

IF JOAN CRAWFORD TRAVELLED BY THE LIMITED

(Written for "The Listener" by M.I.)

I HAVE often been forced to travel from Wellington to Auckland by train. I have often been forced to travel from Christchurch to Dunedin by train. If I liked to brood over it I could think of lots of other places in New Zealand that I might be forced to travel to by train. And I don't like travelling by train.

But I have often thought how wonderful it would be if I could do something really constructive while travelling by train. I was accordingly intrigued and delighted to read the following account of what Joan Crawford does, in a recent *New Yorker*. So I'm giving a synopsis for the benefit of all those women, who, like me, hate travelling by train.

"Miss Crawford has just perfected a method of using to great advantage the three days she spends on a train from Los Angeles to New York," the article states, and it's obvious that the 17 and a-quarter hours offered by the air lines would be completely insufficient for her. Here is her method:

It's Ideal for Experiment

"A three-day train trip is a three-day facial for me," said Miss Crawford, "and there's no time like a train trip for trying out new kinds of make-up. You can experiment with powders, rouge and lipstick to your heart's content. After all, if they're not right for you, you can find it out before anybody else does."

"The first day I spend in bed, relaxing my face and my body. No creams, no lotions, —nothing but good soap and water so the pores of my skin will have a chance to breathe." This takes her to the Great Divide.

What finally gets her out of bed, on the second day, is Step 2. A considerable portion of the day is devoted to lubrication. She removes the polish from her nails and soaks them in oil. (What did I tell you in the Beauty Corner? Perhaps it would be wise for us to keep a

little chart on our train journeys to remind us to lubricate our nails every one thousand miles—frightful if we burnt out a cuticle). Another task of Miss Crawford's second day is to lubricate her skin



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with texture creams. This goes on while the deserts and cacti fall behind.

Much of the final third of the journey —stockyards, steel mills, forests, and the Hudson—is given to experiments with powders, lipsticks, and rouge. I can see Miss Crawford bearing down on Buffalo with cheeks of hollow grey. Her lips have a jovial upward turn at Rochester, a deep-lined, magic down-sweep at Utica. Long eyelashes at Schenectady, short, curly ones at Albany. Magenta rouge, cold red, tropic red, as the singing rails go by.

The Will to Succeed

The test of Miss Crawford's mettle comes during the last hour, when the train is speeding down the Hudson to New York. Whereas we would spend these final minutes counting our pieces

of luggage and wondering who's going to meet us on the platform, Miss Crawford brushes her hair the regulation hundred strokes and gives herself a manicure.

This accomplished, and with eighteen minutes to go, she tackles what she terms the "mascara problem." Problem yes, but solved by Miss Crawford as if it were just a trifling, everyday difficulty. "I take a stand with my feet as far apart as possible," she says, "dig my elbow into the wall, and start to work. Eschewing any credit for a feat so fraught with

breathes. You may perhaps be able to breathe yourself.

At Te Kuiti you get up and devote the next third of the trip (say as far as Marton) to oiling your nails and putting cold cream on your face. (Don't forget to remove the cold cream before you get out at Marton). It's now about six o'clock and still dark, so you can enter the Great Experiment stage, but remember that there's a 25 per cent. chance of the train reaching Wellington at 9.30 a.m. so reserve your more conservative experiments for the end of the journey, just in case.

For the Ordinary Traveller

And now for the problem of the ordinary passenger who travels without a sleeper. The chief difficulty is, of course, lack of privacy. I suggest the following: Divide the trip into three parts as before. As Relaxation will be almost impossible for the first part, devote this to destructive criticism of the appearance of your fellow-travellers. You may learn something from their mistakes, but do not be too ready to condemn, as due allowance must be made for the unusual lighting effects.

At eleven o'clock, the train will, if it's on schedule, steam into Te Kuiti, and the second third of the trip begins. By this time the guard will have put the lights out, which gives you the necessary privacy, so with complete absence of self-consciousness you can embark on the Experiment stage. Be daring. Do not hesitate to let yourself go. After all, nobody can see your face. You could be wearing green rouge and scarlet eye-shadow and no one would be any the wiser.

By six o'clock you can start on the Lubrication stage. Then when it finally starts getting light you can gaze around at the wan grey faces on all sides and congratulate yourself on your own shining one.

We've still left out the Relaxation stage, but I am afraid you will have to defer that till you reach your destination. I am considering writing to the Railway Department to ask if they could put on a special slow train for the benefit of those of us who wish to adhere strictly to the Crawford schedule, but I feel their reply might be that the Express already often fills the necessary requirements. At the present rate of progress, it sometimes seems that the day may not be far distant when Auckland-Wellington will be a three-day journey.

peril on a moving train," she modestly adds, "it takes a steady nerve and the will to succeed, but it can be done if you brace yourself." This "will to succeed" seems to me to be the important factor, and the result is that when Miss Crawford steps upon the platform at Grand Central Station, she is worth beholding.

NOW here is my suggested schedule for travellers on the North Island Main Trunk. If you're financial enough to book a sleeper the problem is fairly simple. You divide the time spent in the train into three divisions and carry out a revised version of the Crawford schedule.

The first 160 or so miles (starting from Auckland) will take you to Te Kuiti. You spend this part of your journey relaxing in your sleeper and letting your skin



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