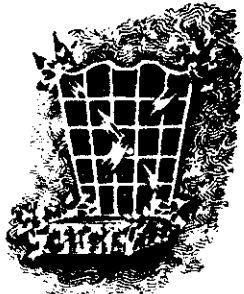


The sketch here gives a little of the frieze as it appeared on either side of the mantelpiece drapery, which was, I think, exceedingly pretty, and it really arose out of the fact that I possessed a nice sheet of looking-glass without any frame to it. This I fixed up against the wall with two nails which projected over it so as to prevent it falling forward, and then surrounded it with two graduated flounces of art muslin, the lower one yellow, the upper one white, while above this again the printed muslin used in the frieze was introduced. The drapery falling down on either side of the mantel-board was decorated to match. As it had to do duty as a dressing-table as well, I fixed a little basket that a friend of mine had sent me on the wall near by, so as to hold odds and ends of toilet accessories. It had a fretwork wooden back, which I painted white to match the rest of the room, and was covered with a pretty bit of yellow brocade, and



A PRETTY THING.

tied up at the corners with butterfly bows, two pieces of ribbon being run through the slats at the back. I have given the basket drawn separately, as I think it sufficiently pretty for you to wish to copy it.

## QUERIES.

Any queries, domestic or otherwise, will be inserted free of charge. Correspondents replying to queries are requested to give the date of the question they are kind enough to answer, and address their reply to 'The Lady Editor, NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC, Auckland,' and on the top left-hand corner of the envelope, 'Answers' or 'Queries,' as the case may be. The RULES for correspondents are few and simple, but readers of the NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC are requested to comply with them.

Queries and Answers to Queries are always inserted as soon as possible after they are received, though owing to pressure on this column, it may be a week or two before they appear.—ED.

### RULES.

No. 1.—All communications must be written on one side of the paper only.

No. 2.—All letters (not left by hand) must be prepaid, or they will receive no attention.

No. 3.—The editor cannot undertake to reply carelessly through the columns of this paper.

## RECIPES.

**TOAD-IN-THE-HOLE.**— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb kidney,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb of beef, 6oz of flour, 1 pint of milk, 2 eggs. Mix the eggs with the flour, without previously beating them, then add the milk gradually, stirring all the time, beat well; let it stand a little while, cut up the meat, lay it in a well-greased tin, pour the batter over, and bake in a good oven for one hour.

**TARRAGON CHICKENS.**—Chickens with tarragon are prepared as follows:—Truss the chickens for boiling, tie some slices of bacon round them; put them into a saucepan with a bunch of sweet herbs, carrots, onions, parsley, pepper and salt, a good bit of tarragon, and sufficient second stock to come half way up the birds. Put on the lid of the saucepan, and let the whole simmer very gently till the chickens are done. Fifteen minutes before serving strain off some of the stock, and having removed all fat let it reduce quickly over a brisk fire; dish up the chickens, sprinkle them with some chopped tarragon, and pour all over and round them the reduced stock.

**POTATO CAKE.**—Ingredients: The potatoes, flour, salt. Boil the potatoes until they are soft and floury; dry them, and while warm mash thoroughly with the hands. Mix with sufficient flour to bind the potato without making it stiff, add the salt, roll the cake out and fry in flavoured fat. The cake is usually half an inch in thickness and shaped to the size of the pan. It should be most carefully turned to avoid breaking it.

**CUK.—Outside Paste:** Take  $1\frac{1}{2}$  breakfastcupfuls of flour, and put into it  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb of either dripping or butter, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoonful of baking powder. Mix to a firm paste with water, and roll it out into a thin sheet; grease the inside of cake pan and line it neatly with the paste, reserving a piece the size of the pan for the top of the bun. Then put together in a large basin the following:— $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb sugar,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs blue raisins (stoned),  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs currants (well washed in cold water, nibbed dry and picked),  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb orange peel,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoonful black pepper,  $1$  small teaspoonful baking soda,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb almonds,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz each of ginger, cinnamon, and Jamaica pepper,  $1$  teaspoonful cream of tartar, and a small breakfastcupful of milk, or just as much as barely moistens it all. Mix all thoroughly with the hands, and put the mixture into the lined tin; make it flat on the top, wet the edges round and put on the piece of paste reserved for the purpose. Prick it all over with a fork, brush it with a little egg, and put it in the oven for about two and a-half hours.

**STRAWBERRY COTTAGE PUDDING.**—Cream together one-half cup of butter and one cup of sugar, add one cup of milk, one beaten egg, one pint of sifted flour and two teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Bake in a cakepan, and serve hot with liquid sauce, into which fresh strawberries, mashed with sugar, have been stirred.

**STRAWBERRY JELLY.**—Boil three-quarters of a pound of sugar in half a pint of water, pour it boiling hot over three pints of strawberries placed in an earthen vessel, add the juice of two lemons, cover closely, and let it stand twelve hours. Then strain through a cloth (flannel

is the best thing); mix the juice which has run through with two and a half ounces of gelatine which has been dissolved in a little warm water, and add sufficient cold water to make the mixture one quart. Pour into a mould, and set on the ice to cool.

## TO MARK LINEN, ETC., FOR SCHOOLS.

TOWELS, finger napkins, nightshirts, and all white apparel are generally done with marking ink; but, if they are to be submitted to the tender mercies of an ordinary steam laundry, or those of a laundress who uses bleaching powder and other destructive agents, the best plan is to have the name in full woven in turkey-red silk on white silk ground. Plaunets for cricket, rowing, and football can be marked in the same way, though cross-stitch marking is commonly used for the two latter. Handkerchiefs are best marked with embroidered initials, or, *fainte de mixer*, with marking ink; and for collars marking ink is the best. Umbrellas can be marked on a silver or metal plate on the handle, or else a tape sewn inside near the edge. Brushes (hair and clothes) can have the name neatly cut in in block letters, or in script style; or they can have the initials cut in a silver monogram. Many boys prefer tiny brass nails studded in, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch apart; and this plan, with larger nails, answers well for play boxes and book boxes. Trunks and bags are best treated by painting the initials, either in white or black, on the two sides; and it is a good plan to have some distinguishing mark painted on the bag or trunk, as it saves time on arriving at a terminus, where so many bags, etc., are alike. Combs and toothbrushes are easily marked with any name. Soap boxes, if of pewter, can be engraved. Boots should have a tape inside the tag, or have initials painted inside the tongue. Books are best marked on the top edge with pen and ink.

## THE GIFT OF GRACIOUSNESS.

(BY MRS WILLIE WALKER CALDWELL.)

If I could play fairy godmother to all the girls I know I should bring to each christening the same gift—I thereby endowing them with a wonderful power, which would bring them friends, happiness, influence and love—the gift of graciousness.

Most girls fail to appreciate this quality, which is more winning than accomplishments, and more enduring than beauty. When the freshness, light-heartedness and graces of youth are gone this gift abides, and forms as becoming a diadem to the matron's brow, or the grandmother's silver locks as to the beauty of the maiden.

Unlike beauty, which God has not granted to all women, and accomplishments, for which all have not a like taste or fitness, this gift can be acquired by all. The only things that can prevent its acquisition are a selfish disposition and a loveless heart—it will not dwell where love for humanity does not abide, and, like true politeness it is founded on unselfishness.

I have heard girls say something like this: 'Oh, she is nice to every one—it is natural for her to be so—somehow I do not feel that way. I am constitutionally indifferent, and it would be hypocrisy in me to pretend to be interested in most people, when really there are only a few I care about.' I have heard these same girls complain of not being so universally liked as other girls, or of being left out of some pleasure in which their more gracious friends were included. The secret at the bottom of the natural indifference of these girls is generally selfishness, indisposition to put themselves out for others, or else a concealed idea that their charms are so great that every one should pay court to them and expect nothing in return.

I have heard other girls say that they were too timid to be gracious, that their shyness made them appear indifferent. The best antidote for timidity is to cultivate an unselfish interest in others, and to think as little as possible of one's self; there is no more effectual cloak for shyness than a kindly graciousness of manner.

I know two girls who live in the same town. One of them is considered very beautiful, graceful and bright; she has several admirers and a few friends, but the majority of her associates and her mother's and father's friends feel entirely indifferent to her, while some comment unfavorably upon her repellent manners. The other girl is not near so pretty and not a whit brighter, but she has sweet, gracious ways with old people and children, with her mother's friends and her own, with the tradespeople and servants, and every one in the town is her admirer, champion and friend. Wherever she goes, smiles and blessings attend her.

Have you not observed the blessed presence of a gracious girl like this at a social gathering or house party? She smiles brightly at her hostess and enters heartily into the pleasures provided for her; stops in the corner for a brief chat with the dear old grandmother, and watches for an opportunity to exchange an unaffected greeting with her host. She compliments the pretty costume or sweet voice of a shrinking girl, and makes the awkward boys, who are just entering society, feel comfortable by her unstudied ease and cordiality. She quietly thanks the servants for their services, is ready for a romp with the baby brother, or a game of dolls with the little sisters, and makes herself a veritable source of sunshine to a whole gathering or to an entire household.

As life ripens and duties multiply, this 'gift of graciousness' finds new channels, and that which may have at first been little more than a trick of manner, prompted by kindness of heart, develops into a trait of character—a life principle—and so becomes a power.

What a subtle, yet strong, force in the management of a home! How it blesses the husband, assists in controlling the servants, and influencing the children; what a potent charm it is in social life, and especially in performing the agreeable duties of hostess. The girl whose mother has this gift is particularly fortunate. Her home is sure to be a happy one, her friends are the friends of her mother also, and in the pleasures of her youth she has her mother's help and sympathy side by side with her due restraint and judicious advice.

## ON SINGING.

BE SURE YOU HAVE A VOICE.

BY CLEMENTINE DE VREE.

THE advice which is used as the title of this article is important to be observed in its reference to both quality and quantity by girls who have any intention of making public singing their profession; though it is a matter of far less importance, in its latter connection, to those who may intend to sing only for their own pleasure, to study for a better appreciation and enjoyment of the singing of others, or to teach vocal music. To those who intend their voice to be their bread-winner, in the capacity to which I have first alluded, the title-injunction is the most important that can be given any girl.

In the three cases cited but the slightest quantity of actual vocal strength may be present, provided that the vocal cords are in a physical condition to emit the musical tones. It sometimes occurs that this is not the case, that the throat can not, from its defective formation, resound or reverberate as it should be able to do in the production of a voice; but this is unusual. The tones then being present, even in the slightest quantity, the rest depends much upon the cultivation.

The best way to discover whether or not you have a voice is to submit yourself to a thoroughly good teacher, and abide by his or her judgment, although, if you possess good intelligence, musical appreciation and a really artistic sense, you should be able to judge for yourself whether your tones are true and sweet, and those are the only requisites necessary for a commencement in vocal education. Strength, steadiness, volume and ability come with training; but sweetness and traciness are natural gifts. These can hardly be acquired.

The opinion of your friends and relatives in this matter, unless they are more learned than loving, will be of but little value to you. They are, as a rule—because in their ignorance and affection they condone and overlook most glaring faults—the worst critics and advisers that a girl can possibly have. I remember a famous *prima donna* once telling me that when on her tours of this country—more here than elsewhere, because most foreign lands have their national conservatories open to the public, and because, in America, girls of a lower stratum have ambitions beyond their station and abilities—scarcely a morning passed that fond parents did not bring for her approval and examination embryo Pattis and Scatchis. And it was a rarity when these singing birds could even follow a scale, thus showing by their lack of natural ability how thoroughly unprepared they were for a career as a public singer.

Therefore it is better, when possible, to submit yourself and your voice to a thoroughly good teacher; one who can have no prejudice either for or against you, and who should, therefore, as he is interested in his art, prove an unbiased and a safe judge. Flattery may be pleasant, but truth is potent, and a girl of vocal ambitions cannot have too much of the latter.

The question which naturally suggests itself next is, 'How am I to know who is a thoroughly good teacher?' And it is a very difficult question to answer; difficult as much because of the different schools and methods of singing, as because of the different characters, voices, and abilities of pupils and teachers. One man may be an absolute master of the style of singing; can show you all the little delicacies of expression and enunciation, the proper accentuation of important, and the passing over of unimportant, words, and yet may not know the first principles of voice production or execution. Again, a master who may be able to develop for you a voice of large proportions from one so small as to be scarcely perceptible, will quite possibly give you nothing of technique—if one can apply this phrase in vocalization. If you can find a teacher who combines execution with voice production and development, you have found a thing of value, and the safe person to whom to submit your voice as well as your vocal instruction.

But suppose that he tells you that you have no voice—a thing which happens but rarely, most people possessing at least a small quantity of that article; but if this excellent teacher shall tell you that—although you have the love of music, and the intelligence and industry necessary—your throat is defective in its formation of the vocal cords, the only thing for you to do is to resign yourself to his judgment and abide by it. If you cannot do it, that is, if you have no voice, do not try to sing. The effect is painful to your hearers and satisfactory only to yourself. The truly artistic spirit is unselfish, and is less desirous always of self enjoyment than of furnishing pleasure to others.

But if you have only the smallest quantity of voice, cultivate what you have; develop more, and learn the art of singing. That is all you will find it necessary to do in order to become a very pleasing singer. I say 'all,' but it is a very large 'all.' It represents months, and even years of close application, patient study, continued practice and care. But the adherence to them will give you—provided you have started with the requisites—a style which will charm, and a voice which will be to yourself and your nearest and dearest, if not to the public, a constant source of refined pleasure.

## A QUIBBLE.

'How dare you say my hair is red?'  
Fair Florence to her lover said.  
'Tis Auburn, silly, can't you see?'  
'But let me tell you, dear,' said he,  
'Tis owing to hair-red-ity.'

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