

TO A LADY SEEN FROM A TRAIN

O why do you walk through the fields
in gloves,
Missing so much and so much?
O fat white woman whom nobody loves,
Why do you walk through the fields in
gloves,
When the grass is soft as the breast of
doves
And shivering sweet to the touch?
O why do you walk through the fields
in gloves,
Missing so much and so much?
—Frances Cornford

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Opportunity

"I am twenty-two and have money of my own. It has always been understood that I should go to England to visit my father's people, but now there is war my family feels I should remain here. We cannot know when the war will end and I wish to go. Do you think it very unwise?—G.N.B."

(No. I think I agree. If you have had your heart set on the trip for so long—and your father's people still agree to have you—I think it better not to wait. You would only become restless and disappointed here. You are grown-up and able to look after yourself. Life should be lived as fully as opportunity offers.)

Years—And Love

"I am in love with a boy three years younger than myself, though we have everything in common and are terribly happy. My girl friends chaff me. If we married do you think everything would be all right?—H.S."

(Good heavens, yes. Why not? Years—and the future—have really terribly little to do with love—and the present.)

Friendship can be Too Strong

"I have a great friend whom I met four years ago when I was seventeen. She has all the qualities I admire and we have so much in common that we are utterly happy together. Yet my father has done everything to spoil our friendship and now actually demands that we see no more of one another. Surely this is absurd.—T.H.M."

(No—it need not be absurd though, of course, it may appear exasperating and stupid to you. It is possible for such friendships to demand, and take, too much. These are important years for you, and your father knows it. It is wise for him to do all he can to prevent you giving yourself over to such an attachment. Try to believe that he is doing a right thing and perhaps you will come to understand it. Is your friend older than you? Write again.)

Strategy

Left to myself for a moment or so in a Wellington drawing-room the other day I heard high young voices beyond the window. The room ran the length of the house and the window looked on to the cool green of the back garden.

Three small boys played on some steps. One stood stony-faced while another kept up a monologue apparently calculated to entertain. The third hung back uncertainly.

This went on a moment. Suddenly Number Two, his patience and his elocutionary powers at an end, leaned across to Number Three and hissed between his teeth:

"Why don't you rout those Germans? WHY don't you rout those Germans? Can't you see I'm keeping Hitler amused?"

Maggie "Can't Stick" The Sea

For all that "Fred's" Maggie fits into Sydney more rightly than the Australian born, she was nearly fifteen before she left her sea-coast town of Brighton, England. And to fun on those famous piers she probably owes more of her talent for comedy than she realises.

Anyhow she was soon introduced to a new and fiercer surf at Bondi, the great surf beach at Sydney. Here she discovered that English swimming proficiency was inadequate. By the time she was rescued, more dead than alive, by a band of bronze-bodied life-savers, she had come to a conclusion that has not altered with the years. She's all for sun and salt air—for sand and beach parades—but, when it comes to surf? No, Maggie "can't stick the sea."

It's Useful To Know That...

A strip of old carpet, glued on to a long piece of wood, makes an excellent mud brush for shoes. It will not scratch the leather... Glycerine, rubbed carefully into delicate materials, will remove coffee stains. Spread out the stained part on a thick cloth, and remove the glycerine by sponging with methylated spirit... Ordinary cooking salt, sprinkled into teacups and teapots will remove tannin stains, if rubbed with a damp cloth... Old blankets, cut into strips, make ideal pads under the stair carpet... Luggage and garden labels are easier to read if you rub them over with a piece of candle and the ink will not run... Belts can be kept neat when hung on large hooks screwed on the underside of a single-bar coat-hanger... Outside drains will not spash if a piece of wood is fixed over them. A small knob screwed on the cover will allow of it being easily lifted whenever the drain needs cleaning. Paint to match the wood-work... A brick covered with velvet or baize, provides a reliable door-stop... Moisture will not penetrate steel or iron if, after a rub with emery paper, a thin coat of good waxpolish is applied... A tear in a fur can be mended with a piece of adhesive tape fixed on the wrong side... Boiled puddings will not stick to the basin or cloth if first dropped into cold water... An old silk stocking will act as a filter if placed firmly over the spout of the pipe which drains into the rain-butt... Paraffin and vinegar mixed with warm water will make an excellent cleaner for linoleum... A teaspoonful of mustard in an empty medicine bottle will remove any trace of smell. Half fill with water, shake well and rinse... A string bag makes an excellent lettuce drier... A hair clip, slipped over the edge of the page, makes an ideal place-marker for knitting instruction... A damp sponge, dabbed on creases, helps in ironing... String will find a good home if placed in a wool-container... Warmed linseed oil, rubbed over new patent leather shoes, will help preserve the leather.

WHILE THE KETTLE BOILS

Dear Friends,

Last week we chatted on fashion. To-day I thought it would be amusing to discuss some of the latest jewellery fads that are included in our modern frocking curriculum.

This statement would without doubt horrify our grandmothers—to whom there was only one type of jewellery—the genuine article itself. If they could have taken a peep into the future which we are living to-day, they would have been startled and scandalised at the present-day vogue for imitation jewellery. Our shops are full of it. Bracelets, rings and necklets of metal and imitation stones—all kinds of novel trinkets which are accepted by the world of fashion to-day.

Invariably we take our lead from fashion overseas, though we are spared some of the more extreme notions. For example, we hear of a well-known society leader in New York startling the natives by wearing a necklace made of tiny glass globes filled with water. Inside swam fish still tinier but very much alive!

In Paris the divorce ring is enjoying a vogue. It is a thin circlet of platinum worn on the little finger of the right hand. In this subtle manner the fair wearer informs the world that she is in circulation again.

In Brazil, a country of precious stones, the masculine element enters the field in earnest. He does not play round with the idea—he makes the wearing of precious stones a badge of office. For example, a professor is distinguished by wearing a green tourmaline ring; a doctor by an emerald; a lawyer by a ruby; an engineer by a sapphire; a dentist by a topaz; commercial travellers by the pink tourmaline. To the ladies of Brazil, the aspect must be disheartening, to say the least. To have their special field so ruthlessly invaded by the male species!

They say that fashion, like everything else, goes in cycles, and what was the craze some years back becomes again in time "the latest."

Sequins and bugle beads are back with us once more. Can you picture a sequin-studded evening gown with a coat-of-mail cuffs to the elbow, the same silver sequin design round the neck forming a hood, which can be worn over the hair or thrown back like a cowl collar?

Gold braid is being used lavishly, particularly on the cuffs and bodice fronts of black afternoon dresses. The famous designer Chanel is featuring elaborate 16th Century necklace effects in gold and multi-colour embroidery round the necks of cocktail and semi-evening frocks. Gold and silver thread, sequins, coloured stones, pearls, braid, and variegated beads are all used to create this charming medieval effect.

Sequined embroidery panels are an elaboration of this period style. They are done in beautiful spring flower patterns and all-over floral designs.

In London, paillettes are worn as big as shillings in all the jewel shades. Dress clips like elaborate jewel Orders, matching bracelets and choker of real sea-shells, dipped in a shimmering bronze shade of metal. Beaten silver sets, studded with turquoises, amethysts, and other semi-precious stones.

Feathers are made to glow with illuminated paint, and flowers that light from concealed batteries are the latest Parisian novelties. A fair Parisian will light up a cluster of glass flowers nestling on a small velvet evening hat—or appear with an electrically lit posy in the lapel of her tailored evening suit.

So the world goes round. With the aid of such feminine ingenuity we can at least never be in danger of drabness—though some may say we are a little crazy.

Yours cordially,

Cynthia