

BANDS AND MARCHING GIRLS

"She Just Loves Organising Things"

"I'M not very good at knitting," confessed Mrs. J. W. Innes, "so I thought I would look round to see if there was something else I could do to help win the war. That's how it all started."

Many people had spoken to me in tones heavy with admiration about Mrs. Innes and her pageants. I had decided that judging by her ability to organise on a large scale, Mrs. Innes was probably a matriarch of sixty-odd, who having organised her large family, now had the leisure to turn her ability to other types of organisation. But the Mrs. Innes who opened the door was perhaps thirty and disarmingly slender ("I've lost pounds since I started all this rushing round," she confessed). She bore few of the trade-marks of the habitual organiser.

"Are you a habitual organiser?" I asked.

"Yes," she said, "it's in my blood. When I was a small girl at school I was always arranging pageants and processions. Then when I grew up I found myself running children's parties and the local dances. I just love organising things. Yet I don't think it's because I like telling people what to do—though

that might have something to do with it!"

How It Happened

"But surely it was a big step from running dances to organising an out-of-door pageant in Wellington's Basin Reserve? How did you come to do it?"

"It all began only last year. As I said, I felt I had to do something about the war, and I'm not very keen on knitting. I felt that I would be more effective doing something else. Then Guy Fawkes Day was getting near, and that got me thinking. Why should we waste all that money on fireworks when it could go to the Patriotic Fund? So I wrote to the Mayor of Wellington suggesting that we should have a Guy Hitler Day instead, and before I knew where I was I found myself promising to organise the night's entertainment. Well, I managed somehow. Ten thousand people turned up to see the show, in spite of the occasional showers. That just proves what I've always said about Wellington. The people here are so starved for entertainment they'll go anywhere for it."

On the Football Ground

"Soon after this came the Wellington Queen Carnival, and I found myself pledged to do at least two more big open air shows. From the drawing room window of my house in Mornington I

can see right across to Athletic Park, where they hold all the big football matches. I used to gaze at this every morning, and visualise the show I would put on there. We had some difficulty persuading the Rugby Football Union to let us have it (they thought that girls marching in tennis shoes might churn up the ground) but eventually they agreed.

"I always pin my faith to marching girls and music. Any show with a lot of both those ingredients is bound to be successful. Most clubs or firms have their marching teams for Interhouse Competitions, and so the organisation of this side of the business is complete before I take over. Then I train the girls for the particular manoeuvres I have in mind and when I've assembled all the bands, I work out some scheme for using the bands and the girls together. Of course every one knows that there's something about a band, and people who run outdoor shows have always taken full advantage of this, but I feel that nobody has sufficiently exploited the possibilities of a girls' marching display. All my marching girls wear white uniforms, and unless you've seen them you can't imagine the wonderful effects you can get with these white figures deploying against the green background. It's stupendous! For my next show I'm considering having four hundred girls countermarching in columns interspersed with bands—the first time anything like that's been done in New Zealand. It will be breath-takingly spectacular!"

Mrs. Innes laughed. "I'm afraid you'll have to make allowances for my enthusiasm. Whenever I think of my girls and bands I find myself talking like a Hollywood publicity agent."

Extra Talent Brought In

"Do you fill in the whole programme with girls and bands?"

"Most of it. I usually import extra talent for the humorous item which has a place on the programme of every outdoor show. Last time, for instance, we had a 'Men v. Women' Football match. And in my next show I'm having several choral items. Members of the Auckland Happiness Club's choir are coming down to Wellington for the show."

"I've Never Been So Frightened"

"Have you ever put on any sort of indoor show?"

"Only once. I organised one night's programme at the recent Wellington Coster Fair. When I agreed to do so I didn't realise just what I had let myself in for. I didn't think about it at all till about six weeks before the show. Then I woke up suddenly in the middle of the night and realised the full implications (and complications). I have never been so frightened in my life. You see I've never had the slightest experience of stage work or production

—I haven't got as far as knowing which is the prompt side—and I couldn't even think of a theme round which to build the show. The next day was, fortunately, Sunday, and I told my husband that I would have to stay in bed till I got some ideas. I stayed till dinner time, and by then I had sketched out a rough plan for the programme which I decided should centre round the idea of British-American alliance.

"Once I'd got my main idea I was able to go ahead. As usual I decided to pin my faith on music and marching girls. But I soon realised that it's much easier to display four hundred girls on several acres of ground than it is to display 200 on several hundred feet of floor space. I found it fairly easy to get them on to the stage—the band played 'The Empire is Marching from Four Corners of the Globe,' and they marched in from four corners of the hall. But that was only half the problem—I had to get them off again. And while it's fairly easy to contrive a spectacular entry it's much more difficult to contrive a spectacular exit."

"However the show went on, and what is more amazing, came off. But I'm looking forward to my next show in the Basin Reserve. I want to get back to the freedom of my wide open spaces."

MRS. DE WINTER ENTERTAINS



MRS. de Winter

Very melodious in a new hat
Flutes her way past the little tables
And the bowls of daffodils
Greeting like a queen
This face, that hand.

Mrs. de Winter

Very full of Art and a good dinner
Smiles at them as they come on
And then, as though fearing defeat,
retreat
Like so many futile little waves
Breaking, baffled, upon a rocklike
indefatigable Canute.

Mrs. de Winter

Suffering, in spite of Higher
Thought
From a slight dose of heartburn,
Speaks to a young man with long
hair
About Art, in a high crescendo
As though it were something she
had picked up,
Crooned over, and then entirely of
her own volition,
Forced into flower.

Mrs. de Winter

Thinks that trees have Souls.
She would have gone out last night
in the moonlight
To commune with Nature
If only the Robinsons hadn't been
coming over for a spot of bridge.

Mrs. de Winter

Thrills on hearing of the young
man's latest story
And hopes if he ever gets it pub-
lished he will let her have a copy.
Because she does so adore Litera-
ture.

Mrs. de Winter

Serving little sausages on sticks and
genteel bread and butter
On thin china plates
Brushes past the daffodils and says
that some people are so
Bereft of any sense of the true
Value of Beauty
That she can't understand what
they can get out of Life.

Well, after all, there's Living,
Mrs. de Winter.

—Isobel Andrews.

"How I got rid of UNDERARM HAIR"



No more razors or smelly pastes

"I never dared appear in bathing suit or evening dress. I was so ashamed of the ugly hair under my arms and on my arms and legs. I had tried everything—electric needles and smelly pastes. Shaving only made the hair grow faster and coarser. I was in despair until a friend told me about New VEET. This dainty cream removed absolutely every trace of hair in 5 minutes. Left my skin soft and velvety-smooth. No ugly, bristly stubble like the razor leaves." New VEET ends your superfluous hair troubles for ever. 1/4 & 5/7 at all Chemists and Stores.