

Your Best Friend

"YOU Englishwomen are terrified of being alone—terrified of silence" a young Frenchman once said to me.

I remembered the blare of gramophones and wireless in English homes, and I remembered particularly a labourer's wife whom I had found at her wash-tub. The loud speaker was going full blast. "It's company," she said. "I feel kind of lonely without it."

"But do you want to listen to a lecture in German on eurhythmics?"

"Is it German?" she said, surprised, "I didn't notice."

It's odd, I think, that we need so much noise to keep us company—in fact, to keep us from thinking. Are we so frightened of our own thoughts, or haven't we any thoughts at all?

I'm inclined to think that is the basis of English unhappiness. We aren't sufficiently good company for ourselves.

The first thing you can do, is to imagine being friends with yourself. You are not going to get very far depending on other people. After all, however much you hide in noise, speed, company, or whatever is your particular form of amusement, you've got to come back to yourself. Why not, therefore, come to terms with the person that you are?

—Rosita Forbes

Work For Wounded Fingers

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pattern grew. So did the party. More and more people kept arriving.

"Why the rush?" I found time to ask Miss Porter.

"It's almost closing time for the department," said Miss Porter. "I leave at half-past four (it was almost five then), and they do like to get started on something before I leave, so that they can go on with it in the evening."

"I must go," I said, feeling suddenly superfluous.

"I'll come along the corridor with you."

Outside the door of the O.T.D. the hospital smell was waiting for us.

"I promised to go upstairs and help a little girl with some tapestry. I'll go back to the men later."

"Do you work with the children as well?"

"No, the Hospital School looks after them. But this is rather special. She wants to get her tapestry started so that she can show mother to-night. Then I'll go back and fix up the men in my department. The day seems so long to anyone lying in bed, and I don't feel happy unless I've left each one of them with something to do in the evening. I think that's one of the secrets of being happy, having something to do, don't you?"

At any rate, I reflected, as I said good-bye to the hospital smell at the main entrance, Miss Porter must be a very happy person.

—M.B.



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