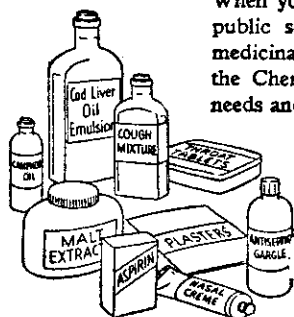




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AN OLD LADY

(Continued from previous page)

her. Her memory, too, is uncanny. She can remember incidents and places long back that have completely passed from our minds.

"She never complains," said another. "In fact, she blesses her affliction. Only a little time back she remarked that she was lucky not to be able to hear any scandal—or witness any unpleasant sights. She is most independent. She likes to help about the house, dusting, washing up—and even doing her own little washing. Most of her days, though, are devoted to Braille-reading and her large correspondence."

Blind Since Sixteen

Miss Biddle was struck down with blindness when she was sixteen, and a few weeks later her hearing went. What inward courage was required of that young girl to go forward with her life? She had that courage, though, and she never faltered. When Braille was introduced into New Zealand, Miss Biddle became a student, painfully and zealously working out the intricate symbols. She showed remarkable aptitude, and progressed to such a degree that she earned the title which she still holds of "Queen of Braille."

Though Miss Biddle's hearing is completely gone, she is most sensitive to vibrations. If she hears clapping or any noise occasioned by excitement, she becomes immediately infected with the mood.

Another Finds Consolation

As we spoke together, a young girl stole up and stood shyly listening on the edge of the group. Someone introduced her to me—a little blind girl of seventeen called Clarice Brown. This child, too, driven by an inner loneliness, has found her life work. She discovered she could play the piano by ear. So she gathered a little group of children about her, trained them in singing and elocution, and now her Sunbeam Songsters are a popular session over the air.

The Blind Social Club is the happy refuge of these people. They come here every day to rest in the lounge and drink a cup of tea—or to work at their bead and rug making.

A blind woman laughed nearby.

"See how lucky we are," she said. "We cannot see our friend's frock, therefore we cannot feel envious—and as we can't see our neighbour's husband—we can't lose our hearts to him!"

This gay, gallant company of the blind. . .

While The Kettle Boils

Dear Friends,

Every time we pick up a paper we find some mention of the Fifth Column. We have also read exhortations by British leaders to combat this menace in our midst; not only by keeping alert, but by going on with our lives, sanely, normally, so frustrating the Fifth Column's main object which is to create strife and unrest in our countries.

Life goes on to-day despite the menace overseas. The flags fly, we knit, we pray, we crowd to rallies—but all the time flowers grow in our gardens, birthdays and wedding come and go; all these simple, normal things to lessen the tension and help us forget the War.

I think that if women lost interest in their clothes then the worst would be upon us. It is instinctive in us; a heritage from generations back, to follow the whims of fashion and array ourselves as becomingly as possible. So clothes being a most normal and sane subject, let's see what the designers are doing for us overseas.

In particular, they have produced, or reproduced, the apron frock for us. This style can hardly be termed new. As far back as the reign of Louis XIV. this essentially feminine style was the mode. But it has been returned to us with a new touch.

The apron frocks are to be seen for both day and evening wear. The designer utilises them in two ways; as separate aprons tied round the waist—with a deep-fitting corselet waistband, or as part of a combination ensemble. There are others sewn on to the front of a frock, but without tying at the back.

This is really an economical style, for, with the detachable apron removed, you

have a different frock beneath. For example, you may wear a plain dark frock in the morning, and by slipping on the matching apron for the afternoon, you have a fresh note of gaiety.

One pretty frock of this type I have seen described was of white foulard dotted with rose red. Over it was worn a navy blue wool-de-chene apron—nearly the length of the frock and cut up the sides into two panels. It tied on like an ordinary apron, and with it was worn a matching bolero jacket and a little white and navy hat. By removing the coatee and apron, you reveal an entirely new frock beneath.

A word about the newest materials. If you have a weakness for tartan, go gay with jacket, waistcoat, and accessories, but beware of a whole frock. It is overpowering—even for a Scot. Checks and pastel tartans, by the way, make gay little frocks.

Wool-prints are both new and popular. The wool-voiles, especially, are lovely; fine enough to be made into tucked blouses, and sheer enough to be transformed into dancing frocks.

Duvetyn, that material that looks like wool-velvet, is having a grand revival, and is easily one of the warmest light-weights.

The new jerseys are being made of wool and rayon mixtures. If you are a coat and frock woman, jersey is your material. It makes an important-looking frock without adding a suspicion to your silhouette. But just a word of advice. When you are purchasing a dress length, see that you get sufficient. When you go back, that extra half yard might not be there.

By the way, one of the newest shades is Maginot green—but that, I'm afraid, is now a little out of date!

Yours cordially,

Cynthia