

NET-MAKING IS WOMEN'S WORK

But An Old Man Can Show Them How

I WENT to see James P. Noble, of Levin, because somebody had told me that he was probably New Zealand's oldest war-worker. Mrs. Noble showed me in at the front door, and we went through a sitting room clamant with photographs of young men in uniform (sons, grandsons,

Anything else just unties, and then, where's your camouflage net?" He showed me how. I repeated his movements. To my surprise, a weaver's knot resulted. Mrs. Noble, too, joined in the congratulations. Almost the proudest day of my life since I produced my first permanent tooth.

"You'd be a good one to teach," Mr. Noble chuckled. "You'll have to go down town one day with my daughter. She was teaching all these women in the W.W.S.A. and in the Women's Institutes. She's a good hand at the net-making."

"Did you teach her?" I asked.

"Yes, when she was quite a wee girl. The lassies take to it, you know, and in Aberdeenshire it's part of the women's work, making and mending the nets. And one of these camouflage nets is nothing to the work of making a fishing net. All my daughters learnt when they were young, and they're much better at it than their father. Yes, it's a good thing for women. They can't all go and join up with these Air Force girls we have in Levin, and they can't all get into uniforms and gad round the country as so many of them would like to do, but this is the sort of work they can do in their own homes and mind the children at the same time."

—M.I.



JAMES P. NOBLE
"Mind the children at the same time"

nephews, grandnephews), and out to the kitchen. Mr. Noble, a sturdy figure with sleeves rolled up over well-muscled arms, was standing at his bench, weaving his needle in and out of the quickly-growing meshes with slow and rhythmical precision. For Mr. Noble's war-work is the weaving of camouflage nets, two a day.

"It's more than 70 years since I first learned to mend a herring net," said Mr. Noble. "I was a boy of 14 at the time. My father was a fisherman, and I followed his calling for nigh on 30 years in Aberdeenshire. After I came out here, I lost the knack somewhat, but a month or so ago my daughter came home from town and brought me a great ball of twine like this one and said 'Here, Dad, you've got to start work again.' Since then I've been making two a day."

"How big are they?" I asked.

"Thirty-three meshes wide and 42 rows long. The Women's Auxiliary people take the ones we do away and join them up as they want them. It takes four of the ones I make to cover a big truck, and then, of course, the boys thread branches and greenery through. It's a great scheme. This work we're doing will save thousands of lives maybe."

I learnt afterwards that Mr. Noble has devoted many hours of his 84 years to the saving of life. He was for over 20 years coxswain of the Port Errol lifeboat, and during the last war, received a decoration for swimming out, fully clothed, to rescue a plane and pilot which had crashed somewhere off the coast near Aberdeen.

I watched Mr. Noble as he started on another row and reached the end of his string. He started to join on a fresh ball. "That's a thing few of the women who are making nets know how to do," he said, "make a proper weaver's knot."

**NOT A
SPECK OF
DANDRUFF
IN MY HAIR**



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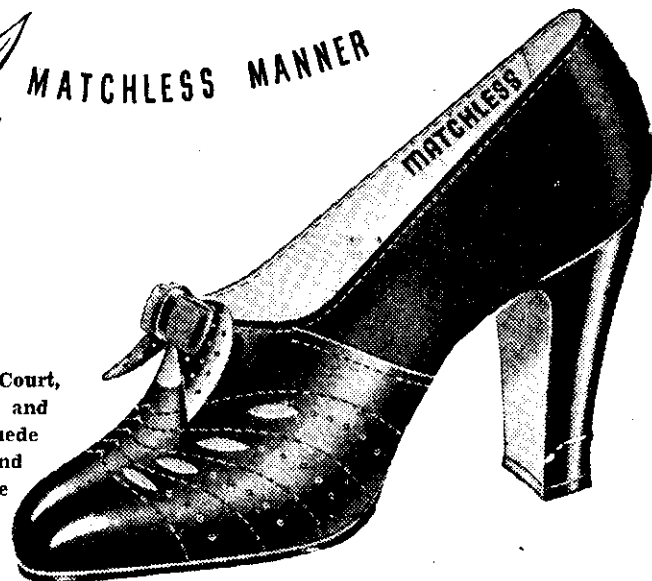
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