



Many women make their tea-set the central motif in their room's decoration. In which case, of course, it has to be chosen carefully.

There is no reason, then, why we should not "follow through" with embroidered napkins, etc.

Here is the flower motif—not exactly copied but like in freshness and in colour—transferred to both lamp and bowl.

Katherine Mansfield and a "Little Lady"

If we have had a New Zealand woman writer very near to genius it is, undoubtedly, Katherine Mansfield. She could write—but she could also suffer. Perhaps it might be true to say that she could write because she could suffer. Whatever it was, she made even Wellington live with frightening vitality in the short stories that are a record of her childhood and her youth. Its restless water, its leaning trees, its hills and its high winds she gives again, but acute, as these things are to a sensitive mind—a little exquisite, a little terrible.

Turning over the leaves of her "Novels and Novelists"—a reprint of her 1919-20 Reviews for "The Athenaeum," London—I chanced upon her criticism of the Diary of a "little lady sitting upright and graceful in a high-backed chair" who died on active war service.

She comments further, "It would be hard to deceive those eyes—they are steady, shrewd, and far-seeing."

But, also, she quotes the diary, "This damage to human life is horrible . . . the sheer imbecility of it." "Boys . . . bite the mud in their frenzy of pain. They call for their mothers but no one comes. . . This is War." "A million more men are needed—thus the fools called men talk. But youth looks up with haggard eyes, and youth, grown old, knows that Death alone is merciful." And, dying, she writes these words out of a selfless grief: "I wish I could give my life for some boy who would like to live very much and to whom all things are joyous. . ."

Are We Worth It?

To make us beautiful, roughly £100,000 is spent every year on scientific research. Preparations change from month to month—with it, it is hoped, enthralling results.

"Platinum" hair, and the "Ash gold" that followed, have been replaced in favour by the new "Champagne." It is said to have all the subtle play in light and colour of champagne itself. £500 was spent to perfect it.

Women to "Get at the Causes"

Here's a hope from Australia. That abominable thing, Victorian Charity, is to be done away. "Good works" are to be put on a scientific basis. "Kindness" will be directed neither to make a victim squirm nor to feed an ego. It will exist because it does exist—because there are still people who can care and pity and assist, selflessly and without vanity.

"Charity" has been raised to the dignity of a profession every bit as important as medicine. The Board of Social Study and Training works in collaboration with the University and with every practical social organisation in the country.

Fifty women in Sydney have embarked on its two-year course. Only students who can prove a "personal aptitude" as well as the matriculation standard of education need apply. And it's to be no mere frivolous or fashionable gesture. Subjects for graduation are social hygiene, economics, psychology, social history, social psychiatry, social theory, social legislation and administration, case discussion, child welfare, and family budgeting.

The aim and intention: to "remove causes of, and not merely temporarily relieve, distress."

Our Grandmother's Blackberries

How many of us are letting the days go by for the Blackberrying Expedition?

The fruit is hanging thick from every hedge and ditch over the countryside. It's not just a matter of filling an old straw hat. If you're wise, you'll bundle the whole family into the car, each armed with a good-sized tin, and make a day of it—with the glorious midday interval of a dip in the river.

Of course it's up to you to reward them with a blackberry dish that is rather super. I looked up my dilapidated 1808 "Town and Country House-keeper's Guide" to see what our great-grandmothers would have suggested, and this is what I found:

"Roll out thin puff paste, lay in a patty-pan; put in blackberries and strew fine sugar over them. Put on a paste lid, and when baked, cut it open and put in half a pint of cream with the yolks of two eggs, well beaten, and a little sugar."

The American housewife has nothing on that!

WHILE THE KETTLE BOILS

Dear Friends,

What is the meaning of a good Samaritan? Possibly we all have our own definitions. Anyway, I know, for I've just been one—with dire results!

Just recently a friend of mine begged me to go house-hunting with her. Now I've done a lot of that in my time—and I knew just what was ahead of me. But my friend was so insistent, that, in charity, I agreed to accompany her.

We started out early one morning, and at night we arrived home—physical wrecks; our nerves razzled by the harrowing experience. Maybe it is all right taken in small doses—but a whole day of it!

We tramped or were run from suburb to suburb. We went armed with glowing advertisements that turned out to be shameless hoaxes; we climbed up hills—and stumbled down them again; mounted innumerable steps of promise—only to find in the end disillusionment.

I have a peculiar "sense" about houses—particularly empty houses. They affect me pleasantly or unpleasantly immediately I enter. A home that has been loved and peopled with sunny memories—that once echoed to the sound of children's feet and their happy laughter—leaves a kind of aura behind it. I can almost feel it. It seems to cling to the house like a persistent echo. But a house that has held gloomy influences leaves me with a morbid sensation of discord. So most of that day I alternated between fits of depression and lifts of brightness.

My friend, however, was enabled to make a decision.

She has decided to take a flat!

All this business of house-hunting reminded me of some interesting notes I once collected on queer houses.

Surely the House That Jack Built could not have been crazier than this one: A wealthy and neurotic American widow was advised by her doctor to build herself a house without the aid of an architect. It took 36 years of her life to build, and is still uncompleted. Workmen, whom she had originally hired by the day, found themselves on a steady job for 20 years—and some of them made enough money to retire on. The house cost 5,000,000 dollars and rambles over several acres of land. It is a maze of 160 rooms—and there are 5 different heating systems.

The widow's bedroom is another jig-saw puzzle. It has myriads of gongs, push-buttons, wires and signals—all so mixed up that no one has ever been able to find out what they are for or where they lead.

Another unique house, also belonging to America, was created by a Mr. Stenman. This gentleman had a rooted dislike of throwing away old newspapers, and in his spare time perfected an invention that enabled the paper, tightly rolled, to be fashioned into panels and pieces of furniture. So successful did this prove, that Mr. Stenman went ahead and built his own home. It is fashioned of 100,000 separate newspapers. Except for wooden doors, window frames, roof and floor, he lives in a complete paper house.

At least, a house-hunter in New Zealand is spared some of these shocks!

Till next week,

Yours cordially,

Cynthia