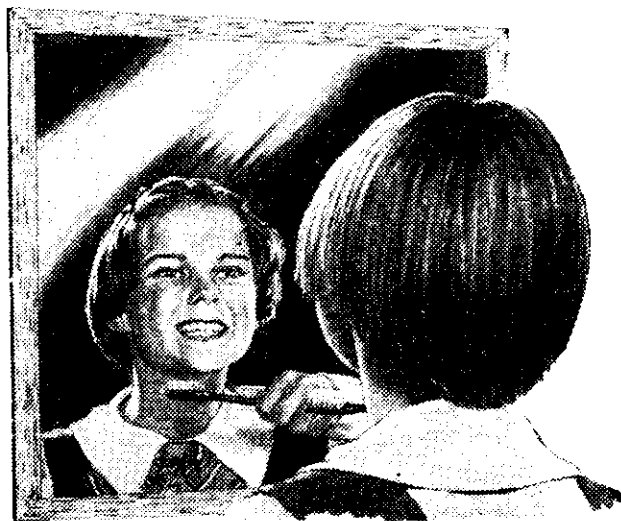
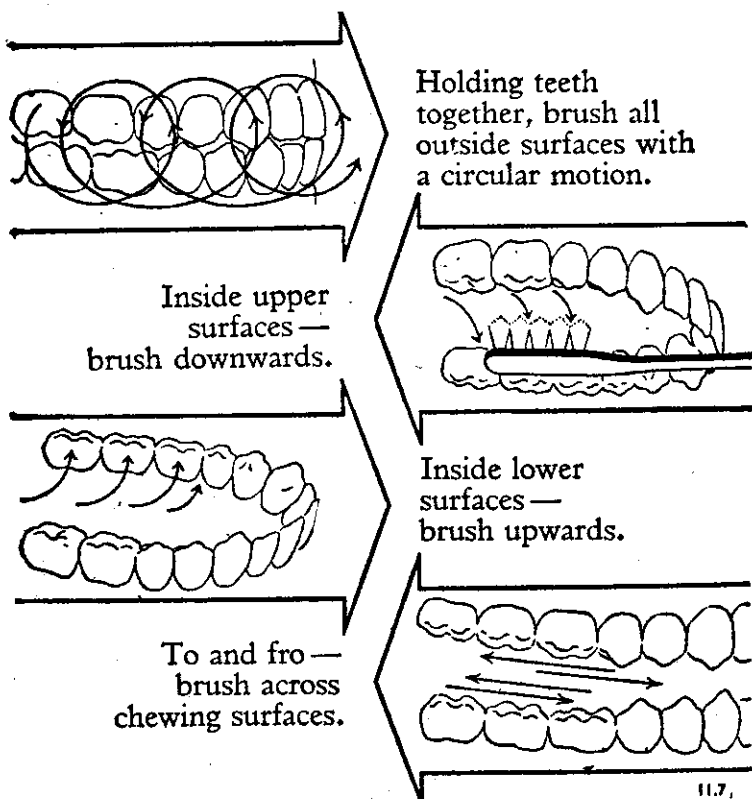


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The Aunt Daisy Story

(continued from previous page)

been like. And once I get to the studio I feel *perfect*. Nothing else matters. I've got the people out there and they love talking to me.

"On the mike, I'm not talking to any single person. Sometimes I think of people in hospital, but I've lived so long in the country that I think a lot of people in little places—people in the distance—people in the hill country and the high places in Otago—and the shut-in people everywhere."

WHAT is the secret of Aunt Daisy's success? "I think," she says firmly, "that to be successful in anything—and everybody wants that—is certainly never to be mediocre; to be *sincere*; always to want to do the very best you can; and certainly that you couldn't care more."

It is a commonplace that the Establishment is slow to recognise and reward artists, sportsmen, or entertainers. Not till 1956 were Aunt Daisy's services to radio—and in wartime, to her country—recognised officially. In the New Year Honours of that year was announced the admission of Maud Ruby Basham to the fifth class of a modern (instituted 1917) but nonetheless honourable order of chivalry. She was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire.

Aunt Daisy's brother-in-law Ernest Muir and her daughter Barbara accompanied her to the investiture at Government House, Wellington. "We had had a rehearsal the day before," she says, "and had been told how to bow or curtsy, and how to back out, and so on. On the day, the knights came first, or course, and then they went through the list till at last a man announced the M.B.E., Civil Division, and my name—Maud Ruby Basham." There was an apparent pause in proceedings. Aunt Daisy's diminutive four-feet-eleven inches was not visible to the assembled company as she walked forward. But as she mounted the dais a whisper—unseemly, Barbara thought, in such a dignified hush—ran round the room: "It's Aunt Daisy!"

Barbara need not have felt embarrassed, for the Governor-General himself promptly widened the chink in the armour of protocol. "You know how men, especially soldiers, can talk without moving their lips?" Aunt Daisy confides. "Well, when Lord Norrie stepped forward to pin the ribbon on me, he leaned forward a little and whispered, 'Bravo, Aunt Daisy!' I had to curtsy, and I didn't dare smile, but oh, I felt so marvellous!"

In these circumstances it is exceedingly probable she would have been forgiven her smile. It is possible, in fact, to forgive Aunt Daisy almost anything. She is the kind of person who steadfastly refuses to believe ill of anybody, and whose conversation reflects the joy and hopefulness of human life rather than its sadness and its fears. Devout without being righteously, she carries into everyday living all the hope-



ful and rewarding tenets of her faith. She preserves the child's infinite capacity for wonder and delight in simple things, and, if the seeds of boredom lie within the self, has ensured that hers remained unfertilised. Her inward qualities of intelligence, strength and resilience are expressed outwardly as a vivacity, force and charm that few, if any, can resist.

It is therefore in pursuance of Aunt Daisy's wish that her story ends with the words of a 16th century prayer engraved on the walls of Beaulieu Abbey:

"Oh Lord support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen, and evening comes, the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over and our work is done. Then, Lord, in Thy mercy grant us safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen."

THE END

(The Aunt Daisy Story is to be published as a book. It will be slightly expanded and fully illustrated; and the publishers, A. H. and A. W. Reed, expect it to be on sale before Christmas.)

NEXT WEEK: A NEW SERIES

NEXT week "The New Zealand Listener" will publish the first of a short series of Radio Profiles. Each feature will be a full-scale impression of a broadcasting personality, amply supported by photographs. The first article, of special interest to Auckland listeners, is "Breakfast with Shone."