with "Home Help" or "Woman for light

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