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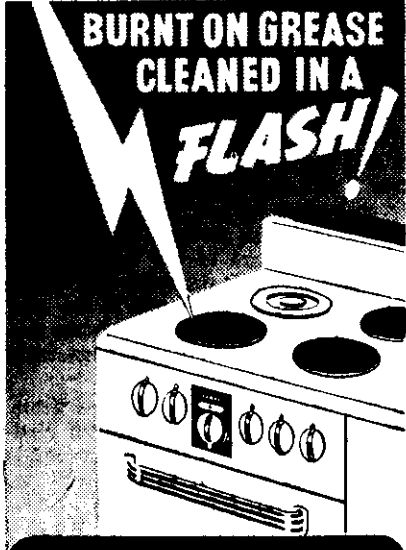
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Extracts From Recent Talks

Making Things Easier

NOW a word to women about making things easier in the daily round of life. I mentioned just now postal deliveries, and I asked you if you were doing all you could to help the Post Office. This question might be extended indefinitely. There are any number of little courtesies and considerations that can be practised so as to economise in time and energy. Give everybody who serves you the least possible trouble. Don't expect too much of harassed and perhaps inexperienced tradesmen and officials. You may see a customer at a busy bank counter pass over a roll of notes. The teller has to smooth over the notes. Multiply this many times and you'll find that an appreciable amount of his time is wasted. Perhaps you and your neighbours can combine to make deliveries of goods easier. — ("Women Are in This War," Miss Amy Kane, National Service Talk, May 10.)



A Naval Occasion

I REMEMBER going to a dance on a light cruiser on one occasion, years ago in Malta. These ships are not so very much larger than a destroyer. The main difficulty was the enormous number of guests who simply had to be asked, and the lack of space to put them when they had arrived. The first lieutenant was a young man of considerable ingenuity. He realised that even a big ship would be cramped if all the guests were herded together, but that if they could be persuaded to keep on the move all could be accommodated quite comfortably. So first of all he staggered the hours of arrival, so that some arrived later than others; then he got permission to use two old hulks that lay at anchor very near and were normally used as training boats by the local sea scouts. These were transformed with bunting borrowed from every possible source and lit by old-fashioned picket boat lamps, which are candles burning inside a kind of little brass house—heaven only knows where he got those from in these days of electricity. The two hulks were then renamed for the night, the "Pirates' Den," and the "Ugging 'Utch," the former was where one had refreshment and the latter, as you may have guessed, was for sitting out.—("Naval Receptions," Mrs. O. J. Gerard, 2YA, May 8.)

Chopin's Piano

I WAS standing gazing somewhat in awe at some lovely examples of modern Concert Grands—all sleek and

shiny and superb; and then suddenly someone said "I think this will interest you"; and almost immediately I was sitting at the keyboard of a smaller, not-so-new instrument that had an inscription under the lid. At what I read I was strangely moved; this was the piano that Chopin had played on during his visits to London. As I gazed down at the keys which his fingers had once so magically moved, all that I had ever read of his life became suddenly real to me. For a few moments I was left alone, just sitting there; and I saw Chopin leaving Poland as a very young man with the strange presentiment that he would never return. . . . I saw the Polish Conservatoire students farewelling him on the Polish frontier with a silver cup filled with Polish earth, which he always kept with him wherever he went. I saw him in the great salons of Paris; and struggling with ill-health at Majorca, and now more vividly than ever before I could see him in London —on the first visit when he went to see a specialist about his health. He called himself Mr. Fritz in the hope that his identity would remain anonymous. — ("Little Adventures in Music: Playing on Chopin's Piano," Valerie Corliss, 2YA, May 5.)

Towel Service

"WE were the only Occidentals there. Next to me sat a contemptuous Chinese duke (or something) with a little skull-cap and a fine brocade robe which he drew away from accidental contact with my vulgar taffeta. On the third and fourth fingers of his left hand were finger-nails longer than the fingers themselves, yet, although much hampered by this aristocratic disability, the martyr took snuff without ceasing, out of a little jade bottle with a coral stopper. Up and down all the aisles of the theatre walked men with little towels in cauldrons of hot water. On being signalled to by members of the audience, these men threw the steaming screwed-up towels over scores of heads with perfect aim. The recipient of a towel wiped his face, his shaven head, his naked breast and his arms with it and then, with strength renewed, flung it back to the cauldron to be re-soaked and used again. I watched fascinated, trembling for my own hat, but I never saw an accident in this towel air-service. — ("Some Adventurous Women: Stella Benson," Margaret Johnston, 2YA, May 9.)



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