

Personality

It is one of those white mantelpieces built in with its overmantel and white frame complete. You take it all with the house. There are white mantelpieces *and* white mantelpieces; this one belongs to the beautifully polished and enamelled class, I think. On taking a house the white mantelpiece seems to suit the general effect of the room, it is when they are dressed that the trial or pleasure is evinced. In my young days marble mantelpieces were much in evidence. I wonder how many you have really enjoyed? I can remember one only—I used to wish Miss Kilmansegg had a marble leg and that there were many Miss Kilmansegg's. Those who do not know Miss Kilmansegg, forthwith, make her acquaintance.

The main object of mantelpieces seems to be to hold ornaments, generally expensive and often of good design, but too numerous, too heavy or too varied. During the past three years I have seen one room in which the white mantelpiece does not annoy, but has something to say.

The shelf contains five or six cut-glass flower bowls, merely. The quantity of flowers is not excessive but each is a factor to reckon with. You would know if you didn't know that in the past three years the same hand arranged these flowers with intention. All appeared in season, but only one colour at one time. Gorgeous roses, purple clematis, all the yellows, including gorse, and browns came "in order due." The flowers were on that shelf to speak, and season in and out their message has been the

same. They look at you and say, "Here we are! tell us is any one living every minute of life more vividly than we are." I murmur back, "You're lovely and can speak because you are not hampered by uncongenial neighbours, and such flowers should accomplish anything."

February was a rainy month, in January we hardly saw the sun and the following was no better. On one of the wettest days of this month I turned in at the little drawing room. A clean fire burned half way up the chimney—threatened coal strike—a rug evidently bought to match a fascinating kitten, mole coloured almost, lying thereon, an open ventilator and a door also open, leading into a conservatory. Before sitting down I was conscious of the brightness radiating in the room and attributed it to the fire and air as well as the general appearance. Presently I looked at the shelf and was greeted from the laurestinus with, "Why have you not looked sooner? We are the radiance that you are enjoying!" There they were, some laurestinus, some scrubby snowdrops, and at the end of the shelf drooping from a tall glass, an alien, a slender willow branch covered with catkins, still green.

Possibly only one woman in a hundred would have picked those poor flowers, but as they stood in the bowls they were as radiant as their gayer sisters, living and doing their part in spite of January and February. The laurestinus whispered again—"It isn't exactly all us, it's her, she knows and understands and loves us so."—C. A. H.

Nurses not eligible for Benefits

Information as to the position of nursing sisters who have served with the Expeditionary forces, under the statutes which confer benefits upon returned discharged soldiers, was recently sought by the Auckland Returned Soldiers' Association from the Minister of Defence. Sir James Allen has replied, stating that he has been advised by the Crown law officers that as the law stands nursing sisters are not eligible for any of the benefits conferred by the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act and the Repatriation Act. The Attorney-General therefore has been asked to prepare a bill to make them eligible.

We are pleased to receive the above information. It has been an oversight that legal steps were not taken long ago to bring sisters under this legislation. Many sisters will be pleased to receive some aid in establishing themselves on return, and in learning some new branch of work. Upwards of 5 years of war work for some of the senior sisters has earned them the right to retire from the strenuous work of nursing. In Australia the nursing sisters do now receive the benefits.