

While The Kettle Boils

Dear Friends,

Back again on my hobby-horse!

Last week I made a plea for all women, young or old, married or single, to cultivate a hobby.

But first you've got to get the energy and the ambition to begin. You've got to develop a backbone as well as a wishbone. First get the urge—and the will to carry it out will follow.

Hobbies have a dozen fascinating possibilities. Apart from the pleasure of self-expression and the relaxation they bring to us, there is always the possibility that you might unearth some hidden talent that will return you fame and glory.

It has been done so often—particularly in the literary line—and who has not had the desire at some time to scribble? Jane Austen—and in our own days, G. B. Stern—started writing to divert their minds from a broken love affair. The Bronte sisters began writing as a hobby because they were lonely. Several other famous women writers began their literary work following a serious illness—and all these discovered that hidden streak of gold. Yet they were in many respects ordinary women like ourselves.

It is even seen in business. A girl starts a flower shop as a hobby—or interior decorating or china painting—and finds that this hobby is in reality her talent. Then the talent is a rainbow that carries her along the path of Success.

This certainly is not the case with every hobby, but there is always the possibility—and if we derive personal pleasure from what we are doing we are more than repaid.

To-day there is a hobby standing on our door-step and pleading to be let in. Perhaps it deserves a grander name than hobby, but it will return you the same satisfaction. It is working for the soldiers.

MARION CRAN: Pioneer of Radio Gardening

WHILE garden enthusiasts in general do not perhaps avail themselves of all the Gardening Talks conveniently grouped for their consideration in *The Listener*, I know of many who tune in regularly to at least two garden sessions per week. With excellent talks from radio stations throughout New Zealand those in search of advice can, and do, receive expert local opinions on their particular problems.

It may be of interest to such listeners to learn that Marion Cran, who writes delightfully of gardens in many lands, was the first radio speaker to broadcast a garden talk.

Marion Cran was connected with the BBC in its early days at 2LO and came on to the air for the first time in 1923. Her garden talks were deservedly popular and became a feature of BBC programmes. She spoke regularly over the air for many years on garden topics.

We are far away over here from the war zone, but our boys are leaving for overseas—and there is work to be done. The needlewoman, the knitters, the organisers can all find a place. And no matter how little your effort may seem, it all goes to swell the whole—and you are doing a grand job.

Over in England the women, of course, have opportunities for greater service. They have risen in a body to become a part of Britain's war machine.

Their organisation is amazing. The land girls, the car-drivers, the canteen workers, the arms-factory workers. Wherever you move in England you will see some of them. And they are not glamour girls experimenting with a new thrill. They are patriots doing a man's job and doing it well. It is a service that demands hard work and self sacrifice, but they are doing it gladly. These are the women Winston Churchill is calling on to-day—for they are needed now as they have never been needed before. Britain cannot do without the help of her women. In a hundred ways they are proving their value.

During the last war women found themselves inexperienced for the work they were called upon to do. But they learnt. In the years following 1914, the world of women underwent a revolution. All sorts of barred doors were flung open to them. They entered freely into every profession, business, and industry. Since then they have learnt to stand on their own feet—and now in this present grave crisis, they are willing and ready.

We all share in that national spirit, and though opportunity debars us from the fuller service, we are doing well by giving of our own small best.

I questioned a well-known Red Cross worker here the other day.

"This," she said, nodding at the pile of work that surrounded her—"this is my hobby."

Yours cordially,

Cynthia

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