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## Women and the Home

### A NICE CUP OF TEA

How Would You Manage On One Ounce A Week?

WE rather like the story of the Elizabethan lady (or was she Caroline?), who, on receiving a packet of tea from her nephew Way Out East, covered the tea with boiling water as directed, poured off the water, ate the tea, and said she much preferred cabbage. We hope that the day is far distant when we shall be forced to boil cabbage, strain off the leaves, drink the water, and remark that we much prefer tea. It is far distant, but the fact remains that already in Australia, birthplace of the world's champion tea-drinkers, each person is restricted to one ounce of tea a week.

We know, of course, that tea stocks in New Zealand at present are comparatively high; but the possibility of rationing calls for serious thought. First there are the social disadvantages of a possible diminution in the amount of tea-drinking. Ever since the original Boston function afternoon tea has been a good excuse for getting people together, and though one could invite them for afternoon coffee it wouldn't be quite the same thing, would it? Besides we are told by connoisseurs that the general standard of coffee-making in New Zealand is remarkably low, whereas, thanks to the amount of practice we get, most of us manage to brew quite a passable cup of tea. There is the alternative of a hotel lounge before five o'clock, but its attractions are powerless in the face of the more subtle blandishments offered by the quiet cup of tea.

Then there is the literary aspect to be considered. Edgar Wallace is supposed to have owed his tremendous literary output to the fact that he kept on duty all through the night a footman whose function it was to supply him with a fresh cup of well-sugared tea every hour, and these he gulped down in the intervals of dictation. It is thanks to this that we are the richer by twenty-six novels and half a dozen or so plays. The carping critic will retort that Shakespeare wrote twenty-odd plays and a fair volume of verse without the stimulus of the teapot, and what about his present-day equivalent, Bernard Shaw? But we have always the Parthian comeback that Edgar Wallace did it all so much quicker.

And we almost forgot to mention the very important point of tea-cup reading. Until the corresponding science of coffee-grounds or wine-lees has reached the present-day tea-leaf standard it is obvious that curtailment of tea-drinking would be a serious blow to the sooth-sayers.

But after all there is something to be said for preparing for the worst. We accordingly interviewed a number of representative and well-known people (the latter preferred to remain anonymous) and asked them what they would do if they were given only one ounce of tea per week.

#### Housewife

"I GET terribly bored if I've got nothing to do in the afternoon, so I just sit down and make myself a nice cup of tea. I suppose it would do me good to cut it out, but then I don't believe in doing without things just for practice. Time enough when you've got to, I think. No, I'm sure I couldn't manage on an ounce of tea a week, and I don't intend to try until I have to."

#### Business Girl

"I'VE got a sister doing A.R.P. work in England, and she says it's wonderful what a lot of good work a cup of tea does when there's a raid on. If anybody's bombed out the first thing the next-door neighbour does is to say 'I've just got a cup of tea made. Come and have one.' And if tea's rationed in England, where they need it so much more than we do at present, I don't think we need grumble if we're restricted to one ounce a week. If you're careful that should be enough for ordinary purposes, especially if you're in a family and can pool the supply. I flat by myself, and I know that now I use about four times that amount, but I guess I could manage if I had to."

#### Committee-Woman

"I'M sure I couldn't possibly manage on an ounce of tea a week. I seem to have to spend such a lot of time rushing from place to place, and if it weren't for my cup of tea I couldn't keep going. And I don't mean anything wishy-washy either. I like a good cup of tea. I remember once I went to a meeting one afternoon and missed afternoon tea somehow or other, and do you know I just couldn't keep awake? To this day I couldn't tell you what on earth the meeting was about. So since then I've always seen to it that I fitted my cup of tea in somehow."

#### Man Behind the Mike

WE wondered if he owed his bell-like tone to frequent tea-drinking, but it is probably a natural gift that isn't given away with a pound of the commodity. He told us that a friend of his,



a doctor in Christchurch, believes that tea-drinking does more harm to the country than beer-drinking.

"Not that I believe that myself," he added. "However, I'd be quite content with an ounce a week. I have my tea very weak."

#### Mother of Four

"ONE ounce of tea per person per week would do us very nicely, because none of the children drinks tea, and so we'd really have more than we need. I can't help feeling that it would be quite a good thing if tea was rationed, because generally speaking we do drink far too much tea and it would be so much better if we went in for fruit drinks or something."

#### Husband

"FOR three years now I've been asking if we couldn't have coffee for breakfast sometimes. Perhaps I'd get it then."

#### Health Food Addict

"PUT it in the dustbin. It's disgusting the way people ruin their nerves and their digestion drinking large quantities of the stuff, and there's no real reason for it. You can make a wonderful drink—very refreshing and a fair amount of Vitamin C—by getting some whole wheat and browning it in the oven and then grinding it like coffee. Of course it hasn't much flavour. . . . And I rather fancy there's something you can do with seaweed, but I can't quite remember and it makes you rather thirsty though of course there's the iodine. . . ."

On second thoughts he agreed with me that he would sell his ounce of tea, if sufficient inducement were offered.

#### CBS Personality

"YES, I'm sure I use more than an ounce a week now, but I'm sure I could manage if I tried. But after all there's nothing like a good cup of tea is there, especially when you come back all tired from the housework or a day at the washtub (not that there's any need for that of course nowadays, there are so many brands of really good soap on the market, and then of course some of these electric washers they sell nowadays are wonderful) and you sit down and you think there's really nothing like a good cup of . . . 's Tea, so refreshing and of course you can always be sure it's made from the best ingredients. But as I was saying, I'm sure we could manage quite well on an ounce a week if only we're careful, and I do think it's good policy to buy the best quality tea and then of course it goes so much further

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