

A Little Experience is A Valuable Thing In Running A Tearoom

NEARLY every woman, rich or poor, at some moment or other in her life, has had an urge to furnish and run a tearoom. How fortunate it is that the majority of us do not achieve this desire! When we visit some charmingly appointed place, are greeted by a calm, unflurried hostess and soon are enjoying an appetising and deftly served meal, we are apt to wax enthusiastic over the attractions of this business, not realising at all what may be going on behind the scenes. For the food business, a business of infinite details, can present situations calling for the utmost skill, which must be ironed out, at once—no waiting until to-morrow. As with the stage, the show must go on!

To be a successful tearoom operator, the woman should have an instinctive liking for food work and an interest in the preparation and details which are at the foundation of good cooking. She should subconsciously know the something that is needed for perfection. She must show imagination and art in her menu making and must have the most practical knowledge of the steps

necessary to get the finished product. She must like people and must know how to get on with them, to soothe a ruffled customer or to make a disobedient dish washer respect and obey her. She must be willing to work long hours and to do arduous work. She must buy with intelligence and knowledge, must know how to adapt herself when a sudden rain storm disrupts the plans for a busy day, or when a hungry mob unexpectedly descends upon her. The woman who is truly successful does not dramatise herself in emergency situations but has an innate poise, and calmness which sees her through.

Successful tearooms have been operated by untrained women, but it is certainly true that the right kind of training does make the path smoother. To training should be added experience and more experience.

At Island Bay, Wellington, there is a very successful tearoom which is in the form of a bungalow and overlooks the ocean. Increasing numbers of people are making this their rendezvous when they want a quiet hour away from the wear and tear of city life. Delicious home-made "eats" are served, and in the winter there are crackling log-fires where any guest is welcome to remain for the whole afternoon.

Auckland has several really quaint little places tucked away in odd corners. One, especially, around Mission Bay



way I remember being driven out to on a showery morning. I "poured out" from an old-fashioned brown teaset, and passed over piping hot scones dripping with butter, and cakes that looked far too nice to eat. Mignonette sitting in the vase on the table, and marigolds standing in the green window boxes outside. Another memory is of a little tea-house in the Waitakeres, where breakfast was served to us after we had dashed out of the sleeping city to watch the autumn sunrise from among the blue hills. Fresh eggs, cream, new home-made brown bread and fruit from the orchard made us realise what voracious appetites a sunrise can create.

Over at Milford there is a rival of the famous Olde Pirate Shippe, where tea is served in "cabins," in the form of a quaint begonia tea-house overlooking Lake Pupuke. It is a hothouse which is somehow or other kept warm enough for the flowers and cool enough for the "tea-ing" visitors. There is another quaint tea-house at Devonport, run in the old English style, which is also the style adopted at the Sign of the Takahe on Cashmere Hills, in Christchurch. There are many curiosities on view, and from the spacious windows of this stone building, built by the late Mr. H. G. Ell, is a glorious view of the city and the Canterbury Plains. In the stone-walled yard is a real old coach which is brought into use on ceremonial occasions.

The popular tea-house at the Kiwi is for the more energetic walkers. And who could forget the raspberries and clotted cream served by homely women in spotless white aprons in the rose-strewn cottages dotted around Banks Peninsula? One of the most delicious afternoon teas I have ever tasted was served in the tea-house perched on a barren cliff at Skippers, the famous gold-dredging district out of Queenstown. At Queenstown and round about Dunedin there are dozens of quaint and successful tea-houses run by enterprising women. (Continued on page 50.)

