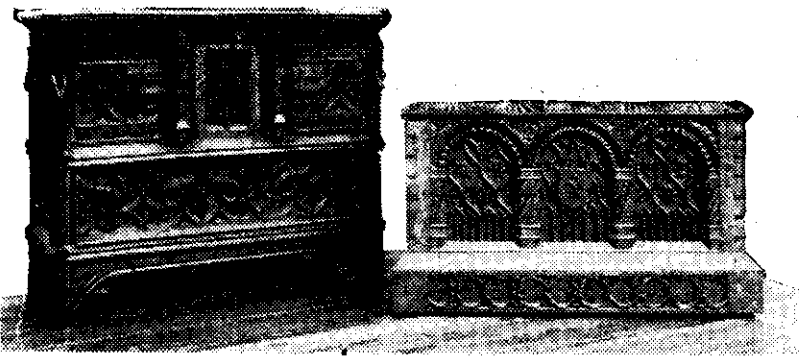


Art and the Wood-Carver

THOSE of you who have already admired the Women's Section of the Centennial Exhibition will agree that it deserves a separate and special visit. For those who delight in fine needlework the tapestry displayed is a real source of pleasure. Every conceivable subject is tackled from allegorical themes to landscape. Many are so fine as to take on the appearance of delicate water colour.

Oil painting, too, is on a high level, though flower studies, with a sprinkling of portraits, dominate the show. Bronze, copper, brass, pewter—all are wrought in masterly manner, from the larger exhibits of screen or chest to the minute jewelled ornaments that fill the glass cases. Busts in plaster and bronze are also to be found.

Not least in interest is the wood carving. Two examples are these old chests in rare design. Examining their tireless detail one gains something of the pleasurable satisfaction of the worker in wood.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Just As Happy"

"I have been engaged a year now and we meant to marry next January but my fiancé wishes to postpone the wedding until we can build a house. I would be just as happy to start in a little flat.—U.S.B."

(Have you investigated "little flats" in this town? Personally I'd feel like starting in a tent before I'd pay the rents that are asked. Otherwise I'm all for short engagements or even no engagement at all. If you feel it will jeopardise your happiness to wait so long then it's up to you to do the persuading.) Domestic Theme

Domestic Theme

"I am twenty-eight and have two babies—one three and the other eighteen months. They and my home ought to be enough, I know, and they take all my time but I get terribly tired and irritable. My mother says I ought to be content. It's no good trying to explain.—N.C.H."

(You do not say so, but I rather guess you were a busy person before your marriage, in quite other ways—perhaps a really necessary member of an office staff and popular among your friends? In any case, I think you are suffering at the moment from an overdose of domesticity, which is no good to you, your husband nor your very young family. Make every effort to shake quite free just once or twice a week. I see you live in a suburb that gives you the advantage of the use of our invaluable Railway Nursery. Your babies, I assure you, would be splendidly cared for there and perfectly happy. It would mean a whole day's freedom to you, at very small expense, in which you could resume contacts with your friends. Am I right in assuming you've rather lost touch?)

"Scarcely Lived"

"My father died and my two sisters married while I was still at school, and it fell to me to remain at home and nurse my mother who is an invalid. She is very old and no longer responsible now, but she has never liked me and seems to go out of her way to make an already difficult situation unbearable. I am over forty but feel I have scarcely lived. Money is not lacking.—R.K.L."

(Circumstances, plus a sense of duty, make victims of so many of us. If you died to-morrow some arrangement would be made for your mother, a housekeeper or nurse found for her. It strikes me that a long holiday—perhaps even an indefinite one—is due to you. But it should be right away and

in a totally different environment. Couldn't you plan something for this summer?)

What is Popularity?

"Can you tell me how to gain popularity in my set? I do everything I can to please but I think I am not liked much.—V.M."

(Perhaps you are over-anxious—not so much to please as to be popular. This could make your friends so self-conscious and uncomfortable as to avoid you or shun your company. If you were more reticent in your own affairs and showed that you had real thought and care for a few, rather than all, others, your friendship would begin to mean something.)

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS:

For reasons of space it is necessary to cut, and sometimes to condense, contents of letters.

Since it appears that these columns are meant to stay, readers are asked to suggest a permanent heading.

Ann Slade

The Woman Architect

"Do you think architecture as a career is hopeless for a woman? I am eighteen and must make some decision. I have a flair for drawing but my family are all against it. Could you advise me?—W.M."

(The idea needs rather careful investigation. First, architecture demands much more than merely a "flair for drawing." Secondly, it is a long course if you mean to go right through with it. Thirdly, there may still be, in this country, an old-fashioned prejudice against the woman architect. I agree it would be an absorbing job, taken seriously. I believe there are two ways in which you might proceed—by study and examination or by entering as a cadet or student with a good firm. You would do well to get the advice of some architect whom you know to be open-minded. You need not necessarily take it.)

Opportunity

"I've got the opportunity of a good job in Australia but my mother doesn't want me to go. My sister backs her up. Do you think I should stay at home and turn down a good chance?—G.K.J."

(It is difficult to advise you. If your mother is neither very old nor dependent on you I should say you must not forfeit a good opportunity.)

WHILE THE KETTLE BOILS

Dear Friends,

Do you remember the old nursery rhyme?—

*Xmas is coming and the ducks are getting fat,
Please put a penny in the old man's hat.*

*If you haven't got a penny a farthing will do,
If you haven't got a farthing—God bless you!*

This childish jingle expresses, I think, the whole spirit of Christmas—that of giving. Christmas is a time of festivity and family celebration. When we speak of Yuletide, we think of Father Christmas and reindeer, toys and gifts, coloured balloons and bonbons, Christmas trees shining with candles, the Christmas turkey and pudding, cookies frosted with white and red icing, mince pies and gingerbread men with currants for eyes. All the exciting, indigestible, beautifully foolish things that belong alone to the Christmas Season.

Yet if we burrowed down beneath the icing and the glitter, we would find something deeper and stronger that makes this one day in the year happy and memorable for us all. It began one night a long time back in Bethlehem, when a Star shone so bright that it dazzled the watchers who knelt in homage beneath the radiant sky. The Spirit of Christianity was born that night, and through hundreds of years on every Christmas Day, Christianity takes on a more vital, glowing meaning. It is expressed through the simple gesture of giving—and that is the real meaning of—Happy Christmas! Happiness—because, for that brief season, self is forgotten, and we know the keener, rarer pleasure of giving. Families draw closer together, friends forgather, and over all presides that spirit of friendliness and goodwill that tells us the Star shines as bright to-day as it did that radiant night in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago.

For the past weeks, here at home, as well as all over the world, people's minds have been busied with the all important problem of Christmas gifts. It is a problem, isn't it? Nobody must be forgotten, and with pencil and note-book we sit down and worry out how our budget will stand the strain of our expectations.

The mere male, of course, at normal times a pathetic shopper, is lost before he starts. But more enterprising woman has, at least, a sporting chance. To say nothing of her ingenuity, many women take a delight in fashioning their own Christmas gifts, and nothing gives the recipient greater pleasure than this intimate, personal gesture.

There are so many really attractive things that one can make at home. Worked linen is always acceptable. Book-markers, metal-work, painted calendars, coat and stocking hangers, parchment telephone book-covers, perfumed sachets, dressed boudoir dolls, and dozens of other charming trifles.

One woman I know, a renowned cook, has a unique idea of selecting a dozen of her most prized recipes. She writes them out neatly and encloses them in an illuminated parchment folder. These she sends to a few privileged friends who, she knows, will appreciate the thought.

I have so many wishes for you this Christmas. That the war cloud may soon be lifted. That prosperity and the priceless boon of health may be your lot. That each day of 1940 may bring you an added happiness—and a greater content. That life for all of you may be kinder, fuller, richer. All this I wish for you and yours.

A happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you all!

Cordially Yours,

Cynthia