NOOKS AND CORNERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"FROM KITCHEN TO GARRET"

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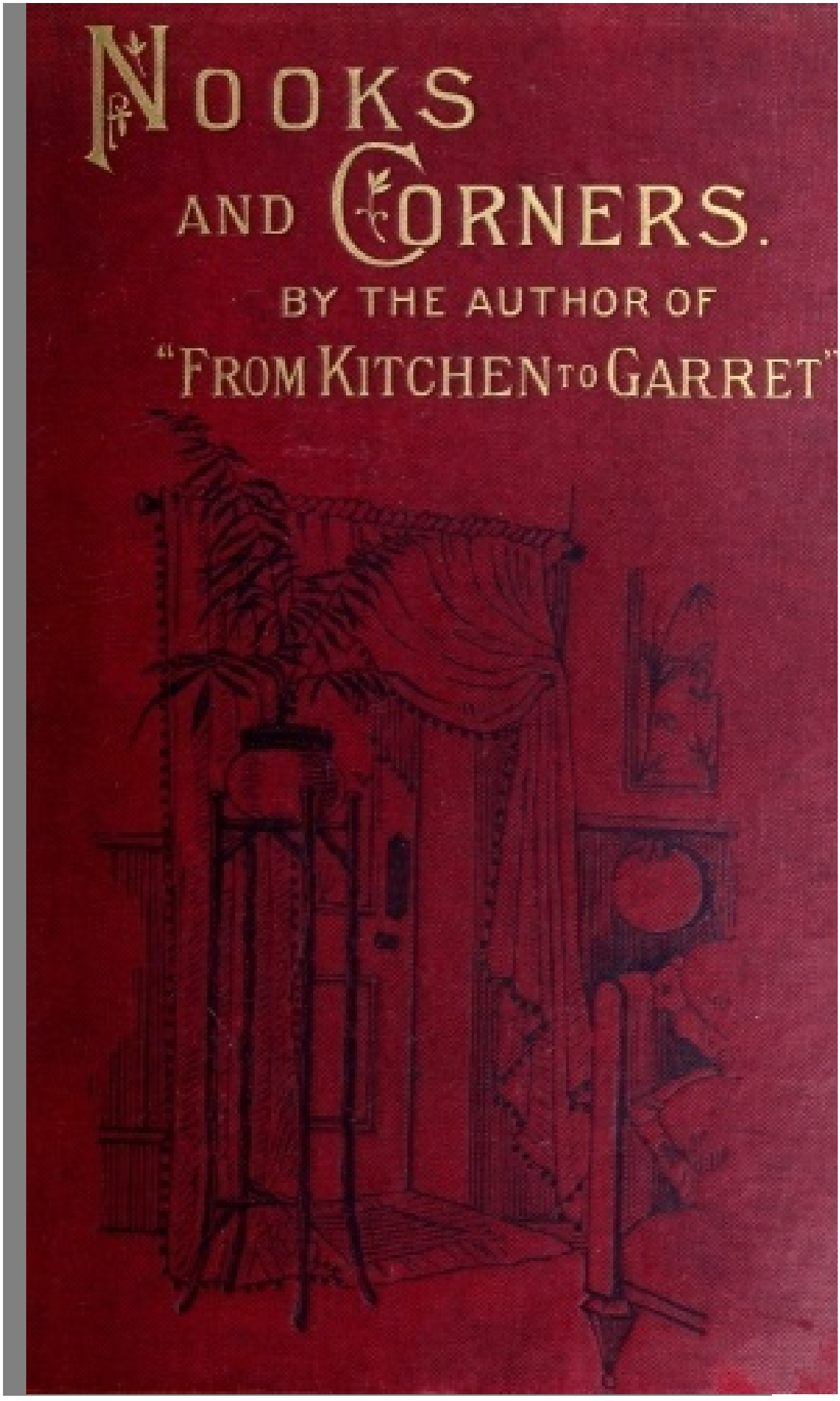

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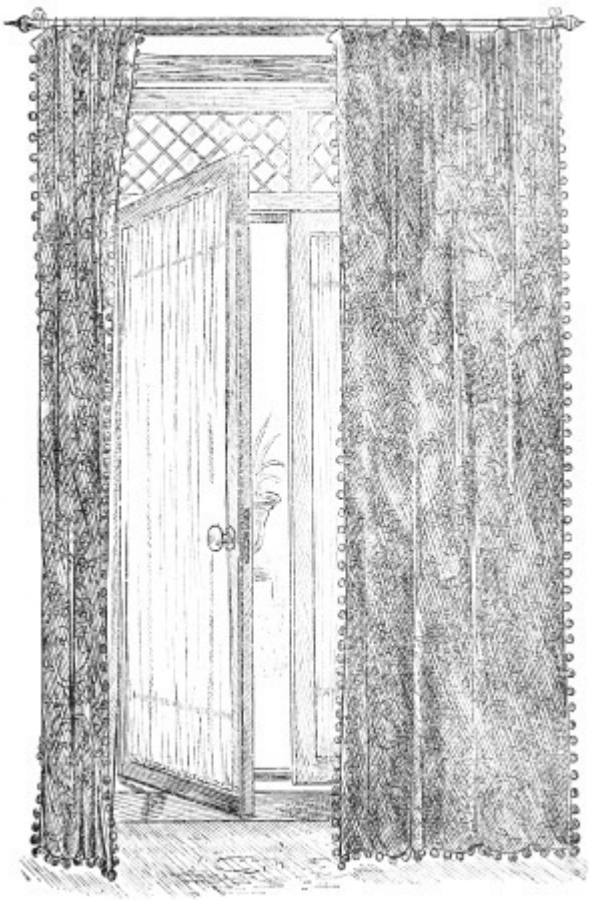

A French Window

NOOKS AND CORNERS

BEING THE COMPANION VOLUME TO

‘FROM KITCHEN TO GARRET’

BY

J. E. P A N T O N

AUTHOR OF

‘BY-PATHS AND CROSS-ROADS’ ‘THE CURATE’S WIFE’ ‘A TANGLED CHAIN’

‘COUNTRY SKETCHES IN BLACK AND WHITE’

ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

London
WARD & DOWNEY
12 YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN
1889

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ILLUSTRATIONS

NOOKS AND CORNERS.

CHAPTER I.

MOVING HOUSE.

I HAVE been asked by a great many readers of ‘From Kitchen to Garret’ to produce another book on the ever fascinating subject of household management and house decoration; and I have been furthermore requested to consider Edwin and Angelina from another standpoint, and to regard them as having increased their borders in more ways than one, and, having become richer and at the same time more numerous, as now beginning to move from their small house, furnished so joyfully and hopefully in the early flush of their married happiness, to one larger in every way, and more suited to their present income and growing family.

I confess that I begin my task with just a little diffidence, and a little misgiving, too, and feel just a wee bit as sad over the beginning of this little volume as I know my young couples must feel when, no longer quite as young as they were, they turn their backs on that dear little first home, and take up their abode in the newer, far more convenient habitation, welcomed so joyfully by the children, who declare that now, and now only, they will have room in which to breathe!

For, successful as ‘From Kitchen to Garret’ is, and many as are the friends I have made through its pages, I am rather doubtful about another book on the same lines; still, I can but do my best, and so, without any more forewords on the matter, I will at once plunge into my subject, and will trust that all those who have made their little houses pretty by either following or improving on the hints given in my first book will not disdain to follow me once more into those Nooks and Corners of house-furnishing and house-keeping, which were deemed too ambitious for my young couple, or were forgotten in the first essay on the subject.

Besides which, as life goes on, I am thankful to say that decoration becomes more and more a fine art.

Formerly people rather scorned the idea of being ‘house-proud’ in the same manner in which all are nowadays. Their house-pride was merely expressed in the amount of gilding compressed into a single room; in the thickness of their carpets, the heaviness of their draperies, and the general costliness of the plenishing, and the amount of money these things had cost was far more often spoken of than anything else; while the name of the upholsterer was mentioned, not as a guarantee that taste and skill had been called into action, but as a proof that money in this case had not been an object. Formerly, did I say? Alas! cases still exist of this heavy and depressing style of thing! Money is poured out like water on carpets that are nightmares, and on papers that are as absolutely meaningless as they are ugly, and the despair of anyone who is called in, as I am constantly, to mitigate the horrors of some gigantic monument of bad taste and lavish expenditure.

And then, too, people are still, as a rule, far too timid, and act far too much in a hurry; they believe far too much in the upholsterer, and far too little in themselves; and above all they cannot get out of the terrible English habit, carried through every single department in life, of buying a thing because they admire it, and not because it suits what they already possess, thus marring at every step their chances of having a home which is always a pleasure to inhabit, and a restful refuge from the cares and toils of life.

But it is to assist the timid and those who lack confidence in their own tastes, and furthermore who may live in distant country places, where nothing new penetrates even in these days of parcel-posts and illustrated newspapers, that I am writing this book, and wrote ‘From Kitchen to Garret,’ and therefore I must not scold but rather encourage those who would add to the beauty of their surroundings, but do not quite know how to set about it: and I am most anxious that there may soon be no house anywhere in England that may not have some claim to be considered beautiful or interesting or pretty; for indeed there is no reason why the humblest among us may not have a charming home, as certainly, if he or she have taste, money nowadays is not a barrier between beauty and the public at large. Therefore when any among my readers makes

up her mind that it is absolutely necessary that a move should be made, the first piece of advice I would give her is that she should determine on her future locality, if not on the abode itself, before she is driven from her first house by the lapsing of a lease or the necessity of deciding immediately because a tenant is forthcoming for house number one; for if not, she may find herself forced into an uncongenial neighbourhood or into a house that has every unpleasant quality under the sun. Above all she must be prepared for a certain amount of acute misery, mental, at any rate, if not physical, for there is something about one's first married home that one can never really replace, and that renders our fitting into our new locality only a little less torturing than inhabiting a new skin would be, were we suddenly forced into one.

Personally I am not one bit sentimental; I never cried over a faded flower, or lay awake weeping bitter tears over an unhappy love-affair: I never had one, I am thankful to say. Neither have I hoarded first shoes, snippings of baby curls, nor indeed anything save my wedding-dress, which is a most valuable 'property' for characters and private theatricals of all kinds; and therefore I am considered absolutely lacking in 'fine feelings,' and unhampered by 'nonsense'; but I have never yet become reconciled to the moves we have had to make after our first twelve years of married life, and I much doubt now if I ever shall; I certainly shall not until I make move number three, and what is perhaps the most curious point in the whole business is that I did not like the house, nor the town, nor indeed anything much about it, and yet I can never see certain looks in the sky, scent certain odours, without being transported to dear dull Dorsetshire, and without longing in a curious home-sick way for the marvellously lovely range of the Purbeck hills, which haunts me like a dream, and for which I am convinced I should positively pine, had I the smallest touch of sentiment in my composition.

The house itself was most wretchedly inconvenient, the furniture of over twenty years ago—aye, and some of it over fifty years ago—does not bear thinking about in these æsthetic days. I endured dullness such as only a London girl, plunged suddenly into an atmosphere she could not comprehend, much less assimilate, could experience: we had three years of

unspeakable worries; and yet, with it all—with its hideous rooms and its cold and ugly passages, its out-of-the-worldness, and its unpleasant associations—there is something about it that no other house can ever hold, and that causes me often and often to dream I am there again, or that makes me hear sometimes on a quiet night the old sound of the sudden clash of the china closet door, the opening of the door at the top of the kitchen stairs—which, I believe, has been taken away now by desecrating hands, and which had a sound all its own—or that causes me to wake suddenly from sleep to wonder at the late return of phantom waggons and ghostly horses over stones that are hundreds of miles away from our present uncongenial abode, and which caused sounds inseparable from thoughts of those dear dead days—days I would have back this moment if I could, if only to live them over once more in a manner a thousand times better than an inexperienced girl could ever do, and use then the experience one buys at such an enormous cost because one will not listen to words of wisdom from those who have lived so very much longer in the world than we had then, and which is useless now, because one sees all too late what one might have done for others.

These experiences and reminiscences of mine may seem out of place here, but they really are not. I shall in this book, as in my last, speak only of what I have experienced; and I am so convinced that when house-moving is done heartbreak must ensue that I dwell upon this aspect of the case in order that the first house may not be left capriciously, but only because it is absolutely necessary to go elsewhere.

I have always felt myself, unsentimental creature though I am, that a house absorbs some of one's own personality: that the very walls we warm with our breathing, living selves, and among which we spend our lives, and allow ourselves to be ourselves without any company veneer, must in some measure become impregnated by our vitality. You may, for example, re-paper and re-furnish your room, but in a very short time that room looks exactly like you once more, and becomes again in a week or two—a month, at most—part and parcel of your own individuality. But leave your house, and, if you can muster sufficient courage to do so, go and call on the next inhabitant, and you will see in one moment what I mean. The

very room is altered. Your successors may have kept your decorations, taken off your ‘fixtures,’ and gone on the very same lines as regards furnishing and arrangement as you did, but it will not look in the very least like you, and you will not believe you are in the same room in which you have spent so many happy and unhappy hours. At first, therefore, in any new house you have not only to adapt yourself and your furniture to it, but you have by your individuality to imprint yourself on the very fabric itself.

The last owner’s individuality fades at once; I have seen few empty houses that do not look precisely like something dead: the body is there, but the spirit is absent. And there is a blank awful chill about such a house that penetrates one’s very soul and depresses one in an extraordinary way; but it takes some time to reanimate the body, and, indeed, in an unloved atmosphere I question if it is ever done. Some folk the house won’t have at any price, and there are one or two places I wot of that are blank still, because uncongenial people have them and are incapable of living up to them properly; they put just the wrong draperies in the windows, wrench the doors round into the wrong places, and finally have hung the very worst colours on the walls, and, indeed, have treated it in such an inconsiderate way that it never responds, and remains silent, angular, unsatisfied, dead, as long as those people remain within its shelter.

Angelina, when she really must move therefore, must remember to think over all these details.

I envy everyone myself who has a really inherited house—a house which has absorbed the family atmosphere for centuries, that has never been passed from hand to hand and from family to family until it has no recollection of who built it or what it was built for; a house for which it is an intense and real pleasure to plan improvements, to deck as one would deck a child of one’s own, knowing that what we spent on it or did for it would benefit and please not only ourselves but those who are to come after us. Yes; hopeless Radical as I am in everything else, I am Conservative indeed in the house I would have if I could; but in these days of progress, when most people grow rich, and many only use their dwelling-place as a

shelter, and don't think of it as a home, I am constantly being pained to see retired city men and lawyers—the two classes which become really wealthy, taking over the delightful places which once owned 'county families,' and ruining the society round with their ostentation and the ridiculous airs only found in suburban places where 'society' so-called consists of 'twopence three-farthings looking down on twopence,' while the poor houses themselves are ruined too by utterly inappropriate furnishing and by decorations suitable only for an ordinary 'mansion,' furnished by giving *carte blanche* to some enterprising and advertising tradesman.

Should Angelina have made her first home in the family dwelling-place, she will never have to learn what moving house really means. She can allow her roots to sink as deeply as she likes into the kindly soil, and she can make it all as charming as she will, because she will know that all she does will only benefit her own; but as there are indeed few nowadays who can contemplate this (for even the absorbers of the old places round London never think of the generation behind them, and often and often cut up the land for eligible building sites, with as little compunction as one cuts up a cake at a school-feast: only taking care it shall go as far as it can), we need not dwell on this aspect of the case, but on the one that should be the motive of this chapter, namely, moving house.

If you are tolerably happy in the neighbourhood you know, pray take my advice and remain there; there are sure to be discomforts of some kind or other in any locality. I have never yet come across anyone who was perfectly satisfied with his or her belongings; certainly I have never met anyone who had not bitter complaint to make about the special locality he or she inhabited, and yet who did not ruffle up their feathers the moment any stranger found fault with it. But a neighbourhood is like a house, and requires locally knowing; and if we are for ever changing our neighbourhood, we can never feel at home anywhere.

No doubt it is an unfashionable idea nowadays, this clinging to one place; but I think, if more consideration were given to the subject, life would be much better than it is at present, for

far more good can be done by those who are able to help their poorer neighbours, should they remain year after year in the same place; for they are thus enabled to know them thoroughly, to sift the deserving from the hopeless, and finally to interest themselves in such a way in the real life around them that the place in which fate has placed them is in some measure better for their having made their home there. And this cannot be done satisfactorily by mere birds of passage, who have no ‘vested interests’ in the place, and are ready to be off at a minute’s notice, just because they think a change would be nice.

And once having made up your minds that a change of house is imperative, I advise you to ponder seriously and at great length over the pros and cons of a residence in the same neighbourhood, before finally determining to plant your roots elsewhere. I think what makes a residence in the suburbs almost unendurable is this mania for change, for we no sooner begin to know people there and like them than we find they are becoming uneasy; they fancy the place is unhealthy, someone has been rude, the nicest people have not called—as if the nicest people ever did rush to call without introductions of some sort or other—and they are off impatiently before they have entered into the life of a place they condemn ruthlessly because they do not really know what it is like.

How long does it take to know a place? Well, if you are lucky enough to go there with really good introductions, I should think six months; if you know no one, and are dependent on chance, or the vicar of the parish, you may never know it at all; but, in ordinary cases, and where people have had their edges clipped by really good society, you ought to know quite as many people as you wish to in about three years.

Therefore, if you have begun your residence in the suburbs, and have a nice church, a nice doctor, and nice friends, stay there; you don’t know how deeply your roots are planted until you begin to drag them up. If you are a Londoner, on no account be persuaded by artistic accounts of country delights to leave your beloved pavements and the exquisite freedom of a town life and surroundings: and if you are born and have lived among cabbages and roses—if you love the country, and

can interest yourself mildly in the continual changes that are going on around you in your neighbours' houses and the cottages round about—remain there; and be thankful for tastes which are innocent if they are circumscribed, and often result in a far nobler life than that made up mostly from excitement and dissipation; because anyone who can and will live cheerfully in the country, making work for the labourer, and employing folk in pure air, and in decent habitations, does much more for the human race than he wots of, and should be encouraged to do so in any manner that one possibly can.

I am often being told that the country is a far cheaper place to live in than London; but I have tried both, and I know better. In the first place, in London you can do precisely what you like, and, provided your likes are not openly eccentric, no one will interfere with you. You can have ten friends or ten thousand acquaintances. You may wear one dress as long as it will hold together, and no one will doubt your capabilities of being respectable because of your shabby attire. You may get up when you like, go to bed when you like, need not give to any charity if you are not charitably disposed, need not keep a carriage, because you can at any moment hail any vehicle, and go anywhere you like; and, above all, can be so easily amused, and at so cheap a rate, that one need hardly put down 'amusements' in our schedule at all.

Now in the country we must have some sort of a carriage if we wish to get outside our own immediate neighbourhood and mix with our fellow-creatures; from the humble 'four-wheel' of the farmer's wife, and the curate's donkey-cart, to the landau, waggonette, or smart little victoria of the other richer folk: all must have some other means of progression than would be afforded by one's own legs. Our incomes are common property, and, should we have two new dresses in the course of the year, are a prey for all those dear creatures who spend their time in being charitable on other folk's money. We must have a garden, and we obtain a scant supply of worm-eaten fruit, inferior flowers, and out-of-season vegetables, at a price for which we could have obtained the very best stores of Covent Garden—for by out-of-season I don't mean that our pears and asparagus come before their time, but considerably after the period when they have become cheap in the market in

London; and, finally, we cannot be amused without half ruining ourselves by constant rushes to town, by subscribing largely to Mudie, and by taking in every newspaper we can lay our hands on if we are readers, and if we are fond of finery, by sending for constant new garments, not because we want them, but because we really want to see what is being worn. Of course rates, rents, and taxes are much less in the country; but rent in London is less than it used to be, and in unfashionable neighbourhoods is not too exorbitant; but even with the rent considered, I still maintain one can live more cheaply in London than elsewhere, and can most certainly live longer there and far more pleasantly.

So I do most strongly advise country mice to remain country mice, unless they make the change very young; and I implore town mice to cling to their pavements, for nothing short of a residence for generations in the country can teach one how to live under the microscope which is put over one the moment a stranger goes into the country to live, and nothing save being born to it could ever reconcile one to having one's most intimate personal concerns discussed at the bar of every public house, over every shop counter, in every parlour, as they are discussed in an ordinary rural place, or to having one's most innocent speeches repeated until one would certainly not recognise them, did they return to us after their last repetition.

I declare that twenty years of residence in and about the country have never reconciled me to all this, or caused me to take the profound interest in my turn in my neighbours, in the way that aborigines do to reconcile and repay themselves for their own sojourn under the microscope, and which a country born and bred individual takes as naturally as he does his absence from the theatres, and his utter lack of interest on any other topic than the ever-absorbing one of 'who is going to marry whom,' or who is not, and what the curate's last baby was called, and why that special name was selected; and, therefore, I never lose an opportunity of warning the ducks to remain in the pond, and the hens in the farmyard where they were hatched, for I am quite sure my experience is not a solitary one by any means, and has often been the fate of those who went into the country because no one warned them that the delights thereof were mere snares and delusions, and who

would give anything to return, only they cannot afford another move.

And I have no doubt that the country mice are as miserable in the town in their turn: they miss the intimate conversations, the familiarity of their friendships; they pine for fresh air, and weep over ‘smuts;’ the noise and bustle we love so dearly bewilders and distresses them; they object to putting on gloves and a bonnet whenever they go out, resent being unable to ‘run in’ at any moment to their acquaintances, dread the streets, see disease lurking at every corner, in every glass of milk, in each vestment fresh from the laundress, and, pining away, become pale, ill, and wretched, and put it down to London, when really the misery lies entirely in themselves.

Have I said enough to show my readers that when they are contemplating a move they should do their utmost to remain in the same neighbourhood, or at all events in one with the main workings of which they are in a measure familiar? I think so; and if at the same time I tell them to remember the church where their children were christened, the doctor who helped them over so many hours of pain and trouble, and finally the friends they made—and old friends should never be given up on any account whatever—I believe they will see that a change even for the better has always its trials, and that a great many things should be considered before up-rooting takes place, and a family is landed in an entirely new locality, that, be it as nice as it may be, has its own interests, in which the new-comer has neither part nor parcel, and its unwritten laws and small rules of etiquette, which are as rigid as they are incomprehensible to an outsider.

I think in every neighbourhood there should be also some agent to send out lists of all the pros and cons, the ins and outs of a neighbourhood, which should show you at once the number and styles of the different churches, the state of society (it could be ‘young,’ ‘army,’ ‘lawyers,’ or anything almost), the schools, the advantages and disadvantages, and, in fact, all the particulars one wants to know. They should truthfully and in confidence give one all the required information, and then one would not run the risk of making mistakes. But as this seems impossible, a residence for a short time in a furnished house

(one's own house could in turn be let to some one who wants to investigate our neighbourhood) should be indulged in. A very few weeks would inform us of all we want to know; for even if we did not become acquainted with one soul personally, we should have looked at the people and taken stock of their windows, from which I think one can always learn so much, and can quietly make our own inquiries about schools, churches, and the rest of the vital points of interest about a new residence, and come as quietly to the conclusion as to whether the neighbourhood will suit us or not, before going to the expense of moving and decorating to suit ourselves and our belongings—an expense which once incurred often binds us hard and fast to a place from which we would give our ears to remove.

Then comes the question of the house. This should be large enough to take all the family and allow for any possible additions; but at the same time Angelina will have to remember that when the boys are at school there will always be a room for a friend, and therefore the question of spare rooms is not such a vital one as it was. She will also have to legislate for the girls' own room—probably a room for a governess, though a resident governess should be avoided unless the house is a good size, and unless she is an absolute necessity. There is the schoolroom to think of, and she must contemplate—perhaps ruefully—the nurseries, with an eye to adapting them to another purpose, when that saddest of all days comes when we cannot deceive ourselves into believing a nursery is any longer necessary, and we have to turn our backs on our youth and the dear small child-inhabitants at the same time. A house without a nursery is never as joyous or lively as one that possesses such a room, and it's no use trying to believe this to be the case. Still it is equally of no use to set apart the best room in the house for that most pleasant of all chambers, if there is no chance of nursery children, and if all are merged into the young gentlemen and ladies, who are fast growing up and eagerly longing to launch their boats on the sea of life for a cruise of their own.

When the house is positively and actually selected and the move imminent, when the lease is signed and the decorations are in train, the first step to take is to get several estimates

from firms who are accustomed to do nothing else save move furniture. In nothing does price fluctuate so much as it does in these estimates, and when we moved from Dorsetshire to Shortlands there was actually and positively a difference of 100*l.* in the highest and lowest of the many estimates we had, the person selected being just 100*l.* lower in his price than the man who made us our first offer.

To move luxuriously we should have taken house number two for a quarter before we are obliged to leave our own. Of course if we could persuade the landlord to let us have it for six weeks it would be better; but not many landlords are as accommodating as this, and unfortunately many of us cannot afford a double rent even for such a short space of time. Still an effort should be made, as undoubtedly much is wasted in a hurried move—in an enforced turning out on quarter day into another house on the same date.

It is only people in very straitened circumstances who accept in these artistic days of ours the landlord's scheme of decoration. Formerly there were no ideas in the head of an ordinary paterfamilias on the subject of paint and paper, and as long as all was clean and in good condition he did not agitate himself in the least about his surroundings as far as mere colour and 'decoration' were concerned, and he cheerfully spread his Turkey carpet and placed his heavy sideboard and mahogany table and chairs in position, regardless of the fact that the 'good' flock paper and vulgar graining made up a *tout ensemble* as utterly depressing as it was tasteless and absolutely without character.

But now, I am glad to think, what is already in one's possession governs in some measure what alterations are to be made, and as fate never yet was so propitious as to put one down straight from one house into another which was exactly decorated to our taste, we may be quite sure that there are many things to do to any place to which we may contemplate moving; therefore I say if possible let the two leases, *i.e.* of your present and your future house, run side by side for six weeks at least: so shall you move comfortably, and be able to make those alterations that are perfectly sure to be necessary.

A new house should never by any chance be entered in the September quarter; it is astonishing what an amount of coal and reckless expenditure of gas is required to obtain even moderate warmth in a new house; and furthermore most appalling discoveries are apt to be made, as soon as the fires are lighted, of the manner in which floors, doors, and window-frames are capable of shrinking the moment warmth penetrates the place; these we can circumvent in summer, but the winter is not a time to run any risks of discovering that the more we try to warm the house the wider open gape the cracks in all the woodwork, and that nothing we can do will really warm a place, more and more exposed as days go by to the four winds of heaven. Therefore, if the future house has never been lived in, enter it in June, or even in March; there will then be ample time to find out all faults in the structure before the winter arrives with all its concomitant miseries.

Delightful Mr. Aspinall, for whose existence I can never be sufficiently thankful, has made house decoration mere child's play compared to what it used to be; and, armed with his paints and a written description of what each room is to be like when done, the foreman can be left to his own devices, and the old house can be returned to with a safe conscience; for if careful selection has been made of each paper and its own particular paint, no risks are run of finding, as I found when I made my last move, that owing to the peculiar freaks of the painter there were seven shades of blue in my hall, and another separate shade of the same colour in a bed-room that was designed for a gem, and was becoming under the wretch's brush the exact shade of a butcher's apron, which was his own idea of a complete match to the 'Berry' paper—really a good hedge-sparrow egg blue-green! If only he had had Aspinall's neat little tins, I should not have had to stand over him all the time he mixed his paint, and most of the time he was applying it, and could not see at the last that he was wrong and I was absolutely right. So if those about to move will leave their decorators instructions to use Aspinall and nothing else, they can be absolutely sure that their paint will be right, and not a perpetual eyesore, as it almost invariably is when left to the tender mercies of the ordinary decorator, who considers he has

an eye for colour, and is as obstinate as half-educated people invariably are.

Briefly, then, the first thing we have to do when we contemplate moving is to really make up our minds that such a step is absolutely necessary, because no one who has never moved can understand the mental misery caused by tearing up one's roots even from an uncongenial soil; secondly, to carefully select a house likely to be our home for the rest of our lives; thirdly, to still more carefully choose and put in train a scheme of decoration that will harmonise in some measure with our cherished possessions; and fourthly, to endeavour not to be forced at the last to move hurriedly or into a new house in the winter. Once these details are remembered and enforced, the real process of moving may begin, and be got over as soon as the new house is ready for the inmates.

The mere move itself should be left entirely in the hands of the people employed. Personally, I recommend for any one in the suburbs Bachelar, of Croydon, who moved our furniture most successfully in the south of England. Peace, of Bridgewater and Bournemouth, is equally to be commended. Unfortunately, I know no one in the north, but I have no doubt there are many firms there; but in any case all should be written to, and estimates should be carefully considered before definitely selecting any one from among their number; but all one's belongings should be in covered furniture vans: open vans or railway trucks are ruination, and should never for one moment be used; and no estimate which includes moving any of the 'goods and chattels' in open trucks should be considered seriously, as even the roughest furniture suffers considerably by being carted about in this primitive manner, and is spoiled to a far greater extent than the mere difference between the two kinds of conveyances would pay for.

The books and pictures should be packed first, and unpacked last; the carpets should be rolled up, after a good shaking, with camphor-bags inside, even for the shortest transit; the straw, &c., used in packing them in the most carefully supervised vans having been proved a most comfortable home for small and teasing animals, which, discovering that carpets, pillows, and beds are warmer and

more comfortable on the whole than straw, forsake their habitations for eligible residences among our properties if we have not made them unbearable with camphor and a good sprinkling of Keating's insect powder before they leave our hands. Each room-full of furniture should be placed ready to be again put down in the special room for which it is intended. The carpets should remain rolled until the last of the movers is departed; then after the floors have been most thoroughly scrubbed with carbolic soap, the carpets should be well beaten, and should be relaid if possible by the hands of some 'professional,' for on the proper laying of a carpet depends far more of the wear than we quite realise. The best furniture mover cannot resist—please remember this!—the exquisite temptation to which he is exposed to stuff up odd corners, and to prevent shaking by making 'buffers' out of our pillows, cushions, and odds and ends generally; and as he furthermore has most excellent wrapping material in blankets, small rugs, and other similar trifles, the amateur must come to the rescue of her goods, or the professional packer will be much too strong for her.

In really well-organised and well-managed households each bed pillow and mattress should have its loose and washable cover sewn tightly over it of whitey-brown crash; these covers should be washed every year—if possible, every six months, and if these are arranged for they will in a great measure protect our property from the dirt and certain amount of almost indispensable damage, which would accrue to them were they left to the tender mercies of the remover, who would at once use them as mentioned above, and would not disdain to walk upon them cheerfully, did they seem to require more pressing down than a mere arrangement with the hands would effect; but if they are not so defended before the move is actually in progress, these covers should be made, or else great sheets of coarse crash, such as is used for packing purposes, should be strongly sewn round them, or inevitably we shall have to send all the bedding to the upholsterers to be 're-done'—*i.e.* picked over and readjusted, and the ticks washed also. The blankets must be even more carefully protected. I have seen them wrapped round iron bedsteads, and large mirrors, and with boots and even knives inside their folds, and in any case they

are ruthlessly annexed for packing purposes. Now to circumvent this I strongly advise that space should be left at the top of the box of each person inhabiting each separate room, and into this space the folded blankets should go, to be ready for use at once, and to be out of the way of the 'ravagers.' The clothes that should have occupied the space in the box can be most safely left in the chests of drawers and wardrobes, for 'personal property' of all kinds is invariably respected, and not the most ruthless of packers would dream of enfolding grimy objects in body linen or even among the folds of heavy winter dresses. These are invariably left exactly as one last placed them, and are emphatically respected, while even new blankets appear to have an irresistible attraction for them, and are annexed at once, while venerable ones suffer in the most appalling way conceivable.

It is absolutely impossible to move in anything like comfort or peace unless the juvenile members of the family and their nurses are 'boarded out.'

It is astonishing how very kind people are to each other when this trying work is proceeding, and there are few among us, if indeed there are any, who are not possessed of relatives, or at least dear friends, who will stretch their houses to the extent of taking in some of the children for the inside of a week; but if there are none on whom we can rely, the children should be sent to an hotel, or lodgings should be taken for them for a week; for if this is not done we should be quite sure to be driven mad by them, by the utter helplessness of their nurses, and by the certainty that we should have them all ill from the draughts, the scrappy meals, the uncertain hours, and the thousand and one absolutely unpreventable events that are familiar to every mother, and therefore need not be detailed here.

Let us suppose, therefore, that our move is to commence on a Tuesday, an excellent day, which leaves Monday for our private packings, for the men to pack the books, china, and ornaments (the number of my possessions in these several ways always eliciting most amusing comments), and for us to clear out the children and nurses; these latter, by the way, should have carefully packed all the children's things the week

before in boxes marked ‘Nursery’ in large chalk letters, and should take with them to their lodgings only what is absolutely necessary. We will then proceed up-stairs, put all the blankets away as suggested just now, see our garments are so bestowed that they are safe, the silver and jewellery in the charge of the man-servant if there be one, in the charge of the parlour-maid if there be none, and then we should see placards are up in each room, inscribed with the name of the room into which the things are to go; and our task at the other end will be much simplified if we also attach labels to each very heavy piece of furniture, taking care similar labels are already placed in a prominent position in the rooms they are intended for.

The packing of a big house takes about two days, and on the evening of the first day two of the servants and one of the household, the eldest daughter if possible, should go on to the new house; if, however, there is a long journey before them they should start almost as soon as the vans come, as the first will arrive Wednesday morning at the new abode, and someone should be there to receive it. The mistress and master should remain until Wednesday night, when they too should go on to the new abode, travelling by night if necessary, and the oldest and trustworthiest servant should be left to see the house is cleaned down by a couple of charwomen, and to hand the keys to a representative of the landlord, who should go over the house with an agent on the side of the remover to see all was left properly and undamaged by the out-going tenant; then the maid or man could rest at a friend’s house or at the local inn, and join the rest of the party on Thursday morning.

It is absolutely necessary that a separate hamper of food ready cooked and sufficient to supply the household for three days should be sent on with the first batch of domestics, and the hamper should contain kettle, cups and saucers, plates, and knives and forks, besides the actual food. The cook will not be able to be spared from putting her belongings in order to cook eatables, but an ample supply is necessary; for, as all will be working hard, all will require sustenance. This hamper should be at once put into the larder in the new house, the door locked, and the key kept by the servant herself.

The contents of the servants' bedrooms, the kitchen, and one sitting-room, and, if possible, one bedroom besides, should be despatched first, and as each article is brought in someone should seat herself on a camp-stool in the hall and should call out 'Dining-room,' 'Servants' bedroom,' 'Blue room,' or otherwise name its destination; so will the movers avoid the pleasing sight, that met my eyes when I moved last, of the complete contents of three rooms placed higgledy-piggledy in the centre of one chamber, heaped up like 'leaves in Vallombrosa,' where the wretched painters were dawdling over their work still; the painters who had caused this chaos by insisting that none of the other rooms were ready, though none were as absolutely unfinished as that in which they had arranged this pleasing reception for me.

Thank goodness, my rage was so extreme that I turned them out neck and crop, else, verily, I believe they would be here at this very moment; but I always determined to use my own sufferings as a warning to others, and I relate this experience in the hope that no one will attempt a move until the painters are out, and unless they will manage it on the lines here laid down for them.

The men who move are always supposed to lay carpets, hang pictures and curtains, and replace the books in cases. Whenever money is a very great object—and, in that case, no move should be contemplated unless it were a matter of health or the bread-winner's change of employment—I strongly advise that they should do nothing of the kind.

In the first place, the carpets should not be placed until the last man has departed; and in the second, it is infinitely better to have not only a regular carpet-layer, but a man accustomed to hang pictures and arrange brackets, mirrors, &c. I personally have a great many pictures and odds and ends, and I have twice had a most excellent man from Shoolbred's on these occasions, who came properly provided with nails, copper-wire, and all necessary tools, and who, for a little under 3*l.*, quietly, swiftly, and skilfully placed the pictures, &c., in their places, with just a very little supervision from me; for, like all those who have no regular art education, he had the usual mania for hanging everything ever so much higher than

it ought to be—a mania I most successfully and promptly combated! But beyond this, and giving him a few directions as to the placing of the pictures in due order, I left matters to him; and in three days—for, like an angel, he remained his Saturday half-holiday at my urgent request—all the walls were decorated and finished properly, which they could not have been in double the time had I been forced to rely on the help of those in the house.

The china and books should be the last things arranged, and this cannot be completed, I fear, in the week; but, thanks to my plan of short curtains and no blinds, any window can be arranged in exactly ten minutes. For, of course, the slight brass rods should be in place before the move begins; and the carpets being square are laid in about half an hour each, the carpet-layer going swiftly from room to room, and the maids replacing the furniture, with the help of a man, as he leaves the room; and as once curtains are up and carpets down the worst of the battle is over, we may, perhaps, even arrange the china and books before Sunday, and so spend in truth a real day of rest.

I have all the decorative china arranged on a tiny folding-table we call a choir-table, because it is brought into use for choir teas and other similar festivities, and from this are picked out quickly and easily the distinctive pieces devoted to each room: the book-shelves are up, and then the books, being packed in something like order, are arranged, and, in consequence, carefully done. A move need never take more than ten days; and it would be simply indefensible were not the house absolutely and completely straight in a fortnight; and, above all, let the servants' apartments and the nurseries be put in order first. Servants, as a rule, are far less able, both by temperament and education, than we are, to bear being 'put out of their ways,' and being over-worked and over-tired resent, as no really trained and well-disciplined nature resents, the small discomforts that we know will soon be entirely forgotten, but that are apt at the time to cause friction, and, if not properly legislated for, may even lose us a good and valuable servant.

And, inasmuch as we have had an education and advantages, and inherit in some cases the disciplined nature of

forefathers and mothers equally disciplined and educated, we must show that we have profited by these said advantages at such times as these; and whereas we know that our maids have had none, we should consider them, and look after them much as we should after children, being quite sure we shall be rewarded after our struggles by cheerful faces and willing arms, that are twice as cheerful and willing as they would be did we not remember to tell them how tired they must be, and to see they have extra food, and a small amount of coddling even, to carry them over the present stress of work.

The children should not return until one sees their rooms are dry and warm and straight. This, like all the rest of the move, must be done by organisation, and the rooms could be properly ready by Saturday night; but each maid must be told off to the different rooms, and the mistress and her daughter (and I do hope, for her sake, she may have that most invaluable of all possessions—a grown-up daughter) must never relax their supervision, else sundry gigglings and rompings about will hinder work, and denote that, like most young feminine creatures, the maids are disorganised by the presence of the opposite sex, and are endeavouring to combine amusement and work in a most unsatisfactory and impossible manner.

The master of the house, poor creature! will confine his energies in most cases to paying for the move, or, if he be very exemplary, after arranging the wine-cellar he will see to the books and help with the pictures. I have even heard rumours of men who are most useful and helpful at similar crises; but as I have never yet found any male rise above the discomfort sufficiently to be of real use in the matter, I must put down this as a mere rumour, only hoping that it may be true. He is, however, invaluable when it comes to managing the men who come to move, and should be considered angelic if he does not grumble over his scrappy dinner, or resent the fact that, unless he can go to an hotel, he is not likely to have any decent meals for at least three days—a fact a woman rather enjoys than deplores, as she recognises that for those three days at least there are no orders to give and no regular planning of food to be done.

The first few days in a new house are replete with misery. On the commencement of our tenancy we are literally besieged by the tradesmen coming to endeavour to secure our custom; but we should be wise if from some friend we were to obtain a list of those who are really reliable, until we are able to send round to the butchers, and obtain lists of prices from all for comparison, and have time to discover which of the local grocers will serve us at co-operative prices for ready money. But under no circumstances do I advise allowing a grocer's man to call for orders: a grocer's bill being the one of all others that is liable to swell to gigantic proportions. The moment a daily visit is permitted, the maids appear to rack their brains to see what they can order, and I have saved myself at least five shillings a week since I put a veto on the daily call, which seemed a signal for them to discover that hearthstones, vinegar, treacle, and similar 'intangible' objects were required; and by 'intangible' I mean articles that might be wanted, as it is impossible to regulate the supplies of these as one can other goods; and as I have had far less of all since I send a written order to either Shoolbred or Whiteley—whose men are not naturally in the least likely to press for orders, and whose sole duties consist in bringing the things, and receiving payment for the same—I strongly recommend all housewives either to deal with them, or to go to the local grocers themselves, and at once impress on them that no orders given in the kitchen are to be attended to under any pretext whatever.

The tradesman difficulty is the first misery, and then come the miseries of making acquaintance really with our house and surroundings. We are sure to discover a thousand small vexatious omissions in the house itself, and above all —'*miserere mei!*'—will we see with dismay that the furniture which looked quite beautiful in our old home has suddenly, and in the most unprovoked manner, become absolutely shabby and miserable.

This is an unanswerable problem, but it is a fact, and I can only account for it by suggesting that the new paper and paint are to blame, and that the sooner we get our furniture done up and rejuvenated the sooner shall we become reconciled to our new house; but, of course, this costs money—at a time, too, when money has been flowing away a little too freely to be

pleasant—and, no doubt, we may have to wait: another reason why a move is trying, and why, like marriage, it should never be undertaken lightly or unadvisedly; and at first we must make the best of our surroundings, being duly thankful for the square carpets and the light short curtains that save us so much piecing and planning, and looking forward to new cretonne and tapestry as soon as we can afford it.

Then comes the misery of making new friends; and here I would say a word of warning to those who go to an entirely unknown place, and have absolutely no introductions. The best and nicest folk do not rush to call on new people unless they have some knowledge of them; therefore wait a little and 'gang warily' before accepting as your *fidus Achates* the first lady who enters your doors, for doubtless her call is caused by curiosity, and because she has but few acquaintances and wishes ardently to have more.

Of course, if you have an immense house and heaps of money, everyone calls on the house and on your income, and you can soon discriminate for yourselves who is likely to be desirable and who is not; but the ordinary householder should be very cautious about the acquaintances she makes until she feels her feet, and can find out somehow—it is from the clergyman and his wife generally—who is who, taking care in her turn to tell enough of herself and her forbears to show that she is respectable at any rate, and obtaining in due course the same sort of information about those with whom she is surrounded.

In London—dear, lovely, unsnobbish London—one can do absolutely as one likes about everything, and nowhere is society as good as it is there. In the country the very best society is dull. In London one can meet with the only society worth having, in my opinion: the society of those who either in art, literature, science, or politics have 'done something,' and are making the history of the world. From this country folk are absolutely debarred: another reason, dear readers, why I say live in London, if you can in any way contrive to do so, and do not leave it on any pretext whatever. But as man must associate with his kind or perish, no doubt there are compensating elements in country society that are evident to

those who have lived among it all their lives. At any rate, we can live more unselfishly in the country, and do more good to those of our poorer brethren than we can in these crowded streets, where they are nothing to us save a probable source of infection, and a certain source of annoyance and dread.

To sum up this chapter briefly, then: let no move be made, unless such a course is absolutely imperative; let it be done in order and with regularity; and make no rushes into friendship in your new neighbourhood until you have discovered who is who, and made due inquiries on this subject; and, above all, under all circumstances, if fate has absolutely obliged you to make that particular move, make the best of it, and don't always either mentally or openly contrast your present abode unfavourably and bad-temperedly with your last location. You have to live where you have pitched your tent: therefore, bad as the place may appear to you, try and smother your feelings until use has made you reconciled to your new surroundings, even if 'home' has not asserted its charm and caused you to become fond of the place, because your best and dearest are there with you. It will be an effort, I can assure you, to do so, but if you are strong-minded enough to suffer in silence, you will be repaid for so doing a thousand-fold.

CHAPTER II.

HALLS AND PASSAGES.

THE first part of the new house that should be attacked by the decorator's art is undoubtedly the hall: and as undoubtedly it is here that the ordinary speculative builder surpasses himself; for, as a rule, the moment one opens the front door one falls up the staircase, or else one is confronted by a long, hopeless passage, which strikes a chill into the stoutest heart, especially if the owner of that heart has not had much experience in the art of 'how to make the best' of a very bad state of affairs.

But in these days of ours nothing in the way of amelioration is impossible; and, indeed, were I given *carte blanche* I would undertake to make the most hideous, square, 'impossible' house a bower of beauty. That sounds very egotistical, but I really do not mean it to be so; I only should like to impress upon my readers that never before has so much attention been given to decoration of houses as is given now, and that by the aid of carefully planned woodwork and by using arches on the plan of the Moorish fretwork first introduced by Liberty, a square room can be made picturesque, and a long narrow passage pleasant to contemplate, by simply putting up a series of slight arches, or else by curtaining off portions of it by aid of simple wooden partitions, such as are illustrated on page 25. I am very proud indeed of this sketch, as it was made from a brilliant inspiration of mine for a house where the instant one opened the door leading into the street, one was confronted by the stairs on one hand, and a long uninteresting straight passage on the other; and I was indeed pleased when I suddenly saw that a couple of arches could be cut out from what might have been a partition placed along the foot of the stairs from one side of the hall to the other, and that the arch at the stair foot could be curtained by a double curtain or pair of curtains, which would fall together when anyone raised it to go upstairs; while the other arch could be draped either to the left or right with a heavy piece of material according to the

position of the wall, or whether there is anything in the way of a cupboard or door to be concealed.

Treated in this way, the ordinary tiresome little hall of a London house is metamorphosed, at once, and, as the wooden framework can be so arranged that it can be screwed into the wall and so be made removable at will, I am quite sure this notion of mine will ‘catch on,’ as the Yankees say, more especially as Messrs. Wallace & Co., of Curtain Road, E.C., are willing to erect it ready painted and varnished at about 1*l.* a foot; that is to say, if the

Fig. 1.—Hall Arrangement.

passage were six feet wide the arches would cost about 6*l.*, if twelve 12*l.*, and so on. The arches could be enamelled to match the hall decorations, and the curtains could be of some heavy material like the ‘Elvira’ tapestry, or the beautiful jute velvet or Bokhara plush, which is undoubtedly *the* material for draping, while even the humbler serge is not to be despised; but in this case the curtain in the stair arch should be made double and very full, a great deal of the appearance of this

‘notion’ depending on full graceful curtains and proper draperies.

It would even be possible in a hall arranged like this to have one of the hideous hat and coat rails which die so hard; but even here I again repeat my warning against these monstrosities; they can never look like anything save Bluebeard’s wives hanging up against the wall, and are always a temptation to the gentle burglar or the common area sneak who delights to make off with coats and hats even if he can find nothing else; but if the master of the house declines to allow himself to be educated up to keeping his garments out of sight, he may be humoured by allowing him a place behind the hall curtain, which should be then properly draped in such a manner that the coats and hats would be completely hidden; a china or brass receptacle for umbrellas could be put on the other side of the convenient curtain also, and so all these most undecorative items will be put out of sight, thus causing the arches to be as useful as they are undoubtedly ornamental.

In many houses the staircase goes up at the side and does not face the front door, and here, too, the arches come in with great effect. I mean in those houses where there is a straight passage from the front door to a room opposite which faces the door and so ends the house; in the passage there are usually two doors, one on either side, belonging to the dining and morning rooms, the end room being often enough a small back room, or, as was the case in our house at Shortlands, even the drawing-room itself; there the passage opens out on the right hand and discloses the staircase close by the door and a passage leading to the lavatory; here the arches conceal the staircase at once and also the latter arrangement, and make a decoration out of what is always to me a great eyesore. In one case where the arches have been erected the passage led to the servants’ pantry, the door of which always stood invitingly open, disclosing sink and washings-up generally to the eyes of the critical caller; the curtain conceals all that now splendidly, and the whole arrangement gives an idea of space and ‘veiled possibilities’ which is really marvellous.

When we came to our present abode the hall here struck me with dismay, and it was some time before I could understand

in the least what could be done with it; it was exactly like a telescope, with a hideous window at one end, opening out on to several dead trees, and what looked like the family washing, with doors appearing just where such doors should be concealed, and, of course, it had beautiful marble papers and graining and a brand-new dado of a dark and hideous design in varnished paper too; the ‘decorations,’ however, I did not consider; but I racked my brains about the long, narrow, awful passage called by courtesy ‘the hall,’ and at last I had an inspiration. I ran a wooden partition across, about ten feet from the end of the place, and behind that put in a hot and cold water arrangement, and made it into a regular cloak-room; opening out another door into that, which previously opened out into a tiny passage leading into the fourth sitting-room, which would have been absolutely unusable had not this been done; and then, by the aid of bent laths and a little plaster, two arches were made in the passage, draped, one to the right, the other to the left, with a ‘khelim,’ looped with cords and tassels; and so I obtained what old Astley used to call a ‘wister’—*i.e.* a vista—and made a really decorated spot out of a most commonplace passage. Of course all the coats and hats are in the cloak-room, and there is nothing in the hall itself save the buffet illustrated on next page, which is in old oak, and which always looks nice, and forms a place where the cards of visitors can be placed, or the letters from the post, or other trifles; a couple of chairs for emergencies, the gong, and one of Mr. Pither’s beautiful red pots on a bamboo stand holding one of the long-suffering Aspidistras, which will live in draughts, and successfully bear uncomplainingly what would certainly kill at once any other plant, completing the furniture of this so-called hall.

My readers will be amused to hear that since I wrote ‘From Kitchen to Garret’ I have learned a very great

Fig. 2.—Oak Buffet.

many things; indeed, if I had not, I should most certainly not be writing a second instalment of ‘furniture literature.’ However, as one of these items is undoubtedly about the hall, I am now going to mention it here at once. Reluctantly, but emphatically, have I come to the conclusion that where hard wear is expected it is absolutely necessary to have linoleum of some kind or the other on the floor. Of course a great many well-regulated households are provided with nice tiles, which I can never look at without envy; but as the majority of folks are not so highly favoured, and as most households possess boys, and many have dogs too, I have regretfully discovered that, if a house is to be kept clean and tidy, the hall must have some material to cover it that can be washed daily, and so can be perpetually and properly kept in order. There is a particularly pretty linoleum made by the Staines Linoleum Company in Queen Victoria Street, E.C., which resembles tiny squares of black and white marble, which looks very well down. Of course it is a sham, and as such is to be deprecated, but I cannot help recommending it, as it looks so clean and nice and

bright, and would do admirably in some halls; while for those who will not allow any shams anywhere in their houses, nothing looks so nice as the darkest brown self-coloured linoleum put down all over the passages and halls, with some six-foot and even larger rugs about. The rugs must be as large as possible, as little rugs are apt to slip and move under the servants' feet. They also have a most aggravating manner of turning up at the edges, and becoming shabby; while the large rugs will wear for years, and stand really very hard wear too. These are about 28*s.* at either Maple's or Treloar's, and measure about three yards long by about one and a half yards wide. I say about, as none of these rugs seem to me to be exactly the same size; but this is near enough to give my readers some idea of how many they would require if they elect to put them down in their halls. The smaller rugs are about six feet long, and about four wide. These should have a wide binding sown on at the back, top and bottom, with a few shots, or else those round leaden weights used in ladies' jackets, underneath the binding to keep the ends down, and prevent the curling which is so unsightly and tiresome in these small rugs, and on damp hall-floors should be lined at the back with American leather.

Linoleum should never be scrubbed with soap and water, for this removes the pattern; but should be rubbed with a wet house-flannel to remove the dirt, and then polished with sour milk and water; plain brown linoleum should be kept in order with linseed oil (boiled) and turpentine mixed. This is specially required at first; for, like all materials which have no pattern on, it shows every footmark, and at first appears as if it were going to wear villainously; but the oil and turpentine soon restore it, and the rugs prevent the usual miserable effect of a plain material, which—I cannot think why—always wears badly if left to itself, and invariably looks untidy and shabby almost before it is down; therefore we may consider it an axiom that, if we are not provided with a good tiled floor, we cannot do better than have either the Staines linoleum to simulate marble, or the plain linoleum and rugs—this for preference. The linoleum should be washed daily with a damp duster, and the rugs shaken, and once a week all should be

cleaned with the linseed oil and turpentine; this will double the wear, and insure all marks being quite removed.

Another thing which I have most certainly learned is, that, delightful as felt looks and feels, and that beautiful as are the colours in which it is made, it is absolutely worthless for real wear. I had it laid down in the Watford house, when we went there, all over the halls and passages, and on the stairs too, and was quite delighted with the soft, warm feel thereof, and the appearance was equally pleasing; but we had not been there six months before that wretched stuff became the curse of the household; every single drop of water, every thread, or morsel of dust, every footmark showed; and from morning until night something had to be done in the shape of brushing and dusting, and, even then, we were never clean and never tidy. And then, in addition to its other sins, if the abominable material did not begin to go into holes; all along the edges of the stairs tiny white spots showed where the under felt was working through, and before a year was out all the wretched stuff had to be removed, and replaced in the hall with dark brown linoleum and rugs; and on the stairs by Pither's beautiful dark-blue blossom-patterned Brussels carpet, which after a year's hard wear looks really better than it did the first day it was put down; and I can never understand how anyone can ever recommend felt, as I am convinced it is absolutely worthless as a floor-covering, and that nothing can make it at all satisfactory; and as I still see it in shops, and notice it pressed on the attention of those about to furnish, I consider it my duty to warn my readers against it, for if they succumb to its fascinating appearance, they will inevitably suffer from its possession in the same way that I did.

Another thing I most strongly advise my readers to possess themselves of, if in any way they can, is a really good stair-carpet. There should be no fidgety border or differently coloured pattern on them to attract the eye and tease the brain, but there should be merely a simple pattern in the lighter shade on a darker ground; this always looks well, and at the same time does not tire one as an accentuated pattern invariably does. I therefore recommend Pither's excellent Brussels and Wilton pile carpets, 27 inches wide, the one at 4*s.* 6*d.*, the other at 7*s.* *3d.* the yard, for they are absolutely faultless, both

in design and colour, and can be as absolutely relied on both for wear and appearance. Wallace & Co.'s 'Stella' Brussels at 3*s.* 11*d.* would be nice, if expense is a very great object, and their Burmese carpet with a design on is also to be recommended, and no one can go wrong about their stair-carpets if they make a judicious selection from these four qualities and designs. I am perpetually asked for a really good artistic and satisfactory carpet at a very low price, but I as often reply, You might as well ask me to supply you with a really good diamond necklace for a few shillings, for such a thing does not exist. You can get very artistic-looking carpets for a little money; the Burmese carpet is ridiculously cheap and very satisfactory, but for real hard wear Brussels or pile must be chosen, and for a really good thing one must always pay; and it is far cheaper in the long run to buy what is really good than to be perpetually vexed at the wear and tear which invariably surprises and annoys us, come when it may. I therefore very strongly advise all who can to invest in really good stair-carpets, even if they content themselves with something far less expensive for the other rooms.

Then, too, I should much like to impress on my readers that the hideous glass one usually finds ready for one, either each side of the front door, or else as elaborate fanlights over the doors in the passage, should be removed and replaced by cathedral glass in leaded squares, or by bottle-ends. If, however, this is impossible, though the expense is not great, and the effect thereof is admirable, let the grained and patterned glass be covered by a really excellent imitation of the cathedral glass. This is to be obtained from Graham & Biddle, Graham House, Oxford Street, W., and is floated on glass in the same manner in which the ancient and much despised 'decalcomanie' used to be managed, and really has quite a surprising effect; a third way would be to remove the glass and replace it with quite plain, clear glass, covered inside by a fluted curtain of good Madras muslin, in really artistic colours. No one who has not risen in rebellion against the builder's arrangement of starred or patterned glass can imagine how immensely any place is improved by removing it altogether and replacing it with something else; and though this may appear a trifle to write about, I can assure you that it

is only by strict attention to such trifles that one can produce an artistic whole, which shall be entirely and absolutely satisfactory in every way. And, after all, these small matters cost far less than the elaborately draped curtains, the fitted carpets, the giant sideboards, and the other expensive monstrosities against which I am always waging war.

To be really perfect, the hall should be a square space in the centre of the house, where a big fire could blaze in winter, and masses of flowers could greet the incoming guest when dear, delightful summer makes fires unnecessary; and naturally such a hall would require very different treatment to the ordinary long and narrow passage; but if the staircase sweeps out of the hall I should still suggest my arches here. They would hide the stairs—never very lovely objects at the best of times—and obscure the glimpses of ascending and descending legs, which, especially in the long-dead days of crinolines, made going up or down stairs a penance indeed to any one who had to perform the ascent and descent in the face of a numerous company gathered in the hall, besides which a sense of snugness would be given to the whole place, which it could never have were that open space left unprotected, stretching up into the air!

As a rule, the square hall should be treated, as far as mere wall-decoration goes, in the same manner as the passages which lead out of it are treated, but here it would be quite in character, were fresh colours introduced, or the style of decoration reversed: that is to say, if the dado, which is imperative in a narrow passage, were replaced by the same decoration used as a frieze, taking care only that the colours should harmonise: for example, supposing the passages themselves were decorated in brown and gold, the brown being the ‘Kenesaw’ design printed on real brown paper by Essex & Co., Albert Mansions, Victoria Street, S.W., at five shillings and sixpence the piece, the dados being of a really good and strong gold Japanese leather paper, the inner or square hall could be papered in the same manner, using, however, the Japanese gold paper as a frieze; the frieze-rail could be Giles’ picture and china rail, holding big jugs and blue and white china of all kinds, and thus a charming effect would be obtained suitable for the squareness of the hall, and

yet harmonising absolutely with the passages which lead out of it.

In such a hall as this the ceiling should be divided into squares; this can be done quite easily nowadays by a series of laths or mouldings made on purpose; this is nailed into the laths above the ceiling with long thin nails. A very good moulding made on purpose is sold by Messrs. Haines & Co., 83 Queen Victoria Street, E.C., at about one penny a foot, and the squares thus made are filled either with a good ceiling paper or else by an admirably decorative material, exactly like moulded plaster, also sold by Haines, and called anaglypta; this costs about 2*l.* for a good-sized ceiling, and when up all should have a coat of ivory silicate paint, or else of the invaluable and admirable Aspinall enamel, also in ivory, for though builders may argue, and decorators implore, for a heavier and more ornate system of treating the ceiling and cornice, I cannot too emphatically condemn any colouring being introduced into the ceiling and surrounding plaster work in lines, and distracting contrasts of colour, thus bringing the ceiling down on our heads, depressing one dreadfully, and all too often bringing into notice much which would be better left to obscurity.

But my readers must not imagine from the above that I am recommending for one moment the ordinary ugly white-wash, the mere appearance of which ruins any room, or that I am ceasing to love the much-recommended papered ceiling—indeed I am not. Colour of some kind is necessary there as well as anywhere else, but the colour must be ivory, or faint terra-cotta, green, blue, or yellow, and must not be daubed on by the heavy hand of the decorator revelling in golds, and reds, and blues in bewildering confusion, and even introducing dreadful real or imitation oak beams, all well enough in houses where they are part of the fabric, and have the sentiment and beauty of age to defend their existence, but absolutely indefensible in an ordinary London house or small suburban villa, as indefensible as is old oak furbished up in Tottenham Court Road and made ghastly with sticky, varnished paint or stain, when placed in a house that has the nineteenth century and speculative builder written large all over it, in the bulging

walls, its vilely drawn lines, and its rawness and newness and vulgarity of style.

For it is no use attempting to have a pretty house unless we are absolutely strong-minded, and begin by forbidding the decorator to do anything but what he is told to do; and it is much wiser to write down exactly at the commencement of our decorations 'precept on precept,' 'line upon line,' 'word by word,' for each room, exactly what we wish the room to be arranged like, putting on paper the name and number of the wall paper, the colour of the paint, and in fact every single thing, so that at the end there can be no mistake; and above all we must not be persuaded out of our own ideas by the builder or by the upholsterer, or by anyone at all, once we have made up our minds what we intend to have, for we may be quite sure that if we are we shall repent it for ever after. I am often much disappointed to find, after I have taken real and elaborate pains to tell people exactly how their houses should be decorated, that they have allowed themselves to be talked over by the builder or the decorator, and that in consequence I am again sent for (at double the expense of course), to tell them how to get over, or in some measure mitigate the horrors that have been perpetrated. 'It is such a nuisance to run from shop to shop getting all the different papers,' says one, 'and the builder had almost the same sort of design in his book, and said his hung much better than those you recommend.' 'Oh! we hadn't time,' says another, 'and so we left it to the builder, and now, please, dear Mrs. Panton, do help us again, for the house does look horrid, and we cannot think why,' and of course I go, and could weep, really weep, over the waste of money, time, and material which would all have been saved had they handed the builder my written plan of decorations and told him that that, and that only, was to be the order for the work.

And decoration is really so easy nowadays, that, like moving, it need only be done slowly and in order to be an absolute success. All that is required from the builder is the plan of each room, you then write to the paper manufacturer for as many pieces of paper at so much, so many yards for the dados or frieze; this is ascertained by simply measuring round the room with a tape; to Aspinall for so much paint (a gallon at 25*s.* does quite a large room), and then having collected your

materials set to work. The painter has not to exercise his genius (?) or discretion (?) at all, he has simply to do as he is told; and, this being understood, one is spared the endless discussions with the builder, who wants to sell you some of the reams of hideous paper he has bought wholesale, and for a mere song, at a clearing-out sale of the 'Chamber of Horrors' of some paper-manufacturer, and who makes a great parade of the printed prices at the back of the sheets, trusting that you are innocent of the knowledge that on all papers the regular discount is 33 per cent., and that his own particular stock has been purchased at almost waste-paper prices, because the manufacturer was only too pleased to get rid of what ordinary upholsterers and decorators had absolutely refused to take up; and who is persuasive and pleading, and finally impertinent, when he discovers he has an adept to deal with, and not one of the numerous victims erstwhile so easily bullied or fatigued into putting up almost anything he shows them in order to get rid of and see the last of him.

I think the hall and passage are good spots in which to once more enforce the above details, for all should be done at the beginning, at the entrance as it were, or else the worry and disappointments will be endless; therefore I cannot consider the disquisition in which I have indulged out of place, and I feel I cannot too much or too often impress on my readers the absolute necessity of being sure what they want themselves before sending for the decorator; he must only be the hands to execute the work; and he must be absolutely silent about colours and patterns of paper if the house is to be a success at all. There are several other schemes of decoration that are absolutely successful in a hall, which were not spoken of in 'From Kitchen to Garret,' and which can be mentioned here before passing away from the hall altogether, although there are several things still to be said about it; and, indeed, as in all that regards decoration, it is an absolutely inexhaustible subject, as new and pretty things appear daily, and good combinations of colour are constantly suggesting themselves to the decorative mind. For the ordinary long dark passage, I would suggest that yellow and white should be used, nut-brown taking the place of white should there be very much traffic in the place, or should there be necessity for a certain

amount of economy; very small halls look nice with Pither's 'special' yellow and white berry paper, at 2*s.* a piece; a matting dado in plain white with all ivory paint, and Maple's yellow and white ceiling paper, at 4*d.* a piece; the matting dado being replaced by Liberty's nut-brown arras cloth, at 9¾*d.* a yard, and all 'nut-brown' paint, where it is considered desirable to have a darker arrangement than would be obtained by the ivory and white. The arras is very wide, 54 inches, and would in consequence cover a much larger wall-space than the matting does, neither is it so difficult to manage as is matting, but both should be secured at the bottom by upholsterer's tacks, and at the top by a light wooden rail, sold by Haines, of 83 Queen Victoria Street, E.C., at something under 1*d.* a foot. This should be screwed to the wall, and could be removed, arras, or matting and all at any time, which it could not be were ordinary nails employed, and a simple (and hideous) paper dado could replace the more expensive 'properties,' were the owner to remove and wish to take the dado with him, a plain paper-dado and a tidy wall being all that could be demanded of him by his landlord; beauty and æstheticism are not in the bond that exists between him and his tenant.

Another arrangement would be Pither's beautiful 'Buttercup, C,' at 3*s.* a piece, and yellow matting dado, and all 'Mandarin' paint, and a ceiling paper in red and cream; the 'berry,' at 1*s.*, would do quite well with either of these schemes. Pither's dull red pile carpet would be best for the stairs; and a good many Oriental rugs should be about the hall. Any draperies over the doors should be the dull red 'Elvira' tapestry, sold by Wallace, or of Mandarin yellow serge, this, of course, being much cheaper than the 'Elvira' brocade, which is 9*s.* 6*d.*, as against the 1*s.* 11½*d.* of the ever useful serge.

If yellow should be objected to—and nothing is so useful or so successful in a dark passage—blue should be the next colour to be thought about, and Liberty's blue tulip damasque is a most valuable paper for a blue hall. This is only 2*s.* a piece, and 'hangs' splendidly, and a very original effect would be produced by this paper, a high dado of red and gold leather paper, and all dull red paint; the red of the paint to match the curious dull-lacquered appearance of the red in the Japanese leather paper; the stair carpet should be red, and the ceiling

paper yellow and white; as a rule Maple's ceiling paper, at 4*d.* a piece, is quite good enough for anything; but if people do not mind spending a little more money, Haines has a charming ceiling paper at 3*s.*, in yellow and white, which, being of a more geometrical and better design in every way, would be perfect for ceilings, although, as I said before, where money is an object, the yellow and white ceiling paper is all that is absolutely necessary, and really answers remarkably well.

Should a red hall be desired, Pither's 'Buttercup, B,' at 2*s.* 6*d.*, cannot be improved upon. Cream or else 'Scindered' paint should be used; a red and white matting for the dado, not a check matting, but one which has a red line in it, and dark blue art carpet on the floor, blue and white ceiling paper—Maple, 4*d.* a piece. Any draperies should be either blue or red, and the ever-useful Khelims would show off admirably in a house arranged and decorated in this way, for their Eastern colourings would appear to advantage against the red and cream walls. This is a bold decoration, but one that looks extremely well, as does even a bolder arrangement, consisting of the 'Buttercup, B,' all malachite-green stained woodwork, a dull green matting dado, Burr & Elliott's (Oxford Street, W.) dull green cocoa-nut matting on the hall and stairs, dull green and white ceiling paper, and draperies of malachite-green serge. All the furniture should be Armitage's stained green wooden furniture, his high-backed little settle being particularly adapted for use in a hall, where no more furniture should be allowed than is absolutely necessary, unless the hall can, by reason of its size and design, be used as a room, and treated and furnished like one.

I cannot and never do recommend either a terra-cotta or real green wall; the latter is such a nondescript and uncertain colour that the use of it in the entrance appears to me to strike the keynote to the character of the inhabitants, who are thus pronounced uncertain in their ideas, and not particularly satisfactory, and there are so many 'builder's horrors' in the shape of dull, gloomy terra-cotta papers that inexperienced folks are apt to buy simply because the pure word 'terra-cotta' implies to a certain class of mind that the paper is artistic and high art, that I am impelled to taboo terra-cotta altogether at once; but if Liberty's 'tulip' and 'marigold' damasque papers

are bought a terra-cotta wall may be indulged in, though I can never pronounce this as totally satisfactory as are the red, blue, and yellow and brown walls. If the terra-cotta is selected, I advise ivory paint; if that cannot be indulged in, a shade of dull green should be chosen to harmonise with the terra-cotta, and the dado should be either green matting or else of green and gold (*dull* green and gold, please!) Japanese leather paper; the stair carpet should be green, and so should the draperies and ceiling paper.

A green wall could be arranged by using Liberty's green and silver 'tulip' damasque, at 2*s.*, and dull green paint, and a pale green matting dado, Pither's dark red carpet, and dark red draperies, the red and cream 'berry' for ceiling, or else terra-cotta draperies, and the 'Stella' stair carpet from Wallace. This hall would be artistic; but a cooler effect, and one that would be specially adapted for a hot hall, one into which much sun pours, would be obtained by using the green and silver paper, sea-green paint, and all pale green draperies, and a green carpet, using white and green muslin on the windows, and any white and green china to hold flowers and plants that one can find.

Once the papering and painting are done and the stair-carpets are down and the draperies are up, serious attention must be given to the trifles which appear scarcely worth seeing to, but on which depend so much, and which I have spoken about in the beginning of this chapter; for it is of no use to put charming papers on our walls if we leave hideous glass in the doors, or allow our staircase windows to glare at us with strips of yellow, blue, and red glass for edges round a starred centre, in a manner found even in these artistic days in houses where people should presumably know better; and I therefore repeat my advice to my readers to look out for the trifles, and never to rest until all they possess has some beauty to excuse its existence.

Perhaps the most tiresome thing in the orthodox hall is the ordinary long staircase window; but this can be improved at very small cost if a little artistic talent is brought to bear upon it. If it can be afforded in any way the window can be made beautiful by filling it in with cathedral glass in leaded squares,

and about three or four really good medallions in stained glass could be hung about. These can be procured from Mr. Pither, 38 Mortimer Street, Regent Street, W. A wide shelf should be placed at the bottom of the window, and china could be arranged there. On the landing could be placed a tall grandfather clock, in such a way that the face faces the hall, and, if there is room, a big palm in a stand adds much to the effect. This would obviate any necessity for draperies, always rather difficult to keep clean in this exalted situation. If this arrangement is too expensive, a wooden arch should be placed round the top of the window, and the woodwork should taper down each side to the bottom of the window (illustrated in Fig. 3), and a soft silk drapery should be caught up on one side. This is confined by a cord, passed over a nail, which can be loosened by releasing the cord; the curtain then falls over the windows, and either obscures the sunshine or the darkness, according to whether it is lowered at night or day, although I should personally prefer to leave it draped and to hang a lamp up in the arch, which could be lighted at night. Plants or china could be arranged along the ledge, and make a charming picture out of what is usually an intensely ugly spot.

Another great difficulty is the usual London landing half-way up-stairs, where sometimes a couple of chairs are put, on which no one ever sits, flanked by a table no one ever dusts or by a couple of palms everyone forgets to water. Here a really clear brain is required to cope with the difficulties; and I have had a sketch done by a friend of mine, who has made a perfectly charming corner out of this generally hideous spot, which I hope will speak for itself, and shows what can be made out of a similar landing with trouble and a good deal of really artistic feeling. In this same house the second door to the drawing-room, which is never used and only looks frightful to those who come up the stairs and see this door first of all, is turned into a cabinet, where various old-fashioned fans and curiosities

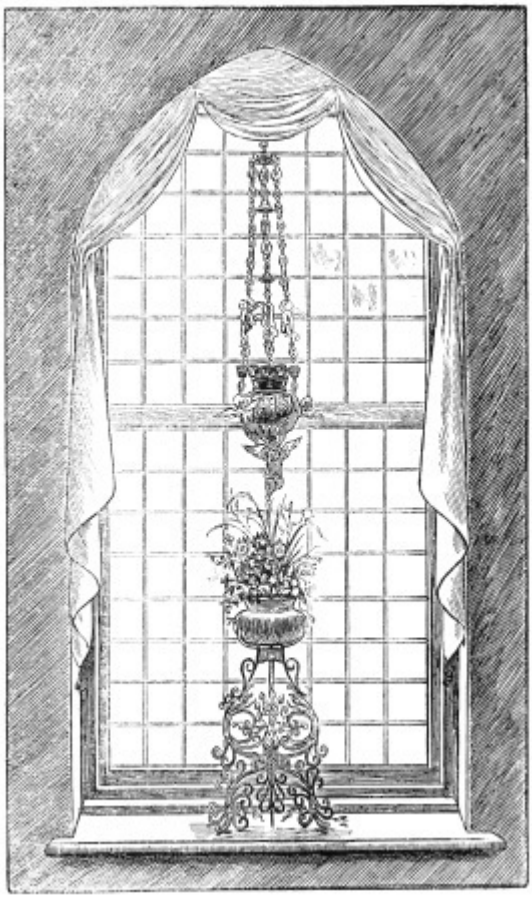


Fig. 3.—Staircase Window.

Fig. 4.—A London Landing.

generally are kept, the sunken space between the wall and the door itself being amply deep enough for this purpose; and as all doors can be made to open into a room, the deep space can always be on the passage side, the flat side being in the room itself and hidden by a straight curtain, or, by a still simpler process, by taking off all the mouldings, handles, &c., and papering straight over the door, just as if it were a portion of the wall itself.

The simple over-doors, sold by so many furniture houses nowadays, should be placed over the doors, in most houses, in the hall, or else pictures should be hung there; and, indeed, one cannot have too many good pictures anywhere. If real paintings and excellent proof engravings are not to be afforded, do let me beg of my readers to indulge themselves in autotypes or photographs from really good pictures. These look specially well in a hall, and naturally do not serve as dust traps, as do far too many of the Japanese ornaments, fans, skins, and trophies of the chase, which are usually considered appropriate to this remarkably dusty and trying situation.

Pictures can be dusted daily; other ornaments require more time and attention, though naturally one would rather have these than nothing, if one cannot afford pictures, in this spot, while the over-doors finish off the hall, and can have the five or six china ornaments, which look well and can be regularly dusted with a long feather brush and duly washed once a week when the hall is entirely turned out.

I most strongly advise the hall to be warmed in some way if it can possibly be managed, and I must own that I never can understand why houses are built year after year without this simple but most important convenience. One need not use a stove because one has it, but it should never be out of one's power to thoroughly warm the house should one wish to do so, and I look forward to a day I have often spoken of, when women shall qualify as architects, and shall turn their hands entirely to domestic architecture. Until then I suppose we must go on grumbling and putting up with grateless halls, cupboardless houses, and rooms where no provision at all has been made for placing a bed or arranging furniture with common sense, to say nothing of artistic grouping, that of course is absolutely impossible in the ordinary square recessless house with which we are now so very liberally provided by the male architect!

But if in any way possible have a grate put into the hall, or else some kind of stove; of course a grate means a chimney, and this is not always forthcoming when wanted, but a grate is much to be preferred; in the first place it can mean a pretty mantel and over-mantel, and cheerful blazes in winter, and pretty flowers in summer; and in the second, the warmth it gives is separable from the fumes and stuffy feeling that one always finds with a stove, no matter how good it is. Then, too, a stove is hideous, it can't help being so, and it is frankly frightful; still, if warmth cannot be got into a hall in any other way, a stove must be used, and I think the one sold by Mr. Pither in Mortimer Street, the 'Eclipse,' is as good as any; it burns a long time without any attention, and costs very little indeed—I think something like twopence for the twelve hours.

The reason why I impress upon my readers the necessity of a stove is that I cannot believe but that we should be saved an

immense amount of illness were we yet more particular about an equal temperature than we are. As a rule our rooms are fairly warm, but in the winter our passages are like ice, they cannot help being so; windows must be opened and the outer doors cannot be kept hermetically sealed, and the moment we leave our fireside or the rooms where we have fires, we get a sudden chill which cannot fail to try us terribly, even if it results in nothing worse; besides which a fearful cold draught comes into our sitting-room the moment the doors are open, and we shiver and throw on more coal—coal that we should not require were the hall warmed as it ought to have been, and which would allow us to even leave our sitting-room door open should we desire to do so. Now our first exclamation to an incoming friend is: ‘Oh, please shut the door!’ and we dismiss him or her with the same pleasing but necessary injunction.

I was delighted to see in one of the papers the other day that there had been a most remarkable diminution in that fatal scourge of our ancestresses—consumption; for I am certain this is entirely due to the fact that we are far more sensible about our clothing, and much more lavish about firing, than our fathers used to be; and I feel convinced, were we to have still more fires, and were we to taboo low

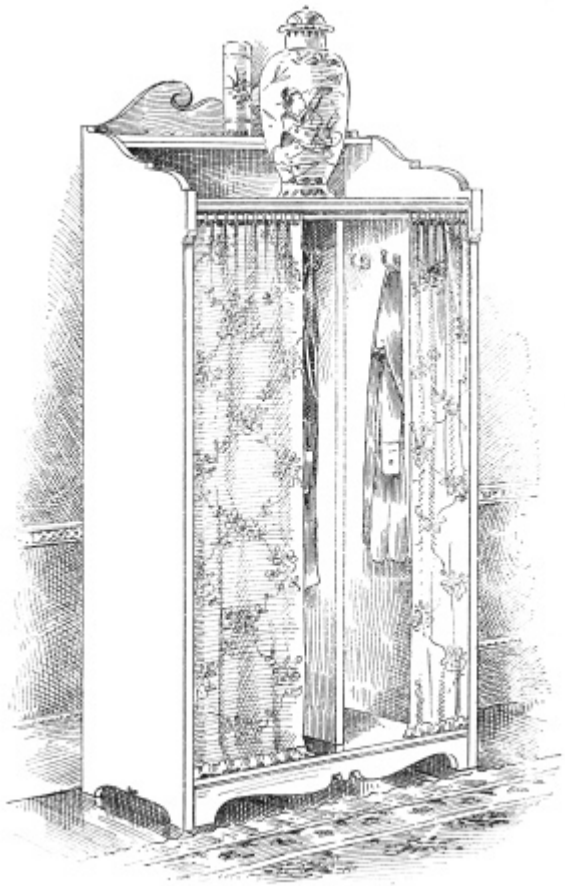


Fig. 5.—Hall Wardrobe (No. 1).

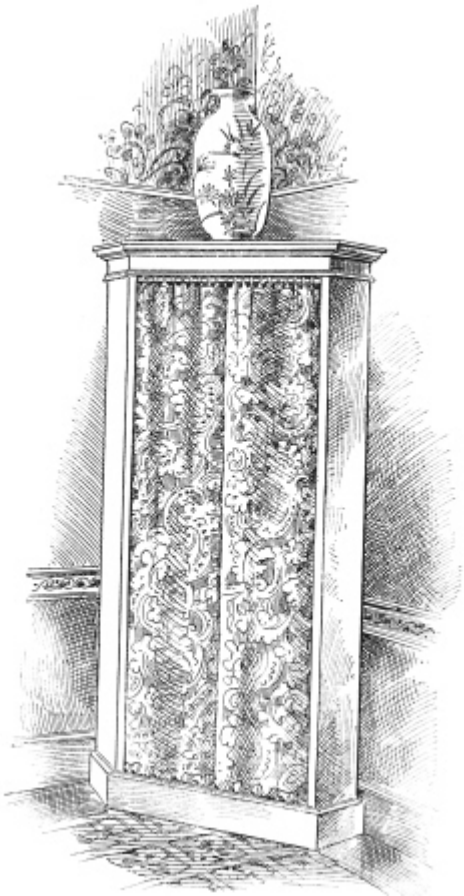


Fig. 6.—Hall Wardrobe (No. 2).

dresses entirely, consumption would soon be a thing of the past. Therefore I cannot, I feel, say too much about the necessity for a stove or fire in the hall, which is certainly neither complete nor sensible without this most necessary piece of furniture; but I suppose we must await our lady architect before these are universal, or before we get a really perfect house, from a woman's point of view at least. The furniture of the hall must depend entirely on its length and breadth, but once more I beg my readers not to allow of anything approaching the appearance of the ordinary ugly hat stand there; if Edwin will not remove his hideous hats and very ugly coats upstairs, Angelina must conciliate him by having one of the hall wardrobes illustrated here. The first one could go into a corner behind the door, and could be painted to match the decorations, or else could be of either American walnut or oak; the curtains could be of serge worked over in a decorative design in coarse crewels, or else of some pretty tapestry. Complete in art colours with serge curtains it costs 3*l.* 3*s.*, in walnut 4*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.*; the straight one costs 5*l.* 15*s.* in art

colours, and 6*l.* 6*s.* in walnut; but for the impecunious, and, alas! there are many among us, a V-shaped piece of wood could be put into the corner and screwed there with a straight piece to make a front, from which the curtain should hang down straight; behind this a V-shaped shelf could be placed for hats, and some hooks could be screwed on the wall for coats; but if in any way possible the real thing should be bought—it could be moved to any other house and would last a life-time. These designs are made by Wallace of the Curtain Road, where these capital hall wardrobes are to be had, and which will, I trust, strike a death-blow to the old-fashioned stands, which were as ugly as they were temptations to the ordinary area-sneak to come in and help himself to any coat or hat he takes a fancy to. Instead of the ordinary hall table I again suggest the buffet, illustrated on page 28; nothing looks better, and if a carriage is kept the oak chest, which can be opened like a cupboard, could hold the rugs, while the top could be ornamented with china and hold a big Imari bowl for cards, and a smaller one for the cards left during the afternoon or letters sent by post; a couple of chairs and the high-backed settle spoken of before would be ample for any ordinary hall, where there should be, furthermore, a good mat at the front door, but no small mats in each doorway or dreadful woolly mats about, things which are quite unnecessary and are as ugly as they are tiresome.

It is absolutely necessary that, whether artistic or not, the hall should be scrupulously tidy and as scrupulously clean; and I do not know a more difficult thing than to insist on the former of these two axioms, and to see one's orders are carried out, especially when there are boys and dogs—those two fatal elements to tidiness and cleanliness, but which are absolutely necessary to the making of a complete house. One may go out leaving a spotless place, with no *débris* to offend the eye, but one returns to find it scattered over with hats and caps, tennis rackets, bats and stumps, paw and footmarks, and a general air of distracting dirt all over, that is absolutely trying to the eye, that fondly hopes to see what it left; and the only way to cope with the human element is to make a species of pound, into which all is put, and from whence nothing can be extracted without the payment of some small fine. I have known a

week's pocket money go in one morning, but, as a rule, very few lessons are required; the unfailing exactment of a fine teaching even a boy that there is a place for everything and that everything must be put in that place. The dogs and footmarks have to be put up with, and I have known an unhappy kitchenmaid wash the front doorsteps five single times in one day, when the boys have been at home, and rain has, as is usual in Watford, been falling dismally. A back staircase is another thing no house should be built without. This spares the hall immensely, and saves the best stair-carpet, and prevents one meeting the servants as one goes up and down—a thing I personally very much object to. I don't know why, but I resent hearing them go up to bed past the drawing-room door, and owe our present house yet another grudge, because, for the first time in our lives, we have here no second staircase. If there should be one, I again advise the oilcloth dado spoken of in my former book; nothing is so absolutely indestructible, or so clean, and with this dado a wall would remain tidy and spotless for an entire lifetime. A strong cocoanut matting should be put down on the stairs themselves, but the edges of the stairs should be carefully inspected, as back stairs, especially, are apt to be very roughly finished off; if this is the case, a carpenter should be called in, either to plane them smoothly, or mend them, or a wide, broad piece of brass should bind the edges; these, again, should have a pad of flock in a thin lining laid along them, finally covered with the cocoanut matting. These small precautions will not cost very much, but will certainly add immensely to the chances of the longevity of the carpets. It would be a good thing to have the 'treads' of the back stairs grained and varnished; but those in the principal staircase should always be painted white with Aspinall's water-paint. This gives an indescribably clean and fresh look to the stairs, and the paint is so easily applied that the housemaid could do it herself yearly, or whenever an opportunity offers to re-paint the treads. Housekeepers should, in my opinion, raise a statue to Aspinall, for he certainly has removed the difficulties that lay in wait for the would-be artistic mistress of the household; for now she is rendered quite independent of the British workman, and can either paint her house herself, or give it to a man who can be trusted to

apply the paint, albeit no amount of instruction will teach him to match a colour or produce anything save a hideous caricature of the paper we give him, and whose ‘heye’ is absolutely incapable of seeing what a ridiculous muddle he is making; and I, therefore, cannot too often impress upon my readers, especially on those who live far from really artistic workpeople, that if they want their houses to be really nice, they must indulge in Aspinall, and must insist on the unbroken, unpicked-out surface of paint that use of this most invaluable enamel produces most satisfactorily.

CHAPTER III.

NOOKS AND CORNERS.

I THINK so very much of the appearance of our rooms depends on how we arrange our corners that I have had two large drawings made from corners in my present house, which, at the risk of appearing egotistical, I am going to write about; not because I consider them perfect—no house can really be perfect unless far more money is spent upon it than I am able to spend—but because I consider they will in some measure assist those who, like myself, are very fond of pretty and comfortable things, but are not prepared to ruin themselves in order to obtain this most desirable combination. I wrote so fully in my former book on the arrangement of sitting-rooms that I am only going to touch lightly on the orthodox papering and painting of dining-, drawing-, and morning-rooms, reserving all my new ideas for the billiard-room and library, neither of which rooms were considered likely to be required for the modest young couple starting in life, for whom I more particularly designed that special volume.

As I said before, this book is intended for older folks, or for those who have more of this world's goods than Edwin and Angelina were supposed to possess; and, therefore, it really supplements—it does not in any measure do away with —'From Kitchen to Garret;' and as I am most anxious to impress this upon my readers by not repeating any of the information I gave there, I intend especially in the present chapter to denote how, with a little care, the modest house can be expanded into a more artistic abode, or how a bigger house can be furnished, the while we do not set on one side the furniture with which we began life, and which we possessed ourselves of with so much gladness and with such a sense of importance—at least, I hope all my readers did, for the culture of home and of all that makes a home cannot, in my opinion, be too much developed. Therefore, from their earliest days children should be encouraged to think about their own special rooms, and should be taught to notice and have a voice in the

arrangement of all the house. If the house is thoroughly appreciated and cultivated, if, above all, it is the prettiest and happiest place our children know of, we shall not have much difficulty with them when they cease to be children and begin to feel they have a separate existence to ours. They have this separate existence, and we should endeavour that, without in any measure relaxing the ties of duty and politeness, they should be able to feel they are themselves and not our bond-slaves; and this can only be done by consulting and talking with them freely about all we have and do, letting them, if they will, develop their own tastes gradually, but not in a manner that will oust us from our proper place or jar with any of our own pet ideas on the subject of home and its decoration and embellishment; for it is better to endure the ugliest place in the world cheerfully than to live in artistic completeness, if this same artistic completeness means sweeping away all the landmarks of our elders and betters, and leaving them stranded in an unfamiliar world of new tables and chairs, which are nothing to them, and but ill replace the furniture which reminds them of so much that we never knew about or have entirely forgotten. I have known a girl in her zeal for beauty make her mother so abjectly miserable by removing a round table, once the centre of the scattered houseful of boys and girls, and by ruthlessly disposing of clumsy and hideous furniture, made precious by memories of those who have gone into the land of shadows, that I am compelled at times to allow sentiment to sway me and to say, Consider first whether a thing has associations before, in one's anxiety for beauty, one does away with it. If it have, let it remain, for nothing can ever replace it; but if it have not (and I sternly myself refuse to become sentimental over a chair or footstool), by all means get rid of it, and replace it with something lighter and more modern. As a rule, this will not last long enough for us to cling round it mentally or to deck it with any of the finer sentiment that is inseparable from much of the heavy mahogany and walnut under which so many of my disciples still groan, and which has been handed down from one generation to another, each generation becoming more and more discontented with it, until the present are in open revolt against that which gave our

grandmothers and great-grandmothers the greatest possible gratification to possess.

The pretty corners in which we all delight, and the lightness and brightness that now characterise our houses, would have been the source of endless woe and trouble to the dear ladies of old. The corners would have meant dust and ‘gimcracks,’ and as the light colours in which we revel would and do soon become soiled, they, too, would have been deprecated because they showed the dirt, which was present equally in the darker rooms, but not being visible was not taken any notice of until the annual clean, when all was made aggressively shining and absolutely spotless, remaining so for about a week, when dust began to gather again, but it was unnoticed because the dark materials did not show the dirt, which, however, could be felt, did our finger come in contact with the rough moreen or dismal repps in which their souls delighted, and of which specimens still haunt us in the houses of those who are possessors of similar heirlooms with which they dare not part.

Then, too, the dear ladies were so fond of stuffing up their windows and darkening their rooms still more by the drawing down of blinds and the eliminating of every morsel of sunshine, for fear their precious carpets would become faded; and I am sorry to say that this affection for half-dark rooms yet lingers among many who ought to know better. But when I stumble into one of these rooms, where one cannonades against the furniture and falls over footstools in the half-light, I always feel convinced that the blinds are drawn to prevent the sun beating too warmly on the faded complexion of the owner of that house, or to hide the ravages of time, that the liberally applied pearl-powder and rouge and the sticky harsh dye are powerless to remove entirely, but that almost disappear in the rose-tinted chambers I so abhor and despise; and I therefore know what to expect when I am ushered into one of these stuffy, dismal rooms, and am thankful when I get out of it; for the mind that can delight in defying age with paint and dye is not likely to find me of the smallest use. I should say at once, Do away with the blinds and shorten the curtains, and let in some air; and as the owner of that house would sooner dye—I mean die—than accede to my request, I have nothing to say to her, and get away as soon as I can. Any amount of decoration

for the house I like and appreciate, but I cannot appreciate or understand the ambition that makes one Aspinall one's face and pretend to be five-and-twenty when one knows one will never see forty again.

Corners are especially appreciated, unfortunately, by the ladies who draw their blinds down and never face the eye of day save in a carriage, with a spotted veil over their features and a shading parasol, and no doubt some of these individuals will look at the pictures in this book and may see these words of wisdom; if they do, I hope they will consider them, wash their faces, and pull up their blinds. I can assure them they will be far happier and healthier, more especially if they realise that the time they spend in tiring their heads and painting their faces is absolutely wasted—it neither makes them younger nor more ornamental—and that it would be far better employed in working for others, or in making their homes as cheerful as unfailing sunshine and fresh air invariably do. Therefore, down with the curtains and up with the blinds, and let us have as much cheerful sunshine as this rather disappointing climate will allow us to possess, and the first corner I would make is the summer corner, for, that once made, dismal darkness and stuffiness would be an impossibility.

The special corner illustrated here is one of the windows in my present morning-room, which is at the end of the room, in a curious species of square nook to itself; there is an enormous species of bow-window beside, where I have my desk and other belongings, and beyond that again is a third window, below which I have a long book-case full of books; but though this window is to some extent unique, the seat illustrated here, which is an adaptation or rather an enlargement of Giles' 'Cosy Corner,' could be put under any window and of course enlarged immensely; if desired, it could go across one side of the room, and the arm with a curtain could come out straight from the wall of the room, thus making a sheltered place in which to sit and read; and breaking up admirably the long straight look of the wall, which all too often makes an ordinary room the most uninteresting place in the world, and the most difficult to render artistic and pleasant. The right-hand side of the seat should be at least two feet longer than the left-hand side, or else the seat will look too much like a family pew,

which cognomen one of my friends is rude enough to give to my present seat, but arranged with the ends of an uneven length, the seat looks like nothing save what it is—a remarkably comfortable lounge, where one can either sit and read or talk, and it forms an extremely pretty addition to any room.

The special seat illustrated here is enamelled Aspinall's electric turquoise, and is upholstered in Colbourne's yellow and white Louis XVI. damask, at 2*s.* 11½*d.* a yard, but I intend soon to replace this covering by dark yellow stamped

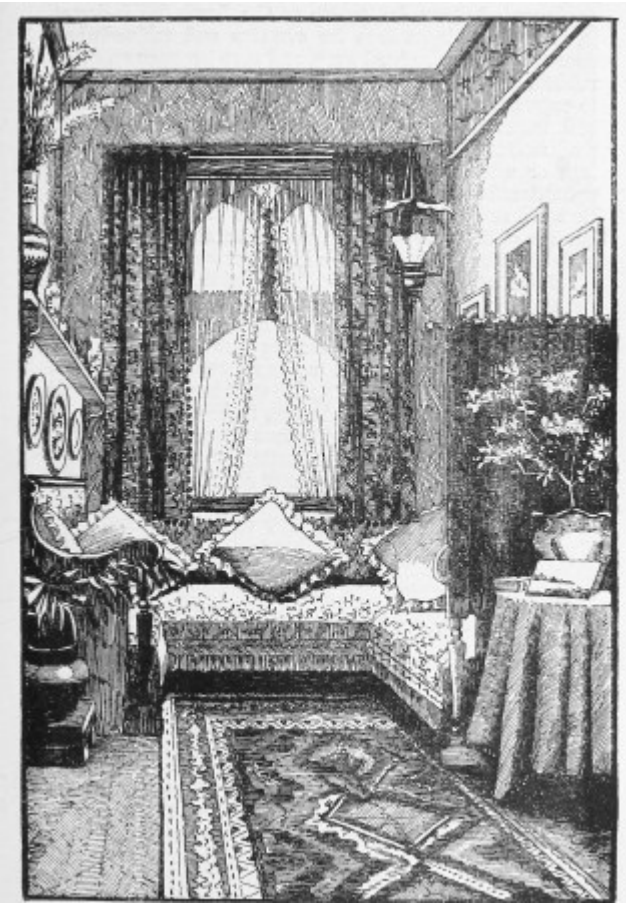


Fig. 7.—A Summer Corner.

corduroy velveteen, for, pretty as the Louis XVI. damask is, and admirable as it is for curtains and table-cloths, it does not answer for hard wear, and soon becomes soiled and rubbed, a fact Giles warned me about; but I was anxious to experiment myself on the subject; and having done so, and found it does not answer, here solemnly warn my readers from using this charming material for tight coverings or where real hard wear is expected of it. Tightly upholstered furniture should be

always covered in something that will really wear, not only because of the expense, but because of the worry of having workmen always in the house replacing the furniture which has become soiled and worn.

But whatever the seat is upholstered in, the fringe round the seat should not be forgotten, and it should almost touch the ground; mine does not, and in consequence the seat always has the appearance of having grown out of its frocks; and the material should be in some measure a contrast to the colour used for enamelling the ends and woodwork; indeed, I much prefer the ends, &c., to be of some polished wood, while the straight piece above the seat and below the shelf could be either plainly painted or polished wood, or else it could be made of brocade or Japanese leather paper. Mr. Giles puts Lincrusta in those he sells to fit into recesses, but I cannot endure this stiff and very ugly material, and always ask him to replace it for me with something preferable, the excellent Japanese leather looking better, in my opinion, than anything else. The straight piece above the seat, if covered in brocade and furnished with tiny hooks, would make an admirable place to display the miniatures and odds and ends of silver that are so fashionable; really old and valuable fans could also be displayed here to advantage, and a thin sheet of talc could be stretched over all. Glass would be too heavy, and the talc would protect the fans, &c., from dust, and yet be sufficiently transparent.

The shelf for china is part of the seat: this is of wood, either enamelled or polished, and should be carefully arranged; the tall jar containing grasses at the end of the shelf in the sketch is really in the corner in my room, and fills up the space between the curtain and the wall, and in the opposite corner from the frieze-rail hangs one of Benson’s admirable copper lamps with a copper shade; this throws the light down on the seat, and enables one to read there, should one wish to do so, the cushioned corner below the lamp being perhaps the most comfortable spot in the whole seat. Just on the other side of the arms, and below the top of them, I had small tea-cup shelves put; they shut down completely, and when not in use are scarcely visible, but they make a great deal of difference to one’s comfort; for one can rest one’s cup there easily, and in

consequence this corner makes a favourite spot during the ceremony of afternoon tea, which we always hold in the morning-room, our present drawing-room being only used when lighted up, as it is dark and depressing, because of the numerous trees by which we are surrounded, and that make it unbearable until the lamps are lighted and the yellow and white decoration stands out in the admirable manner in which these two colours always do when once artificial light falls upon them.

The big pillows are in yellow, deep-red, and electric turquoise, and were bought at Maple's for 16*s.* 11*d.* each; but those who really possess numerous pillows, soft and comfortable enough to lean against, but hideous to contemplate, will be glad to hear that Maple sells these frilled silk covers ready to slip on, which would transform in a moment the most frightful pillow ever presented to an unfortunate bride, who yet dare not do away with the kind gift of a relative who may be has not gone with the times or holds the stern opinion that a gift one makes oneself is worth any amount of presents bought in a shop: so it is, if the work be present day work, and really artistic; but the beaded cushion or (the worst development of all) that covered with crazy patchwork, still exists unfortunately, and may exist, blamelessly and usefully, if slipped into one of these covers, which can be whipped off in a moment, should the donor appear unexpectedly, or be even pointed out as our pious endeavour to preserve the 'beautiful' work by a cover one does not mind if one spoils: an excellently plausible excuse that spares the feelings of the maker and our own sensitive optics at the same time.

The curtain on my seat is hanging on a brass rod, and is made from a remarkably beautiful pattern of yellow and brown stamped velveteen known as the Graham velveteen, and sold by Graham & Biddle; both sides of the curtain are alike, as I have doubled the material, and I am very fond of this special bit of colour and design; but if the velveteen is objected to, the curtain can be made from the soft artistic silk Shoolbred sells at 2*s.* a yard; this must be double too, and put on very full, or else it will soon become skimpy and flabby. The table at the end of the seat has a loose cover of dark-red Bokhara plush, a

capital species of ribbed plush edged with ball fringe; this costs 6*s.* 11½*d.* a yard from Colbourne, and it takes a yard and a quarter to make the square, which is necessary for one of these cloths; a big yellow pot holding a palm stands on the table, the palm giving place whenever possible to a flowering plant, a great white azalea, and a big white rose tree, and also an orange tree with flowers and fruit, and a flowering daphne having all appeared there to the greatest possible advantage. Beyond the curtain, at the extreme end of the seat, I hang a long Japanese bamboo, and have flowers here whenever possible. These bamboos are most decorative, and look nice with comparatively few flowers in them.

On the other side of the seat, at the end, a palm stands on the low, square, velvet-covered stools I prefer to anything else for pot stands; and at the extreme end I always have one of Mrs. M‘Clelland’s admirable newspaper and magazine stands; these are the right height for use and stand on two crossed legs; one side takes papers and the other magazines; a paper-knife is slipped into a bracket at the side, and altogether the stand is a wonderful comfort, and above all makes an excellent present for a man—that most difficult of all creatures to give a present to, unless one half ruin oneself in order to make him an offering.

The walls of this special room are covered with Mr. Smee’s admirable blue paper at 4*s.* the piece, all the paint is Aspinall’s electric-turquoise enamel, the frieze is plain gold Japanese leather paper, and the ceiling is in squares; the moulding that forms each square is coloured cream, and the squares themselves are filled in with a well-designed yellow and white ceiling paper from Mr. Smee’s at 3*s.* a piece; the floor is covered with yellow and white matting, and has several rugs lying about, and the curtains are Louis XVI. tapestry, in yellow and white, edged with the usual ball fringe—the smaller windows having this only, the larger one having ‘guipure vitrage’ on it as well. The frieze has been embellished most successfully in three or four places with great branches of Japanese-looking japonica in the natural colours; and this is an immense improvement, as one requires touches of red undoubtedly about the room. The branches do not go all round the room in the orthodox manner, but are scattered in three or

four places, and are the work of an artist. A good effect can be obtained by merely outlining with a careful brush the patterns that are on all Japanese leather papers with a little ‘Scinde red.’ Of course this must not be done all over the frieze, but simply here and there, and should be executed with taste, and a great amount of common sense as well.

Before I say any more about this room, or about the other corner which has been arranged for winter use, I want to draw the attention of my readers especially to the windows. My plan of doing away with blinds was illustrated as regards a bow window, and the tiny squares of the manor house windows before, but no one has ever seemed able to grasp the manner in which an ordinary flat window or a French window can be managed. This window is the ordinary flat window; and can anything be simpler than the white curtains of ‘guipure vitrage’ stretched on two slight rods fastened on the window *frame, not on the sash*? These curtains remain in place, whether the window is open or shut, and, in consequence, were they used in a bedroom, one could dress comfortably with the window open, the curtains remaining in place and serving as a blind. With the ordinary short blind, which vulgarises any house, and to which English house-mothers cling with a devotion worthy of a better cause, one must keep the windows closed during the process of dressing, as the blind goes up with the window, and leaves the room exposed to the glances of anyone who may be passing by. The thicker curtains hang from a separate brass rod, which is rather larger than those used for the muslin. These curtains are attached to rings which allow them to be drawn easily along the rods at night, and when the sun shines too warmly and brightly, and, therefore, no hideously ugly blinds are required; for even ladies whose dubious complexions forbid the free entrance of the blessed sun can make their rooms as dark as they like by drawing these curtains, which can be lined with a thick sateen, and should be edged with a ball fringe, to break the hard line which always spoils the look of any curtain when left untrimmed. ‘Guipure vitrage,’ which is to be had from Wallace, from 10¾*d.* a yard, makes admirable under curtains. Of course it is much dearer than Kay’s butter muslin, or his easily-draped Indian muslin at 2¾*d.* a yard. But then these muslins require making up, and

must be edged with softly falling frills, which should be from 3 to 5 inches in width, according to the size of the window. These frills are put on without any heading, and fall in a sort of cascade. The frilled muslins sold now by the yard at any big shop are not nearly so satisfactory, as the frills are goffered, and are very stiff. Making the frilled curtains is a serious consideration: they must be done by hand, as the muslin will not stand the machine, and the hemming required is rather hard work, and therefore 'guipure vitrage,' despite its price, should recommend itself to those who are not given to sewing. It merely requires hemming top and bottom, and the rods pass through these hems, which should be loose enough to allow of the curtain being moved to cover the window entirely, should this be necessary, or to part in the centre, so that any view there may be need not be obscured.

In the ordinary London house, where all sorts of endeavours are made to completely hide the doings of the inhabitants of the rooms from the passers-by, these curtains, especially in the Indian muslin from Kay's, are invaluable. No one can see in, and all can see out, while further protection could be obtained by flower boxes along the window-ledges in the summer, and put inside the rooms in the winter, if desired. A couple of iron brackets could be put out, one each side of the window, Aspinalled to match the rest of the paint, and on this the box could rest, full of flowering plants, when the weather outside would be too cold for them to live and flourish. The whole of the house should be done alike with the curtains, of which a double set should be made. The 'guipure vitrage' must not be very much starched, and it must be carefully pulled out and stretched before it is quite dry, or else it will seem to have shrunk; but with care and proper washing these curtains would last three or four years, and, as there is no real trouble in making, should soon be the favourite material for these short curtains. The cost would be about 4*s.* a window, so that it would be easy for anyone to see what their house would cost them. Naturally the other muslin would come only to about 1*s.* a window; in this case the sewing must be done by the owner of the house or her maids.

I think from this sketch anyone can see how the ordinary blindless window is managed; while the way to arrange a

French window is shown in the frontispiece so plainly that no further description can possibly be needed.

And now we come to the winter corner, the sketch of which requires very little comment from me, as I think it speaks for itself; but my readers may be interested to know that the sofa illustrated here began life as a wretched stiff sofa with a scroll end, and no side whatever, and was bought very cheaply of a country tradesman. When I wanted to make a comfortable seat by the fire, I got another local genius to put the scroll end upright, and to put on the side. This transformed the seat at once, and made a most comfortable lounge, more especially as I had the legs cut down, until it is only fourteen inches high, the seat being about twenty-four inches wide. This is a seat *pur et simple*; but by putting a couple of pillows on the end of the sofa nearest the wall and stuffing them comfortably down there, one makes an excellent rest for one's head, and can lie there in warmth and peace. This corner, by the way, is a special favourite of Max, the tabby cat, who much resents being moved therefrom, and retreats in great dudgeon to a chair from Liberty, which stands the other side of the fireplace, which is only just indicated in the sketch, and which is a charming but simple design, from Shuffery in Welbeck Street.

Behind the sofa stands the corner cabinet made for me by Mr. Smee, and which is just what such a cabinet ought to be. I have seen a corner cabinet which looked as if its middle had suddenly collapsed, the two sides going into a miserable point, which was as ugly as it was unsatisfactory, and I could not think what was the matter with it, until I discovered that the point ought to have been behind, and that the front should be comparatively straight, as in our illustration. This cabinet is enamelled electric

Fig. 8.—A Winter Corner.

turquoise, and has brass handles to the drawers and cupboard, which are made for use, and hold an immense variety of things. The drawers are divided in half inside, which is a great convenience, as it enables one to keep papers and properties of all sorts and conditions separate and distinct; while the cupboard also has a shelf in it, and is the whole length and width of the bottom part, thus holding a good deal. The two little velveteen curtains are to break the monotony which would have been caused had the shelves been left open; and the top and shelves generally hold any quantity of china—the dull yellow and blue jars one buys at Gorringe's being especially suitable for this room; as is the deep red Kaga and Imari ware imported in such quantities by Shoolbred, Liberty, and Whiteley, and indeed by almost every second shop nowadays.

The table shown in this illustration is one that is remarkably useful by reason of its second tray. My own table is covered in dull yellow corduroy velveteen, edged with a ball fringe; but if

room were a great object, and there were much to store away, a loose table-cloth, in serge or Bokhara plush, could be thrown over it to conceal anything that was hidden thereunder. I am not fond of these makeshifts myself; but in a small room, where every single inch is of consequence, work that would be perhaps unsightly to leave about can be neatly folded and put on this tray; and another place to put away could be afforded, if we replaced my fireside sofa (which Wallace will supply at 5*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* complete) by a sofa I saw at Hampton's just lately. This is an improvement on the very useful box-ottomans I advocate in many bedrooms, and is much like a sofa with a tolerably high side and two ends; the top of the sofa lifts up, and discloses a good deep box, which would hold an immense quantity of things; while the whole affair does not look like a box-ottoman, but resembles a very comfortable and pretty sofa; this costs about 7*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*, and would be of immense use in a room where one had a great deal to put away, and very few convenient places to store one's property in. This would stand where my sofa is in the sketch, or could be put in a recess one side of the fire; it would look well in either situation. I think this corner, too, gives some idea of how pictures can be hung about in an informal manner; although in every case these are represented in the sketch as being much higher than they really are; there is no formal arrangement, yet all seems to fall into place without trouble, and the whole effect is very good; flowers and plants are again to be found here, and indeed I cannot say too much about the desirability of filling our rooms with both plants and flowers. No house can be pretty without a great many of both; and no one who has not seen the immense difference plenty of plants make can have any idea of the satisfactory effect of these great adjuncts to the real decoration of a house. They cost money, but not one quarter of what they used to; and even in the depth of winter in London one can buy heaps of narcissus and jonquils absurdly cheaply, a shillingsworth making an appreciable difference in any house!

Beyond the chair just indicated in the sketch is a species of square arch, and beyond that a square end to the room itself; I did not at first see what I could do with this most ugly part of an ugly room, but at last the brilliant idea struck me, of which I

give a tiny sketch here. I had a series of brackets put up the arch to hold china; the back of these brackets and the panelling above the arch itself was filled in with red and gold Japanese leather paper, and on each bracket I placed one of Elliott's pots; the sides of the brackets were painted by Mr. M'Clelland's clever brush with red, yellow, and pink roses, and I at once found myself in possession of a charming object for contemplation, instead of a yawning gap, preposterous in structure and hideous to look at. By the left-hand side of the arch I place a beautifully embroidered Japanese silk screen in the most delicate shade of pink; I can dwell lovingly on this, as it was not my own selection, but was a Christmas present from someone who knew and studied my tastes, and it gives just the right finish to that corner; behind the last bracket stands a palm in an art-pot, and another little table with a blue cloth is in front of the screen, and completes that side of the room.

Below the last window is the long low book-case mentioned before; it is only about three feet high, and is enamelled electric turquoise like the rest of the room, and each shelf is edged with a frill of yellow printed linen; the top of these shelves makes an excellent rest for photographs, china, and plants, and is thus finished; had the book-case not been placed there I cannot think what I should have done, as no one can sit in that part of the room, which really is a tiny ante-room, or entrance merely, to what is not at the best a large room, but which would have been all the better had the eccentric designer done away with his arch and put all the space at his command into the room itself; but he did not, and so I have made the best use I can of the room as it is, though I really believe in so doing I have shortened my life perceptibly!

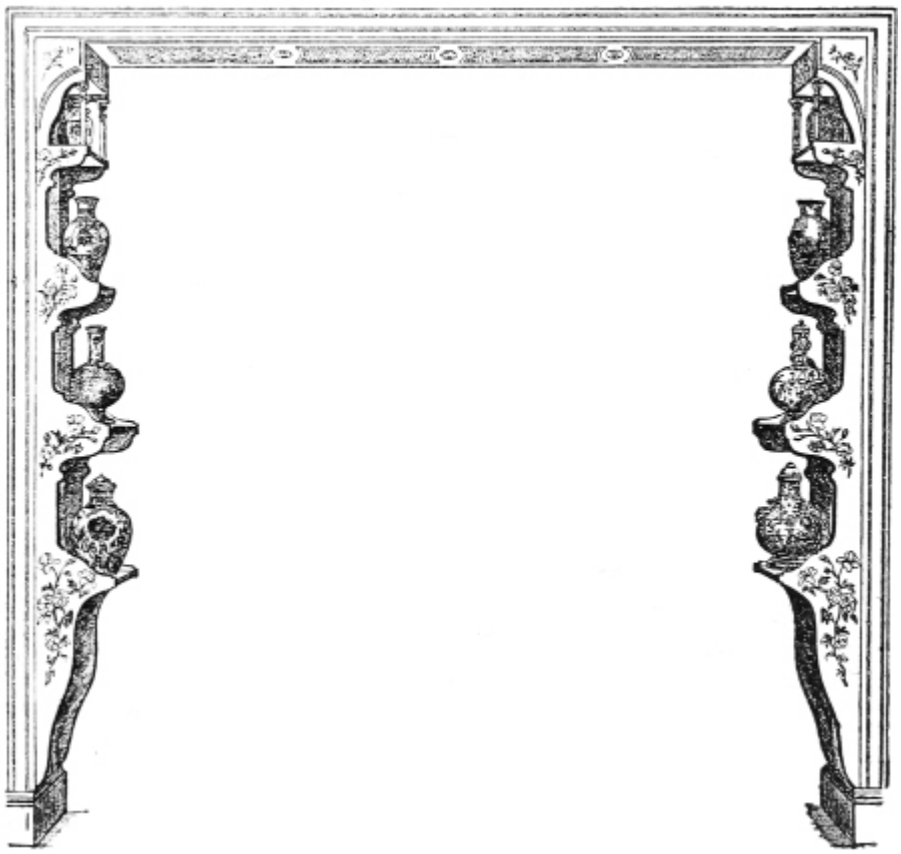


Fig. 9.—Arches for a Double Room.

At the end of the room, opposite the window under which the book-case is, is a door—and such a door! when we came it was grained maple, and was the centre of a wooden partition, above which was a neat fanlight of starred glass. I shall never forget it—never! I have now put on each side of the door a curtain of Wallace's 'daisy brocade,' and another on the door itself on one of Maple's rods, which open and shut with the door. Above this there is a shelf to hold china, and the glass is replaced by leaded squares of cathedral glass. I mention all these details to show what a difference a small amount of common sense, a little woodwork, and a little money will make; indeed, in these days of artistic merit, when upholsterers are educated gentlemen, and the shop is no longer a badge of infamy, I think no one who is not utterly obstinate and tasteless need have an ugly house; though I must confess I still have to grieve over the many absolutely hideous houses in the land arranged by those who are not tasteless—I wish they were: then one could do something with them—but are so permeated by vile and vulgar tastes of their own that they will not be taught, and continue to offend our eyes with their belongings,

regardless of the fact that in these days it is really easier to have pretty things than to have ugly ones. Before I pass on to other nooks and corners which can be made, I should like once more to impress upon my readers that for a morning-room nothing is so absolutely successful as regards decoration as this arrangement of greeny-blue, yellow and red. I have sat in it and contemplated it for just seven years, and I am more and more convinced that nothing else is so entirely satisfactory in every way; naturally we need not adhere to Mr. Smee's 4*s.* paper, or there would be too much monotony about it. Marigold 81 at 5*s.* 6*d.* from Morris is just as beautiful, while Pither's less expensive 'blossom,' 'berry,' and bay-tree papers, which average 1*s.* 6*d.* a piece, can all be used according to the size and shape of the room. And once more I should say most emphatically, Study your room; a dark dull room could not take this scheme of blue, and were such a chamber taken for the morning-room, which I hope and trust would not be the case, I should advocate another scheme of colouring altogether, and would suggest either a really beautiful pink and green floral paper called 'Amaryllis' at 10*s.* 6*d.* the piece from Wallace, or else Haines's 'rose' paper at 3*s.* 9*d.* With either, I should suggest warm ivory paint, a pink and cream ceiling paper, and either cretonne curtains, in a cretonne to harmonise with the paper, or else of soft green Liberty silk, the greens procurable there being the greens to harmonise with pink, Liberty pink and green commingled making a most charming room, but one that should not be attempted cheaply. Green and pink must be in expensive materials to procure the proper shades, a common green and an inferior pink being about the most terrible colours one can have, although a common blue runs it very hard, as sporting individuals would say. A green carpet—either the green 'lily,' that always satisfactory, inexpensive carpet from Wallace, sold in blues, greens, and reds, at 3*s.* 11*d.* a yard, wide width, or else a dull green pile carpet from Pither's—should be used in a room decorated in this manner, but the green must be an artistic green, and have no fidgety pattern to distract the eye or attract attention to what we should never see, unless our attention were really called to it.

If the morning-room were in the country, were a very hot room, and only used in summer, it would look very charming in sea-green and white. Morris has a beautiful sea-green paper at 3*s.* 6*d.*; and Chappell & Payne have a very pretty sea-green and white-chrysanthemum paper at a little under 2*s.*, the same colour, which could be used were Morris too expensive. Either sea-green or ivory paint could be used. There could be a hand-painted frieze on sea-green 'tectorium,' of white lilac and the graceful white broom and their own foliage, and a pale sea-green cretonne should be chosen, with bunches of white lilac on. The floor should be covered with sea-green matting and rugs, which would bring a little colour into the room, and the furniture should be sea-green enamel upholstered in the cretonne. In the pink and green room, by the way, the furniture should be malachite green-stained, to be had from Wallace, and the muslin next the window should be Helbronner's pink and green lily muslin. This is expensive, but it is by far the prettiest muslin for such a room that could be found. I think low basket-chairs are still the best chairs for a morning-room, but, if they can be afforded, one or two higher chairs should be provided. I find Shoolbred's corduroy velveteen the best thing possible to cover basket-chairs with, unless one has a maid who is clever enough to unpick the cretonne covers and wash and replace them; then nothing is as nice as cretonne, and this same material, in some appropriate shade, would do for the

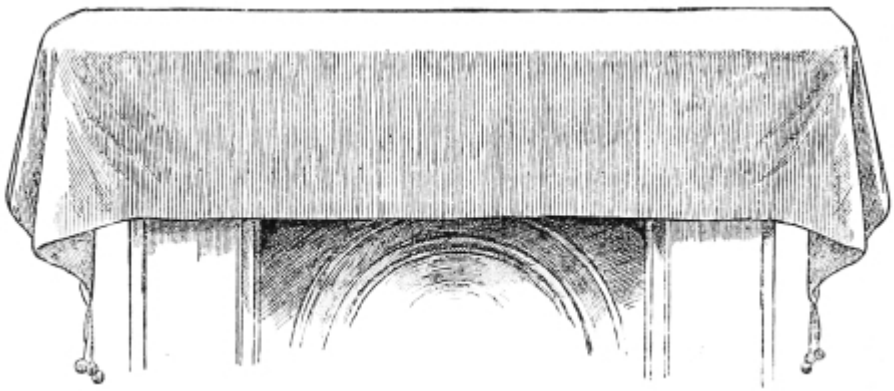


Fig. 10.—Simple Mantel Draping.

larger chairs. The cost of these must depend on the money we have to spend, but a good chair with comfortable springs costs from 5*l.* to 8*l.*, and, if the money can be managed, I should advise as much as this being given; it will be cheaper in the

long run. I think the most difficult matter of all to explain by mere words is the arrangement of a fireplace which is already supplied with one of the 'handsome statuary' marble mantel-pieces, which are so much admired by builders and folks who cannot help being impressed with the idea that marble mantel-pieces and a claim to gentility go hand in hand, and I am always imploring people not to drape these imitations with elaborate flutings and flounces of muslin and general awfulnesses. If the morning-room—or, indeed, any other room—is burdened with one of these mantel-pieces, paint it boldly with Aspinall (the paint can always be removed either with Carson's 'detergent' or else by the 'Eclipse Paint Remover'). See that it matches the rest of the paint in the room; then place along it the simple drapery I have illustrated here. This is quite sufficient. It hides a good piece of the underpart of the structure, and as it can be shaken daily does not collect dust and dirt, as must all more elaborate arrangements inevitably. This drapery is made by taking a straight piece of material about twenty-four inches wider and twenty-four inches longer than the mantel-piece itself; the sides and front are edged with a cord and a tassel, or else a few pompons are hung at the front corners; the drapery is placed straight along the mantel-piece, the uncorded edge against the wall, and drapes itself, being kept stationary by the ornaments and photographs, &c., we usually put on the shelf. Bokhara plush makes the best drapery, but if this is used three or four should be made at the same time, or else the plush cuts to waste. Of course the rest can be used in other ways; it makes admirable flat bell-pulls for bedrooms, with a brass ring at the end, and could be used as toilet covers; but corduroy velveteen is nearly as pretty, and, being the exact width required, would be the best material to use; it is only 2*s.* 9*d.* a yard. Whatever is used, the corners of the drapery should be lined with satin, or sateen, either in a paler colour than the drapery itself or in some contrast, as the corners show, and would not look nice at all unless they were lined. This completes the drapery, which is the only one that should be allowed, as it is simple and cleanly, which is more than can be said for any other arrangement. The pattern was given me by a friend, who bought it of a first-rate upholsterer

in Paris, and is so simple, I cannot think why no one ever thought of it before in England.

Before we pass away from speaking of the fireplace, I should like to describe one or two ways of filling up the recesses generally found in present-day houses. In a dining-room I should always place the buffets there which I recommend in place of sideboards; then, in the drawing-room or morning-room, Giles's cosy corner, illustrated in every advertising paper, is to be recommended for one side; this seat goes straight along the recess, and has an end that returns along the end of the recess, giving a corner in which to sit. As a rule these seats will take two people comfortably. Above the padded back is the same straight piece illustrated in the 'summer corner,' surmounted by the bracket-rail; but if people do not wish to go to the expense of an elaborately upholstered and spring seat, they can easily make a seat for themselves by having a wooden frame on four legs made to fit the recess; the top should be covered with sacking or webbing, along the front of the seat should be nailed a full flounce of corduroy velveteen lined with holland; a square cushion, made from wool and hair mixed, should be placed along the top of the sacking, and the back should be formed by hanging two square cushions on the wall so arranged that one dovetails with the other in the corner; these should be high enough to allow of using a finish of Giles's bracket-rail for china, which should be put along the top of the cushions and keep them in their places, and a lamp can be hung over the seat, either from a hook placed in the ceiling itself or hanging out from the frieze-rail from one of the brass arms sold by Benson, on purpose for holding lamps, for about 10*s.* 6*d.* each, that would give light to anyone who sat to read by the fire in a room in which gas was banished, as I trust it may soon be banished from every sitting-room in the land, either in favour of the beautiful electric light, for the universal use of which I pine, or in favour of lamps, which may give trouble, but save that trouble over and over again in the manner in which things remain clean and good that would have become both spoiled and soiled had gas been used where they were. Another recess can be filled by using Mrs. Talbot Coke's design, published in the 'Queen,' and which I have her permission for giving here, and which is not

only very pretty but decidedly useful. It could be made by any carpenter first, as three simple shelves; the top and bottom shelves should be of equal depth, the centre one should be rather narrower, and the whole arrangement should not be above the line of the mantelshelf; along the edge of the shelves should be glued strips of Japanese leather paper, and the top shelf should be divided as in the sketch, the arches being either simple wooden arches cut out of thin wood, or else of the Moorish fretwork sold by Hindley & Barker; the bottom shelf should have three separate small curtains along it, the division between being strips of wood decorated with Japanese leather. Of course this arrangement should be enamelled to match the rest of the paint, and the silk which is used for the curtains should be a contrast; and great care must be taken to employ someone who does not make his woodwork with a heavy hand (as some cooks make pastry), for I once saw one of these recess arrangements carried out in such a way that the whole effect was dreadful, being entirely marred by the thick wood and heavy arches of which it was composed. Any china can be arranged therein, for the top makes an admirable resting-place for odds and ends and one's favourite photographs or books. An armchair should be put by the side, and this will suggest at once a comfortable reading-nook for a winter's afternoon without any more elaborate arrangement.

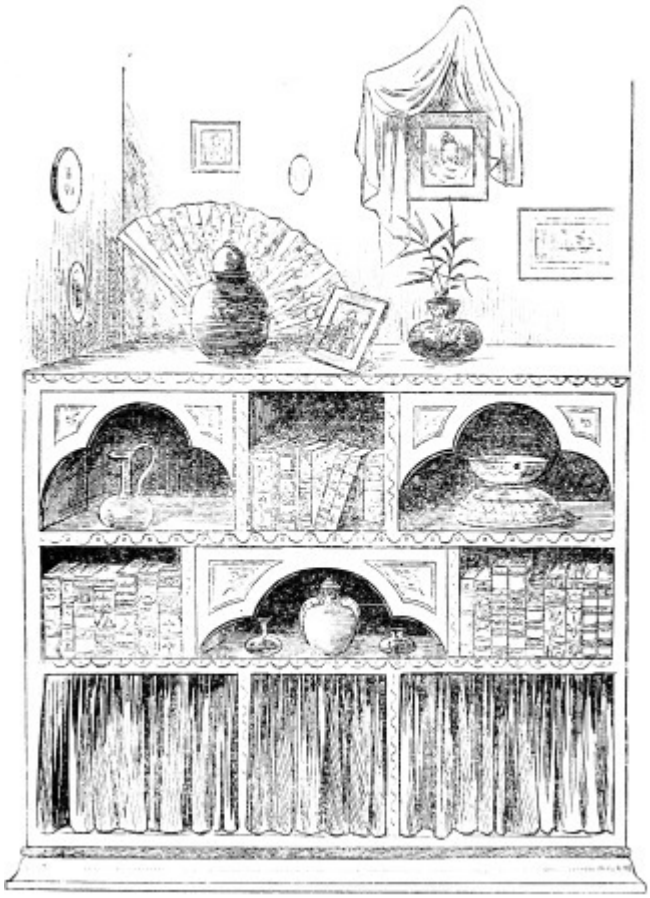


Fig. 11.—A Recess.

I am so often asked to advise people, on paper, how to arrange their furniture, and despite my strenuous refusals to contemplate such a waste of time, am so constantly importuned to do so, that I venture to pause here, and give one or two hints on the subject of the general arrangement of sitting-rooms; as although it is naturally quite impossible to tell positively where to place a chair I have never seen in a house I have never entered, it is possible, I trust, to give general hints which shall enable my readers to make their sitting-rooms rather more comfortable than most of them seem able to do at present.

For example, no matter how small a room is, an enormous amount of comfort and a certain idea of unlimited space is always given by placing a screen judiciously by the door; this prevents the whole of the room being on view at once, and gives an opportunity of placing a chair or two behind it, which we could not do were the door to open into the passage and leave a yawning gulf behind one’s back, or were it to open into the room and so leave an exposed place at once where no one

could sit, because they would feel they were sitting in the passage; and, again, no chairs should be isolated or put out of humanity's reach; if they are, they will surely be sought out at once by some shy caller or visitor, and we shall have to spend our time endeavouring to draw him or her into the circle. By this I do not mean that our chairs should be arranged as if we were expecting the assembling together of a prayer-meeting, but that they should be within reach both of ourselves, the fire in winter, the window in summer, and of the light always; then shall we be quite sure our guests are happy, or, if they are not, that it is their own fault and not ours.

There should be a place for each member of the household in any room, and attention to these details even causes the furniture to in some measure arrange itself and be so placed that it shows to the greatest advantage, and can at the same time be used by the owners in the best manner possible as well. If more lamps are required in a room than the two or three which are usually quite sufficient for the purposes of general lighting, those who require special lamps should be encouraged to look after them themselves, especially in the case of the daughters of the house, on whom, in most middle-class families, should devolve all the flower-tending and finer parts of housekeeping, of which, by that time, the house-mother will no doubt be weary, and will only be too glad to hand over to those who are full of energy as well as of the very newest ideas on the subject of how to arrange the flowers, on which so much of the appearance of the house depends.

I like the sofa placed out straight from the side of the fire, as in Fig. 7, or straight along in front of it, about seven or eight feet from the front of the fire; and in some rooms the piano, that most undecorative piece of furniture, can be put with one end straight against the wall in the recess, the other straight out into the room with the sofa against the back, or else a comfortable chair, as represented in Fig. 11, which will, I hope, give my readers a good idea how to manage a piano, which can be placed either out from the wall in the recess, across one corner of a room, or out in the room itself, and, indeed, in any way that will not necessitate its back against the wall, a position that is fatal to anything like music, for it is terrible to play with one's back to one's audience, or to sing

straight into the wall, which throws one's voice straight back at one all the time one is singing. As will be seen from the sketch, the baize at the back of the piano is first covered with a good Japanese leather paper, and then soft silk is carelessly draped over it, finishing with a long piece at one side; the top of the piano is first covered with the soft silk, which is fastened by tiny tacks inside the lid to keep it in its place, and then by a piece of Japanese embroidery; at one end is a tall palm-stand from Liberty with a big brass pot holding a palm; at the back, where there is no distinct drapery, stands a small screen, and at the other end is a Cairene inlaid stool holding a jar of grasses; but I should prefer myself a much taller arrangement, as the end of the piano is not at all a pretty object. The silk which is found in the front of most pianos should be replaced by Japanese leather paper. If draping is objected to—and it should never be attempted by anyone who cannot pay some artist in drapery to manage it for them, unless, of course, their own fingers are clever at it—a very good substitute is formed by using one of Shoolbred's piano-rods, from which can be hung a simple full curtain of some good and beautiful brocade, such as is their Nismes brocade. The top should always be arranged as shown in the sketch, for though these things may deaden the sound,

Fig. 12.—A Draped Piano.

and a good musician would, no doubt, rage about them, they can be removed in three seconds to a side table should music be the order of the day, and could be replaced at once without giving anyone any undue amount of trouble. I have seen a writing-table in a very small room placed against the piano, the back of which, having been, first covered with brocade, served as a species of ‘hold-all’ for all that is usually found on a writing-table; but I cannot seriously recommend this, as it is certainly incongruous to find cards of invitation, balls of string, date-cases and paper-knives, and general *débris*, fastened about a piano, which must, I am sure, resent tremendously this extraordinary manner of embellishing it. I have never seen a piano arranged in a better manner than the one illustrated here by the kind permission of my successor at my dear Shortlands house, in whose hands the traditions of the house are well kept up, and who has filled my shoes there much better than I filled them myself; one of her improvements being the drapery over the conservatory door,

which I have illustrated here, so many people having doors like that one and being quite unable to manage them properly.

The door is composed, as are all similar doors, of glass at the top and two small panels in the wooden frame below; these are filled in with Japanese leather paper, a brass handle and one finger-plate are added (only one finger-plate should ever be put on a door, and that should be put above the door-handle); and on the top of the glass is placed one of the pretty bead blinds; this is a graduated one, and is just indicated in the sketch. On the left-hand side, nearest the fire, hangs a straight full piece of drapery, edged all round with ball fringe, while on the other side is draped a curtain with a drawing string, which lets down in a moment to hide the door entirely at night. A further idea of how this room is now arranged is given by the tall palm-stand, and the end of a deep, low, beautiful sofa from Liberty, which I never see without breaking the tenth commandment. The sides and back are quite straight, the seat is very broad and is heaped with the frilled pillows, which are as popular as they are useful and pretty; the sofa is enamelled white, and is covered with a beautiful yellow brocade, the curtains beyond, by the window, being of a Morris cretonne, which resembles both in colour and design the brown and yellow velveteen from Graham & Biddle mentioned before. This design makes admirable portières,

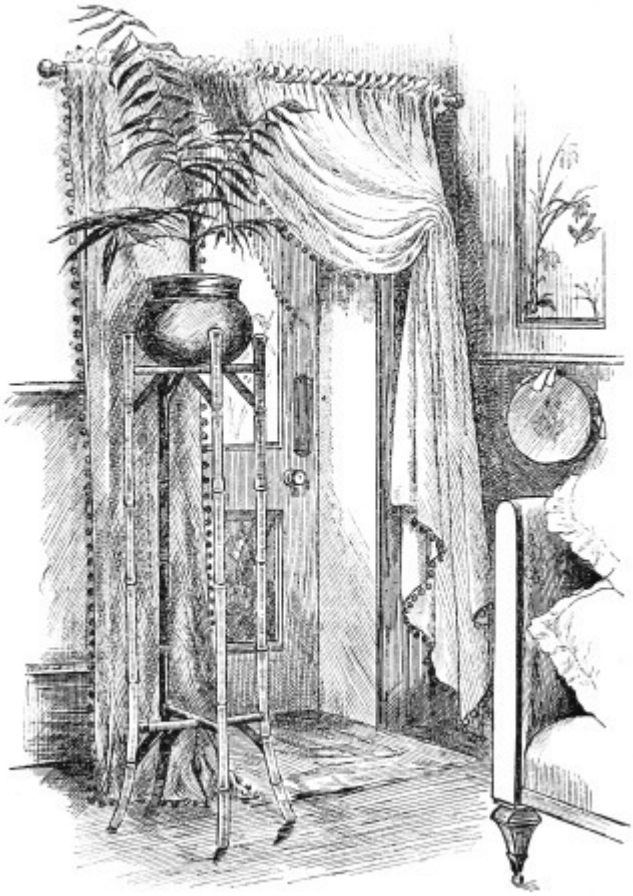


Fig. 13.—Conservatory Door.

and is always a pleasure to look at. The tambourine is hung on the dado, which is of a very good yellow and white matting and is headed with bamboo, and despite the favour into which friezes have grown of late years, a favour they quite deserve I must say, I still cling to the dado in the dining-and drawing-rooms; in the former they give solidity to the wall, which they always keep tidy; in the latter they serve admirably as places on which to hang our favourite nicknacks and those small sketches and pictures which we prize, and which would almost be lost to sight were we to hang them above the height of the dado-rail, where we could not have them near us; so I strongly advise a dado whenever we can have one in the drawing-room, and I have been lately confirmed in my opinion by seeing two newly decorated rooms where the dado was useless as far as regarded the hanging of pet possessions, but it was so decorative that I am forced to pause here for a moment and give a description of them both.

In room No. 1 the wall-paper was my favourite yellow and white from Mr. Smee; all the paint was a deep ivory, and the

dado-rail was ivory too; for about a yard below the rail the wall was coloured primrose, and over this was hung a full soft curtain of yellow silk closely plaited on tiny rings, which again were hung on nails below the rail, which curved out over them and hid them completely; this curtain could be taken down and shaken and replaced every week if desired, while, of course, during absence from town the silk would be folded up and put away. The loose curtain looks charming round the room, which is a very tiny one, and has been admirably arranged by Mr. Smee with a fitted seat at one side of the wall, with side curtains to give an idea of privacy, and above that is a long bookcase; the curtains are of the beautiful larkspur cretonne which has yellow and blue in it; the carpet is a deep red, to give more colour, as the room is to be used for day, and therefore requires to be made to look warmer than could be done were only blue and yellow used; and the furniture is all ivory, and upholstered in different brocades; albeit these are also covered with loose cretonne covers in the larkspur cretonne, which is 2*s.* 10*d.* a yard, but really deserves to cost as much, it is so pretty, although I do own it is rather expensive for a mere cretonne.

The other room in which I saw the curtain dado was much more sombre in design and colouring; and I do not for one moment recommend such a distressingly dark arrangement, although I do most heartily commend the clever designer of this original room. The dado was not the straight curtain which goes all round the room, which I have been writing about, but it started from the window at one end five feet above the floor; this continued for halfway along the wall, where it suddenly lowered to within three feet of the floor, leaving a piece of wall about three feet across and two deep; after running along for three feet at this lowered angle, it rose again and continued along the wall to the door. Just on the other side of the door the curtain began at three feet from the wainscoting, and continued for about five feet, when it rose once more, and continued at the first altitude for the rest of the wall, which ended in a corner; the curtain lowered from that to the fireplace, which, with its overmantel, filled one square, the dado beginning once more at the five-foot altitude after the fireplace was passed. The curtain was moss-green serge, and was hung from a pole

painted moss-green, with brass rings, which were *en évidence*; and above the curtain the wall was covered with a very good Japanese leather paper; the squares made by the dropping of the curtain being filled in one place by a choice picture, in another by an admirably designed bracket for books and china, and in another by a square beaten brass shield holding an elaborate and beautiful clustered candelabra; and had the drapery been of some bright colour, or some really decorative brocade, the house would have been as charming as it was original, but, arranged with the dark Japanese paper and the much darker drapery, the whole effect was so depressing, that I felt, were I obliged to remain in that house, I should have committed suicide, for my spirits would never have borne up under it. But it was a dark day, as the owner pointed out, when I told him, at his request, what I thought of it all. But I maintain that as most of our English days, and more especially our London days, are extremely dark, we are bound to try and make our rooms so beautiful that they, at least, shall not in any way add to the depression that is inseparable from sage-green walls and darkness generally. We cannot have too much cheerfulness I maintain; it is absolutely impossible to be too happy and too lively; and as our climate does not help us to be either the one or the other, we must endeavour to simulate as much sunshine as we can, by making our rooms cheerful and as sunny-looking as we have the power to do. I never go into my own rooms, or the many rooms I have helped to decorate, without feeling that, whatever else may be their faults, they certainly cannot be called gloomy. They are all bright and cheerful; and I defy anyone to be miserable long, unless, of course, some real misfortune has occurred, in one of my rooms in the green serge abode. A misfitting dress would be as dreadful a sorrow as a broken arm, a disappointment about an entertainment as serious as an illness or loss of money! Flowers again should never be forgotten, or allowed to become dead and shabby; and, above all, each room we occupy should be scrupulously clean, and without being aggressively neat should be absolutely tidy. Directly a thing becomes dirty or untidy it should be cleaned or replaced by something else. We should never overlook the soiling of the paint, a crushed antimacassar, a dirty ceiling, and, above all, we should

remember that no amount of artistic knowledge and careful decoration can make up for grimy tablecloths and crooked vases, heaped-up papers and crushed chairbacks and damaged cretonnes. A room must not only be made nice, it must be kept so; and if we cannot afford good servants, who will respect our belongings, we must do the finer parts of the housework ourselves. It is no disgrace to wash fine china, and turn and fold our tablecloths and draperies; it is disgraceful to have dirty ornaments, and to be untidy and careless about our rooms.

Indeed, if any of us really want our rooms to look nice we should, no matter how good are our servants, go carefully over them ourselves the moment the housemaid's work is done, and see that all is as we like it. Servants do not place furniture, they *ram* it into its place. The tablecloths are usually put on wrong side out, and, somehow or other, all seems to require the lady's touch, which cannot be explained, but is certainly observable in any house where the mistress is untidy, and so naturally excuses untidiness in those around her.

I maintain that tidiness is quite a gift, and that she who is possessed of that admirable quality makes things go twice as far as does she who never attempts to put a thing straight, who overlooks dust and dirt, and without knowing precisely how it is managed, gets her house into endless muddle and never allows it to look nice, albeit she spends three times as much over it as does she who is gifted with tidiness and a 'straight eye.' Therefore, if a house is to be properly kept, the moment a handle comes off a door, replace it; the instant a thing looks in the least degree dirty, have it washed or cleaned; let any carpet be mended before it goes into a hole; have black cleaned off any ceiling the moment it comes on it; and, above all, have the china clean and straight, and never overlook a rent or a dirty mark. If a house is kept nice the expenses are gradual; if all is neglected, the day of reckoning, which must come inevitably, will be such a heavy one that it will cost more than can be afforded by anyone who is not a millionaire; and it must come, for even if the house is our own, we must leave it some time, and our successor will not revere our memory, or remember us even with kindness, when he comes after us and repairs our ravages, which need have been unimportant had we punctually

spent the yearly sum for repairs, &c., which should always be set aside by every careful householder.

Every room in every house should be re-painted and papered at least every seventh year. Outside painting should be done every third year. The ceilings should be cleansed the moment they begin to look dirty; and we should never possess curtains or carpets which we cannot afford to replace somehow, or that will not readily wash and darn, and shake when they begin to show signs of having been used.

A pretty house in good order will always let, should we desire to move; while a house in bad repair, and dirty, will never find a tenant, even if the landlord is a model one, and is willing to do all he can in the matter of new decorations, for somehow the squalor and grime that greet the eye first on entering never seem forgotten, and the house is passed over again and again, because it is impossible to believe a house in such a state can ever be made either healthy or beautiful.

Before passing away from the three ordinary sitting-rooms in a house I should like just to speak of some of the new styles of decoration which have come to the fore lately, and which, I am glad to say, are all as cheerful as can be; not that the arrangements I have advocated have been relegated to that mysterious limbo dedicated to the fashions of last week. I have at last, I am delighted to be able to tell my readers, persuaded one or two of the more enterprising tradesmen to recognise the fact that a thing which was good and satisfactory last week is just as good and satisfactory this, and all the schemes of decoration I gave before are still to be had. But tastes change, and it is always well to be prepared with some new ideas, for rooms are all different, and what suits one room will not suit another.

I still like the Japanese plain paper, red and gold leather dado, and red paint better than anything else for a dining-room, just as I cling to my blue morning-room; but as it would not do for us all to have this same decoration, I often advise an admirable tapestry paper, sold by Pither at 4*s.* 6*d.* a piece. This can either have ‘holly-green’ or ‘imperial red’ paint, and a dado of Japanese leather paper, carefully chosen to harmonise with the paper, and which should have dull red and green and

gold in its design, in very dark and unobtrusive shades. The ceiling paper should be pale yellow and white, the cornice cream. The doors should be panelled with the Japanese paper, and the curtains should either be of Colbourne's Gobelin tapestry, at 6*s.* 11*d.* a yard, wide width, or else of self-coloured velveteen or serge, the colour of the paint (whichever is chosen), and the carpet should be an Oriental one if possible, with a dark red matting surround, or else of Wallace's dark red 'anemone,' either in pile, Brussels, or Kidderminster, according to the price one wishes to give. This style of decoration would suit almost any furniture, though I should prefer the chairs to be covered with the Gobelin tapestry, which wears admirably, and which should always be used to re-cover old or shabby chairs, instead of a cheap leather. This covering could be done at home by an upholsteress if necessary; but I should advise the chairs being taken in hand by someone who can re-make the stuffing, if the expense can be afforded; if it cannot, the leather should be left as it is, all unevennesses and excrescences should be made even by judicious use of cotton-wool on the leather, then a tight cover of holland should be first put on, finally the cover of Gobelin tapestry, which should not be buttoned down, but should be stretched over and secured in its place with a gimp. Each chair would cost about 4*s.* or 5*s.*, certainly not more.

Where the old-furniture mania exists, an artistic dining-room can be made by using all nut-brown paint, Essex & Co.'s 'Kenesaw' design, stamped on real brown paper, a gold and brown leather dado, all yellow serge or velveteen curtains, and a golden-brown square carpet; and great care should be taken in both rooms to have the proper tablecloths, which Burnett makes from a design I gave him, and which have been largely used (and recommended by the several imitators of mine which have sprung up in divers papers since I first began my own notion of giving advice on the matter of house decoration and arrangement through the columns of a newspaper, now some six long years ago), and which are far better and more artistic than any others I have ever seen. The cloth is plain serge or felt, with a contrasting border united to the cloth itself by a gimp in which both colours are mingled, and finished off with a ball fringe. These cloths cost about 25*s.* for an ordinary

table, and, as they will clean and dye, would last some years if properly looked after.

I have already spoken about the morning-room decoration, and therefore I will only add a few words on the subject of the drawing-room, where the yellow-and-white scheme I so often recommend cannot be improved upon by those who can afford a reasonably expensive scheme of decoration. Of course the very greatest care must be taken to avoid anything like the gold-and-white paper of our ancestors, but this usually was accompanied by grained maple paint, which gave the last touch of horror to the scene, and therefore could never resemble the delicate ivory paint which Aspinall has made so easy for us; and I still admire Mr. Smee's beautiful yellow-and-white paper at 11*s.* a piece better than anything else, and with this I advise a dado of Collinson & Lock's '47' cretonne. This should be secured with a screwed-on dado-rail, as then the cretonne could be removed to be washed; all the chairs should be put into frilled cretonne covers of the same cretonne, made like those in Fig. 13; the curtains should be of Pither's printed linen at 1*s.* a yard, edged with ball

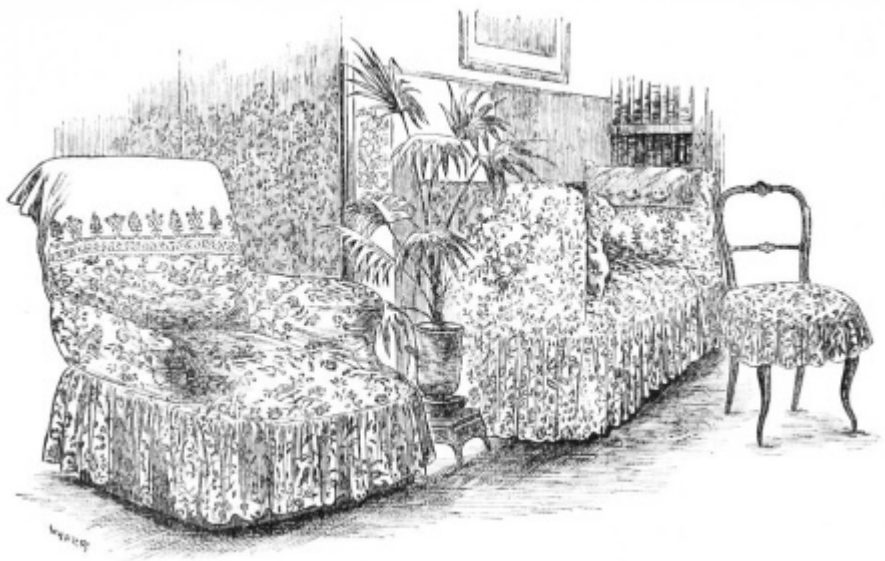


Fig. 14.—Frilled Chairs and Sofa.

fringe at 6*d.* a yard, and the carpet should be dark blue pile, with a pattern that resembles tiny daisies powdered all over the surface in a paler shade of blue.

Great exception has been taken to Pither's printed linen because it fades. So it does; but then it is very cheap, it lasts

two years in a sunny window, four in one that is not sunny, and, finally, dyes beautifully, fringe and all, coming back from the immortal Pullar as good as on the day it was first bought. I don't think one can complain very much about a material which behaves like that, can one? But, of course, the printed linen as curtains can be replaced by silk, damask, or by '47' cretonne itself, should the first-named material be objected to.

No colour lights up so well as yellow—I am quite sure of that; and another decoration could be made from the yellow 'Othmar' paper sold by Essex, all cream paint, and a frieze of chrysanthemums, either painted by hand, or else of the excellent printed design sold by Haines at 3*s.* 6*d.* the yard. With this the carpet should be red, and the curtains should either be of a brocade which introduces the shades in the flowers, or else of a cretonne: all would depend on how much money there was to spend; but whether cretonne or brocade is used, it must match the frieze in some measure. Though great cornices and vast pier-glasses over mantel-pieces are entirely out of date, and will never, I trust, return into fashion, there are still some unfortunates who labour under these possessions, and who dare not rid themselves of them, much as they would like to do so, and who may be glad to learn how these horrors may in some measure be mitigated. All cornices become less repulsive directly they are Aspinalled ivory. I cannot tell why, but this seems to metamorphose them at once, and makes them quite ornamental, while the frame of the glass can be treated in the same manner, unless the frames are quite flat, in which case they should be covered with brocade, in the same manner in which the fashionable frames for photographs are now managed. In any case, all the heavy flourishes and 'ornaments' should be removed, and the glass made in every way as plain and unobtrusive as possible. Draping with muslin, or even with Liberty silk, is never successful, and only makes the object draped like one of the lodging-house possessions, carefully guarded in a similar manner by the careful landlady from the encroachments of the flies, and is therefore much to be avoided.

Never, no matter what the time of year, put it out of your power to have a fire, should you so desire it. I still cling to the Japanese umbrella, and have never found a substitute for it

which is so absolutely satisfactory. If its stick is properly cut it hides the wood and coal and grate entirely, and gives a bright spot of colour, and can be removed at once. A curtain hung straight down from a slight rod just under the top of the grate itself looks very neat, as does a series of rings to hold flower-pots, just brought out by Hamilton, of the Quentin Matsys Forge, York Street, Westminster. This holds twelve pots of flowers, and can be lifted out in a moment altogether should a fire be required, and would always look well put down in a corner of the room. One of the Guild brocade screens with miniatures answers well too, and Giles has invented from my description a fireplace cabinet, which, put under the wooden mantel-piece—which is *de rigueur* in an artistic house—continues the mantel and overmantel decorations, and makes the whole appear like a good cabinet for books, china, and flowers. This can also be removed in a few minutes, and either hung on the wall or placed in a corner of the room.

The perfect câche-feu has yet to be invented, but until some clever genius has done this, either of the above ideas answers quite well; but I do solemnly warn my readers against fashionable trellis-work with paper ivy and grapes wandering over it, fans outstretched in plush with senseless photographs let in—as if photographs could be in place on the hearth!—and all the thousand and one freaks of fashion that are brought out by those who ought to know better, and who have filled many houses to overflowing with terrible plush frames, soiled satin bags, useless odds and ends, and ghastly painted tables, brackets, and stands, which are costly to begin with, and so we do not like to dispose of them too hastily, and which should never be seen in the houses of those who really want to have an artistic and pretty home; with which solemn warning we will pass on to sterner subjects, and will consider in another chapter how to treat the more ‘manly’ portion of the house, where work or pleasure may be gone in for.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BILLIARD-ROOM AND LIBRARY.

'THERE must be nothing frivolous, light, or airy in the aspect of either of these rooms; all must be sombre and steady, if not dark;' and though I do not go so far as this—the ordinary dictum of the upholsterer—I am quite willing to allow that in the billiard-room at least lightness and frivolity are out of place, albeit I cannot allow that even this room need be sombre and dreary, while certainly it ought to light up well, as it is a room which is generally used merely at night.

Wherever it can be afforded, and wherever there are young men or lads in the house, there should always be a billiard-table, and the girls should be encouraged to play with their brothers and their brothers' friends as long as their mother or father can remain in the room as some sort of guard and guide; the pleasanter home is made the less inclination will young men have to go elsewhere for their amusements, and if they are accustomed to be made happy and feel that their friends are welcome too, they will not keep outside home for the pleasure that is to be found without crossing the threshold. A billiard-room in winter, a couple of good tennis-courts in summer, and the hours of leisure will pass comfortably along, and leave neither time nor opportunities for less desirable pleasures.

Example is everything in a house: a thousand sermons will not speak as loudly against betting, and gambling, and drink—the horrors of my existence—as will the example of a house where such things are never allowed, and yet where amusements of all kinds are not frowned upon and refused, where games are encouraged for their own sakes, and where a healthy outdoor life replaces the bar-frequenting, loafing hours, which are all too often the portion of those who have been accustomed to 'nipping' and loafing, because they have seen these two habits allowed as a matter of course from their earliest days.

And before I speak of the mere walls and furniture of a billiard-room let me impress upon my readers not to allow this

room to be turned into a base imitation of a tap-room. I am not a teetotaler, and have small patience with those intolerant individuals whose language and statements are all too often as bad and violent as they are absolutely unreliable and untrue, and I do not believe in the possibility of living our present eager and artificial existence without the aid of alcohol in some shape or the other, certainly not after we have borne the heat and stress of the day, and we require something stronger than water to sustain us, but I do absolutely condemn the insane and insensate habit in which so many indulge nowadays of continually drinking between meals. Were stimulants taken at meals only, were spirits, with the exception of brandy (which should be kept entirely as a most valuable medicine), abolished, we should have no drunkards, and the teetotalers would lose all excuse for their most unpleasant and untruthful existences; and as we now seldom see a drunkard in our streets, and never contemplate the pleasing scenes which after dinner, in our great-grandmothers' times, were visible in many dining-rooms, from which no gentleman ever issued to join the ladies, because he was generally under the table or else fast asleep with both arms on it, I am in great hopes that we are learning to be a sober nation, though I hope sincerely never to see it an absolutely teetotal one, for beer and wine are necessary, I am convinced, in our climate, and we should be miserable indeed were we debarred, as the fanatics would debar us, from the use of all fermented or alcoholic drinks.

But we must be moderate and we must not drink between meals, and we must avoid the constant sodas-and-brandies which appear inseparable from some billiard-rooms, and to which is due, no doubt, the pious horror many good folks have of this chamber in a house; and I should like it to be firmly understood that the room was for the game merely, and that anything like 'nipping' would be at once and sternly discouraged. This being satisfactorily settled, we may proceed to plan and decorate our billiard-room with a clear conscience, secure in the fact that we are simply providing a place for innocent amusement, that will be of invaluable service at night and on wet Saturday afternoons, and that will not prove a snare and stumbling-block to any, more especially if we as sternly

refuse to allow gambling as we refuse to allow imbibing at odd moments of the day or night.

I am always astonished that no crusade has been raised against the national sin of gambling. Drink ruins the homes of poor men, but not more certainly or rapidly than gambling ruins the homes of rich men, and of men far from rich. Drink may kill a man, but it takes a great many drunkards to imbibe an estate, while one night's gambling may scatter the savings of a lifetime and turn all the wretched children of a selfish gambler into the streets to starve. I have been horrified sometimes to see ladies and gentlemen hot, eager, excited, gambling in private houses, the host actually bent on winning from those who are enjoying his hospitality, the hostess almost insulting her guests in her awful anxiety to gain the contents of their purses; and I am convinced that the only way to escape this demon is to refuse to pander to it at all, to never allow one single penny to be staked at cards in one's own house, and to make this such a rule that it would be impossible to break it on any consideration whatever. I have seen pennies played for which begat the taste for gambling for much larger sums; and I have never seen a house where gambling was allowed truly prosper, or be anything save the residence of those whose ideas and hopes were centred in this world only, and never rose above the mere 'society' existence, than which nothing can be more despicable and awful.

This book is not a tract, and therefore I do not say one half I should like to on this subject; but as I remember the ruined homes—one family especially, where all are scattered and most are dead, where gambling went on in the schoolroom and drawing-room alike, at every moment which could be snatched for the purpose; the broken hearts, the miserably wrecked careers, entirely due to this vice; when one can hardly take up a paper without seeing the dreary fate of some wretched youth, whose tendencies to betting and gaming have caused him to rob his master's till and landed him in penal servitude, I must say I cannot help feeling astonished that the eager teetotalers do not try their hands at putting down gaming, especially as they have the law on their side—the kind, good, well-devised law which snaps up little boys who play pitch-and-toss at the corners of the streets, that winks at Tattersall's and the big

races, and finally is utterly powerless to punish the high-class gamester, who spends his nights at gaming-hells and ruins his home and his wretched constitution at the same time.

However, lest I weary my readers in dwelling on this subject, about which one cannot say too much, I think I will now simply speak of the decoration of the billiard-room, having, I hope, so judiciously sandwiched the powder between the jam in this chapter, that those who seek for information about the room itself may unawares come upon it, and so be forced to meditate, whether they like it or not, on some of the reasons why so many people dread the idea of a billiard-room where there are boys. If gambling were non-existent, the veriest Chadband might learn to handle the cue; while a pastor at a dissenting chapel need not dread the eyes of his deacons were he found disporting himself in the halls of the ungodly, which would cease to be ungodly, or be no more so than the harmless tennis-courts, were betting eliminated from among their charms, and nothing but the game itself really and truly encouraged and allowed.

A big room is a necessity for a billiard-room, which should never, by any chance, be shorter than twenty-six feet long by twenty broad; a full-sized table measures twelve feet by six, and the size I have spoken of only allows sufficient comfortable room for walking round the table, and for the usual raised seats which are always put at the ends and on one side of the room. Personally, I should prefer a much larger room still, as I like to see one end of the room furnished as a species of sitting-room; but, of course, in London the twenty-six by twenty room would be ample. In the country, the billiard-table comes in for days when shooting is impossible, and the sitting-room end there is a great advantage in more ways than one.

Quite a charming billiard-room can be made by using all brown paint and a high dado, to the top of the door, of brown and gold Japanese leather paper; above the dado the wall should be painted *café-au-lait*; the cornice should be replaced by a coving, which should terminate in a top-light, from whence the ordinary cross-lights could be hung for use at night, and these surely could be in beaten iron with some

prettier shades than the hideous green things which match the equally hideous cloth, which I hope to see replaced soon by something a little more artistic, say in such a room as the one I have just described, by a dull brown cloth, which surely would be every bit as satisfactory as the green, which is certainly the most aggressive shade of green which has ever been made. In this case the shades could be blue, with some lace over them, or the yellow with no lace at all.

Where the ceiling is coved, the coving should always be decorated either with gold leather paper or by an artist's brush; and I have seen most elaborately drawn pictures of the old wooden ships of Henry VIII.'s time in a similar coving, in sepia on a cream ground, which looked perfectly beautiful, and which I should recommend in a similar room, where stags' heads and other trophies of the chase should be arranged on the painted wall, which should be too high for pictures, which could not be hung on the dado either, for fear of their being damaged by the ends of the cues. I should advise the use of printed yellow linen for curtains, edged, of course, with ball fringe, were there any windows in the room beside the top-light, which should have a gathered soft yellow blind arranged to draw over it in very hot weather; while the table itself, when not in use, should be covered with a large square of yellow serge lined with American cloth, with a big monogram embroidered on one corner; this would preserve the table, and look much better than the ordinary cloth.

The floor should be parqueterie with strips of velvet pile carpet in golden brown on the four sides; these should be mitred at the corners, and no other carpet would be required, save, of course, a square if we had the drawing-room end to the room I advocated before; if not, the room should be kept for billiards only, when the strips round the table would be quite sufficient; the leather seats should be covered in brown leather, and the fire should be protected by one of the admirable guards sold by Benham & Co., and which have padded tops, on which people can sit and watch the game, and get comfortably warm at the same time.

I have seen a most ingenious arrangement of small cupboards in the overmantel of a billiard-room, which was

pronounced invaluable for the safe storing away of cigars and tobacco, which should be mentioned, as of course smoking will be principally carried on in this room. The mantel-piece was walnut, and the fireplace the orthodox open grate and tiled hearth and back; the overmantel was carved to match the mantel, and was quite flat to the wall, which had been scooped out in some manner behind it, to allow of the formation of sundry square cupboards in the wall itself; these each held a cedar-wood box of cigars, with the front end off; and the cigars were so arranged that they could be taken out one by one, when the square wooden block in the overmantel, which formed the entrance to the cupboard, was unlocked, and fell forward on a hinge. No one could have suspected the overmantel of being a cupboard, and yet it was one; while at the same time this particular spot was especially pleasing, I believe, to the constitution of a cigar, which appears to require a certain amount of warmth, until it disappears finally into smoke, leaving its terrible odour behind it. On the mantel-piece itself were dull blue vases holding spills; several ingenious and expensive match-boxes, on which all matches appeared to me to refuse to ignite, and the usual *débris* one always finds in similar localities, filthy-looking pipes, old date stands, and stands for holding the hunt appointments, and similar expensive and broken toys, being there in vast abundance. Another excellent manner of decorating a billiard-room, where the owner had pictures to dispose of, and did not want a very elaborate or costly decoration, would be formed by papering the room entirely with real brown paper, and painting the room the same soft brown; a frieze should be added, if possible, of one of the Japanese hand-painted friezes one can buy occasionally at any decorator's, representing a flight of wild ducks, or else of storks, among reeds and flowers; but if this cannot be either found or afforded, a plain gold and brown Japanese leather frieze would look well. This should not be less than fourteen inches wide; anything less is distinctly ugly; while it might come almost to the top of the door, which should be surmounted by one of Wallace's simple over-doors to hold china, which should be blue and white. The curtains in this room should be Liberty's very dark blue and white reversible cretonnes; the chairs could be either dark blue

leather or saddle-bags with dark blue velvet surrounds; and the carpet should be dark blue pile. This would look well, and be an entirely pleasant scheme of decoration; a hand-painted frieze on brown paper would also be capital if expense were no object.

Yet another and a bolder decoration could be made by using Essex golden 'Othmar' paper, with Mandarin paint, and a wide frieze of the dull green 'Othmar,' dull green carpets, and Graham & Biddle's beautiful yellow poppy cretonne, edged with dull green ball fringe, and lined dull green; the carpet should be the dull green 'Stella' pile carpet from Wallace's, and all the chairs should be dull green leather.

If by chance there can be afforded or managed a drawing-room end to the billiard-room, a couple of screens will be found most invaluable; and if these screens have a long spike in each fold, to receive which a corresponding hole is bored in the floor, a great objection to screens will be done away with. Furnished with these spikes, which should be able to be unscrewed and removed quite easily, they could not possibly be knocked over; and, in my opinion, the tall standard lamps, which are so much in request just at present, should be furnished with similar spikes, as they always appear to me dreadfully dangerous, especially where there are children, or even dogs, or careless servants; for though, of course, the danger of fire is entirely done away with if we use Defries's excellent patent for putting out the light as the lamp falls, the oil must be spilt and damage the carpet, while an unpleasant smash and fright are absolutely certain. We should be saved anything of the kind were my simple spike arrangement adopted by all those who use these lamps.

The drawing-room end of the billiard-room should have a bow window with a seat round, several cosy arm-chairs, a table capable of holding the week's supply of newspapers and the month's supply of magazines, each in its own proper corner, and a couple of serviceable paper-knives should be always forthcoming. There should be a nice little writing-table for the use of any who wish to scribble notes; and, above all, there should be either a long bookcase on the wall full of frivolous literature, or else one of Trübner's excellent

bookcases, which revolve and so allow one to reach any book in the case without rising from one's comfortable seat.

A venerable piano which has seen better days is no mean addition to the comfort and pleasure of the billiard-room, and many an hilarious and impromptu entertainment has chased away the melancholy caused by a wet afternoon in the dismal winter country, due entirely to the happy presence among the company of a piano which was quite good enough to be used to accompany comic songs on, and amply good enough to form the basis for a recitation after—a long way after—Corney Grain or the immortal John Parry.

But though a big room is much better than a small one for billiards, people should not be deterred from having a table in their houses because their space does not allow of a full-sized one. The very nicest billiard-room I was ever in, and which, alas! is now no more, was that formed by using the square hall of a country vicarage; that table existed before the present age of artistic decorations, but whenever I remember it and the dear old house in which it stood I forget all art, and only remember the extreme fascination that place had for me, and can scent again the mingled odours of the vicar's pipes and Maréchal Niel roses, which are inseparable from my remembrance of the place. The table stood squarely in the front hall, which was covered with brown linoleum, and was seldom unmarked by dogs' feet for more than five minutes after it had been freshly washed, and we used to perch about on the tops of oak chests, the fender, anywhere, while the game progressed, as there was no room for seats. In addition to the hall table, the hat-stand, decorated with all sorts and conditions of hats, male and female, and the oak chests, one of which held the rugs and whips, the other the parish registers from some very bygone date, the walls themselves were decorated with stuffed birds and animals in glass cases, sundry collars and chains belonging to the dear dogs, driving-whips suspended in some cunning manner to keep them in shape, a barometer which survived the most fearful amount of banging and shaking that ever barometer was subjected to, and finally by the post-bag, which hung from a nail until it was fetched by a small village girl who rejoiced in the remarkable name of 'Rhody Jemimy,' who had to take and fetch the bag morning

and evening from the ‘World’s End,’ the mail-cart bringing it and taking it from and to that mysterious location, for we were far too primitive in those parts to have a postman, and had our one post a day contentedly enough, though I believe the present denizen of the vicarage has clamoured until he has not only a postman but a second post; albeit, neither were ever required by us, who were perfectly happy in those blessed days without them. I dwell upon this room rather at length in order to encourage anyone who may hanker after a billiard-room, and not dare to think of it seriously because the necessary twenty feet by twenty space is not forthcoming, and, moreover, because they dread the expense as much as the want of room. Of course a new full-sized table is a very expensive thing, and fittings and all could not cost less than 150*l.*; but as soon as we have made up our minds that we can really have a billiard-table we must begin to look out for the sales, for very often there are compulsory sales about, where a very good billiard-table can be purchased for a quarter the price of a new one. I have known one sold for 25*l.*, as the owner had forgotten to renew his lease and was given summary notice of dismissal, while a friend of mine bought a beauty for 40*l.* which simply required a little polish about the legs to be quite as good as new; but should money be of no real object, it would be better to go to some really first-class maker and have the table properly set up and made, for I believe there is great art in the proper placing of the table, and this should only be undertaken by someone who thoroughly understands the business; still, in a small room, and with a small and second-hand table, there may be found vast enjoyment if the bigger and more elaborate arrangement cannot possibly be managed.

I am always amused at some people’s determination not to be either happy, or *complete* in their household arrangements, because they cannot have the best of everything that is to be had, though I must confess such conduct makes me just a little cross as well. I have known folks utterly refuse to contemplate the joys of a jolly little pony and chaise because they didn’t care to set up a carriage unless they could do so properly; ‘properly’ in their case meaning the orthodox coachman, footman, horses, and a couple of carriages; whereas they condemned themselves to their own immediate neighbourhood

and to tramping about the lanes, or to staying at home, because they could not understand that as much pleasure could be got out of the ‘shay’ as out of anything still more gorgeous. I have known folks decline with scorn to cover their ugly, depressing, bare walls with pictures, because they could not buy Millais and Herkomers; whereas their lives and their houses would have been brightened at once had they spent 20*l.* on autotypes. And I have as constantly been acquainted with dozens of folks who would not do this, that, or the other, because they must take a back seat so to speak, and who in consequence waste half their opportunities. I except society, by the way; if the best society is not forthcoming (and by the best society I mean the society of people who are clever and who have done, or long to do something to make the world brighter and happier than they found it), don’t have any. The contact with mean, small, and ignorant minds does one harm, not good; the constant rubbing against time-serving shoulders and the shoulders of those who would do any amount of grovelling to be received by what they consider the society of the neighbourhood, only smirches us, and we had better sit at home all our lives with our books alone than expose ourselves to the deterioration we receive from association with such folk. But, apart from society, I would rather have the second or third best of everything if I can’t have the first, for the more one gets out of life the better, and the more one sees of the world and of the nice people in it the wider do our minds become, and the more appreciation and enjoyment do we have from our lives.

With the plea for a secondhand billiard-table rather than none, I will turn away from the room with one last suggestion —viz. to have good thick curtains hung over any doors that there may be in the room, outside; this will keep the smell of the smoke within proper bounds, and will also keep out the sound of the click-click of the balls, than which nothing is more annoying—to me at any rate. These curtains could be made of Adams serge lined with Bolton sheeting; both these materials will wash and are to be had from Burnett’s, and should be very wide and full, and should hang well over the hinges and cracks of the door; these should further be surrounded by ‘Slater’s patent’ for excluding draughts, as naturally the room will be properly ventilated, and there would

be no need to think of that, all our care being centred on keeping in the room all scent of the smoke and all sound of the balls. If the room is separate from the house, and only connected with it by a long passage, we may consider, I think, that nothing more is to be expected, and that here is indeed the perfect billiard-room. This room should be in the care of the head housemaid, whose first duty should be to open all the available windows every morning, no matter what the weather is like, to see all the cigar-ash is swept up, and finally to slip the curtains off the poles (a matter of three minutes exactly), to have them well shaken out of doors and left there for half an hour, having them replaced the moment the room is cleaned and set straight. Treated like this the billiard-room would always be fresh and nice, and would have no more smell of smoke about it than would be pleasantly suggestive to anyone who is not such a bitter enemy to smoke as I am.

And now about the library, the arrangement of which must depend entirely on the individual tastes and pursuits of the master of the house, whose room this is more especially; for in all big houses the mistress has her morning-room, and the guests generally are provided with writing-tables in their rooms, and would only venture into the library when the door was open, or by the rule of the house was made free to them during certain hours. Naturally, if the master were in no measure a literary man, if he had no Parliamentary work, or work that required him to isolate himself from the rest of the household at certain hours, the room would always be free; but it should be kept for writing and reading only, it should never be turned into a play-room of any kind; therefore there should be a certain sobriety about it, and it should not be furnished too frivolously or in such a manner as to suggest flirtation instead of study, sweet sleep instead of proper, severe application to one's books.

Perhaps the very prettiest library I have ever seen is one in London, which may sound frivolous, but is nothing of the kind, and has some of the most serious work of the nation done between its four walls; it is enamelled white—doors, cupboards, bookshelves, overmantel, indeed everything, and has a most beautiful effect, especially against the dun-coloured, gold-tinted calf volumes, with which the shelves are

most amply supplied; the shelves are supported on cupboards with brass locks and hinges, and are wide and deep enough to hold quantities of law papers; all these shelves and cupboards are ‘fitments’ passing completely round the room, and continuing under the windows. The only scraps of wall which show are papered with a very good Japanese leather paper, and the space above the mantel-piece is filled in with an old portrait; sundry pieces of blue china are on the mantel-piece, which are never without their fresh flowers; the carpet is a very fine Oriental one, with a great deal of white in it; the furniture is blue, as are the curtains, which are arranged across the top of each window and down one side only, while the enormous desk which occupies the centre of the room is a most exquisitely inlaid piece of marqueterie, and is the only coloured thing in the room, the frames of the chairs, &c., being enamelled like the room itself. Now this white idea for a library in London—dirty, smoky London—does seem absurd and a trifle frivolous, but the effect thereof is perfect, and as the application of a damp clean duster and a polish from a leather makes the room absolutely spotless, I see no reason why the white library should be scoffed at as an impossibility. A big beaten iron and copper lamp from Strode hangs in the centre of the room, and gives the finishing touch to a very perfect apartment.

Here the room is used for important work which requires absolute peace and absolute solitude, where the books refer to the special subject of study, and would be of no interest whatever to the ordinary man. Still, a modified edition of the white room could easily be carried out, and would be far more cheerful to live with, than the orthodox dark green and carved oak, or a base imitation thereof that we find in far too many houses; oak, in my opinion, being utterly unsuited to a modern house, and should only be used in a big old house where one looks for it as a matter of course. Of the modern imitation called Flemish oak I have no words of condemnation sufficiently strong; it is abominable, ugly, heavy, and badly executed, and should never be tolerated in any house where artistic decoration is encouraged and sought after.

If, as I said before, the master of the house does not require so much space for papers or books as to authorise him to cover

in the entire wall-space at his command with fitments, I advise him to run his bookcases simply round the room to a height of an ordinary dado. Above this could be hung the ever-useful Japanese paper, or a real red-and-white paper, such as is Pither's 'buttercup.' On the wall could be hung pictures, or a large cupboard well designed (and I should suggest Mr. Arthur Smee as the proper person to send to for this) should break the space of wall in the centre. The doors could be of cathedral glass in leaded squares, with broad brass hinges and locks; while the same design, of course on a much smaller scale, could be introduced over the mantel-piece. The desk could be enamelled white, and the top covered with Japanese leather paper. Of course the handles on the drawers must be brass; the blotting-book could be of red leather, with a plain monogram stamped on, or else the name of the room and of the house; and the head housemaid should be very particular about the state of the inkstand and of the blotting-book, though she should be forbidden, of course, to touch any of the papers on the desk, for fear she might lose important manuscripts. The mistress of the house should dust these herself if the master is touchy, or objects to other hands meddling with his belongings.

The curtains in a library should be thick and warm, and should, in the red-and-cream room, be in cream Roman satin, embroidered with red flowers if possible, or else of deep red Roman satin or Bokhara plush. The furniture sold by Hampton, covered in what they call 'Khelims,' but which is quite unlike the ordinary striped material I have always purchased as such, and is much more Oriental-looking, would do admirably in this room, where there should certainly be a couple of good sofas and four or five armchairs, and a small writing-table and chair beside the bigger one; while great care should be taken with the lighting, it being most important that a good light should fall on the book or writing-table, which should throw no fidgety shadows. When the electric light becomes general this advice will not be necessary, but until it is great care must be taken, before the lights are absolutely fixtures, to ascertain that they are in the right place, or else the unfortunate would-be readers and writers will be continually annoyed. The large standard lamps are useful in a library, as

they can be moved at any moment, and further care should be taken in the choice of a carpet, which should be thick and soft, and should cover almost all the floor, thus saving the student any chance of being fidgeted by the sudden scroop of a chair pushed hastily back or by the noise of a falling book or of a sudden footstep.

In a small house a library would be impossible, and therefore I give no directions for a cheaper style of decoration, which, however, could be managed in judiciously chosen shades of green and white, and I will only now speak about the books and the manner of treating such a room.

No child or very young person, and no servant, no matter whom, should ever be allowed to read the library books, which should never under any pretext whatever be removed from the library, and should consist of histories, travels, poetry, and all standard works that have survived the fiery trial of a twenty years' existence; the lighter works of to-day, which one reads when one is tired or wants simply to be amused, should be found in the billiard and morning rooms, and in every spare room in the house (Mudie's books being also in these rooms), and on no account whatever should a really good book which forms part of a set, or is valuable, be lent; listen to no entreaties, place the book *in the room* at the disposal of anyone who cares to read it, but lend it and you may and will run the risk of losing your book, or of having to torment for it, until your friend hates you, although in strict justice he ought to hate himself for the trouble he has given you. In every library and, indeed, in every house, there should be a list of the books in each room, and whenever a book is added the name thereof should be written down. I speak feelingly, if a little bitterly, on the subject, for no one has lent more books than I have, and no one has been more ruthlessly robbed; for people who would be absolutely incapable of depriving one of a pin, lose and forget to return my books, and at last I have come to the conclusion that I will never lend another; books are cheap enough, goodness knows, and libraries swarm; let people borrow there, and close your heart to the would-be borrower if you want to keep your books, and not scatter them generously about the world at large.

Again, I should never forbid anyone to read any book whatever—a prohibition makes people anxious at once; but the fact that the library books must be kept in the library would deter the children from reading what they ought not, and we would forbid certain literature because of its binding, not because of the contents; this I have found act much better than the wholesale orders we were given on the subject, in consequence of which I had read all Defoe's, Richardson's, Fielding's, and other works I should never have seen before I was sixteen, and wondered why on earth they were forbidden me. I should never have read one of them had I not wanted to see why I must not; they did me no harm, because I could not understand them; they might have done infinite harm to any other girl who was less babyish for her age than I happened in some mysterious manner to be, and therefore it is a good thing to keep such books where children do not come and where they are forbidden to touch books which are too well bound to be risked in their all-too-generally grimy little paws.

As in all the other rooms in the house, cheerfulness should be first thought of: a gloomy library, a library where the windows are obscured, is a mistake; cheerfulness is the first thing to be seriously cultivated by us all, in all relations of life, for it is indeed true, as the poet says—

> A merry heart goes all the way,
> A sad one tires in a mile-a;

therefore, in choosing and furnishing the library, remember this axiom, and let sunshine and brightness and cheerfulness be found there, as in every other room and place in the house; for we are insensibly and immensely influenced by our surroundings, and we should always make the best of our lives and belongings in every way we possibly can.

CHAPTER V.

SHALL WE DO AWAY WITH THE NURSERY?

It is a hard moment in the life of any woman when she has to make up her mind that she cannot any longer consistently retain one of the best rooms in the house for the nursery, more especially if she has been able to realise her ambition, and to give to her children an ideal chamber, where beauty and suitable arrangements for their comfort have been duly studied.

I know nothing sadder than an empty nursery. The children, who were as much our own as anything on this earth can ever be, have ceased to be children. They are still ours, but they are independent creatures; our care is no longer absolutely necessary to them. Some may even have married, and others may be trying their wings by some short flights from the home that will always be theirs, even if they do not care to return to it. But, in any case, they are no longer the dear little mites whose tiny ailments kept us awake at night, whose clothes and education were our unceasing care, and who found their heaven in our presence, believing honestly and thankfully that all they had came from us, and that we were without a flaw, as omnipotent as we were faultless.

The most melancholy part of middle age is this being left behind by our children, the eagerness on their parts to live their own lives and begin their own career. But it should not be sad, as it is only what happened to our parents, after all, and will happen again in the future generation. But all the same, it must be a hardened heart indeed that can contemplate an empty nursery and have no other thoughts than how best to decorate or use the room for a totally different purpose. There is a peculiar *serrement de cœur*, which, once experienced, can never be forgotten, when we enter a room made sacred to us by a thousand dreams and romances—a thousand dreads and fears we have never spoken of to any soul on earth, and have to consider how best we can alter it to another purpose.

I remember, years ago, going to see a house in which we had had many, many happy hours, and which had just passed from those we knew and loved to persons in an inferior station of life, with whom we should never have any dealings, and I have never forgotten the feeling of desolation that seized me when I looked up at the erstwhile nursery window, from which the bars were hanging broken, and remembered the faces that used never to be absent from that place—a feeling that was intensified a thousand times when I climbed up to the room itself, and looked for the last time on the walls, papered by ourselves with pictures from the 'Illustrated News' (I can remember them all vividly, from the marriage of the Princess Royal in one corner to pictures of the American War in the other), and recollected the boys who were all out in the world, each busy with his own life, with whom I had played, ridden, eaten far too much fruit in the sunny garden below the nursery windows (where I verily believe it was always fine and hot), and with whom I had risen at dawn in many a misty September morning, bent on collecting a great dish of mushrooms for breakfast, to surprise the house-mother with—a surprise that she must have been well accustomed to, but which she never failed to express; she knew we should have been so disappointed had she seemed in the least degree to expect the never-failing dish, though she had a hard struggle to be duly elated and not say one word about the draggled skirts and wringing wet stockings and boots, which she knew were reposing upstairs and would be shown to her in due course and with much wrath by Susan, to whose lot it always fell to remedy our dilapidations, which she used to say were always worse when I was there to rush about with the boys and lead them into mischief and dirt of all kinds.

There can be nothing more extinct on this earth than that dear old nursery, closed nearly twenty years ago and utterly swept away, but I can never think of it without becoming young again—without being the eldest of that small flock and worshipped as only five small boys can worship a London cousin much older than themselves, who yet could enter into all their games and excursions with the zest of a girl who has never tried living in the country, and sees only the poetical side of it; and without remembering the happiest of happy homes,

where I cannot recollect a cross word, a disagreeable day, or anything but the noise of the boys rushing about, the scent of a thousand flowers, the planning of a hundred picnics, and a delightful sense of summer and sunshine that can never be forgotten, and that has influenced more lives than mine—more even than the generous, hospitable master and mistress will ever know—though perhaps he does in the rest he won so worthily and in the Heaven that must hold anyone who was as generous and good as he was to the many, many relations with whom he filled his house, and to whom he always gave a hearty welcome.

But no doubt there are a great many other nurseries just like this one—and, indeed, I know of several—so I would beg my readers to bear with me while I speak of these rooms, and beg them not to make a clean sweep of the nursery altogether until they are positively obliged to do so, not because there may be other babies to come, but because the nursery is useful for a thousand things, and it makes such a dreadful difference in a house when the room is completely altered and turned into a room for the maid who takes the place of the nurse, perhaps, or into a sitting-room for the girls or boys. Don't let this be done, dear readers, until you are absolutely crowded out, because you will be miserable, and because you can never tell that the room may not be wanted as a sanitorium; an upstairs sitting-room, a refuge for our grandchildren, should we have married children, and should they be coming to stay with us, and bring their babies in due course of time; while the room having been decorated and furnished as a nursery is that and nothing else, and would have to be completely altered, should we settle to do away with it altogether.

Now, I want you to look just for a moment at the picture I have had drawn here of an empty nursery and see how admirably it is adapted for the purpose, and how cruel it would be to sweep away all these corners and shelves. You will notice how the cupboard fills in the recess between the fire and the wall, and you will see how a doll's-house should be arranged, and then, I am sure, you will think twice about weeding out all this, and doing away with things that may give pleasure to future generations, particularly when we must all number among our acquaintances people with children, who come to

tea, and will enjoy their tea twice as much if the children can be relegated to old nurse and the room where all is prepared for the small guests, who will for the moment take the place of those who are still children to us, albeit they are as old as we were when we began housekeeping ourselves, and set up a nursery with the pride and consequence inseparable from that most important step; while we can look hopefully forward to other small visitors who will be delighted to play with 'mother's old toys,' and to hear things about that mother's childhood, which can only be told them by an authority on the subject.

The nursery I have had sketched here is, of course, a much more expensive and elaborate room than could be suggested to folks with small incomes, but will serve as an example, I hope even in little houses, although, as those were amply catered for in my first book, I do not feel so bound to consider them as I did then. I should always have a real dado in any nursery. The one used here is of Indian matting, which is as neat and clean after ten years' use as it was the day it was put up. By the way, a dado should be secured at the top with rather a heavier rail than the one illustrated, and this should be screwed on, not nailed. The screws can be removed at any moment, and the dado taken down. In the case of a cretonne dado this could be washed at any moment, while stuff or matting could be brushed or shaken; but I have taken down matting after ten years on a wall, which was sized before the matting was put up, and have never found the smallest dirt behind it, while the wall remained absolutely intact for that space of time, and, indeed, is as good as new now, after fifteen years' wear, at least, I hear it is; unfortunately we have moved twice since then, and I cannot possibly inspect the matting to verify this statement for myself as I should like to do; but ten years is a long time, and, in these roving days of ours, when all too rarely do houses descend from father to son, is quite space enough for most of us.

Above the matting—which should be the kind sold by Treloar, in Ludgate Circus, for 35*s.* the roll of 40 yards—can be put any pretty blue paper. Pither's new blue bay-tree paper, at 1*s.* 6*d.*, is charming, and is of a colour that

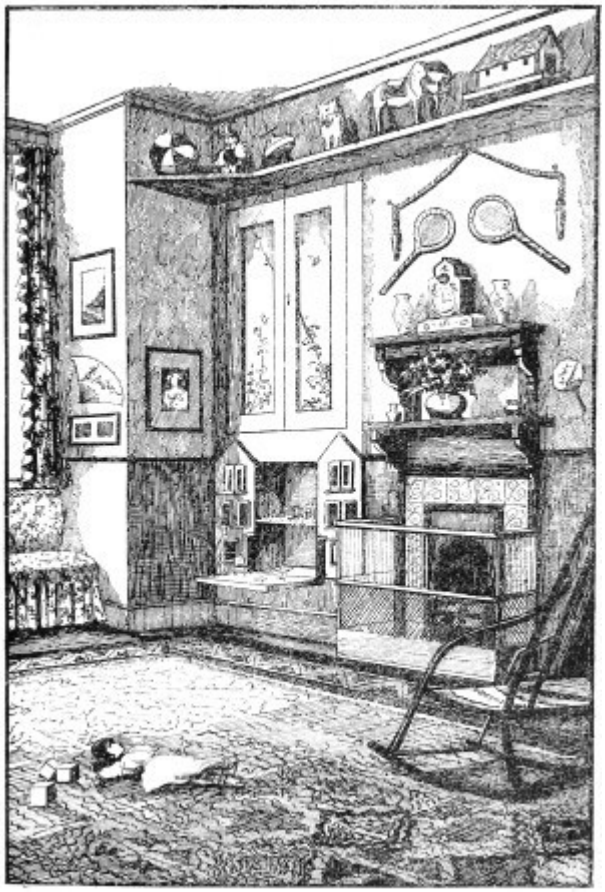


Fig. 15.—An Empty Nursery.

we never tire of. The paint could be the same shade of blue; the tiny cornice should be coloured cream, and the ceiling paper should be Maple's cheap yellow and white one, at 4½*d.* a piece. This could be cleaned twice a year with stale bread, and, as it is so cheap, could be replaced the moment it showed signs of becoming in the least degree shabby. The best toys could be arranged round the room on the shelf, which could be painted blue, and further appropriate decorations could be made by tennis rackets and skipping ropes if desired, albeit I should prefer a picture there of some kind or other, or else a lamp hanging out over the fireplace, beyond the reach of little fingers which might hanker after the fascinating occupation of lowering the light or putting it up to such an extent that the glass might be smashed in less than no time.

The short curtains and absence of blinds which I always advocate, and which idea has been largely copied and adopted, are just indicated in the picture, as is the long straight seat under the windows, which would take the place of the sofa if there were not room for one; but the useful serge or arras cloth

should be used instead of cretonne here, as cretonne so soon gets out of order in a place which is so much used as such a window-seat might be. Corduroy velveteen would also make an admirable covering, and would always be, in a measure, tidy. It is possible to make these window-seats do double duty as a seat and also as a box, for instead of the front being a 'hollow mockery,' as it is when it is a simple frill and nothing else, it could be a wooden box, and the seat could be a padded lid, which could lift up and down. A small frill nailed on the top of the seat would conceal the opening, and the front of the box could be covered with frilled material like small organ pipes. This would hold any quantity of work, old books, magazines, and rubbish generally: rubbish which is of no use at all, but is absolutely priceless to the little owners.

I think anyone who has ever owned a dolls'-house will admire my idea for a fixed one, because all who have ever possessed a similar abode must have occasionally pulled it down about the ears when engaged in an orthodox game with this most fascinating toy, at least it used to be fascinating in my day; judging from my two girls no one can care now for them, for the beauty we had has long since gone to a hospital, owing to the absolute indifference with which its many charms were treated by our children. But if there still exist any small maidens who treat their houses as we used to, I am sure this arrangement of cupboard shelves with a real house front and a flap to let down, properly painted of course like a hall door, with windows above, must commend itself to them. The flap makes a table for dolls' meals and parties, and is very useful for house cleaning, which delightful occupation invariably occurred in my day every Saturday regularly; but then we used to cover up our furniture with dust-sheets when we went to the seaside, and, furthermore, always deposited our wills in the drawing-room bureau under the same adventurous and dangerous circumstances, sealing the house at one side with the device of a dove bearing an olive-branch in its mouth, so that we might be quite sure profane hands had not meddled with our house or our possessions during our absence. I do not know if in these grown-up days of ours, and of competitive examinations and women's rights, there is time or inclination either for elaborate games, such as we used to play over the

dolls'-house, but I hope there is, as nothing is more truly engaging than such a possession, for which netting new curtains, and making new furniture, even occupied the boys, while, of course, we were never tired of altering and arranging and making too. Little as I work or care for working, I am sure I should enjoy making a Berlin-wool carpet now for someone's dolls'-house, only, unfortunately, I don't know anyone who has one. I should not require a pattern; I remember the black diamonds accurately, each diamond being filled with a different coloured wool, making a *tout ensemble* to be feared, indeed, in these æsthetic days of ours.

Many a wet afternoon has been happily passed in washing and 'getting up' our net curtains for the windows, in rearranging them and tying them up with ribands bought at Whiteley's, when it was one wee shop served by the Universal Provider himself and two girls, for which we saved our money; and I sincerely believe my first love of decoration and adornment of the house was fostered, if it were not born, of the intense attachment I had for my dolls'-house, at the desk of which I wrote my first attempt at poetry—and very awful it was—and to whose sheltering care I confided many a packet of MSS., which I was always going to submit to a publisher, but which paucity of stamps kept safely in the dolls'-house until I was old enough to know what utter rubbish I had written, and how worthily it would have been rapidly entombed in the waste-paper basket.

Below the dolls'-house illustrated there is a drawer, which can hold any amount of odds and ends, and of course the whole side of the room could be dolls'-house if cupboard space were not required, but, as it may be, the cupboard is shown above the house, decorated with a spray of flowers, painted by someone who knows how to paint; not by any amateur dauber, for you must never allow bad art in your nursery, even if you know it will have to be done away with in a comparatively short time. The other side of the fireplace can be another cupboard; this should be treated exactly like the one shown, of course without the dolls'-house. This will give ample space for all the nursery belongings, for no one should be allowed to hoard, though a certain amount of rubbish should always be winked at, but broken toys and torn books

should be mended and patched—capital work that for wet days —and should always be sent off to the omnivorous Sisters at Kilburn, who can use anything, it doesn't matter what, and who will welcome as treasures what the children will no longer use; therefore nothing should be thrown away. Nurses and children alike all enjoy mending and making for the Kilburn orphans, if only they are told about them and asked to take an interest in the good work done there. I have looked about all over London, I think, since writing my first book to find a suitable floor-covering for the nursery, and have not satisfied myself quite that I have done it. I cannot like or in any way advise linoleum there. It is cold, ugly, and there is an undeniable odour about it that never leaves it, and therefore I do not like to see it in a room which should always be as pretty as we can make it. I think, therefore, it is best to buy a square carpet, with either a border or else a good woollen fringe round, and put this down over carpet felt. Wallace's 'blue anemone' Brussels carpet, at 3*s.* 11*d.* a yard, would wear some years, or a cheaper carpet still might be had in the 'blue lily,' at 3*s.* 9*d.*, wide width; but I should prefer the Brussels for really hard wear. The staining round the room should not be more than 12 inches wide, and should be done with Jackson's varnish stains. When the stained boards begin to get shabby the nursemaid can paint them over herself with some stain, and they can be kept in order by a weekly polish from the stuff sold by Jackson for the purpose. Half a gallon of the stain is sufficient for a margin round a good-sized room. This would cost 6*s.*, and proper directions for applying the stains are sent out with them. Personally, I prefer the dark oak or walnut stain to any of the others. There should never be a hearth-rug in any room; but I must again state this in connection with the nursery, it would only cause accidents, and would serve at least to conceal the depredations of a careless nursemaid, who cannot refrain from making that portion of the carpet filthy with carelessness when she is doing the grate if she should be provided with a rug with which to cover up her sins. The carpet can be turned round to ensure equal wear if the square is made as suggested, and should last quite ten years, which is as long as any carpet should be allowed to last, in my opinion; an older carpet being a repository of dirt and dust, and therefore

cannot be healthy, a reason why I should never advocate very expensive carpets, as I much prefer to be able to have a new one without too much exertion on my part, especially in bedrooms, and in such rooms as nurseries and schoolrooms.

I am, however, again describing a nursery, and this instead of calmly discussing how best to do away with it; but I will make a confession here, and then I fear I shall show how bad an advocate I should prove were I called in to advise how best to do away with this room, which in all real homes is the very heart of the household. For be it known to my readers, that, as my youngest child was eight years old, I determined, Spartan-like, to do away with the nursery, and converted the room into a sitting and sleeping room for my nurse, who was henceforth to act as maid; the young person, who was as her own baby, being taken from her and sent to share her sister's rooms, one of which was to be part school, part sitting room; but we were all so uncomfortable I had no heart to continue the arrangement. When small friends came to tea there was nowhere for them to go; wet days were things to be dreaded because the child had no real place of her own for her things, and, after struggling on for nearly a year, we have returned to the nursery, although we try our hardest to call it school-room, and are now so much happier in consequence.

Another problem—should we do away with the nursery—is, What is to become of the nurse? You may call her a maid and give her your garments to look after, and tell her she must now take on her the work of a maid, but she will never do this properly; she will miss her room and her occupation, and she will move about miserably, missing the children and yet not knowing what she misses, and will neither be useful nor pleasant. But leave her her nursery, and one child if possible, and she will be quite happy; and, much as we may hanker after a maid, the ideal creature who shall never have to be told that buttons are off or skirts torn, who shall make our every-day dresses and retrim our bonnets, we owe something to the nurse who has looked after the children at the worst and most critical time of their lives, and are bound, if we cannot afford the two luxuries, to sacrifice the maid and cling to the nurse. And be quite sure if we do we shall be rewarded; the children may be grown up, but even grown-up folks have colds and headaches,

and sometimes worse ailments than these, and who so fit to keep watch over these ailments as the nurse, who has gallantly steered us through measles, whooping-cough, and the thousand ailments other people's selfishness is always handing on from generation to generation?—no one, surely; and if she and the nursery are retained together, there is always someone who knows what to do in an emergency, and a place to go to to be petted and quieted and made much of, as only a nurse can do who has had her nurslings from the first and loves them as only their mother and nurse know how to love. We have two such nurses in our family: I one, my sister the other, and I can never advise doing away with any nursery when I remember all that this may probably mean to others beside the householders themselves.

In a large house, therefore—a house where, let us hope, people mean to stay some years—this is an extra reason for making the nursery as pretty as possible. One cannot be very sentimental over a schoolroom; there is always a suspicion of ogre's castle about that room, and it can invariably be turned into the girls' sitting-room or into a billiard-room at the earliest opportunity, but all the sentiment of the home is to be found in the nursery, where the children are without a care or a trouble, and where they are gaining strength and health for the battle of life; therefore, let us never grudge any money we can afford being spent upon the nursery. As I said before, I always consider blue by far the pleasantest colour to live with, which is one reason why I advocate blue in the nursery; but of course endless combinations of colour could be had which would be equally pleasing and successful, but not as nice to live with always. However, I will give one or two which might perhaps be liked better by people who are not as fully convinced as I am on the merits of blue.

A pink and cream nursery would be pretty and bright, and could be managed by using Pither's cream and pink bay-tree paper, all cream paint, and a dado; the dado of Haines' anaglypta, painted cream, the ceiling paper should be J. & H. Land's green and white 'Watteau' ceiling, at 3*s.*, the carpet should be either the green 'lily,' or 'Stella,' or 'anemone,' from Wallace, and the cretonne should be Oetzmann's sage-green 'algæ' cretonne, at 1*s.* 3½*d.*, the muslin curtains being, if

possible, of Helbronner's pink and green 'lily' muslin, an expensive muslin but a very lovely one, which would complete the room nicely. The furniture should be ash and as simple as possible, and the flowers on the cupboard should be the pink flowering rush with slender reeds, and a few pale Marguerites. Yet another decoration could be made by using a high dado of Liberty's nut-brown arras cloth, at 9¾*d.* a yard; this would be sufficiently high to allow of the toy-shelf being used instead of a dado-rail; above this the paper should be Pither's 'Buttercup, C,' at 2*s.* 6*d.*, a dull yellow-brown paper; all the paint should be 'golden-brown,' the ceiling paper should be yellow and white, the curtains yellow 'Venetian' cretonne, reversible, at 1*s.* 1*d.*, clear Indian muslin underneath, and the carpet should be Pither's golden-brown cottage carpet. This scheme sounds dull, but were anyone so unfortunate as to be condemned to use a sunless room as a nursery, she would find this arrangement would bring the sunshine into the room in a remarkable manner; while dark-blue curtains, carpet, and coverings would make the room less severe and be equally satisfactory, more especially if Colbourne's Hawthorne muslin in yellow and white were placed next the window. Still, in a sunless room, one cannot have too much yellow; yellow serge would be found useful here for curtains should the windows be large, or a draught come in which would be too much for the cretonne to keep out, though cretonne should always be lined with Burnett's sateen at *7d.* a yard, and for a nursery should be edged with frills; the ball-fringe is really too tempting for small children, who cannot resist the delights of pulling off the little tufts wherever they are within reach of their fingers.

A most successful decoration, if rather a dainty one, was carried out under my directions the other day, and may be mentioned here, as variety is always pleasing to some minds, and it may be liked by those who approve of bright colours; it consisted in staining all the woodwork with Jackson's malachite green stain and papering the walls with Pither's admirable red and cream 'buttercup' paper, the ceiling being papered with a pale green and white paper; the floor was covered with a green drugget from Barr & Elliott's, at 2*s.* a yard, wide width, which is wearing admirably, and all the furniture was in quaint stained wood from Mr. Armitage,

examples of which are illustrated in the chapter on kitchens; the settle, table, and chairs, being all made by him, as were the mantel and over-mantel; in the centre of this latter piece of furniture was placed a square of looking-glass, though I personally should have preferred a good autotype in the red tints. The tiles in the grate were red, and there was the orthodox high fender with brass rails, which should never be wanting in any room where there are children; the table-cloth and curtains were of green serge, the exact shade of the staining, and the room altogether was far prettier than I had expected it to be, although I must confess my expectations were very high.

Out of one of these schemes of decoration—and I am glad to say that all are possible, for Pither, among others, will always keep in stock any paper that has really found favour with the public; therefore I am not recommending what will be out of anyone's power to possess almost before these words are in type, as was the case a very few years ago—it will be quite easy to evolve a nursery in the new house which will be so pretty and appealing to the inhabitants, that when the last baby is a tall young person, either rejoicing in knickerbockers or a frock, or in being in the schoolroom as a matter of course, and who goes for walks and has meals in company with the elders—and we are forced to consider the problem with which I headed this chapter—we may reply unanimously, No; not as long as nurse lives, nor as long as there is the very smallest chance of illness or of our having to entertain small visitors. For these even the cots and high chairs should be retained; they do not eat anything, as one of our old nurses used to say when I wanted to give away some of the treasures, and they may even come in for the grandchildren, who will appreciate, as no one else can, the fact that they are having just what their parents had, and sitting and sleeping in the very beds and chairs they used to patronise. It is from the mistakes of others we learn most, and I have never forgotten the lamentations among old servants at home, when the nurseries being done away with and every cot scattered to the four winds of heaven, my mother had to borrow cots and turn the house almost upside down to take in her grandchildren, who were suddenly sent to her to be looked after during a sudden stress of illness,

an inconvenience that caused endless worry and bustle, but would have been nothing at all had the old nurseries still been as they were, and which, as a rule, can be easily managed in a big house where the nurseries have been properly arranged for.

Then, too, the position of the two rooms close together, and generally a little way removed from the rest of the house, though not at the top, I beg, makes them a most admirable place for an invalid to retire to; there is always a chance of illness—aye, even serious illness—as one gets on in life, and all sorts of disagreeable things remind one that one is not immortal; and though, as a rule, houses are built emphatically to live in, and neither to be ill nor die in—though, despite the architects, both these unpleasant matters are possible—one can generally in a large house manage that the nurseries shall be close together and quiet; therefore, they should be kept apart for our own use. We could be ill most comfortably in the night nursery, and convalescent in the day nursery, which could, however, be used for our nurse did we require one, and the cheerful pretty papers and the thoughts that would be inseparable from these rooms would alike help us to bear our woes, while we could have nurse to talk to and to 'do for us' as no one else could—no one who did not know us thoroughly, and, having seen us in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, knows exactly what we can bear and how to manage us best.

Thinking over everything, then, considering carefully what the nurseries have been and what they may be, I do most seriously beg all my contemporaries to pause a very long time before they lay a ruthless hand on what was once as sacred as a shrine. No amount of decoration can embellish walls decorated with the hopes and joys of our youth, and one's first playing at Motherhood; no other paper and paint give us the idea, or remind us as do the old papers and paint, of a thousand and one things no one can possibly want to forget; not even the miseries endured during serious illness, the anxieties turned into joy, or may be deepened into dreadful gloom by death itself, should be forgotten; aye, a thousand times should they be remembered if this be the case, and, though this is an impatient age when no one wants to think, and when death is treated so lightly that people are in society and deepest black at

the same time, and when all are so impatient of the sorrow death brings with it, that ‘no one stays at home except the corpse,’ I trust I shall not number many of them among my readers, or indeed anyone who cannot and will not thankfully remember their past, and as they grow old, Darby and Joan together, will not spare time to look back gladly and happily to days which were better, perhaps, than the present days of feeble steps and darkened lights, but which are no less happy if Edwin and Angelina are still hand int hand and heart to heart, and have proved for themselves the absolute truth that where marriage is begun in love, continued in love, and ended in love, it can never be anything save success, and that anyone who calls it a failure must know absolutely nothing whatever about it. To such a couple as this, the nurseries must always be sacred places, and they will be as reluctant as I am to do away with them. I think, therefore, I may take it for granted that unless absolutely pressed for room we shall retain our nurseries, keeping them fresh and bright and nice in case we are ill, or in case we have our grandchildren to see us, or in case we have small visitors, who, being provided with suitable rooms, are nothing but a pleasure to us, when otherwise they might be nothing except a trouble and a nuisance.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GIRLS' ROOM.

In writing about the girls' room, I mean to consider a great deal more than decoration, though naturally that will not be neglected, for I am more and more convinced as years go by that something definite must be done in the way of providing for the women who flood the market and struggle—alas! that it should be so—in the open streets with men for their living, instead of contenting themselves with being the helpmeets of those with whom they wage this unseemly warfare. I have a very strong opinion that people should not bring into the world any more children than they can reasonably hope to equip in some measure for the fight. Boys can always make their way, women cannot; and though I do not agree with Mr. Besant, who declares that women hate work and do not wish ever to do anything, I do think that no woman should be obliged to work for mere food and clothes—at all events in the ranks above the lower middle classes; and that no woman's constitution can stand the anxiety of providing her own sustenance, and at the same time doing work to procure this sustenance; for anxiety paralyses a woman, and the more she is obliged to take thought for the morrow the less able is she to ensure the morrow's being provided for by her work. She should, therefore, never be placed in a position in which she is literally forced out into public strife, unless from her very earliest days she has been brought up among workers and taught that her future can be nothing but severe toil.

Can one speak too strongly of the wicked selfishness of people who bring ten or eleven children into the world, knowing that, were they to die to-morrow, the unhappy creatures would either starve, or do worse than starve in the workhouse or in one of those excellent and stony-hearted institutions where the child becomes a unit among hundreds of uniformed units, with never a pretty frock or sash among them, and never a chance of anything save work outside the walls and of an ultimate grave?—of the insensate and odious

conduct of those parents who bring up their children to have every single thing they require, and then, when the girls do not marry and grow old at home, leave them penniless when totally unable to work, because they have never known they must—never have learned a single thing worth knowing, and that they must either starve genteelly or live on their overburdened relations, or add to the already fearful number of people who paint dreadful little tables and tambourines, sew infamously, or try the thousand and one ways of making a little money, which cheapen the market and bring institutions for the sale of work done by ladies into the profoundest contempt? I say that the State should interfere, and force a man to lay by for his daughters, at least so much that will keep them from such an end, or to give them such an education that at any moment they could work—could do the work that from their earliest days they should learn is waiting for them in the near future; and that if a man's own sense will not teach him that he has no right to make helpless women suffer (as women must suffer who find themselves destitute in middle age), he should be treated like a criminal and punished by a jury, which should be composed of women who have suffered in their turn through their parents' selfishness. Naturally this would be impossible, but I do wish men's consciences could be awakened, and every successful man who is working hard, spending all he makes, and adding yearly to the frocked darlings in the nursery with scarcely an *arrière pensée*, would remember in the dead of the night, when one's sins generally find one out, that the day of reckoning will come—that some day the children brought up in luxury and accustomed to think the world their own will be faded spinsters (for out of a large family some are sure to remain unmarried in these days), and that all the sweetness and light of the early life will be forgotten, and the father will be cursed when these faded, sorrowful women have to look forward to nothing but patient starvation or a corner grudged to them by their more successful relations, to whom they can never be anything save incumbrances; for these disappointed ones of the earth always resent prosperity in anyone else, and are apt to snarl and snap at those who dole them out the bread they so unwillingly take.

Why should not the State compel every working man with two or more daughters (after two the case should be legislated for) to pay in a part of his income to some fund for providing for the women? And by working men I mean those who have no capital except their brains—the artists, lawyers, clergymen, professional men of all kinds, who have nothing but themselves to depend upon. The man making and spending his 1,500*l.* a year should be forced to put by at least 200*l.* a year for the poor girls who come into the world without their own consent, and who are left absolutely destitute, save of a certain amount of distaste for anything save enjoyment, and an absolute dislike of doing anything save just what it pleases them to do at the moment; while at the same time a properly mapped-out education should be provided that will enable them to earn something in addition to the pittance the State would be keeping for them against a rainy day, but which would be something on which they could rely with certainty, and which would allow them to contemplate possible illness without the deadly sinking that fills the breast of any woman who has absolutely nothing but her own self to rely upon, and who knows she must starve or seek the cold comfort of the corner mentioned before if she cannot continue her labour.

I cannot put the case too strongly before the fathers and mothers who may read this book; for, after all, they must be their own State, and do their own legislating. They must not have enormous families that they cannot feed, clothe, or educate respectably; and they must so manage their affairs that the girls can rely on the 100*l.* a year, which is all I ask for—all that is absolutely necessary to keep a single woman in comfort, but not luxury; the luxuries must be earned or gone without. They must do this, I say, unless they wish to look down from whence they may go after death, and have their hearts lacerated and torn by the sight of the women they have left to starve and to curse those who have entailed so much misery on them. There surely would be some insurance company who would undertake to do for all what the Edinburgh Life Assurance Company, 11 King William Street, E.C., does for schoolmistresses who like to pay in a certain amount yearly—viz. pay them a pension at a certain age, or else a sum of money, whichever they prefer; and the parents could, as soon

as they added another daughter to the household, begin providing for her. If they cannot do this, I maintain they are absolutely wicked in adding that little life to the overwhelming population already here.

There is no misery to be compared to the misery of a woman who, never having imagined her future can be aught but a sheltered one, finds herself at middle age absolutely destitute and at the mercy of her relations. She has no claim on anyone but her parents, and she knows this, and suffers infinitely. Therefore those parents must contemplate this: must understand that marriage does not come to the lot of everyone, and that, even if it does, the woman should not go penniless to her husband, but should have some small allowance to enable her to feel independent, and to add to her house, or her children's pleasures, out of her own resources. Here, again, I mention the 100*l.* a year. Each girl in an upper middle-class family—the professional man's family—cannot possibly cost any amount less than that; in the case, of course, of some, 50*l.* would be amply sufficient, and this sum should be allowed yearly as long as the father lived; after which, insurance money should be forthcoming that would insure something at all events, if not quite as much as they have been having.

If, however, it is absolutely impossible for a man to give his daughters anything—in which case they ought most distinctly never to have been born—he is bound to tell them so honestly from their earliest days, and he is equally bound to give them such an education that at any moment they can earn something, either as domestic servants—and, for my part, I would, and far rather, be a parlourmaid than a nursery governess—or as Board school teachers, designers, or as members of such of the home branches of toil as are open to women who cannot aspire to the higher education and the advantages of Girton and similar establishments.

Of course the subject of woman's work is one on which volumes have been written, and volumes might still be compiled from the same source, and I could not naturally go into all the *pros* and *cons* of each occupation in this chapter, even if I knew them all, which I do not; but I do strongly beg my readers to dissuade their girls from competing with the

men; they only lower prices, and, finally, prevent the men from marrying them by giving themselves one less chance of fulfilling the proper end of their sex—viz. to make a home in the fullest sense of the word. There is plenty for women to do without scratching and fighting with the men. If only they can realise that fact I shall not have written in vain.

I have had lately a great deal to do with women who have to earn their own living, and I have never found one who really could and would work at anything that turned up who could not add in an appreciable manner to her income; but I have also found hundreds who would not even try to do what I could offer them, but who preferred to dabble with paint, to embroider hideous cushions no one wants, and which cost pounds to make, to undertaking the 'smocking,' the upholstery, and, above all, the dressmaking and cooking with which any sensible woman, who is honest and hard-working, can keep herself and manage to get along comfortably. No; if they can't get just the work they want, they will not take any; or, if they take it, they grumble; don't return it at the time they promise; and, finally, are so unbusinesslike that their employers are in despair, and vow that, come what may, they will never employ a so-called lady again.

And it is also astonishing to me how the mere fact of being gently born seems to these poor things to excuse all their failings. Rickety screens, impossible pictures, frightful woollies—all must be sold at a higher rate for them than for anyone else, because they are made by ladies. And so it should be if ladies understood that, because they are ladies, they should be more punctual and better workers than the poorer classes, if their ladyhood were a hall-mark instead of a screen for their misdemeanours. But they will not see this, and in consequence they bring discredit on their order, and make the very words 'Poor lady!' synonymous with everything that is bad and absolutely unsaleable.

To be a successful worker one must take the work which comes before one, and one must be trained to work, to punctuality, and to business habits; therefore, if there be one of the families of daughters no other nation produces in the reckless way our own does, it is imperative that the training to

work begins in the nursery, and that the defenceless girls are given this equipment at least, even if the parents can do no more for them.

The boys are born to work; they are carefully trained and brought up for this end, but there are hundreds of cases where the fathers have either been suddenly ruined or become poor through illness or their own selfishness, and who turn the girls out in their turn, and are much astonished when the poor things flounder hopelessly about and cannot keep themselves, because they have had absolutely no training which shall fit them for work.

I feel, in writing this chapter, which concerns the girls of the household, that I cannot say too much about the subject of some provision being made for them, and that they should be relieved not only from the necessity of having to find a market for unskilled labour, but also from the trial of marrying if they do not want to do so, or if they do not see anyone they really love, because their parents are continually telling them it is their duty to marry in order to make room for their younger sisters.

Now, incredible as it may sound to male ears, there are very many women to whom marriage and the obligations and responsibilities entailed thereby are absolutely distasteful and disagreeable. As a rule, these women make the best wives and house-mothers, but they are not the happiest people in the world, and would probably have been both happier and better had they followed out their own inclinations and lived their own lives in their own way, without the constant presence of a man and the unceasing cares of a household on their shoulders. They do not understand Love with a big L, and passion and they are strangers for ever, and always would be, but they marry at their parents' request, to clear out the nest, and they certainly miss the higher happiness which, perchance, might have come had they waited, either from their work or from meeting the one individual who might have roused their sleeping souls and shown them a glimpse of the paradise that exists, I believe, for those lucky natures who understand what we may call the 'Ouidaesque' aspect of the case; albeit I also think they use up rapidly in that short sojourn in Paradise,

which serves more sober-minded folk for the whole of life's journey. For myself I cannot speak. I am a prosaic, unsentimental individual, and so far have got on without sentiment very well indeed; but other people may not be as I am, and may endure misery by marrying the first man who asks them because they see plainly how desperately they are grudged the room in the house which should have been theirs for ever, and from which they should have been allowed to go reluctantly to the husband, who appreciates his wife a thousandfold if he understands he is only allowed possession on sufferance, and that she was wanted by her own people quite as badly as ever he could want her himself.

And this brings me round to the question of giving the girls their own room in the house, where they can do just what they please, and where they can ask their own friends to tea should they desire to do so; not, however, in the American way, which empowers the young people to have festivals whenever they like, and to ask whom they like to them, but in a mitigated form, which compels them to ask permission to entertain, and furthermore to produce a list of names, so that full knowledge may be the mother's portion, and that she may know exactly who is coming, and, moreover, what is going on. If the girls have their own sitting-room, they feel their residence under the paternal roof is meant to last as long as the roof itself, and they have not that hurried, disagreeable feeling some unfortunate girls must be given by the parents who make no provision for their permanent comfort, and who openly speak of what they shall do when So-and-so gets married; poor So-and-so, who has never had an offer in her life, and shrinks away from every man she sees, as she cannot help regarding him as the monster who carries off a damsel whether she wishes it or not, because the fetish of home has to be appeased, and the fabric kept together by the quick sacrifice of those who are old enough to be chained to the rock to await his advances.

The home—of the making and the decorating, the management, and the keeping together of which I feel I can never say too much—cannot possibly be made too happy, too pleasant for the younger members of it; but they in their turn must understand that they, too, have their part in the whole to perform. The grown-up daughter in such a home is a most

precious possession; she can save her mother endless trouble, she can and does take the burden of most of the detail on her shoulders, and for her, therefore, should be arranged some place, no matter how small, that she can call her own, and where she can in some measure do much as she likes, for she is sure to have some pet occupation—friends to write to, work to do, all sorts of things to see about, and which she can only attend to in a room set apart for her and her belongings.

In many cases the schoolroom makes an admirable girls' room, but should this room be occupied by the younger children when the elder daughter is 'out' and requires a room to herself, a capital arrangement could be made for her by copying the French fashion of a boudoir-bedroom, an arrangement for which is illustrated here, and which my artist has adapted from a room I used to have in my Dorsetshire house, where space was a great object, and where the downstairs rooms were so badly managed that it was impossible to have a morning-room in which I could sit, although there were two tiny rooms beside the dining-and drawing-rooms, which we turned into bachelors' bedrooms, and which constituted our only spare rooms for some time. These rooms were larger than need be bestowed on the eldest girl of a house, and were made by removing the partition between a bed-and dressing-room; the bed and dressing-table, which also served as a washhand-stand, were completely screened off by a long and very tall Japanese screen; the cabinet, which stands by the side of the bed, held a quantity of linen, &c., and always looked very decorative, and not in the least like the humble chest of drawers that it undoubtedly was; while the couch in the first window served as a sofa, and, furthermore, held any quantity of dresses, supplemented as it was by the cupboard, the doors of which are panelled with Japanese leather, put in nearly twenty years ago, and verily, I do believe, the very first doors in England that were ever treated in this manner. I never saw any elsewhere, though, of course, now to find a door with undecorated panels is rather an impossibility,

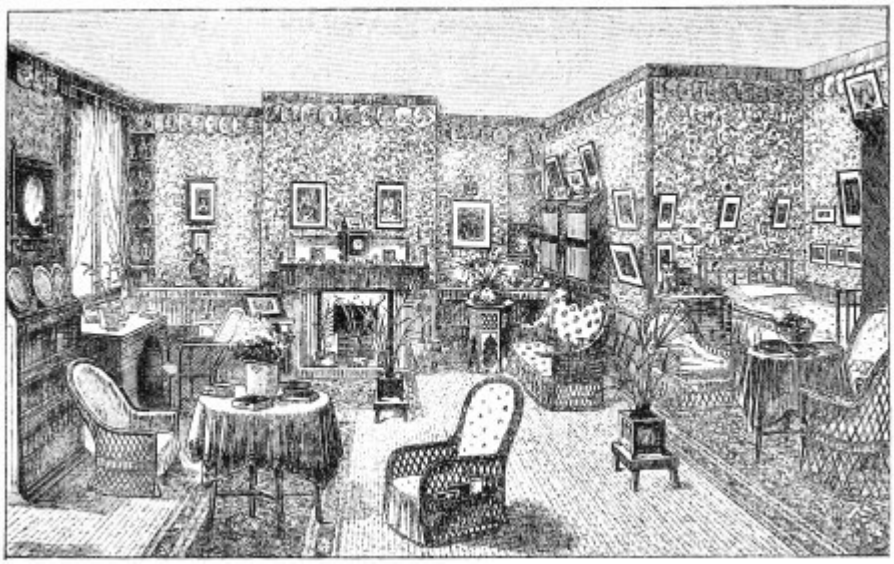


Fig. 16.—Boudoir-Bedroom.

at all events in any house the owner of which aspires to be in the least degree artistic.

The room illustrated here was papered with a very soft brown-and-gold paper, and had a dado of red-and-white matting, and a hideous shade of terra-cotta paint. In those days one could not find a ceiling paper anywhere, and I was obliged to content myself with a species of *café-au-lait* wash on the ceiling, which much exercised the mind of the local decorator, to say nothing of my own, for though I knew I hated the ordinary whitewash, I did not quite know how to set about a change; but notwithstanding that, my *café-au-lait* ceiling was rather smeary, and was profoundly jeered at by the good local housekeepers, to whom a spotless ceiling and a clear conscience were synonymous, and to whom anything new or strange meant undoubtedly an unsafe spiritual condition. The relief from the white glare of the ordinary ceiling was so great that I stuck to it manfully, and even added a blue ceiling to one of the other rooms until I came across a pretty paper, and had that put up, to the intense disgust of the builder and the open horror of the inhabitants, who since my day have papered their ceilings too, and done all sorts of other things which I used to preach in my bridal-days, but of which they took no heed until they saw me in print; then they were quite sure I was right, and began to alter their houses and make them prettier than they had ever been before.

I should not now put terra-cotta and brown together, but that room somehow always looked very harmonious; the short frilled curtains were of a charming soft terra-cotta and white cretonne, which unfortunately has been out of stock for something like fourteen years. The muslin was a very soft Madras with frills also, and the couch was covered in the same patterned cretonne, only in blue and white; when the paper became shabby and a little dull I added a frieze of Japanese fans all round, and they gave just the colour I required to the room. One cannot somehow buy such good fans nowadays as those were, unfortunately; and this is not imagination, for I possess a good many of these identical ones now, and I can never find in any of the numerous Japanese shops which have succeeded Liberty & Hewitt, or I should say followed them, any paper fans that are half such good colours or such pretty designs as those which formed the frieze in that particular room. I had the floor covered entirely with matting, and rugs were placed about. The whole of the furniture, with the exception of the writing-table shown in window No. 2, was wickerwork, and as in those days there was no Aspinall, I had to beg my varnished paint from the man who mended our carriages, and who could never produce anything except a very good black and a particularly awful blue, which I only tried once, and eschewed in favour of black, which remained on for years, and finally succumbed to the superior charms of Aspinall's hedge-sparrow-egg blue and other delicate and pleasant colours.

The shelves, both in the recesses by the fireplace and between the windows, will give an excellent idea how to manage these dwarf bookcases, which hold a quantity of books, while the tops serve as cabinets or stands for china. The corners of the room had a series of long wooden brackets in each, edged with frills of dark-blue velveteen, and the mantel-piece had on a painted board for the shelf edged with a deep frill or flounce, also of the same dark-blue velveteen; a narrow strip of looking-glass was placed along at the back, as overmantels were not invented, and I had always a horror of the great glass sheets then in vogue; while above that hung pictures, fans, &c., which made a species of overmantel arrangement for myself, with which I was quite satisfied. The

room altogether always looked pretty and nice, and was much admired; it was always full of ferns and palms and flowers too, without which no room can ever look well, spend what one may on the furniture and decorations thereof. This species of boudoir-bedroom is always a capital possession, and were space no object in a house I should always arrange the bed-chambers in a similar manner: there should be a dressing-room and bath-room to each, where all the dressing operations could be carried on; and the bath should be shut off by double doors from the passage. Such an arrangement is quite delightful both for visitors and when one has to remain in one's room from ill-health, for once up and on the sofa the whole appearance of a bedroom vanishes when the screen is in place, which is put straight along between the bed and the cabinet. All the housework is done behind the screen, the housemaids entering by the curtained door, and the invalid is not worried by the sight of bed-making operations, while her room always looks nice, and she can receive there anyone she may care to see, which she could not do were the room frankly a bed-chamber and nothing else.

Of course on ordinary days the windows must be opened as soon as dressing is over, and left open for a good two hours' spell of airing, and the room should not be sat in after tea or after luncheon if possible. This gives ample time for a due course of airing, the only objection anyone could make to this arrangement being that probably the room might be stuffy, or the air in it exhausted by being used during the day as well as slept in during the night. This objection vanishes into thin air when the windows are opened widely and kept open from about two till bedtime; indeed, I say after bedtime, for whatever the weather may be I have one window open all night, and whenever possible every window which will open remains so; indeed, one window in our present house has not been closed for a moment during three years.

Now, in decorating a room on a smaller scale for a girl, her own individual taste should be in some measure consulted, but nothing can possibly be or look better than the delightful 'Watteau' paper, sold by Haines, at 2*s.* 6*d.* the piece. It is a paper of which one never tires, and has also the capital quality of being no distinct colour, and of allowing any colour being

used in the room with it; while at the same time, should a distinct hue be desired, a room decorated with the ‘Watteau’ paper can be made distinctly blue, moss-green or coral-pink, according to the manner in which the room is painted, or according to the frieze or dado selected. For example, the paper could be hung above a dado of cretonne sold by Shoolbred at 1*s.* 4½*d.* a yard, which almost matches the paper, the paint in this case being ivory, and the ceiling paper Land & Co.’s ‘Watteau’ in yellow and white, at 3*s.* the piece. The curtains could be either of the same cretonne or of a Louis XVI. brocade, sold by Colbourne at 2*s.* 11½*d.* a yard, double width. The floor could be covered with matting, and there should be some rugs about on the floor, thus making one decoration without any distinct colour. Another could be the ‘Watteau’ with a plain green frieze or a frieze of Haines ‘rose’ paper, at 10*s.* a piece. This is run round the room, not put on in strips like wall-paper, and therefore would not be as expensive as it sounds. The frieze-rail and all the woodwork could be stained green with Jackson’s malachite green stain; the ceiling paper could be pink and white; the carpet, Wallace’s green ‘lily;’ and the chairs could be stained green, and upholstered either in the pinky terra-cotta Louis XVI. brocade, of which the curtains could be made, or else of the ‘Watteau’ cretonne mentioned above. The bed should be covered with a worked quilt—a good occupation for any girl would it be to make such quilts; while the towels and pillow-cases should all bear embroidered monograms, marking-ink being a positive badge of disgrace in a household where there should be useful fingers.

There are a great many floral papers, such as the ‘rose,’ at 3*s.* 9*d.*, sold by Giles; the ‘carnation,’ sold by Maple; and the ‘wild rose,’ sold by Haines, which are all charming for such rooms, or, indeed, for any room; but should a severer form of decoration be required, my readers cannot go wrong with any of Pither’s papers, or of Liberty’s new damasque papers, which are all as good and artistic as they can be, and which can be used fearlessly by anyone who is not sure enough of his own taste to allow himself to select a paper on his own account, or has not time and patience to encounter the invariable battle with the decorator, who will not produce, until he is absolutely

obliged, any paper on which he cannot see his way to making an exorbitant profit, and who sets forth paper after paper, trusting to his own ingenuity and his powers of wearying his victim to enable him to sell some venerable ‘shopkeeper’ which has long vexed his soul by its unremunerative existence on some back shelf.

I am delighted myself with Liberty’s damasque papers, which have only been brought out since I wrote my first book, and which, therefore, have not had the honourable mention there that they so very richly deserve to have had, the blue and silver ‘tulip damasque,’ at 2*s.*, being a perfect paper, and one that would be quite satisfactory in a boudoir-bedroom, unless it happened to be a very small one; in that case the blue and silver marigold, at 1*s.* 6*d.*, would do equally well. With these papers a dado is imperative, as I do not consider they have sufficient substance in them to withstand the wear and tear inseparable from their position at the base of the wall. A dado of Treloar’s thin matting or of a good red-and-gold Japanese paper would look well. With the matting the paint should be ivory, with the leather paper a good red paint should be selected which will harmonise with the blue. In any case a red carpet, such as Pither’s dull red ‘cottage’ carpet, or Wallace’s dull red ‘anemone,’ should be selected, and the curtains should be the same red in serge, or else in a dull blue cretonne, the ‘algæ’ made on purpose to harmonise with this paper by Oetzmann.

The planning and talking over the arrangement of this room will be a great amusement both to mother and daughter, and I strongly recommend the mother to attempt nothing in the way of a surprise, but to frankly take her daughter into her confidence and consult her tastes on the subject if she wishes the room to be a real success. I am compelled to recommend this course from an experience of my own, because I have never forgotten my unconcealable dismay at returning home after a long visit to find my own mother had planned such a surprise for me, but had in all innocence, and with such kindness, done such dreadful things to my pet belongings that I often recall the remembrance of my start of horror and exclamation of dismay with the profoundest contrition, for I did not know then what I have only realised in after years, that

I must have pained her dreadfully, for, dear soul, she had done all the renovations out of her own savings, and had taken much trouble and pains about it, and I could not help saying, ‘Oh, why did you let them do this?’ before I realised that this was a surprise, and I ought to have been enchanted instead of dismayed at her renovations—renovations that were in absolute good taste, for her taste was perfect, and her house charming long before anyone else cared for their house, but which somehow were not my ideas, and which annoyed me dreadfully because the arrangements were not mine at all, and which I never dared alter afterwards, because I had already received the changes so ungraciously, instead of realising that I should have been enchanted with the forethought and goodness which had prepared all this for me.

Remembering my own reception of a similar surprise, therefore advise that the daughter should be consulted in every way about the room she is to inhabit, unless, of course, she has no tastes of her own, and does not care what the room looks like so long as she has it to herself; then the room can be made as pretty as the mother likes. But there are few girls nowadays who do not care for their rooms, and are not as eager as anyone else to make themselves a pretty nest that they may regard as their own, and not as a perch on which they rest on sufferance until they are pushed out by the on-coming juniors into the arms of the first man who appears in the least degree anxious to have her for a wife.

I do hope that, whatever else happens, the daughters of the household may never be sent away to schools, or urged at a high school to overwork their brains and go in for those wretched competitive examinations. I am no advocate for the higher education of women, for votes for women, for anything which shall take them out of the sheltered home atmosphere, where women alone can breathe comfortably and live properly, and force them into the arena of life; and I do hope mothers who may read this book will consider what they are doing when they force their girls forward, and delight in the hard work and successful examinations which ruin their constitutions, and make them irritable and nervous and old before their time. I know only too well that there are women who are compelled to work, but I shall always maintain this

should not be; and, to return once more to the subject with which I began my chapter, I state boldly that neither would they be were the families of English people smaller, and were we less extravagant, less determined to snatch all we can from life, doing absolutely nothing for ourselves that we can get someone else to do for us. Why, I know myself one family of five or six daughters who, if their father died to-morrow, would not have 50*l.* a year, yet who go out night after night to balls, who take cabs at every moment, never saving a shilling, who are waited upon by half a dozen servants, and yet who ought to do the housework themselves, who ought to be content with a quarter of the gaiety they insist upon. The poor silly things even went to Court, though, Heaven knows, the Queen would have sent them back again had she known what their dresses cost—a price, moreover, that would never be paid —and who finally would have far more chance of happy marriage than they have now, when every man they know looks askance at their garments, and then at their father's worried face, and avoids them, justly declining to put themselves in the noose which is round his neck, and which will surely kill him, even if he can keep his head above water for much longer. This case is the case of hundreds of families at present, and therefore I feel I cannot say too much about it, and I do hope mothers will therefore think a little more about their daughters, and endeavour to restore a little of the quiet and simplicity which are almost extinct in this rushing era of ours, and which can never be found among those who are cast out from the shelter of home and forced into competition—a competition that is as odious as it is unnecessary in most girls' lives, and that would be altogether unnecessary were there fewer girls in the world, and were we content to spend one quarter of the money we do on all sorts of nonsense and on extra servants, who only make our daughters lazy and luxurious when they ought undoubtedly to be up and doing.

The moment a girl leaves the control of the schoolroom and the watchful eye of the governess she should be told that, though now she is to some extent her own mistress, she must not consider her education finished, but rather that the real part of education is just beginning, and that it is absolutely necessary that every day should begin with some steady work;

and it is also well that some definite rule should be made on this subject: certain small household duties should be given to her, and certain studies should be continued, leaving it to her to select in some measure what those studies shall be.

Now in the richest households there are many things which should never be left to servants if one wishes the house to look like the abode of a lady, and not of a *nouveau riche* one, the principal one in my eyes being the arrangement of the flowers. The best gardener in the world has only a gardener's ideas, and cannot know what to bring in and how to place what he brings in in an absolutely satisfactory way, and, as dead flowers and fading plants are disgraceful and worse than an utter absence of floral decoration, the first duty a girl should undertake is that of going round the rooms the moment breakfast is over, to decide which plants are to be removed and which vases should be refilled. In the country the gardener should wait her orders, and have the flowers gathered dry and before the heat of the sun is on them, and should himself exchange the plants, the position of them being determined by his mistress, as the arrangement of the flowers should be left to her alone. If done systematically in the manner here indicated, all the house will look fresh and nice, and there would be no chance of overwork.

To arrange the flowers an old dress should be worn, also a large apron and sleeves should be donned. Despite the fact that the gardener should bring in the flowers, there is always something extra to gather at the last moment, and one rushes out, gets one's skirts covered with damp mould and dew from the grass, or shakes down a quart or so of water from the trees all over one, and a dress is spoiled in a moment—a serious matter at all times, but something more than serious when one has forestalled one's allowance, and can't afford another garment anyhow.

The arrangement of the flowers in most houses nowadays would occupy at least an hour, after which the girl should sit down for a steady read at some standard work carefully chosen for her, or else to any sewing work she may care for; then she should take up her hobby—and I trust she may have one for her own sake—and she should either practise, paint or write,

or do anything she likes (save read novels) until the hour before luncheon, when she *must* go out. If she be wise she will continue her regular walk with the schoolroom party; if not, she must be sent out to see her friends, do ‘errands’ about the village or town, or else arrange for a game at tennis—anything to ensure some exercise. The girls of the present day don’t care for walks for walking’s sake, but they must have open-air exercise somehow, whether they care for it or not.

In London, I maintain, any girl who knows how to behave, and who is told plainly how to conduct herself, can safely go about the streets alone from the day she is eighteen. I have done so ever since I can remember, and though I do not consider myself lovely, I certainly was nice-looking (please, I am not conceited), and I never met with any adventure of the very smallest kind; and given a straightforward walk, an air of having something to do and doing it, no peeping into shop-windows, for example, and not a suspicion of loitering anywhere, I maintain any ordinary girl can go about alone perfectly, should it be inconvenient to send someone with her, or should she have no girl friend or sister with whom to walk; anyhow, London is much safer than the country, with its crawling tramps and its suspicious cows at every corner, to say nothing of mad bulls and dogs and all kinds of perilous adventures.

The morning walk disposed of, after luncheon then could come any pleasures. There are sure to be calls to be made, tennis to go to, afternoon parties, concerts, and all kinds of small dissipations; then would come dinner, after which, if there were no going out, amusing books could be allowed, and, in fact, any amusement that she particularly cares for should now be indulged in. The evenings should be entirely her own; and if she has any hobbies, and wishes to continue the morning’s work, let her do so. You will very likely be as glad to be left alone for a little with your husband as she is anxious to return to her own quarters and resume the special employments on which she was engaged.

I am now writing about those lucky girls who have an assured future of some kind, who, though they may not be rich should their father die, will not have to join in the fearful battle

for bread, and who should represent the sex universally had I my way; and, therefore, I do not dwell on the necessity for toil that would be inevitable were the girls' parents aware of the sword hanging over their heads. In this case the girls should know the truth, and should themselves elect whether they should prepare armour against the fray, or hang about, hoping against hope that they may be married before the evil days that must come fall upon the household. But girls who are pretty well off, and who, as I said before, cannot starve if their parents die, should still endeavour to find some real occupation for themselves; they may never want to make much money by it, but they should always be able to save money by it; and if they cannot do anything definite, or that will be likely to be heard of in the world, they should cultivate their fingers, and should learn to embroider and sew, in order that their room at first, and their houses afterwards, should be made beautiful by them, and should show evidences of their industry, and the excellent uses they have made of their time.

Make the girls' room pretty, and the girls will like to sit there and spend their time carefully within the charming walls; but do not for one moment tolerate laziness, lounging, or novel-reading; and as long as the girls are at home, see that the mornings, at all events, are properly employed. The results of the day should be seen, should be inspected, and the masters or mistresses, who should still attend to continue some lessons (German, music, and painting being the best, I think), should be interviewed now and again about the progress of the pupil; and a watchful but not inquisitorial eye should be kept on all that goes on in the room, else we shall find it turned into a rubbish-place, or a spot where all is play and nothing useful is ever done.

Lessons in dressmaking and in cooking should be given, if possible, to every girl; and she should also at the earliest age possible be taught to knit socks and stockings, and, above all, she should, in the very fullest sense of the word, learn her duty to her neighbours, and be taught that her superior advantages both of time and money should be tithed for those whose lives lack so much, and could be made so very much brighter were we all to do our duty by them. I am not an advocate for slumming; I do not consider any girl should have a district,

and, unless in the country, Sunday-school teaching is not always to be attempted; but some part of the day should be set aside, either for working for the poor—amply represented to me by the Sisters at the Kilburn Orphanage—or in making some life brighter. In the country it is easy to collect flowers for hospitals, or to ask dwellers in courts to tea in the garden in London, to make things which will be useful, and to take girls and boys occasionally to some museum or picture gallery, just for an hour's change from the crowded streets.

I think girls should always do one thing during the day, as a matter of custom, for the poor; but whatever is done should be done under some direction. Young folks are enthusiastic and hurried, and often do more harm than good by indiscriminate charity. But then the clergyman of the parish can sometimes be consulted, and when he cannot, I say, Send to Kilburn, to the Orphanage in Randolph Gardens. There, without consideration of creed, with large and vigorous minds and hearts, all are helped; and all work can be used, all help received, with the perfect assurance that what we send there will emphatically reach those for whom it is meant, and that there are no highly paid secretaries to come before the poor and suffering.

These are all large matters to be discussed in this book, but I cannot think they are out of place. I am thankful to say that far more people trouble themselves now about their poorer neighbours than in bygone days; that rich men realise that they are only stewards of their property, and that they should administer their goods for the poor as well as for themselves; that while the owner of a large park and magnificent pictures is not bound to cut up the former for allotment-grounds, or distribute the latter among the denizens of Whitechapel, he is bound to allow them to see both, under proper control, whenever he is called upon to do so; that garden-parties for the poor are far more necessary than garden-parties for the rich; and that all who regard life rightfully and have had a large share of life's best things are bound, by their duty to God and their neighbour, to administer them in some measure for the poor, who will gradually become more fit to share them as we show them our possessions and teach them how to regard them properly. Under these circumstances there is great hope that our girls may advance farther than we have done, and, being

most carefully trained from their earliest days to remember God's poor, may do so as a matter of course, and may consider that day wasted indeed which cannot show at least one thing done to alleviate some of the misery and poverty there is in this overcrowded world of ours.

The weaker sex indeed! We may be weak physically—we are, we allow that; we allow that our impulsiveness, our weakness, our very structure, forbids us battling with the men, shoulder to shoulder, in that dreadful scrimmage for life in which some women would cast us all; and all we beg is to be allowed to confess that, and have some shelter provided for us, where we can do our part of the world's work—our part, that a weak mind cannot undertake, but that is essentially the woman's part—the part of beautifier of the home and administrator of the finances, and, through the home, of the outside world, too, where we see all men as our brothers and sisters, and where we recognise our place as helpers (not rivals), of consolers (not competitors) of the men, who should do the sheltering and home-providing that no woman, except under most exceptional circumstances, can possibly manage by herself alone.

Therefore, if all who have girls remember this, and instil in their hearts the fact that we want them at home, that even if they should not marry or become senior wranglers, or anything else equally prominent and unpleasant, their lives can be busy and useful and fully occupied, and of infinite use in their generation, we shall do something for the world at large even if we let all this grow only out of the innocent preparation of the girls' room when they have reached the end of the first stage of their life, and become in some measure mistresses of themselves. But, for fear I may be considered too solemn and serious, and for fear that my readers may think I am adverse to gaiety, and would not let girls enjoy themselves under any circumstances whatever, I will finish this chapter, and pass on to consider far more frivolous things—namely, how to manage one's dress allowance, and, furthermore, how best to arrange for any festivities we may be able to afford when we have maidens in the household who are anxious to 'come out.'

CHAPTER VII.

COMING-OUT AND DRESS.

I ALWAYS regard the expression ‘coming-out’ as rather a ridiculous one, when used by the ordinary upper middle-class household; yet, as it has become a recognised part of our vocabulary, I suppose we must all adopt it when we talk of that enchanting period of a girl’s life which occurs when she is about eighteen, and is in some measure emancipated from the control and ever-watchful care which have been her portion from the day she was born until the joyful moment arrives when the books may be closed and the schoolroom-door shut, and she takes her place among her elders as a right, and not on sufferance any more.

Here I should like to pause for a moment to impress upon all mothers who may read my book that a girl should remain absolutely in the schoolroom until she reaches her eighteenth birthday; the longer she can be kept from the turmoil of life, from the shams and wearinesses of ordinary society, and from any temptations to shirk her education, the better. She will not be pleased with her mother at the time; she will think regretfully and, may be, angrily of those of her less guarded, more ‘fortunate’ (?) friends, who are ‘all over the place’ at seventeen, who never read an instructive book or think of anything save dress, admirers, and what dissipation is in store for them next; but when she looks back at her girlhood from the altitude of that calm, sheltered middle-age I wish for all girls for whom I care, she will see what she has to thank her mother for, and all the disagreeable feelings she had then towards her will be atoned for a thousandfold in the flood of grateful affection which will fill her heart, and in the love which she will entertain for one who trained her so carefully, and who cared for no present lack of affection, because she knew quite well she would infallibly and at no very late date reap her reward.

The years from sixteen to eighteen are undoubtedly the years during which a girl learns most, and in a properly

guarded household she would then comprehend more fully than at any other time how necessary it is to use every moment for the best. She would form habits of study, regularity, and appreciation of what is best in art and literature which she would never lose, and which would only develop as years went on; and she would, furthermore, lay in a stock of health, on which she could draw at will when the real stress of living begins, and she finds herself in her turn with a heavy burden of real work on her shoulders, and has a house to manage, a husband to please, and children to bring forth and care for unceasingly.

And this latter is the strongest argument I can use against girls being 'brought out' too young; if they are they may marry. I knew one parent criminal enough to allow a child of sixteen to take upon herself this burden; and should they marry and have children they entail on themselves and on unborn generations misery compared with which a life spent always in the schoolroom would be a life of Elysian and purest delight.

The first thing to consider with our girls is their health: let that stand before every single thing; dress them as little mites carefully and warmly; as young girls insist on warm clothing and perpetually dry feet and skirts; never allow a game of tennis on a damp lawn to pass by without seeing that no damage is done thereby; and then, furthermore, insist on early bed until the lesson-time is over; allow no dances of any kind, forbid entirely the children's parties, which are at the root of half the epidemics, the affectations and the bad manners of the present day; while you take care that pleasant companionship, treats in the shape of afternoon concerts or plays, or tennis-parties with children their own age, these give the necessary relaxation, and you can face the 'coming-out' gaieties with a light heart, knowing quite well that your daughter has the necessary physique to stand the strain, and that she has arrived at a common-sense age, and will be able to know when she has had enough pleasure, the while she will care herself for something beside balls and parties, albeit she will in no measure despise a proper allowance of both.

I am no Puritan; I do not object to dancing or theatres, or any other amusement, but I do plead for moderation in all

things, and that a girl may have time for something beside mere play. I ask it not only because their mental health must suffer, but because their physique cannot possibly stand that present strain and yet remain intact ready to bear the yet greater strain to which most women are exposed during their married life. I know only too well what an uncontrolled girlhood and unending gaieties did for me, and I am only again writing out of my own experience in the hope that I may save some few girls from the misery in store for them if they begin their fashionable life before they are eighteen and if, when they begin it, they have no moderation about it, and go from ball to ball, party to party, until their faces become thin and wretched, their bloom goes, their tempers and noses sharpen together, and they are unstrung and miserable just at the time when life demands most from them, and they ought to be as well and happy as they are miserable, nervous, and broken in spirits and in health.

I actually have known one mother introduce her daughter at seventeen because the next daughter was far prettier, and she wished to give No. 1 ‘a chance’ before No. 2 appeared on the scene. Can anything be more ignoble than that? And it is to save both mothers and daughters from a similar fate to that which will overtake this couple that I am pleading for the girls; that, in fact, they may be saved from themselves by the prompt action of those who ought to be the first to shield their children from a too early contact with the world.

I should myself keep a girl to regular hours until she was eighteen, but even after that, as I have shown in my last chapter, she should have employment and occupation. Until she was eighteen she should never be in bed later than 9.30, and she should always be down at 8.30, while she ought never to be allowed to go to any large dance before then. Small ones, ending at 11, should be very sparsely attended, and those not at all until she was past seventeen. When the auspicious date of her eighteenth birthday draws near, a great effort should be made to celebrate it properly. On that date a girl comes into her kingdom, accepts at your hands the sceptre of self-rule and the crown of an educated and well-guarded girlhood, and certainly some special notice should be taken of such an occasion.

Not, please, by her being presented at Court; the present-day rush of the wives of wine merchants, successful upholsterers, and tradesmen of all kinds has made what was once a stately and beautiful ceremony a mockery indeed. Of course girls whose parents are about the Court, who have long pedigrees and ancient titles, are bound to be introduced to the Head of Society and to take their places round the throne; but just think for a moment what it means to the ordinary middle-class family, the frightful expense, the worry and strain of the presentation, the fatigue and showing off at the 'Drawing Room teas' afterwards, and, finally, the dead and unpleasant certainty that they will never be asked to one Court function, that they are no nearer being the bosom friend of the princesses than they were before, and that their social status has not been improved in the least; indeed, it has gone down, for old friends sneer at the foolishness and scoff when they see the name in the paper, remembering with redoubled force the counters of the wine merchant and shopkeeper, which would have been entirely forgotten had not the 'fierce light which beats upon the throne' been reflected on those who approach it and shown up the flaws in the pedigree which were on the way to oblivion, but which give ample scope for scoffing from the very lips which are drinking the tea at the 'reception' after the Drawing Room, where all are wondering what the dresses cost, and whether Jones or Smith, as the case may be, will last over the season, or whether he will marry off his daughters before the crash comes and all go under together!

Remember, I am not scoffing at trade; it would ill become me to do so; but I am simply asking my readers to be sensible and to be frankly and absolutely themselves. Personally I would far rather pin my rights to being a lady on the fact that art and literature have been my sponsors than on being the great-great-granddaughter of a king's mistress or a ruffianly robber of other men's goods; but that has nothing to do with the subject. A waiter on courts should have business at those courts; therefore I say that those who cannot consider themselves owing the Queen a call, and the courtesy of showing her their girls as they grow up to take their places, either as friends or servants, have any right to go there, and that they had much better stay at home and not make

themselves ridiculous by an attempt to be and seem what they can never really be.

Let us suppose that our eloquence has prevailed, and that the girl has reached her eighteenth birthday, and there is no talk of her being presented, or any such nonsense; but still something must be done to celebrate the auspicious event. If the birthday is in autumn or winter, or very early spring, there is no reason why a dance should not be indulged in, more especially if it can be afforded, or if there is room for such dissipation. These two things are, of course, to be considered before anything else.

A ball can cost any sum anyone likes to spend on it; all depends on the purse and the ideas. If we engage a good hall and band, go in for a regular and first-rate supper, any amount of flowers, and so on, I tremble to think what the bills may come to; but all can be ascertained by writing to the different places where such things are to be found. Gunter will give an estimate per head for the supper; the Prince's Hall secretary will tell you the charges per night; Mrs. Green, of Crawford Street, W., will tell you what her fee for decorating the room would be; and Mitchell, of Bond Street, would provide the band. But people who can afford to arrange matters *en grand seigneur* are not likely to come to me for advice; if they did, I should only hand them over to the above-named authorities. Still, if these lucky folk should come across my book, this will tell them what to do. But ordinary folk can give a very enjoyable dance for a little over 50*l.* to about 125 people, making the hours from eight to twelve, and having a stand-up supper at about 5*s.* a head, ending up with soup just before the guests start for home; and I fancy that, if one had a sufficiently large house, and could manage the supper oneself, it could be done for very much less, particularly if one has a stand-up supper, which is really all that can be required when people have dined late, and only want something to carry them over the later hours and the extra amount of fatigue.

To make such a dance a success, the floor must be perfect, a band of from three to five performers engaged, and people must be thoroughly well introduced to each other, and, if possible, no girl must be seen sitting out without a valiant

struggle on the part of the hostess to prevent such a sad occurrence by finding her a partner. I cannot countenance or believe in dances, or, in fact, any social gathering, where there are no introductions; it is simply an excuse for laziness on the part of the hostess, which all too often condemns her guests to a great deal of misery and dulness. Of course the theory is a perfectly correct one; the practice, however, cannot, in my opinion, be too heartily condemned. There will always be *débutantes* and shy girls who know very few people, and these cannot possibly dance unless we see they know men to dance with.

Is there any misery like the misery of a girl who is dying to dance, who loves the exercise for its own sake, and who has to sit out on a bench, her feet impatiently tapping the floor, and her little heart ready to break with disappointment, while she sees married women, who ought to know better, and who ought never to dance at all as long as a girl is sitting out, prancing all about the place and caring nothing for the poor young things whose day it is? As long as they enjoy themselves, that is quite enough for them.

The watchful hostess will have none of these engaging little ways at her dances: the girls are provided for first, the matrons after; and as this would be impossible were introductions done away with, I would impress upon my readers to cling to this old fashion, and to see that the girls enjoy themselves, no matter who else do not. Except as chaperons married women are out of place in the ballroom, and should not be encouraged to come there; if they do their duty by their homes, their husbands, and their children, they could have neither time nor inclination for such a pursuit.

When my own daughter ‘came out’ the other day, we had about 125 people to a dance in Watford, and it cost us just under 50*l.* Because our house was too small to have any festivity in, we had to engage rooms, which cost about 5*l.*; the supper cost about 25*l.*, at 5*s.* a head, including soup, aërated waters, and waiters, and a certain amount of decoration for the approach, anterooms, &c. We had plenty of moss, plants, &c., which our own gardener arranged. The local band of three performers cost 3*l.* 3*s.*, and the rest went for wine,

programmes, and odds and ends generally. The dance was certainly most successful, and went off very well, and was quite as much as we could afford. Naturally I should have preferred much grander doings—a first-rate supper, the 'Blue Hungarian' band, or any other excellent one; but it would have been foolish to refuse to entertain at all because we could not manage these gorgeous details—details that were as much above our means as they would have been quite unnecessary in Watford.

But the dance was successful, because the girls were pretty and the men pleasant, because old friends came down and rallied round us, and because we all saw the girls did not sit down once, that there was no flagging, and that all who could be introduced were made to know each other. I dare say there were plenty of people who wondered they did not have a gorgeous supper, but I do not care if they did, and I certainly am never going to precipitate myself head first into the Bankruptcy Court because someone else gives what, no doubt, they can well afford to do, but which I could not, and which, were I to do, I should soon come utterly to an end.

I mention all these personal details to show that what we did can be done by other people, certainly by people who have a big house and plenty of servants, at a moderate cost, and I hope I shall not have become a 'mock of many' because of all I have said; but as I always think personal experience frankly given is worth any amount of polite theory, I give my experience here as elsewhere, hoping that it may be of use to many beside myself.

If the damsel is born in the summer, I strongly advise a tennis-or garden-party, though, alas! in this climate we are so dependent upon the weather that I mention this with a certain amount of diffidence; but given one of the lovely June days Nature sometimes kindly dowers us with, and can anything on earth be pleasanter than one of these al-fresco gatherings may be if properly managed?

The garden is looking its best, and, if the seats are judiciously arranged and a proper amount of amusement legislated for, the hostess can greet her friends with a light

heart; she can be quite sure of a successful party without too much trouble or expense on her part.

The refreshments should be either in a tent on the lawn or else in any room that may open out into the garden. Should there be no such room, I strongly advise the tent to be procured (one can always be borrowed at a most reasonable expense), as, if the refreshments are not easily accessible, the party becomes scattered: the timid do not like to separate themselves and go in search of sustenance, while the greedy can seclude themselves and snatch an undue share of the good things prepared for the entire company.

Given the tent, or the room, and we can proceed to place very long and narrow tables there, which we should decorate with as many flowers as we possibly can get together, and should we have very many Londoners coming to our gathering we should put a host of the little baskets Whiteley sells for about 4½*d.* a set under the tables, and fill them at parting with what we garnished the tables with. Roses and lilies and greenery are not to be despised in London, and our friends will come down to us cheerfully another year if they carry away a sweetly-scented souvenir of our last gathering. People don't mind carrying flowers, and we can always spare those we have used for garnishing the table.

Among the flowers we should put large imari bowls of strawberries and cream ready for ladling out on small dishes; the strawberries should be denuded of their hulls, and the whipped cream, which can be thickened with white of egg and made palatable with sugar, should be piled high on the fruit, which, of course, should be unbroken. If a refrigerator is handy, the prepared fruit should be kept there until the last moment, and only produced when the guests have begun to assemble, the places for the bowls being kept by plates to prevent the symmetry of the table being spoiled by a careless or hurried maid-servant.

I strongly advise all the cakes being bought from Buszard, who will, moreover, tell you honestly the amount of the different kinds you should have for the number you expect; and, as a rule, you should prepare for a few more folks than you have down on your list. If a very fine day people often

bring friends with them. I personally like them to do this, and if you yourself happen to know anyone who possesses little girls, and who is coming herself, I advise you to ask her to bring the children. Well-brought-up children are delightful additions to a garden-party; they look like bright butterflies flitting about, and should therefore be encouraged to come, not by a written invitation, which would make them unduly prominent and of consequence in their own eyes, but by a casual mention, which cannot inflate them, and yet will show they have been thought about by us. Beside the fruit and cakes, a little finely cut and rolled brown bread and butter should be prepared, but only a little; few people eat it; as a rule it spoils their gloves, and they do not want it, and it is wasted if left, and if the weather is really summerlike and hot, ices should be provided, and also iced lemonade, gingerbeer, and claret-cup. No other wine is requisite. And as wine is frightfully dear, and should never be given unless really good, I advise it being omitted altogether, unless expense is no object. When the garden-party can be from 6 to 9.30 the garden could be illuminated with coloured lamps, and a cold supper succeed the tea. This, of course, is the ideal garden-party, but one which is out of the reach of most people who have a great many friends, and want to see them without an undue and enormous expense.

The tennis-courts, of course, should be swept and garnished and newly marked out for the occasion, and several enthusiasts over this (to me, idiotic) game should be told off to see that all who want to play can do so. If this is not done, we shall be vexed by seeing this game, which is so dear to so many, quite left alone; and I defy any hostess to attend to her guests and keep the tennis-balls rolling at the same time. She must engage the help of her younger guests, and to them must be left the everlasting trouble of making up the sets, which seem to me to have only just begun as they are finished. Now, in the dear departed days of croquet, a hostess had nothing to do but make up the sets of eight and set them going. She saw nothing more of her guests, a well-played set of eight lasting quite as long as the garden-party itself could be expected to do.

Anyhow, there must be something beside tennis to amuse our guests, and I think a band is almost a necessity, particularly

if one is blessed with a decent local band; then the expense will not be ruinous. One can get an excellent string band from town for about 20*l.* I particularly like Mrs. Hunt‘s ladies’ orchestra (*Les Merveilleuses*), all particulars of which can be had from the secretary, or from Chappell & Co., New Bond Street; but sometimes it is as well to encourage local talent if one can do so without fatal effects, when for 5*l.* you can have a good deal of music, always a cheerful matter, and can sometimes have very good music too. But a local band should always be put a good way off, distance, as a rule, lending an immense amount of enchantment to their productions.

I think also that some of the charming open-air scenes from Shakespeare can be given with great effect. I also am very fond of Mendelssohn’s open-air glees; and some recitations are often amusing. But should these latter be indulged in, let me beg that the hostess knows beforehand something about them, else will her fate be what mine was once, when an enthusiast began a long, long, long poem. I don’t know to this day what it was, whether it was meant to be pathetic or comic or not, but I do know my agonies were awful, and that I was rapidly going mad, when an opportune shower put a stop to the eloquence, which had gone on unceasingly through the passing of several express trains, all of which made a hideous noise, and any one of which would have been sufficient to daunt any other individual. Short, amusing—really amusing—recitations are always a success, and I should taboo anything tragic or sentimental, or anything which lasted over ten minutes at the outside.

Never, however, be persuaded to give a garden-party trusting to tennis alone. There can be nothing more dreary than such an entertainment; it is like an at-home, where nothing but talk is provided. I would never heap on amusements out of doors or have music without stopping in doors, but I should always provide it in such a way that it serves as a pleasant reason for the gathering. An in-door at-home with music can never be a success if the seats are put in rows, and people are forced to sit stiffly close together; an outdoor one can never pass off well unless we prepare amusements, and see that our guests are really entertained and yet not overburdened with our attentions.

I think a whole chapter might be written on the art of being a hostess; and yet, perhaps, a few words may suffice. I believe a hostess, like a poet, is born, not made. Still, a few hints may not be out of place, for I think sometimes parties are unsuccessful because, though possessed of the best intentions, the hostess may lack the knowledge that alone can ensure a successful entertainment.

In the first place, without emulating two friends of mine, one of whom took the youngest unmarried girl in the room down to dinner, while the other, out of pure kindness, let his wife walk in first and then followed himself, and in consequence was hugely laughed at. I do think that in ordinary society a great deal of ridiculous fuss is made about precedence. What can it matter to the wife of some man knighted but the other day whether she or the wife of the parson goes into or out of the room first? If it does, she must be so stupid that I should not care to see her in my house; while to me it does matter immensely whether I have someone to take me in who knows what is going on in the world and reads his newspaper and sees every play that comes out. Give me a man like that, and I don't in the least care what his father was, neither should I care one bit whether Jones and Mrs. Smith, and Mr. Smith and Mrs. Brown, walked in or out of the room before me; they may all go, if they like, in a string. So long as I have a pleasant companion and a pretty table to look at, and a well-cooked dinner, I don't care in the least how I reach the dining-room.

See that the people who are likely to get on have an opportunity of knowing each other; watch that no one is sitting glum and disconsolate in a corner; remember, if you can, who is anxious to be introduced to or shown any celebrities in the world of art and letters who may happen to be present; and, above all, consider everyone's pleasure before you think of your own; and in a large gathering never sit down until you are actually driven to do so through fatigue, and you may be quite sure that the party will be a success. And send out your invitations, remembering that the pleasantest people are not always those who can afford to ask you again, and that your object in entertaining is above all to give pleasure, to see clever and entertaining, people in your house, and not to

ensure a return as soon as may be for what you are doing. I do not care if people are the highest in the land if they are dull; I would far rather meet and know people who are clever and interesting than the most exalted member of the peerage I could number among my acquaintances if she were stupid and uninteresting, and had nothing to recommend her but her coronet and her connection with what Jeames de la Pluche calls the 'hupper suckles.'

I think that I have now given some idea how to ensure success at the two kinds of parties which might be used as means of introducing a daughter to the world at large; but, of course, there are a great many other gatherings which may be indulged in, and, above all, let us learn always to be ready to give a welcome to any of the children's friends. Should we discover that they are not nice we can easily speak about it, and tell our reasons for not receiving them; but well-brought-up young people will only make nice friends, and we must invariably be ready to give them a cheerful welcome. We can always be glad to see them after dinner, or to afternoon tea. This cannot ruin us, and when possible we should let them stay in the house and encourage them all we can. At the same time the rules of the house must be kept; the hours for meals and the general habits of the elders respected; and we must not be expected to help in the entertaining—that must be left entirely to the younger members of the household, whose friends they are.

Perhaps one of the greatest problems, after we have settled on our manner of entertainment, is to determine how the girls shall dress and in what manner they shall manage their dress allowance. This should be made to them and paid punctually from their eighteenth birthday, but it should never be made without starting a girl with a good and sufficient wardrobe, with a miniature trousseau in fact; if this is not done, unless, of course, the allowance is a very handsome one, the girl will get hopelessly into debt, and will never be free from that millstone all her life.

Dress is, unfortunately, so frightfully expensive nowadays that the problem of how to dress at all, always a serious one, has assumed gigantic proportions of late years. We went out

immensely in our youth, and had 50*l.* a year allowed us, which we just scraped through on, although I remember how anxiously I watched the sleeves of one special grenadine dress, which I could not have afforded to replace anyhow, and which would wear out in the most agonising way, and which was one mass of darns before I could get another, and I have never forgotten the anxiety it gave me, to say nothing of under-garments, which really seemed to vanish perceptibly, bit by bit, after each visit to the laundress; but nowadays girls cannot go out very much and appear well dressed on double that sum. Even with 100*l.* a year there would have to be cutting and contriving, and a good sewing-maid would be an imperative necessity should there be really very many balls every year and afternoon and evening dresses to be seen after besides.

Of course, if not more than 50*l.* can be spared to each girl, the attendance at balls must be limited, and a great deal of sewing must be done by the damsel herself. But I never recommend anyone to go to a cheap or common dressmaker; if she does, her garments will never look nice, and she will spend three times as much as she need on renovations and alterations, while she will run every imaginable risk of having her stuff spoiled and the dress made so badly that she cannot wear it.

Supposing the girl is to begin with her allowance of 50*l.*, her trousseau should consist of a dozen of each under-garments necessary; she should have six pairs of silk, six of fine cashmere, and six of warmer cashmere hose; she should have four white skirts, a silk underskirt, and a quilted poplin skirt; she should have two morning dresses, one a good tailor-made one with a jacket to match, the other cashmere; she should have two best dresses, one for every evening, one for dances, and two for balls; and she should have a sealskin coat, a waterproof, and a jacket, and about three hats; she should have four pairs of boots and four pairs of shoes; and she should remember that the longer these are kept in stock before they are worn the better, and one pair of shoes should never be taken into regular wear without another being purchased to take its place. Cheap shoes and boots should never be bought under any pretext whatever; they wear out at once, are a hideous shape always, and are dangerously thin, things which should prevent their being in any girl’s wardrobe.

I am often struck, particularly in crowds or in large gatherings, at the perfectly frightful clothes most English women wear, and I have come to the conclusion that this fact is caused by the extraordinary fondness they seem to have for any kind of black mantle or jacket on which they can lay their hands, and by a habit they have of crowning their heads with any sort of hat or bonnet that may be in the fashion at the moment, no matter whether it suits them or not, or whether they have anything else in their possession with which it can be worn.

The tan jackets which have been so fashionable lately have in some measure emancipated the girls from the tyranny of the black cape; but I do wish all who dress at all would do so much more sensibly than they do now, and would never buy a single thing without carefully reviewing their wardrobe first, and then purchasing the addition equally carefully, not because it is 'lovely' or the 'height of the fashion,' but because it suits the wearer, and above all suits what she already possesses. She must never enter a shop without knowing first of all what she really does require, and she must never allow herself to be talked out of her own preconceived ideas; if she does she is sure to find herself saddled with some utterly unwearable garment, and which, moreover, matches nothing she already has in her possession. A girl should be carefully taught what is likely to suit her, and she should, moreover, be carefully instructed how to manage her wardrobe so that her things may be in some measure *en suite*. For example, should she possess a sealskin jacket, which she should if in any way possible—a capital little coat costs about 12*l.* to 15*l.*, and wears ten winters comfortably, and can be used afterwards as linings—her winter morning dress might be some soft brown cashmere; she could vary this by having two or three soft silk handkerchiefs as waistcoats in the pretty prevailing fashion of the day, and could have a dark brown, a deep yellow, or a pale pink one. This dress would look well with the sealskin, or with a tan jacket should the weather be too warm for the former, and the hat should be brown or else dark blue with brown feathers in; this would allow of the second dress being powder or gendarme blue; this could be trimmed with bands of sealskin or soft brown silk, and here would be every-day garments to

don in October and wear off and on until the first few warm days in May turn our thoughts to new and lighter clothes. A best hat should always be in stock; but this must harmonise with what she already has in the way of dresses. These must be good; the two will then, with the help of a judicious maid, come out again in the following autumn as very good every-day dresses and dresses for wet Sundays, and all that will be required is an afternoon party dress, which can also be worn on fine Sundays to church and for afternoon wear, should Sunday callers be allowed and encouraged in the manner I trust they are.

Summer dresses are where the strain comes on our resources, and where the clever maid comes in so well. One can buy a print costume unmade for about 18*s.* 6*d.*, but made up in London it costs about 3*l.* 10*s.* to 4*l.*; I have never seen a decently made one under this price. The maid should suffice for these costumes, the simple banded Norfolk bodice being easily managed, as can some of the looser bodices; and great care should be taken to purchase about three yards more of the print than is absolutely needed. Print dresses in our wretched climate generally last two seasons, and, as they generally shrink in the wash, it is wise to provide ourselves with material for new sleeves or new fronts; it can be washed before being used to ensure that no appearance of patching is given by the new unfaded material being placed against that which must have faded a little during the last wear. We have discovered in Stafford (rather ‘a far cry,’ as the Scots would say) a capital dressmaker who, for absolutely reasonable prices, makes charming print dresses for 45*s.* and excellent material dresses for girls for about 75*s.* I know these wear because we have tried them often and often, and, indeed, my daughter gets all her morning dresses there. I shall not publish her name, because I do not want her to be inundated with work or raise her prices, but if she can manage to do this—and naturally it must pay her to do so—why can’t London dressmakers do the same? I pause for a reply, and in the meantime meditate ruefully on the different prices I have to pay for my garments to those charged by the Stafford dressmaker.

I have always believed that ladies properly instructed in this art of dressmaking, and banded together, could make a

comfortable living out of providing the garments of their fortunate sisters who had not to work. They would not make their fortunes, but they should do well if they do not pitchfork themselves into the place because every other work they have tried has failed, but take it because they have had an excellent training and are really tasteful and capable of advising about, as well as making, the clothes, which are such a burden and trouble to most of us. Of course they would be invaluable to the girls with a limited allowance; they would know what was worn, what would suit them and their purses at the same time; and they would keep a staff of humbler sewers who would renovate the garments it should be their pride and delight to make the very utmost of; while to those like myself, for example, who must have suitable and pretty dresses, and have not sufficient time to obtain this desirable end without immense expense, they would be simply invaluable, and we should be spared making the mistakes we are constantly making, the while we should be sure that our advancing years should receive due notice at their skilful hands, and that we should be suitably as well as becomingly dressed, and that at a not undue expense.

I should be very grateful to anyone who would start such an establishment; she could charge for her advice plus the dress, as I charge for my advice about furniture and household management, and I am quite sure her establishment would soon be the centre of an admiring throng of girl disciples, to say nothing of the elder women, who would be thankful to be taken in hand, to be prevented from buying unbecoming garments, or things which have nothing in common with the rest of their possessions, and who could shop there in peace, knowing they would have kindly counsel, instead of being assured lyingly by the saleswoman that a perfectly unsuitable bonnet is the most becoming thing she has ever seen, and that an ugly black mantle is so handsome that, given this, it will act as charity and cover a multitude of sins in the shape of a shabby dress; the real truth being that the gorgeous mantle only accentuates the shabbiness, and, by adding another to the rank of the black mantle wearers, gives another evidence of the fact that, as a rule, Englishwomen in the street are the worst-dressed women in the world.

To really dress well costs an immense amount of money, for to ensure correct and pleasing dress it is absolutely necessary that all things shall match in some measure—mantle, dress, bonnet, and hose must be *en suite*; but if we cannot afford to go in for this we should restrict ourselves to one or two colours at the outside, we should never buy anything which is at the height of fashion, and, above all, we should wear our clothes carefully, and we should not disdain to see they are put away in an absolutely spotless condition, with each atom of dust and dirt removed, every small necessary mending done, and with soft paper between the folds. Unless we have this religiously seen to the handsomest dress soon becomes draggle-tailed and shabby, while a cheap or inferior material wears three times as long as it otherwise would do if we see it is treated properly.

But cheap or flimsy materials should never, under any circumstances, be bought, unless the girls can make them up themselves, to wear at home evenings or during the summer, or unless the sewing-maid can do them; the making and trimming cost three times as much as the stuff, which hardly looks nice for three days, while good material pays for good making and wears until one is really tired of being in the same garment. When that feeling comes to us we should lay the dress aside for some months and then take it out again; the rest actually seems to have done the garment good, and we wear it again with pleasure, instead of putting it on each morning with renewed dislike and distaste, as we did before we put it into the wardrobe for the short retirement we advise.

If matrons over forty-five cannot afford to spend very much on their garments, I do most strongly advise them to keep to black and very dark shades of greens and reds; these, however, should be left absolutely alone should there be any tendency to *embonpoint*, then black must be *de rigueur*. This seems a little hard, and of course black is to a certain extent uninteresting wear; but we can console ourselves for the fate to which all must come by knowing that we are suitably attired, and that, at all events, we are not making ourselves ridiculous by vying with our daughters about our clothes.

Women are the age they look. I know some of the above-named age who do not look a day more than thirty-five, and

they therefore should dress as they please. But the moment age begins to show let us calmly acknowledge that our pretty days are over, and garb ourselves accordingly. We need not be dowdy in these days. Black and dark raiment generally can be made as nice as possible and quite festive-looking; but we should be suitably dressed, and, after all, we don't want either admiration or attention then from the outside world; we are sure of both at home if we rule rightly and are queen of the only kingdom that is worth having—the beautiful kingdom of Home.

What does anything else matter, if we are still looked upon by our husbands with as much pleasure and admiration as they gave us in those never-to-be-forgotten days of courtship, and if our children consider us nicer, kinder, and wiser than anyone else? To obtain such applause is worth the whole struggle of living to preserve it—any amount of trouble which we can possibly take. Therefore, let all costume themselves suitably—the girl in the prettiest frocks she can possibly afford; the matron quietly, becomingly, and richly; and, above all, let all consider carefully the matching that I so strongly advocate, and let the girl who begins her allowance always keep most correct accounts, showing these and her paid bills when the next quarter is paid, and let her never be too proud to ask her mother's assistance, especially if she cannot see her way to make both ends meet; but never pass over a debt, and let her see you notice all she spends. It may seem a little inquisitorial, it will really save her endless care and worry if you prevent her in any way you can from getting into a habit of forestalling her income—a habit that, once formed, is one that hardly anyone ever shakes off in after life, try how one will.

The ball-dresses are the garments which try a girl more than anything, the tulle skirts and pretty flounces, which cost so much, getting so soon spoiled and messed; and I think the stock of the first season's dresses must be helped considerably by the parents, else will the poor girl feel herself worse dressed than anyone else; and that is a small misery that should never be allowed if in any measure it can be avoided. The years from eighteen to twenty-one are undoubtedly the most joyous of any a woman ever has. They are not always the happiest, taking our standard of happiness very high, but they are the brightest,

sunniest, and most amusing that the average girl will ever have, more especially if she have been carefully brought up in a good atmosphere and be not tormented with those uncomfortable religious doubts and miserable hankerings after a career and after reforming the world we some of us had such a severe attack of at that age. I personally would not be eighteen again for all the wealth of the Indies. Then, I thought it extremely grand to believe in nothing, to have a gloomy satisfaction in my superior mind, which soared above the old beliefs, and formed a misty religion of my own, which meant nothing and led nowhere, and to indulge in dreadful sarcasms —mentally only (I am thankful to say I did not often utter them)—on the worldly wisdom of those folks who naturally wished their daughters to marry well and turned cold shoulders on the poorest and generally most undeserving of suitors, and I used to stay up until the small hours of the morning (although I was dreadfully sleepy) inditing the most awful verses against the rich and titled folks, whom I naturally thought were fattening on the poor and miserable, and to whom I intended to go on a species of socialistic crusade; and finally in writing a big novel, which used to make me feel very much more intellectual than most of the people I mixed with, and which, after an evening spent among the brightest and first intellects in the world, I used to contemplate savagely, having been made to feel very small, though I would have died rather than confess such a thing—a feeling I did not mean ever to experience again, once that *magnum opus* was given to the world and people really knew me for the genius I was. Alas! that recognition has never come yet; still, I am very happy without it, and am always doubly thankful my days of craving for worldwide fame have vanished, and that I neither want that nor to believe in anything any more.

I hope, however, there are not many girls as silly as I was then, and as I dare say I should have continued to be had I not married—I, who scorned the idea of the ordinary British matron, and regarded children and household cares with bitter disgust. And during the twenty years I have been a wife, I am always struck with wonder when I remember the imaginative, impulsive thing that was myself so long ago, and try to trace in my present self the miserable, ambitious cynic I fondly hoped

was some day going to set the world on fire and blossom out as a new Thackeray or Dickens. Nothing feminine was good enough for me; I meant to beat the men or do nothing at all.

Such a girlhood as that may be of infinite service, and was, but it cannot be called a happy one; still, I think I was the exception, not the rule, therefore I ask that all who can possibly manage it will see their girls are happy as long as they are young; to give them their allowance because they should learn how to spend money, but to add a dress here and there, an ornament, a new trimming judiciously if in any way you can afford it, and go without yourself rather than allow a girl to be shabby or worry herself to death over a wearing-out garment; at the same time let her learn to do her own repairs and have lessons in dressmaking; make her happy, but at the same time let her help herself to the desired end. I hope there may never be too many daughters in the family for this allowance of 50*l.* to be an impossibility; no girl can dress really on less. If there are, she *must* be taught early to make her own garments, and she must learn, furthermore, that she must spend far more time and thought over her clothes than is good for her, should the allowance be much less, and should she be obliged to go out into society a good deal. As I stated at first, I am not now writing for the young beginners, but for those whose children are growing up, and who have made and are making a good income; I therefore trust that what I have said about dress will be taken only by those for whom it is intended, the Angelina of ‘From Kitchen to Garret,’ poor dear, having often enough to do without much that she would have thought indispensable in the old days.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTENINGS AND WEDDINGS.

THERE is a great deal to consider, apart from the mere arrangement of the ceremonies, about the events of which I mean to speak in this chapter, therefore no book devoted to the interests of the home could be complete without at least some words on both subjects.

To begin with: the old story of the bad fairy told us in our childhood, who invariably was forgotten, and as invariably turned up without an invitation at the christening of the prince or princess, is not as improbable as it appeared to be on the first reading. The bad fairy may be an infuriated relative to whom we have forgotten to write; it may be family pride outraged by the name chosen for the infant; or it may take the form of having asked the wrong instead of the right individual to stand for the child; but all too often it is there, and the heedless conduct that raised the evil fairy from her sleep may bring about consequences that are as unpleasant as they are certainly unexpected and generally undeserved, for I have often observed that the deepest insults are those we are most unconscious of giving, and that the evil habit of ‘taking offence’ is often increased by conduct that was as innocent in design as it was certainly disastrous in the effect.

And now let us pause for a moment and speak on the subject of taking offence, a matter that has given rise to endless family divisions and caused more broken friendships and quarrels than anything else in the world. To begin with: it is a sign of a common, jealous, vain nature to take offence; it shows that the offended person is so endued with a sense of her own importance that she is always on the look-out for an affront, that she has such a low idea of human nature that she is suspicious of everything that happens, and is always expecting some slur is being cast on her, some dreadful plot against her dignity is being hatched; and she is so vain that she thinks everything that happens is especially levied at her, though

generally she was as far from the thoughts of the offending person as she well could be.

A family possessing such a touchy member is indeed much to be pitied; one can see nothing or very little of any acquaintance possessed of such a disposition, and indeed no one would wish to see such a one more than one can help; but a member of the family must be considered in some way; therefore such an individual is all too often the bad fairy, who, having once received or fancied she received an insult, never forgets it, harps on it always, and ends by doing immeasurable harm in more ways than one by her disagreeable and untutored tongue. And notice I say *she* and her. I don't consider we can learn much from men, but we can certainly learn larger-mindedness from them; for very seldom do we find a man taking offence in the childish and touchy fashion far too many women are so fond of doing.

As a rule we are all too busy to soften the aspirations of such an individual, and so we drift apart without any distinct quarrel, gradually seeing less and less of each other, until we do not meet at all; but it is generally well, if we possibly can, to go straight to anyone like this and find out the cause of offence, at the same time refraining from doing so unless we care very much about it, because, ten chances to one, the person who takes offence once will always be doing so, and it is not worth one's while, as a rule, to conciliate those who will find a subject for offence in everything one says and does, unless one is always flattering them, an easily offended person having the most ravenous appetite for flattery possible to conceive. Therefore, when a christening has to be thought about, we should first consider if there be any Scylla to avoid, any Charybdis past which we must navigate the boat, and, above all, must we endeavour to be quite independent about the most important subject of all—viz. how to name the child.

I do not go quite as far as does a friend of mine, who considers the names he gives his children act on their nature, and that they insensibly form their characters to in some measure sympathise with their baptismal names. Thus, for example, it would be as impossible for John to be naughty as for Jack to be anything save a pickle, for Edith to be anything

save calm and religious, while Trixy must be a flirt and set all her lovers by the ears. But still I do think a great deal depends upon the name, especially if the surname happens to be rather uncommon or pretty, and that the judicious selection of well-sounding names does wonders. But here we must steer between plain John Brown, who could never be anyone, try as hard as he might, and the Reginald de Montmorency Brown, which is the laughing-stock of the neighbours, and which is a grief to the unfortunate holder thereof through life, unless the possession of such a name forces him to become as ridiculous as it is itself; then, of course, he is quite happy, and we need not pity him at all.

Another thing I do most earnestly deprecate is the perpetuating of family names, unless the name happens to be a pretty one and is chosen for itself. In the first place, family names are generally hideous, and in the second we cannot name the child after all the members of both families; to give precedence to the father's family names will offend the mother's family, and generally the unfortunate infant is not only saddled with a hideous name, but finds itself a bone of contention almost before it has any bones at all; while, if we boldly select the names which seem to us euphonious and to harmonise with the surname, we shall offend no one, and shall show we have an individuality that must be respected by the members of both families alike.

Then, too, if families are large and have endless branches, great confusion is caused by each separate Paterfamilias having one of these names among his flock. Cousins very often stay in the same house, and come to visit each other, and if there are ten Miss Elizabeth Smiths and these happen to be staying together, how are their letters to be distinguished? The possession of similar initials in families has made mischief enough; the possession of similar names can make twice as much again.

In naming a boy we must think whether he can be made miserable at school by having either a grand or girlish name, which the young fiends, his schoolfellows, can turn into something to his disadvantage, and, if possible, the younger sons should always have some good surname before the family

name; this will enable them to keep distinct. For example, if the eldest son is called Charles Robinson (not that I should call any boy such a frightful name), his next brother can be called John Smith Robinson (supposing his mother's name to have been Smith), while the third could be William Brown Robinson, thus marking the distinct families at once, and allowing the sons of the holders of these names to have the double name, and perhaps the aristocratic hyphen, satirised by Corney Grain, which is so dear to the heart of the ordinary suburban resident, while it is not a bad plan to give the girls their surname as well as a pretty Christian-name at baptism. This would allow people to trace pedigrees easily were it a universal custom, and would be of great assistance in writing the family history we ought one and all of us to possess, for it is astonishing how much we are helped in our attempt to bring up our children if we have any knowledge of our forbears, and can trace in any way the habits and occupations of those from whom we have sprung.

Having settled on the child's name and registered it before we tell our relations and friends, the impossibility of making a change saving endless painful and unprofitable discussions, the next thing is to decide on the god-parents. As a rule this is a mere form, but of course it should not be so. A god-parent necessarily sends a more or less handsome present at the time of the christening, comes to the ceremony if he or she can, and then forgets all about the child. But this, I repeat, should never be. The god-parents should keep up a friendly intercourse with their god-children; they should know where they are, what they are doing; they should most undoubtedly be present at the confirmation ceremony, and they should always at Christmas either write to their god-children, send one of those useful and pretty cards, which I trust will never go out of fashion, or else give some little gift that does not cost much, while it makes the link between them very real, and gives some meaning to a position that at present would often be more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Of course it is easy enough to manage this in one's own rank of life, and we ought to have as many god-children as we can honestly interest ourselves in; but we should never undertake the office unless we mean to perform the duties; and

we ought occasionally to ‘stand for’ some of our poorer neighbours’ children. As a rule they are delighted to have us, and it gives us a hold over them we could not otherwise acquire; while a boy or a girl has always a sense of obligation to behave better and do better in life if he or she has a god-parent in a higher station than his or her own, to whom they can come for advice and help by right, and from whom they receive at Christmas, at confirmation, or at any important step in life, some trifling token. Therefore I do not think god-parents can think too much of their duties, or neglect to stand for all they can manage to look after; it is something to do—something that can also do endless good, if we undertake the duties properly.

When the god-parents are chosen the christening-day should be fixed, and this should be the very first day that the mother and child can go out of doors. The clergyman who performs all the family services should be asked of course, and the time selected should be about the middle of the day, and, if possible, the font should be nicely decorated with white flowers. Of course the correct thing would be to have a public service with the congregation; the church always looks dismal and horrid when empty, and, according to the rubric, the service should be public; but I should never advise this. In the first place, the mother is never quite strong enough to stand the long service; and, in the second, babies do howl so that the congregation is made miserable, and, therefore, what is really an excellent theory is a practice to be avoided. Unless the christening is postponed, a thing I cannot contemplate for one moment, a child’s first outing should be to church; there is no doubt whatever in my own mind about that.

Take this for granted, and half the misery of a christening disappears; never allow it to be postponed, and it is done as a matter of course. If the god-parents selected cannot be present, they must be represented by proxy; and they should never be waited for, any more than they should be chosen for any reason save that we are fond of them, that they are related to us, or such friends that we know they would do the best they could for us were we to die and leave the children to the mercy of the world at large—as regards their mental welfare, I don’t mean their bodily. I repeat here, that no one has the smallest

right to bring a child into the world for whose existence he cannot in some measure duly provide.

Without emulating the Roman Catholic habit of confession, I much like to feel that each family possesses some clergyman among its friends, who stands to it in some measure in the position that a Romish priest does to many households. The finer ceremonies of life and death should be conducted by one man; and it is always a great pleasure to me to feel that he who married us christened all our children, while it is as great a regret that he cannot any more perform any more ceremonies for us, for he has gone where ceremonies are of no avail, and where he has, no doubt, already received his reward. However, though none can take his place, we have still a 'family priest;' and I think all the simple ceremonies of our Church are made a thousand times holier by the fact that one man performs them, and that he takes that individual interest in us no strange clergyman ever can. Let anyone see a christening in a town church, hastily performed by a man to whom the infant is nothing but an unpleasant lump of lace and fussy clothes, or at best one more little soldier for the great army, and the same ceremony performed by a man who knows and loves the parents, and I shall need no more words if this does not express all I mean. Let my readers note the conduct of any cemetery chaplain reading the burial service, with which custom has made him hideously familiar, and then hear someone who has known and loved the dead read it; I am sure, after that, I need not plead for the election in each family of some good man as family priest. He is a comfort, indeed, with whom no one can afford to dispense, even in this hurrying, fashionable life of ours.

When the church and all is settled, the baby's dress is undoubtedly a matter for great consideration. In some families grandmamma produces the robe the child's father was christened in, and of course that, and nothing else, should be worn. Of course, equally, high neck and sleeves should be added, and a little flannel bodice can be placed with advantage under the fine open-neck bodice of the robe; white ribbons should tie up the sleeves and be placed under the waist, and the cloak should not be either heavy or unduly gorgeous. The hood and cloak must be removed in the church, and the nurse should

do this quickly and silently the moment the ceremony begins, placing a big, soft shawl round the child; this allows it to become quiet, and does not ensure the roar which invariably follows if the child is handed to the clergyman the moment its clothes are taken off. It should be rolled in the shawl until the christening service is over, then it can be dressed and shriek if it likes; no one but the nurse will be disturbed by its howling then.

Baptism is a sacrament, and therefore there are no fees to be given to the clergyman, but the father goes into the vestry to give particulars about the name, &c., for registration in the church books, and he should then make the clerk some small present—5*s.* would be ample for most middle-class families, while 1*l.* would be princely. If the clergyman has come some distance one should take care he was no loser by it, delicately and nicely, and if one is rich some present should be given to the church itself to mark the ceremony; there is always something a church lacks that we can give without ruining ourselves; in fact, all these simple ceremonies should teach us to love the Church with the singular attachment even Dissenters have for it, and should make us more to each other as a congregation than we otherwise would be had we no religion to bind us together. The christening over, the baby should be taken, according to a dear old Yorkshire superstition, to be shown to some friend who will give it bread, salt, sixpence, and a new-laid egg; and if this superstition be respected, and, moreover, if the infant be taken up in the world before it is taken down (*i.e.* carried upstairs before it goes down), my old nurse used to declare that it must be lucky and could defy any amount of bad fortune. She invariably climbed by a stool up to a high settee with our children because our house had not a third story, and much she used to amuse us with these small vagaries; they were a matter of real moment to her, and we indulged her. Why not? If they did no good they most certainly could do no earthly harm.

Now, before we pass on from the christening ceremony to speak of weddings—a much more enthralling subject—I want to say one word on the matter of family gatherings. I know quite well I am venturing almost on forbidden ground, and that such an idea as a family party is beneath contempt in these

days, when we want nothing but amusement, and dislike running the chance of being bored more than anything else. Still, I am going to speak about them, and I trust that I may show that they are not only unobjectionable if properly managed, but that they are absolutely necessary if we are to keep up anything like a good feeling amongst the members of one family.

The reasons why, as a rule, families separate and fall apart are, first of all, because some go up while others remain stationary, and others creep slowly down the hill; and, secondly, because there are none of the small civilities and amenities of life practised among relations that render society possible and pleasing. If a sister thinks another sister's conduct is not just what it ought to be she tells her so, without considering that she has no more business to take her to task than she has to call on and scold her next-door neighbour; they frankly discuss the manner in which the respective children are brought up, and, indeed, often make themselves so interfering and disagreeable that the family party ends in tears and in mutual vows against any attempt at the same thing again.

Now, as regards the first offence, it is one we ought to be able to bear with equanimity, especially if we are remaining stationary while others are flourishing on a plain above our heads. In the first place, the honour and success of the one member is the property of all, and we can glory in it too, while, if we are at the top of the tree, no one will envy us that position if they share it in some measure, and if we take care that they are not hurt by our assuming airs that are as ridiculous as they are unkind. A man who forgets and ignores his poor relations is a snob, and is invariably laughed at by those who know of their existence; while if he never forgets them, and is good to them always, he reaps a reward no one can deprive him of in the tender affection, pride in his attainments, and unselfish delight in his success, which would be turned to gall and wormwood were he to turn his back on and ignore those whose flesh and blood he shares, and who must always be his relations, try how he may to shift them off his shoulders entirely.

Give this feeling, and I maintain that we can have family parties which are quite successful, more especially if we remember the second pitfall and refrain from these hideously spiteful remarks some families seem to regard in the light of indispensable tonics; and we should always try that our simple ceremonies of christenings, birthdays, Christmas, and weddings should include all those of our immediate kin who are near enough to share them. Let all be asked, let them see you are glad to see them, and give them your best (not your second best, please), and I am quite sure the family party will be as successful as any other you may be induced to give. Of course the party need not be all family; a judicious admixture of outsiders is always to be recommended, more especially if we are at the top of the tree and can take this opportunity of introducing some of our 'best' people to those who are pleased to meet them, although their present means may not allow of their entertaining them in their own houses in the same manner that we can.

These differences cannot be helped, and indeed they should be a source of pleasure to all, as I said before, and undoubtedly would be were family feeling cultivated among us in a manner that it certainly is not in most English homes. Therefore all these ceremonies should be made an occasion for family parties, and at Christmas time, too, all should meet who can, at the house of the eldest of the family, should the father and mother be unable to have their gathering or be dead, as is so often the case; and there should be regular preparations for enjoyment, a 'surprise' (my annual surprise considerably shortens my life), a Christmas tree, games, and a good supper, all mapped out just as if we expected the greatest strangers and wished to impress them with our forms of hospitality. Take rather more pains about the arrangements and details of a family party than any other; I am quite sure that if you do you will be amply rewarded.

And now to think about weddings and marriages, generally a most enthralling subject to fathers and mothers when the children have grown up and they begin to contemplate the idea of their leaving the fireside for homes of their own, when begins, I think, the most difficult period of our life, and when we cannot be too careful whom we admit to our houses, the

while we must not be unduly fussy, else we spoil our children's chance of happiness, and make them miserably anxious for themselves and their possible fate—a fate I would postpone for ever if I had my way, for who can calmly contemplate passing on one's daughter to another's care, I wonder? while one's possible daughters-in-law can never be anything, I fear, save successful rivals to the throne one occupies in one's boys' hearts.

But these things will happen, and equally of course all girls should marry, a happy marriage being the best fate for any woman, no matter how cultivated, how talented she may be. I have no doubts whatever on that subject. Suppose she writes; who so fit to battle with the publisher as the husband? or she paints; well, he can smile on the critics and undermine them with a good cigar and all the rest of it. Or does she sing? Surely, surely the husband's protection comes in there more than ever; while for those lucky women who only want to fulfil their destiny and make a home, the husband of course takes his right position at once, and is guardian, bread-winner, and head in a way that Nature intended him to be, and that all real women want him to be. The few who clamour for another arrangement don't understand the subject at all, and are as ridiculous as they are abnormal and few in number, and therefore need not be considered in the least. There is, therefore, no doubt that women should marry if they can; and if not, well, there is plenty for them to do, although they will never be as happy—I am sure of that—as the happily married woman; neither will they ever suffer as an unhappily married woman must, albeit very many unhappy marriages would have been far otherwise had people had common sense at first and married each other as what they were, and not what they supposed each other to be; resenting their own mistakes on the unfortunate object they had deified, and not on their own stupid selves, while of course they should be resolved to make the best of what was inevitable, and to really make the wife or husband become all they had imagined him or her to be.

When the discussion on the subject of 'marriage being a failure' was going forward I was only deterred from joining in the fray by the knowledge that my indignant feelings on this subject were so strong they rendered me incoherent; but I was

glad I did not, for no one could have driven sense into the heads of a good many of the silly women who wrote rubbish about their woes. Of course there are unhappy marriages, plenty of them, made worse, to my mind, a thousand times by our present disgracefully easy divorce laws; but, trace them to the beginning, and I venture to state that one and all of these marriages would have been happy had the parties to them been properly brought up, and, above all, properly told what marriage really means, not only to themselves, but to those who may very probably come after them. Not one girl who marries but knows that the man by whose side she stands at the altar is not only her lover, but the possible father of her children; and yet what mother would not consider herself simply dreadful were she to say this to her daughter when the proposal is made, and her fate is yet in abeyance? and yet what more important matter could be spoken of? I think none. A girl who marries a man—an old man—for his money, even from the very highest possible motives—from the idea, may be, that she is not only ensuring the safety of her own future but that of many who may be near and dear to her—is committing not only a crime against herself and her own future, but is ensuring that the faults, sins, and selfishnesses of the man she marries are passed on to endless generations; and where such a marriage is contemplated I maintain that a mother has an imperative duty before her, and that she must tell her daughter straight out, that the sufferings she must endure in her own person in daily contact with her future husband will not be a tithe of what will come upon her when she begins to recognise his sins and his evil ways reappearing in those children who may come to her, and who will bring their own retribution with them; be sure of that.

It is a priceless boon to know that one inherits a right and a duty to be good in the broadest sense of the word. I personally do not care one fig what a man’s trade or worldly position is so long as he is absolutely honest and trustworthy, and would not act or speak an untruth; and this is the sort of inheritance we should strive to hand on to our children. The higher the station the more should be the endeavour to live in such a way that our example may be valued; but, whatever the station, let us remember that there is always some one influenced by us, and

that we have obligations to them which we must consider if we want to live a really good life.

And one of the first things to think of is this question of marriage, not only because of ourselves, but because of the children who may come to us, and who must be thought of before we give our girls to men who may make them ‘fairish’ husbands; perhaps may not ill-treat them or beat them, but who are not possessed of sufficient individuality to be the heads of their own houses, and who have not honest souls and some ambitions above the mere ruck of living and making as much money as they possibly can, not only because such men can never be the makers and possessors of a home, but because they may leave children whose weaknesses and wickednesses may not only break their mother’s heart, but may make the world worse than they find it, one’s truest ambition being to make the world, or one’s own special corner thereof, better than one found it in some way or other.

Young people naturally resent advice, and rarely, if ever, act upon it, and we have all taken this to heart so much that some of us have ceased to give advice at all. But this should not be so; the advice may not be taken—that we cannot help—but it is our duty to give it, and I hope all mothers will do so, whether their children act upon it or not. We should not shirk a duty because we cannot see any effects; they may appear even when we have long ceased to look for them.

The sins of the fathers must be visited on the children; there is no doubt about that. We need not argue about it; it is a fact that we all have to acknowledge, and therefore there is no need to go into the rights and wrongs of the matter, for no amount of argument will do away with this inevitable truth; and equally, therefore, a woman should choose not only a man she loves, but a man she respects, and one it shall be her very greatest pride to know her children will resemble. She will be spared endless suffering if she do, for there is no suffering on earth like that caused by wicked children, or even by the anxieties about weakly and suffering children; and she had better remain an old maid all her life than bring upon herself the unspeakable wretchedness of having children who are a constant source of

anxiety to her because of what they may, nay, of what they *must* inherit.

Given a clean record, a stainless youth, a good constitution, and an honest worker, and we need ask no more for our girls. It will not hurt them to begin their new life on a much lower scale than that which they have been accustomed to, more especially if we have taught them their duty to themselves and their future. Then, if we know that the young couple honestly love each other, we can feel content.

And by love I do not mean blind, unreasoning passion, the mad, extraordinary feeling that one reads about in novels, and which generally lands one or the other in the Divorce Court, and of which I have nothing to say, but I do mean that wonderful self-devotion to another, the mutual respect and regard, and the absolute unselfishness, that make up the true love that never fades, and that increases year by year in those whose married life was based on such love as this, and whose home reflects around the happiness which is centred there, and which can only be procured by those who begin their life together on a proper basis, and who do not expect to find in each other the god or goddess of perfection, who would probably be as unpleasant to live with as he or she is undoubtedly non-existent in this world of ours.

Of course all this sounds fearfully prosaic, and is, no doubt, middle-aged philosophy; but it would not be worth writing down if it were not middle-aged, because it would be imagination only and not the fruits of experience. I have lived a certain number of years, and I have had large opportunities of observation, and I am certain of what I am saying, that the truest marriages are those which are framed on respect as well as love, and that those women are the happiest who can implicitly trust and believe in the men to whom they have given themselves in some measure body and soul; and that, furthermore, they get the most out of life who take care every moment they live has something to occupy it, and that that occupation benefits someone beside their immediate selves.

I have often heard people say that the first year of their married life, and indeed that the honeymoon itself, was the very dullest and most difficult period of their whole lives; but I

have always listened to these statements with astonishment, for I have come to the conclusion that if what they say is true it must be that, like the despised family parties, it is because they did not manage their affairs properly. Why, the honeymoon should be the most amusing journey one ever makes—I know mine was—for one sets out together with an entertaining feeling that the absence of the chaperon for the first time gives just a *soupçon* of delightful impropriety to the journey; that for absolutely the first time in one's life one can go where one likes and do as one likes; that if one liked to put on one's Sunday frock on a week-day one would only be admired and not scolded, and that one's shopping becomes actually important and not frivolous, because it is for the house and not for oneself merely. Besides, there is the amusement of seeing new places with a congenial spirit, and with one who does not consider it his duty to insist on learning all he can about a place; in fact, the honeymooners are no longer children to be educated, but people bent on amusing themselves together, with no *arrière-pensées*; these come afterwards. Then business has become dreadfully imperative in its demands on the husband, while the wife leaves home for a holiday, her mind distracted between pleasure and a melancholy foreboding of what may happen during her absence to children and household, neither of which can naturally trouble her during that first delightful jaunt, which should always be to some amusing, bright place where theatres can be fallen back on should it be wet, or where picture galleries could be visited under similar adverse circumstances. One can visit the dullest of places safely together after one has been married years; there are then mutual interests which will always occupy husband and wife: but at first this is actual suicide; there are then not very many things to discuss, and the unfortunate young people fall back on endearments and use up in a month that which should last them comfortably for all their lives.

But we are arriving at the honeymoon before we have allowed the engagement, and must therefore retrace our steps, or else we shall omit the most important item of all—viz. how to act when we see an engagement is imminent and we are not sure if we like it or not. We should soon make up our minds on the subject though, for if we do not approve we can easily

manage that the young people shall not meet any more. It only requires tact and common sense, two qualities which seem to me often strangely lacking in the ordinary British household.

And, indeed, all that appertains to matrimony is made very difficult by the extraordinary manner in which English society looks upon the relations between young men and girls; in some measure allowing great familiarity, and in another way turning on anyone and calling her 'match-maker,' should the unfortunate individual attempt to bring together those she thinks would like to see a little more of each other. Match-maker, indeed! Why, I consider it the duty of every happily married woman to try and make others happy in a similar way; and I have known more than one happy woman rendered a miserably disappointed spinster, just because the right person was not at hand to manage a last meeting, or give the one opportunity that was all that was required to make liking into love, or to ensure the speaking of the question that had trembled on the lips for some time.

Of course marriages are made in heaven, but I also know that Heaven helps those who help themselves; and as no girl can do that, it is the duty of her married friends to help her, especially if they have any common sense, and can act *Deus ex machinâ*, without letting anyone know what they have done.

If our young people are 'desperately in love' with the wrong man, or the wrong girl, all the better that the love is desperate; it will burn itself out all the quicker; but not if we oppose the match tooth and nail, though at the same time we need not countenance it. We should, under these adverse circumstances, state calmly but boldly the reasons we have for our dislikes; we should simply put all the 'cons' we know in plain words, and we should listen to the 'pros' equally calmly, and we should never allow a *personal* dislike to make any difference in the matter; but our reasons should be valid and not of the 'Doctor Fell' kind. Then, if the daughter or son is not convinced, say no more, do not oppose it; let the young people see as much as they can of each other; if there are disagreeable relations, make them very welcome to your house; be civil but not affectionate to the man or girl; and finally be, or rather appear to be, absolutely indifferent. Make a fuss, rage and

stamp and oppose, and you may at the same time order the trousseau. Act as I advise, and ten chances to one the match will be broken off; but if it is not, and should it turn out well, be the first to thankfully acknowledge it. Should it turn out badly, refrain from the delightful habit of saying, 'I told you so,' but instead recall to the offended party all the reasons he or she had for marrying; do not condole, but rather remind him or her of the early days and of the love that once existed, and remind them that marriage, once entered into, must be made the best of. You will do far more good and have far more satisfaction in healing the breach than in proving yourself a true prophet; for if people were more sure than they are now, that being bound they cannot get loose, they would cease to strain against the cords, use would accustom them to them, and finally what was once irksome would be pleasurable. People who have once loved each other can always remember the happy days of their youth; and, remembering them, naturally will long to return to them, or to secure at least in some measure a reflex of them in their middle age.

But, having contemplated this side of the picture, let us look at the far pleasanter one where all goes merry as a marriage bell, and the engagement is all that it should be. Yet before we do this I must just add one other word, and that is that, come what may, no marriage should ever be entered on, on any pretext whatever, unless the consent, if not the approbation, of the parents has been obtained. I have seen several marriages begin like this; I have never seen one that turned out well, or that was absolutely a success, and I do wish my readers to remember that this is a fact, and to therefore refrain from conduct that can have but one result; besides which, how can the children of such marriages turn out, if one has no control over them, should they desire to do likewise? for they have the one unanswerable argument in their possession: 'You did it; why should not I?' Then also a man never really respects a woman who throws over every one of her relations for him: he knows he is not worth the sacrifice, and though he may be flattered at first, ultimately he despises the girl who gave up all for him, and never really regards her with the reverence he must give to her who comes to him from her home, from her mother's hand, knowing that that home is the emptier for her

absence, and that a place should always be kept there for her, should she require to return there for any reason whatever. Home should be always home to the married children of the household, just as much as it is to those who remain spinsters and bachelors; and on no account should the doors be closed on them, or should they be allowed to feel that they have become in a measure strangers there, and that their place being filled knows and requires them no more. The trousseau of a girl should be as ample as can be afforded, and should have more under-garments than anything else; dresses alter in fashion so rapidly that it is folly to burden her with too many garments; neither are unmade costumes any use in these days, when no good dressmaker will make up one's own materials. I should, therefore, give a girl not less than two dozen of every feminine garment, and as many more of each as I could afford. A good trousseau would cost about 200*l.*, and of course as much more as the parents are prepared to spend; it should include a sealskin coat and a long fur cloak; the other outside garments should of course depend upon fashion and time of year, but it is a good plan to have some extra yards of material to all the dresses, particularly if the bride is going away from London to a distant part of the world.

When the engagement is really formed, and the wedding is beginning to be the subject of conversation, one cannot say all the difficulties are over; there are the bridegroom's family to welcome and be introduced to, and though, of course, if the bridegroom is well known to us this initial difficulty will not have to be encountered in all its worst forms, still very often the engagement alters one's relationships suddenly, and it requires careful steering then to avoid friction; as a rule the parents on both sides think their children might have done better, and it is generally difficult to prevent this feeling being unduly apparent. Then I do beg for all my girl friends that they may have a pretty wedding; I do not want enormous sums spent on the wedding dress, but I do want the church to be nicely decked, all her friends to be asked who care to come, not because they may possibly give wedding presents—a species of blackmail which has become seriously unpleasant lately to anyone who is not sufficiently strong-minded to refuse to give because they are afraid of being out of the

fashion—but because they are really friends, and will bring good luck by their loving prayers and real affection. And I do deprecate for all the hurried ‘quiet weddings’ in a tailor-made frock; a woman should be in white on her festal day, and it should be indeed a festal day if her marriage is entered on in the spirit I have been writing about.

I love a pretty wedding: the bride in her lovely white dress, and her group of bridesmaids; the flower-decked church, the hymns, and the bright faces of the choir boys (I must own I have a great weakness for choir boys, and generally make friends with them all) are all such a bright beginning to a new life; and if the solemn words are spoken by the ‘family priest,’ the man who, may be, married the parents and christened and prepared the bride for confirmation, there remains nothing to be desired, and we can wish the new home God-speed, knowing our wishes will have every chance of being fulfilled.

Afternoon weddings, with the flower-decked tables and the inexpensive refreshments, bring pretty weddings within the reach of everyone nearly; even the erstwhile elaborately decorated cake now bears a wreath of simple and real flowers, instead of the pinchbeck temple that used to be reared on the centre; and all that is required besides is a certain amount of cake, ices, tea and coffee, and a little wine. Here again the expenditure can be regulated by the income; but it need not be an expensive affair unless one specially desires that it may be.

Now, most people are married by banns, and licences are rarely required; this simplifies matters very much. But before the wedding is definitely decided on I should advise the clergyman of the church one is always in the habit of attending being consulted about all the legal forms; he is sure to know all that is necessary, will tell you exactly what you ought to do, what the choir and organist will expect (of course, if the organist be a gentleman, as he often is, and a personal friend, you must give him a present, not money), and what steps you must take about the decorations. But do not hand these over to a shop; be sentimental for once, and let personal friends undertake this duty. I would rather have hideous decorations put up by hands that loved one, on such an occasion, than the most exquisite trophies ever designed by Mrs. Green and put

up by those who do not even know the bride and bridegroom by sight.

I do hope every bride may soon have her *dot*, just like all French and German maidens have; but in any case she must not go penniless upon her wedding tour. Coventry Patmore's idea in the 'Angel of the House,' that his three-days' bride asked him to pay for the sand-shoes—'Felix, will you pay?'—as a matter of course, is a mere man's notion. I am certain she must have hated to do it, and would have given anything for some money of her own: so do not let Paterfamilias forget this, even if he have the conscience to allow his daughter to go penniless into her husband's house; and let him give his daughter a nice little sum of money, in order that she may not have to ask her husband for a farthing until their return home, when the allowance question should be gone into and settled, thus doing away with the constant jar about money, which is at the bottom of more matrimonial unhappiness than is anything else.

I think I have said all that is to be said on the subject of weddings, and have stated boldly how best to secure the happiness of our children; it is a subject on which I feel very deeply, and when I see girls marry men who cannot by any possibility make good husbands or good fathers, I long to tell them this, but of course no one but their mothers can; and I shall hope that I may influence one or two to do so, and moreover to insist that their children do not marry to perpetuate the disease or the evil tendencies that must wreck innocent lives that have no business ever to exist; for while, if marriage is entered into properly, there can be no failure about it, marriage being the perfection of life, the uniting and joining of the two lives, which, separate, are indeed incomplete, but which, brought together, form an absolute and wonderful whole, a marriage which perpetuates the vices of a drunkard, of an evil temper, of an habitual liar, or the constitution of a consumptive or of a lunatic, is absolutely wicked, and can never be anything but a curse to the wife and mother, whatever it may be to the man himself. A *roué* has discounted his chances of a happy married life. No woman can reform a *roué*, and even if she could she should not try, because in her children she will perpetuate the father's vices, and will make

the world worse a thousandfold by those she brings into it, while at the best she may save a soul, though I personally do not believe she could even do this; at all events, it is not right to sacrifice her future and her children's future in the endeavour, and therefore I hope she may never try.

As I said before, we cannot explain away the mysterious influence of heredity; but as it exists and is inexorable in its consequences, we must acknowledge it, and we must all do our best so to live that we can give our children the noblest inheritance on earth—an unimpaired constitution, and a name unstained by any mean or low vice, a name that may be our proudest possession: aye, even if we saw it first above the window of some suburban shop! Then shall the world become better because we have lived in it and given it hostages also: and so shall we prove what I should like to be always preaching—that marriage is the most blessed state on earth, if it is begun and carried on mutually with esteem, affection, and real consideration, for each other's welfare.

CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT THE BOYS.

THE poor boys! When I begin to write about their home I could almost weep when I think how small a space of their young lives they are permitted to spend under the home roof.

I have said so much in my former book about home education that I suppose I must not say very much more now, but I long to repeat my protest against the present manner in which boys are sent away from home, almost before they are able to stand alone, quite before they are able to withstand all the thousand and one temptations that assail them the moment they are turned into the herd of boys which represents a school, and where the poor things have to spend most of what ought to be the very happiest part of anyone's life. However, as public opinion is against me, I am going to set down here the best way of mitigating the evils, and I also intend to give the relative expenses at some of the best of our public schools and colleges, so that those who read this book may see at a glance whether they can afford to send their boys to Harrow, Eton, Rugby, or Clifton—Harrow being put first by me, as I am devoted to the bright, healthy, happy place, as I suppose all are devoted to the public school of which they know most; for, much as I deprecate the life at school which is so far away from home influence, and much as I should prefer to live at Harrow and have my boys home at night, there is something about a public school education which nothing else gives, and which can be entered fearlessly at fourteen if the boy have been well trained and if he have a certain amount of moral courage and good principles of his own. It is madness to send a weak-minded lad who inherits evil propensities to a public school; he is sure sooner or later to disgrace himself and his wretched parents at the same time.

But before going into the question of schools and expenses there, let us dwell for a few minutes on the arrangement of the boys' rooms in the house, which should ever be the happiest place in the world to them, and from which should flow that

never-failing stream of sympathy in their progress, their pursuits, and their general welfare which has borne many a lad on to success and to a brilliant place in the world in after life. An authority told me once that the boys who did best were undoubtedly those who had most letters from home; who knew everything that was happening at home just as well as if they were there; to whom the movements of the family and of the animals were as familiar as if they still were among them, and who were not afraid to tell their parents anything. Sympathy is a priceless gift; sympathy between home and the boys at school is an anchor indeed, and will keep them safely in the harbour when every other means might otherwise have failed. And this sympathy can but be expressed in constant communication between home and school, and by a loving care, while the boys are absent, of their rooms, their belongings, and the especial niche which should be kept sacredly for them, and not cleared out hastily for them to inhabit, as it were, on sufferance during the all too brief holiday time they spend at home.

I do not mean to say that during their absence the rooms should never be used, that would be simply too ridiculous; but they should not be taken into household wear; if they are they cease to be the boys' rooms, and in consequence the boys feel they are a nuisance and putting some one else out; they do not naturally take their places in the circle, feeling they are filling a gap which has never been filled since the day they returned to school.

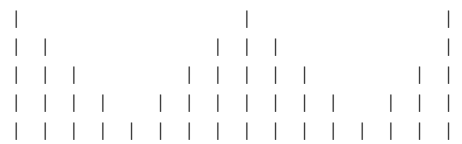
I should certainly try to have a place set apart for the boys for wet days and for their own special occupations; if this cannot be managed, their bedrooms should be so arranged that at one end they can carry on their several hobbies without doing any damage to the finer portions of the house; but, if in any way possible, secure a sitting-room for them where they can do as they like; and if you want really perfect holidays find some enthusiastic skater, cricketer, or walker as holiday tutor, and make him responsible for the welfare of the boys. As they do not live at home, naturally there is no one told off to keep special care of them or to go about with them; if this is done, the holidays pass without a hitch, and without unduly threatening the mother's life, who, try as she will, cannot be

sure that, if the boys are out alone for half an hour longer than usual, they are not drowned, or lost, or lying in ditches with broken legs, and who can never school herself to be their companion, even should she be strong enough to be so, because she is always expecting something dreadful to happen to them. At least I know what I feel on the subject, and I suppose I only feel what everyone else does in the matter. In the boys' rooms, whether bed or sitting rooms, I advise always the invaluable dado; this ensures the lower parts of the wall being kept tidy, and minimises the expense of doing the rooms up when they become shabby. A rail along the floor, or rather a piece of wood about three inches wide laid along the floor close to the wainscoting, will keep the chairs, &c., off the paint, and then, if we have a pretty paper above the serviceable matting, or cretonne, or arras cloth which forms the dado, we shall be quite safe to preserve the room for some time, looking fresh and nice and bright.

If baths have to be taken in the boys' rooms, or if they clean their rifles, skates, or other matters there, or if they have pet animals which share their abode, I strongly advise that the floor should be covered with a plain good linoleum without any pattern on, and then on the top of that a strong square of carpet should be laid. Wallace's 'Victor' is a capital carpet, and so is Pearke's Anglo-Indian square carpet. This should not be fastened down in any way, and should be most rigorously folded back by the housemaid during those hours when bathing or dirty work is being carried on. The linoleum can always be cleaned with soft warm water, and kept in order with boiled oil and turpentine, and the carpet can be put back in a moment, thus making the room tidy at once.

Rubbishy cheap furniture should never be bought for a boy's room. Naturally by this I do not mean we should be unduly reckless over what we buy for the boys, but that we should go to some good man like Wallace, and tell him that we want good seasoned wood and handles which will not pull off, and drawers and doors which will not stick, and which will not tempt the lads by such conduct to undue violence in the matter. Boys are always in a hurry, always impatient. They can't help it; it is a failing of the sex, and half the damage boys do is caused by the fact that we do not realise this and often give

them rickety or common furniture, because ‘anything is good enough for the boys to knock about.’ There cannot be a greater mistake. Give strong ash furniture, made properly, a good plain brass and iron bedstead, and a good chain mattress, and we shall find it pay; yes, even if the boys play ship on the mattress, the necessary waves being well represented by the manner in which the mattress goes up and down when jumped upon by the intrepid sailors. Our mattresses have served as ships and as oceans too, but they are as good now as the day they were bought, simply because they were very expensive; but if they had not been dear I don’t think there would, have been anything left of them by now; therefore cheapness is no economy, as regards mattresses at any rate; of that I am quite convinced. A good suite of ash furniture containing wardrobe, washing stand, and toilet table can be had for about 10*l.*, and I do not advise less being given. This should be supplemented by a chest of drawers to hold shirts, socks, &c., and the boots should be kept either downstairs in the cloak-room or else in a proper boot cupboard; and I strongly advise the toilet covers to be in art serge, simply trimmed by a species of edging in crewels composed of about nine stitches, one long, one shorter each side of the long stitch, and one each side shorter still, like this:



This should be carried round the edges of the cover in a lighter shade than the serge itself, and would cost about 2*s.* a cover, or indeed less, as serge is double width. There would be no ball fringe to pull off by shutting it heedlessly in a drawer, and there would be nothing we could not easily replace, should blacking, paint, oil, or any of the thousand and one messes in which boys seem to revel be spilled upon it. White toilet covers are absolutely useless, and of course it would be really ridiculous to give them more elaborate covers, which could only be spoiled.

It would not be of much use here to give any special schemes of decoration for boys’ rooms, but I may say that the

cheaper the wall paper is above the dado the better. Boys are continually adding to their stores of pictures and ornaments, and are as continually shooting at a mark on the wall with anything that comes handy, and are not above giving the flowers on the paper a nose, or a mouth from which a pipe proceeds, or ears which resemble those of a donkey; and though these decorations may be left a certain time it is best to have such a paper which, while being pretty, is one that we can replace without an undue struggle on our part; and I may mention Haines's capital 7½*d.* blue and terra-cotta papers. The blue could have blue paint, and a blue matting dado, and a yellow and white ceiling paper; the terra-cotta might have ivory paint, a terra-cotta and green cretonne dado, and curtains of the same cretonne. Helbronner has a beauty, 604, at 1*s.* 8*d.* a yard, and the ceiling paper could be Land's pale green and white 'Watteau' at 3*s.* the piece. Wallace's dull green 'lily carpet' would make a capital square there, as would his red lily in the blue room, where the cretonne could be Oetzmann's red and blue Westminster cretonne, which should be lined, as should all cretonnes which do duty for blinds as well as curtains; this all curtains should do, had I my way entirely in the matter. The walls and books and pictures should be the boys' own choice, and so should be the ornaments on the mantel-piece, though a clock should be invariably provided, and this should be one the veracity of which should be unimpeachable—punctuality must be enforced and hours kept, and no excuses should be allowed on this score. If the youth declares he wishes to make up for his perforce straitened hours of repose at school, let him go to bed as early as he likes—never interfere with that, but do not weakly allow him to be late in the morning; it puts out the whole household, and for no reason at all, and should never be countenanced for a moment. Late hours in the morning mean more than I have space to dilate on here; but you may be quite sure that a household which is late in the morning is never a well-managed or prosperous one. Late hours then denote lazy, self-indulgent habits, and therefore should never be allowed.

If the boys begin them in the holidays be sure they will be continued after school is left, and therefore be firm on this point, although I know all too well how difficult it is to be

stern and inflexible towards the boys who are only at home for the holidays, and naturally are in consequence just a wee bit spoiled by their indulgent parents. Now if a sitting-room can be given to the boys and the tutor, I advise it being furnished as prettily as may be as regards the walls, but the floor must not have a carpet, and room must be found there for the lathe, carpenter's tools, and odds and ends so dear to the heart of the boy; and here let me beg and implore parents to aid and abet their children in any hobby they have, if they can do so reasonably and comfortably, and without undue expense; and let me also beg of them to keep and treat with scrupulous reverence any drawings, efforts of literary genius, or of mechanical genius, which their children produce and present to them; at the same time I do not advise their being exhibited to the world at large, while I should carefully explain to children, that the thing was kept, not because of its present intrinsic merits, nor because it was a distinct effort of genius, but because it was their doing, and because we should like to compare it with future efforts, in order that we may see how they have improved.

Without going the lengths that 'Misunderstood' does (a book, by the way, which has made more prigs than any other under the sun, in my belief), I think parents often make their children miserable without in the least meaning to do so, by reason of the manner in which they refuse to interest themselves in their pursuits. It is not pleasant to partake of sticky black cakes baked in the dolls'-house pans, to sit on the cold stairs in the dark looking on at a spirited representation of a magic-lantern, the slides of which we know by heart, and we may endure agonies over the hundredth representation of the usual charade, neither may we feel profound interest in the School Magazine; but at the same time we are bound to think we do, and we ought to be more than thankful that our children care for these things and go in for them, rather than for the usual hanging about, reading those dreadful Rider Haggard books, which have done more harm than anything else, I verily believe, to the youth of the present day, and have vitiated their tastes, until nothing pleases them which is not written in gore and bound up in a mixture of pistols and swords, which is as odious as it is unnecessary.

The boys' books ought to form a very distinct feature in their sitting-room, and, if possible, we should endeavour to keep out all Haggardish stories. But this is almost impossible in these days of independence and fourpence-halfpenny literature. I know I can't, and glorious detective stories and other works of art are to be found all over the house; but we must do our best to improve the standard, by placing other better books in the authorised bookcases, and by ridiculing and, if necessary, confiscating whenever we can all we so highly disapprove of. At the same time I honestly confess this is mere advice: I cannot stem the torrent myself, but hope there are other more strong-minded parents than I am, who may be able to do so, though I have done my best in the matter, and have tried everything I can think of to eliminate these books, for which I have the most hearty contempt and dislike.

It would be no use, I think, to say more about the arrangement of the room which should be set apart for the boys; but I cannot say too much about the necessity of the dear things having a place where they can do absolutely what they like, for half the friction which seems to me inevitable in other people's households, when the boys are at home, is undoubtedly caused by the fact that the boys are in the way, and have no place that they can call their own. Under these circumstances they worry their sisters, spoil the furniture, and upset the servants; and more especially does this happen in London, where there is nowhere for them to disport themselves, and nothing that they can do except promenade the streets and go to theatres and such-like places of amusement.

Of course, little boys can be managed well. They have their nurseries first, and then their governess and schoolrooms. It is when they begin to go to school that the trouble begins. The governess does not care about them preparing their lessons in her room; and if they are day boarders, which they certainly ought to be until they are twelve or thirteen, and, indeed, until they go into the big school, where they should be when they are fourteen and not a day before, the lessons must be prepared at home, and this work should doubtless go on under the superintendence of someone in authority. Parents often can and do help immensely, but there are very few men who do not

find their classics decidedly rusty by the time they are required to superintend their children's preparation; besides which they are, as a rule, tired with their own day's work, and are not in the least inclined for extra labour, and often do not possess the necessary stock of patience required for this kind of employment.

My ideal education would consist of sending the boys to a good school in the daytime, and in taking care that they prepare their work in the evening, under a good tutor, who would be trusted to simply superintend them, and to give the necessary help, but who would not do the work for them; he would not live in the house, but would simply come for the couple of hours during which the boys would work. This would do away with the great objection to home education, which is undoubtedly the work which has to be done at home, and which cannot be properly superintended unless someone is told off for the purpose, unless the parents are well up in the work of the day, and are furthermore prepared to give up almost all society for the sake of looking after the boys—a thing which should never be done, for it is most important that we should make and keep friends; if we don't care for them for ourselves, we must care for them for the sake of the children, who would find themselves shut out of everything when they grew up did their parents withdraw themselves entirely from society when they were yet small.

Of course a great many people cannot manage to live where there are really good schools, but equally of course a great many can, and when this can be managed it undoubtedly ought to be; and places like Bedford, where the schools are excellent, and Wimborne, where the Grammar School has improved mightily of late years, and where house rent is moderately cheap and living very inexpensive, offer especial advantages to a widow left with two or three sons to educate, and to military men and others who can live where they like, and have only their boys' education to think about, Bedford being especially good for this purpose.

I believe there is a book published which gives all necessary particulars about all these schools, and indeed about all the schools all over England, but I shall only mention those of

which I have personal knowledge, as I am no believer in second-hand information: this can always be procured for special cases, and would be out of place in a book like mine, but I do strongly advise all who can—all who have no settled occupation that binds them down to a special locality—to live where they can have their children educated from the home roof. I am quite certain that this is the ideal and proper education, and results in a better class of man all round. They may not be as polished, their manners may not be as perfect, and they may be shy and gruff, but their morals will be ever so much better, and they will be better men in the highest sense of the word. For though they may 'marry the lady's maid,' like the youth in 'Punch,' at all events they will marry her; they will not degrade and then desert her, as alas! so many men do nowadays. But I myself don't believe they would do anything of the kind; by far and away the best men I know are those who have been least away from home, and they are not among the unsuccessful ones of this life either.

However, it is sometimes impossible for parents to manage home education, though in London there are so many opportunities, that it must be more a case of must than can't, for there are Westminster, St. Paul's, and the University College Schools, all of which can be managed after the boys are old enough to be trusted in the streets alone, and at the latter of which for the absurdly low fee of 8*l.* 8*s.* a quarter can be had the best education in the world, but where the boys need learn very little if they can scrape through the day's routine without finding themselves in either the 'black' or the 'appearing' books; but even then they do not learn as little as they can if they try at either Eton or Harrow, where it seems to me the education given is especially useless for practical service, and can never by any chance fit the recipient for any real work that he may have to undertake.

The perfect education should be that which most fits a man for his work, and no one can watch the manner in which we are being ousted by Germans from every place without allowing that their education has something which ours lacks, and that unless our boys can be taught to emulate their patience, perseverance, and eager quest after knowledge, to say nothing of their capabilities of existing on a pittance, we

shall wake up some day to find our lads quite out of the running, because they do not understand life properly, and because they are unable to fight for themselves against the present overwhelming German invasion. There is a limpness, a passiveness about the boys of the present day that is something dreadful, and that I think springs in some measure from these fatal examinations, and the fearsome higher education. They see the prizes can only fall to the exceptionally gifted and hard-working members of the fraternity, and therefore they are dispirited before they start, knowing that, try as they may, they can never succeed. Far from stimulating most youths to work, the sense that unless they are geniuses they cannot pass the exams cripples them, and they cease to care to try for what they know they cannot possibly obtain, read how they may; and therefore I cannot but think the excessively high standard that must be reached nowadays in everything is a mistake, and that serious consideration should be given both to this and to the fact that our boys are not able to compete with the Germans because something in our scheme of education and learning does not permit them to do so successfully.

Let us then give home education a chance and see what can come of that, and let our nurses be French and German, so that the children may learn these languages with their earliest breath; and, moreover, let us in some measure educate our children for what they are going to be. It is no manner of use to give those who are to be in trade the same teaching as that required for the learned professions; and I venture to state that if a man has to take to trade the sooner he does it the better. Eighteen ought to see him in harness of a light kind, but harness all the same; and I furthermore state boldly that it is absolutely waste of time and money and everything else to send boys abroad to school. They never do any good there, and they may get into most frightful mischief. If boys must be sent to France or Germany, take them yourselves, otherwise you may be quite sure that both time and money are wasted. I am not speaking without book, and I have never heard of one school, either in France or Germany, where the education was of the least use, neither will it be until more schools follow the example of Clifton, and form settlements abroad on the lines of our public schools; though even then I am inclined to adhere

to my own opinion and urge on parents, whose sons require to know French and German thoroughly, to go to both places themselves, and stay a couple of years in each in some good town. If they do they will achieve their object, and their boys will command far higher prices in the labour market than those can who do not know any languages except their own, and a certain amount of Latin and Greek, which, it seems to me, they learn only to forget as soon as ever they can manage to do so.

But if parents will not hear of home education they must most carefully select the preparatory school, and they must manage to afford in addition a first-rate public school, for nothing can possibly be worse than a cheap or inferior place of education; and it is an astonishing fact to me that in such an important matter as is education one requires as a rule so little guarantee that we actually receive what we are paying for.

No one can be a lawyer or doctor without credentials; anyone who likes can open a school, and command scholars too. Why should not the State interfere here?—it is very fond of interfering dreadfully on far less important matters—and say boldly that no one shall have a school at all until he has qualified himself in the eye of the State, and is diplomaed or hall-marked in such a manner that one can tell at once whether he is fitted for the work or not? Until this is done I much fear that preparatory schools will not improve to any great extent, and that the middle classes will continue to send their children to people who are utterly unfit for the work they have undertaken. A personal reference from some parent, often enough from one who knows little indeed about his children, and possibly a few letters after the name, are considered quite sufficient guarantee by most people that they are obtaining all that they are paying for.

A good preparatory school costs from 85*l.* to about 125*l.* a year; of course less can be paid, and I dare say more can be paid also, but I consider an excellent school can be had for 100*l.* a year. Of course there are always extras beside, and these depend entirely on the means of the parents, and in some measure on the schoolmaster himself, who should undoubtedly be a man in whom we can trust, and to whom we can give our confidence, telling him exactly what we can afford to spend,

and also what manner of child our special boy is, and also, most important of all, what he is to be, and what particular talents, weaknesses, or goodnesses he may be likely to inherit. We should also give our child our confidence. We should tell him emphatically what we can afford for him, what we wish him to do, and finally encourage him in every way to get on by writing to or seeing him constantly, and by never letting him imagine for one moment that 'out of sight means out of mind;' he is more in our minds, just because he is absent from us, than he would be were he constantly in our presence.

As regards public schools, Harrow costs roughly about 200*l.* a year, and the first term's bills are as follows:

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Board and washing	30	0	0
Public tuition and school charges	11	11	0
Entrance to school and house	16	0	0
Private tuition	5	0	0
	62	11	0

Of course the 16*l.* entrance fees do not come in again, but this is more than spent on extras. There are subscriptions to endless things and payments for extra tuition, for which a long list of printed names on the first account in some measure prepares the unhappy parent, who somehow never is prepared, for the extraordinary amount of new clothes, mending, hair-cutting, and other trifles, which go to sum up the accounts in the ensuing terms.

Eton seems to me to cost about 20*l.* a year more, and the bills of one term are as follows:

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Board and tuition	44	0	0
Washing	2	0	7
Head master, school instruction, &c.	8	8	0
	54	8	7

This is without entrance fee, and the extras seem to me to be rather more frequent, while Rugby is considerably less than either, the bills there being as under:

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Tuition	13	6	8
Boarding	24	0	0
School stationery (this varies)	1	10	0

Medical officer	0 10 6
	39 7 2

Both at Eton and Rugby the allowance given by the house master is 1*s.* a week, at Harrow 2*s.*, but besides this of course the boys take money to school. The smaller boys at Harrow should not have more than 3*l.* during the term, and out of this they must pay sundry subscriptions. At Eton I think the pocket-money can be almost anything, while at Rugby 3*l.* does until the boy gets into the Sixth, when he should have more money, and when the books, a heavy item in most school bills, are far more expensive than they were in the lower forms.

Individually I know most of Harrow, as I said before; but, as these bills have been copied from actual accounts rendered to friends of my own, I think I am justified in printing them, and they will also serve as a guide to those parents who are hesitating where to put down their boys' names, a ceremony which should take place when the boys are about six or seven; and if the parents have no 'traditions,' and are not wedded to any special school by reason of the father having been there before, or relations on either side having been in the special school, the school should be chosen in some measure to suit the boy's health, and also in some measure his future occupation. I should not send a lad who was going to work in any shape or form to Eton. That school should be reserved for those useless individuals, who toil not neither do they spin, nor should I send a boy to Harrow who intended to go in for trade or anything save one of the learned professions. Those who have a big business to go into might be sent to Rugby or Clifton, but I should prefer to let them attend St. Paul's or the London University School, or else send them to Bedford or a similar establishment.

When the boys are at school, the holidays should be in some measure legislated for and all arrangements made for the boys' welfare; and of course no parent who cared for his or her children would possibly be away from home or out of reach of the boys during that time: the parents' holidays, which are as important in some measure as the children's, should come off when school has begun again, but on no account should they occur when the boys are at home; and if possible the summer

holidays should be spent by the sea, the beloved sea, which, as fashion changes, is, I am sorry to say, becoming unpopular, and is left alone by those who are fashion led, and in consequence impelled towards the country or ‘foreign parts.’

But of the holidays more anon; I have not yet quite done with the boys, and the holidays can have a chapter to themselves later on.

I think the most important hint of all which I have to give is that on no account should a boy leave school or college until we have something to put him into, and which shall occupy his time. There is nothing more fatal than idleness, and it should never be countenanced in any shape or form, and I do hope some day to find that all boys who have to earn their living may be given some sort of a trade—something they can do with their fingers, outside and above any profession they may be going in for. Given a trade they can never starve, and would be far more fit for the colonies, where so many lads flit, looking forward to more freedom and more outdoor life than they can possibly have here in England, though I cannot imagine a more foolish thing than to allow a youth to go out ‘on spec;’ unless he has something to go out to, he had far better remain where he is; if not he will soon degenerate into something far less like a gentleman than he would have been had he remained at home and taken to some good and honest trade. I cannot help thinking that these ‘decorative’ days of ours will open up the furniture business to gentlemen, and that soon our houses will be provided for entirely by men who are artists, and that those who cannot originate, yet have artistic tastes and an eye for colour, will not despise work which is far more interesting than desk-work for example, and far more remunerative than the position of clerk, with which so many lads of the present day have to satisfy themselves. The gentlemen of England can bring back trade to England if they choose, they can replace the slovenly workman and the shoddy work, and it remains to be proved if they will do so; at present people’s eyes are open, and trade is no longer a badge of disgrace, so I hope some day to see industrial villages turning out good work, where at present are empty labourers’ cottages and impecunious landlords with untilled farms; and in the meantime I beg our boys not to remain idle but to work

somehow, it does not matter much at what, but at some work that will be good and must and will find a market.

If a lad is going into one of the learned professions it is necessary that he go to college, where the expenses all told cannot be less than 300*l.* a year, but before he does so his father should seriously tell him that whatever allowance he has is the extent of what he can give him, and that under no circumstances whatever will he be responsible for any debts of any sort or kind, and that doing what he is for him he is doing his utmost, and that he would rather see him go through the Bankruptcy Court than impoverish his sisters or his other brothers to pay his extravagant liabilities. Let this be well talked over at home in private, and I do not think the lad will place himself in the miserable and anxious position of many a young man who ladens himself with debt during his college life, which cripples all the best of his existence and embitters his days in more ways than one; but the boy must have parents on whom he can rely, and he must know that they mean absolutely what they say. There can be nothing more unfair than for the girls to be starved mentally and morally, and the younger lads badly educated, because a parent has to pay debts which ought never to have been contracted.

Gambling debts should be utterly ignored by the parents, and gambling in every shape and form should be absolutely forbidden, the reasons thereof being plainly stated; and I think all parents should be more open about their circumstances than they are to their children, who often get a most erroneous impression about their people's income, because of the manner in which they live. Why! because they have a carriage and a big house is the very reason why they can do no more, and why should the parents give up all they have justly earned because their children are extravagant? I see no reason myself, and I myself would certainly never do so to pay extravagant liabilities, or liabilities incurred on the gaming-table or on the racecourse.

Give the boys a good education and a start in life, and provide the girls with 150*l.* a year, either when they marry or at your own death, and you have done your duty by your children. The girls cannot starve on that income, and neither

would they be the prey of any fortune-hunter; but no one has a right to bring children into the world in the ranks of the upper middle-class and do less; misery will come of it if he does, be quite sure of that.

Of course misfortunes may happen, and the parents' early death may prevent an actually safe future being secured for the children; but, as a rule, an early death should be provided for by insurance, and misfortunes, if undeserved, generally bring sympathy in their train, and there are many mitigations, even for these, if parents are judicious and have not flooded the world with an enormous family that they can have no prospect whatever of providing for. As soon as the boys have finished their education let them begin to work; a lawyer can begin; a doctor can commence at once to wait for patients even if he cannot buy a practice, which would be the best thing to do; a curacy can be procured for a cleric, and if trades are chosen the sooner those trades are entered into the better; but whatever is selected never allow idleness of any shape or form. Idleness is the parent of all mischief. A man well and healthily employed has neither time nor inclination to go very far wrong.

Let the boys be encouraged to have tastes, and above all let every lad in England join some Volunteer Corps. I consider it a duty for every man to be able, and to show himself willing, to protect his home, and if he is encouraged at home he will volunteer, and will take an interest in his work, which will be invaluable to him. The expeditions are pleasant; all lads love a gun, and adore being able to shoot, and if the taste is acquired in the school cadet corps it will continue afterwards; and remember that all out-door sports and occupations are so many safeguards—tennis, bicycling, volunteering, shooting, hunting, riding, are all so many protections against temptations, to which all lads are exposed, and on which of course it is impossible for me to speak here.

To sum up the advice I would give about our boys, I would say that love of home, love of sport (not racing, not battue, nor pigeon-shooting, nor similar inanities, but *bonâ fide* sport), and love of an out-door life, are the great protection for the lads. Do not encourage theatre-going and endless balls and society affectations, but do encourage in every way you can

those things of which I have been writing. I am sure then we shall have a healthier and a better race than the ‘masher’ Gaiety bar-lounger, for whom I have such a profound contempt, or than the race-frequenting, betting, ‘lemon-squash’ consuming, nerveless, brainless idiot that is so extremely prevalent in the present day.

As soon as a lad is eighteen he ought to have some definite allowance for all his small expenses and to enable him to clothe himself, and this must depend entirely on his parents’ circumstances, and where he is and what he is doing. Of course, if he should be placed in his father’s business he must be paid for his services, and this pay must cover all he spends; but as a rule 50*l.* is ample. A man can dress well and decently on 30*l.*, the other 20*l.* he can do what he likes with; and he should be encouraged to save for a holiday in ‘foreign parts.’ He had far better travel about than smoke his senses away, or waste his money in going to theatres and in-door amusements of any kind.

Boys are an endless anxiety, there is no doubt about that, and it is greatly, no doubt, owing to that fact that the system of sending the boys away to school has arisen; but although they are at school we cannot get rid of our responsibilities, neither should we try to do so. We are responsible for their existence, and we are bound to do the best we can for them. We shall, I am sure, be rewarded for all they have cost us, if we never relax our care until they are really grown up and are capable of managing their own lives; then, if we have trained them to love their home and to habits of work and occupation, we can do no more but trust in Providence; we shall have our reward sooner or later, of that I have not the smallest doubt.

As soon as a man can keep a wife he should marry and begin to make a home for himself. I am a great believer in early marriage, and I should like all my boys to marry as soon as ever they can. There is nothing teaches a man as the responsibility of marriage does, and nothing on earth is happier than a happy marriage. It is the complement of life, the perfect whole that all should strive to attain; about that subject I am quite sure, and none of the stock arguments against marriage, nor the stock jeers, will ever alter my opinion. Of

course there are troubles, if so they are borne better together; pleasures come, they are brightened by having someone to share them; and above all, marriage makes the home; the home gives an object in life and steadies at once, therefore marriage should be encouraged in every way it can, and those who are married should help on the marriage of others, and should show by their own conduct and bearing that it is the best state on earth, if undertaken out of pure love, not silly passion, and maintained in the mutual respect, affection, and toleration for each other's faults, which are the very bonds of the home, and which last when every slighter bond has given and fallen away. Once our boys are married we can breathe again, at all events our active work for them is over; and the less we interfere with them after that happy event the better chance will they have of making a success of their lives. All we have to do is to win the love and confidence of their wives, and that is not difficult if we never offer advice on any subject, and give them as much affection as we can. Above all must we resist the dear delight of talking over their *ménage* with other people. 'A still tongue means a wise head,' says the proverb, and a tongue cannot possibly be too still, when once there are sons and daughters-in-law in the family.

CHAPTER X.

SOME DOMESTIC DETAILS.

I THINK that I am more often consulted about how to manage servants, and how to apportion an income, than on any other detail of domestic management, and therefore I am of opinion that a few more words on these subjects may not be out of place here, although, as I have repeatedly stated elsewhere, no real help can be given by a stranger on either matter, and that only a species of general rule can be laid down, either about the management of the maids or how to set apart and divide the income we may have to spend. To begin with the income: I have had two scales drawn up by an accountant, and now present them here for what they are worth. The first is the very smallest income that any two people should marry upon, in my opinion; although I know many folks, especially among the ranks of the clerics, who ought to know much better, who continually do so, and as continually have numerous families, for which they cannot provide in the least, and for which they beg in the most shameless manner, and for whom I have neither sympathy nor patience. As a rule these unfortunates live in the country and have big gardens and houses found them rent free, but I have nothing to say to them here, and, as I cannot conceive how ladies and gentlemen can bring up, clothe, and feed their children, and manage their household respectably on less than 800*l.* a year, I have no ideas on the subject, and therefore cannot write on what I know nothing about.

Let us therefore take the ordinary young lawyer or young man who is ‘something in the City,’ that unknown City, the occupations of which are so mysterious in my eyes, and let us suppose he has 500*l.* to spend every year, increasing, let us hope, should he indulge in the luxury of a family; a luxury he has no more right to go in for on a tiny income than he would have to set up a carriage and pair, without being able to pay all the concomitant expenses; and this is how he should parcel out his expenditure:

	£	*s.*	*d.*
House-rent in London	80	0	0
Rates and taxes	20	0	0
Repairs to house and furniture	30	0	0
Two servants' wages and keep	90	0	0
Keep of self and wife, *at least*	75	0	0
Clothes for wife and pocket-money	50	0	0
Clothes for husband, including his daily luncheon and City journey	70	0	0
Coals	6	0	0
Life insurance	27	0	0
Summer outing	12	10	0
Washing	16	0	0
	476	10	0

Leaving: the magnificent sum of 24*l.* 10*s.* to cover doctors' bills and the thousand and one incidental expenses which are always cropping up, to say nothing of amusement. One could hardly rise to the upper boxes on 500*l.* a year if one must live in town and have appearances to keep up as well.

It is better at first, if the income is very small, to live in the suburbs. There are not so many temptations to spend money, and there would not be much going out. In London of course, the going out is endless; there must be cabs, new gloves, flowers, and the hundred and one extras that carry off one's money, and two servants are a *sine quâ non*. If the suburbs are selected, cabs and evening gloves, &c., need not be legislated for; one servant could do the work; and the house-rent and taxes would come to 50*l.* instead of 100*l.*; but there would be the husband's season-ticket to consider, and furthermore the intense dulness that is the wife's portion, for suburban residents are not hospitable; they are, most of them, not very well off, for of course all rich people fly to London; they are mutually suspicious of each other's *bona fides*, and are, moreover, engrossed as a rule in their domestic duties, and when the husband returns from town he is not only tired with his work, but with the added railway journey; he usually hankers after his garden in the summer and his arm-chair by the fire in the winter, and does not care to go out, more especially as he judges from his own feelings in the matter, and is quite sure his host wishes him at home in bed quite as much as he wishes himself there.

But, again, here I must show how impossible it is for another person to really advise a friend on this subject of division of income satisfactorily. There are plenty of suburban residents who are absolutely satisfied with their fate, and are equal to the misfortune of a small income. In that case I have told them precisely how they can manage best on the sum of 500*l.* a year. I can assure them they will have to be most economical and excellent managers to do that; and they can furthermore understand that it costs about 50*l.* a year to add a child to the establishment, and that 45*l.* a year is supposed to keep and pay a servant. These two details will be of assistance, maybe, when the income increases and the owners thereof contemplate a little launching out.

An income of 1,000*l.* a year should be apportioned as follows:

	£	*s.*	*d.*
House	100	0	0
Rates and taxes	33	0	0
Repairs, renewals, &c.	50	0	0
Two servants (rather better wages allowed)	100	0	0
Keep of self and wife	100	0	0
Wine, &c.	12	10	0
Clothes and pocket-money for wife	75	0	0
Clothes for husband	100	0	0
Coals	10	0	0
Insurance	50	0	0
Summer outing	30	0	0
Washing	26	0	0
Balance for incidentals	313	10	0
	1,000	0	0

And this larger balance would be drawn, upon for the extra expenses, such as entertaining and amusements, charities, and the thousand and one pleasant ways of spending money that are open to the possessor of the larger income, and are rigorously out of the reach of the owner of 500*l.* a year.

Then, too, there are all sorts and conditions of things to consider before laying down a law on the subject of apportioning the income; such for example as the consideration if the income dies with the husband, or if it may come from capital safely invested. In the former case the insurance ought to be very largely increased, as that is the only

absolutely safe manner of saving one's money. As a rule it costs about 27*l.* a year to insure the receipt of 1,000*l.* at death if the insurer is a young man, and I ask all intending bridegrooms to consider what this would mean if this be all the provision they can make for their brides, supposing they were to die and leave them with two or three little children and no other means. They could not live on 40*l.* a year, which is about all they would receive, and I therefore do trust all young men will seriously consider the matter before rushing into matrimony. At present a great many folk are like the ostrich, they bury their heads in the sands of present content and never consider the evil days that are before them. If they remain two, no one can blame them, but I do blame unendingly the selfish creatures who burden this overcrowded world with more genteel paupers. If people on small incomes insist on doing this, let them have the courage to bring up their daughters as upper servants and their boys to good honest trades; it is the genteel pauper, the girl who can paint a little, teach a little, and embroider a little, and the boy who, come what may, must wear a black coat or its equivalent in light tweeds, who have no right to be made to exist, and for whom the world has absolutely nothing to offer save a certain amount of snubs and a very large quantity of the unappetising dish known as the cold shoulder.

Therefore, if the income dies with the husband and there are children, a certain amount of money must be put aside annually for insurance; it ought to be enough to bring in 100*l.* a year to insure the wife from starvation when she is too old, too worn with all she has had to do to attempt to keep herself; and there should also be no false pride about the manner in which the children are educated; they should go to Board schools, where the teaching is excellent and far better than one can procure at ordinary small schools, which may be much more 'genteel' but will not be half as useful; for the Board schools are far and away better than anything that could be obtained from the wretchedly underpaid teachers who would be the girls' portion. The necessary companionship with wretchedly poor and dirty children, which is the great drawback to a Board school education, could be mitigated if all those who are really worthy of the Board school education

were to share it; and surely a good mother could tell her boys exactly what to avoid, and the lads could come straight home and simply be taught in the school. The girls would not need so much looking after, for they are far more conservative naturally than boys: boys will play with and talk to anyone; a girl very soon discriminates for herself, and will not play with another if she suspects her to be in the very smallest degree below her in the social scale.

It will be observed that I do not in the least take a sentimental view of life, for I feel that when one contemplates the terrible army of martyrs, the girls who have been ‘genteelly’ brought up and are ‘genteelly’ starving or living on their most unwilling and hard-working relations, one cannot say too much or write too much on this subject, and I cannot also but think that when there is the cry in the land that there undoubtedly is for more servants, more good and trustworthy lassies to help us with our domestic duties, and that when ladies in Australia are so pressed by their troubles and by the fact that they cannot get ‘help’ for love or money that they are actually driven to write to their papers to suggest that men may marry more wives than one, because no one but a wife is found to do house work, and that one wife is not sufficient for the purpose, it is quite time that the surplus maidens should consider whether it is quite as impossible to become a servant as it appears to be now. As decorators, governesses, and spoilers of canvas, they are undoubtedly not wanted, but they are required badly for simple domestic work, which is, none of it, half as hard as unlimited tennis, dancing all night, or rowing: not any of it half as unpleasant as is living on the begrudged charity of some relation, who wants all his hard-earned savings for his own children, or as degrading as is marrying the first man who asks them, and who can give them some sort of a home, for whom they have not the smallest respect—the very smallest amount of affection.

Now, of course there are disagreeable details about house work, and scrubbing cannot be pleasant, but surely the ‘scrubber’ could come in daily and do up the worst of the ‘chores,’ as the Yankees say; and what is the rest? Waiting at table, not half as unpleasant as selling at fancy fairs; opening and answering the door, not half as hateful as bringing one’s

wretched little painted match-boxes and tambourines to an overstocked guild, or a most unsympathising and equally overstocked shopman, who is often far more impertinent than any caller ever could be to the lowest maid in the establishment; and I personally should prefer to make beds, wash china, dust rooms, and clean silver to hanging about listlessly in a shabby frock, knowing quite well that I could never have another unless some reluctant relation gave me one she would much rather have given to her own children; and I cannot recollect any duties which would be expected from the girls which I have not enumerated above, or that they could not honestly undertake in a sheltered home and under proper matronly care.

And if all servants were ladies—and I see no reason why every servant should not be a lady if she tries—think how much more our houses would be our own than they are at present! Even with the best of maids there are always places in it and corners where we feel we cannot go exactly when and where we like, and where, try as we will, we cannot be absolutely sure that thorough cleanliness prevails and where, moreover, we cannot be ‘decorative’ because all our efforts are frustrated by those who cannot shake off their early training and can no more refrain from smashing china and scraping paper off the walls than they can learn to trust us implicitly and in their turn allow us to trust them.

Remember, I personally never can nor will join in the fearful outcry against the maids which I hear on all sides of me. I have related my own experiences in Vol. I. of this book, ‘From Kitchen to Garret’ and I have not one word to add or take from what I have said there. I still maintain, if you take your servants young and train them yourself, and if you don’t expect perfection and show that you mean to be obeyed, you will have no trouble; but you will never have perfect service until you can have ladies in your house, whose ladyhood will ensure the perfect trustworthiness, the honesty, the cleanliness that no cottage-bred girl can ever give, because she can never be taught to really comprehend the necessity of all these particulars.

Mrs. Crawshay's scheme of lady helps has, I believe, quite collapsed; at all events, one hears nothing about it now; but I see no reason why an earnest effort should not be made to try sending our superfluous girls to Australia as lady helps, and then, if that succeeds, trying them in England, where there seems to me to be a real and crying want of good domestic servants. I am only judging from other people's woes; for, although I dare say I have mine before me, I have not experienced them yet, and have always been able to find what I wanted without any undue exertion on my part. Of course the house would have to be reorganised to some extent. The bedrooms would have to be as fresh and pretty as one could make them; and, above all, we must reform our kitchens, which are at present the most unhealthy, disagreeable, and odious rooms in the whole house, as they are undoubtedly the ugliest, and where, in ordinary households, the unfortunate maids have winter and summer to sit while the cooking is done, and in heat that I wonder allows them to live at all, and that must exasperate their tempers as much as it must try their constitutions.

Now let us consider the ideal house and the ideal kitchen, and I cannot see myself why both should not exist; let us build our washing-stands so that hot and cold water are able to be turned into the basin which can overtip and empty itself; smaller conveniences could be managed in the same manner, and all the housemaid would have to do would be to wipe out the basins daily, to sweep up the pieces with the 'Ewbank' carpet-sweeper, which makes no dust and picks up every morsel off the floor, to make the beds and dust, the very making of the beds being simplified by the chain and hair mattresses now general. All that has to be done is to turn the mattress daily, to spread the under blanket and sheet absolutely smoothly over it and tuck them in, to replace the bolster and pillows, and the over supply of blankets, &c., carefully straightened and tucked in. Is that harder than tennis, more menial, forsooth, than living on one's relations, or husband-hunting genteelly under the greatest of all difficulties, the difficulty of looking nice and merry, and being good-tempered, on absolutely no means at all?

Now let us take the ideal kitchen, the kitchen as made and designed by Mr. G. Faulkner Armitage, of Stamford House, Altrincham, Cheshire, who has most kindly drawn for me the different pieces of furniture with which he decorates this charming room of his, and which, in the Manchester Exhibition, were stained green and decorated with brass hinges and locks, and see how we could adapt this to our present style of house, the house with the tiny kitchen, the smaller laundry, pantry, and scullery, and where there is not an atom of sitting-room apart from where all the work is going forward. In that case is it worth while to make a pretty room, and if we do can it be possibly kept so? I think it can, even with our present maids, whose taste for the beautiful is not largely developed; it most certainly could if we are given the maid of the future, the real lady-maid, who may come forward to the rescue of those unhappy beings who at present haunt the precincts of registry offices and spend small fortunes on advertisements which can have only the most barren results.

But before I go on to speak of the ideal kitchen and the cook of the future; who will hardly concern my readers, as she is not born at present, or if she be is certainly not ready for engagement, I should like to say a few words about the best manner to obtain servants, repeating continually that if we require good ones we must take them ourselves and train them ourselves. I am always met, when I state this fact, by the unanswerable argument, ‘I have neither time nor patience to teach my servants; I can pay good wages. I want to engage skilled labour.’ Skilled labour may be had for money, there is no doubt, but the person who engages her maids on these lines will never have good or affectionate servants. She will be waited on, dressed, cooked for admirably, no doubt, but she will obtain nothing beyond her mere bargain. For better wages, a more aristocratic place, her cook will leave her in the lurch, despite the fact that she may expect to be laid up or to have most particular and important visitors at the very period when the old maid departs and the new one comes in. Her nurse will extract her pound of flesh in the shape of holidays and outings, whether the baby is teething or not, or whether the children are all miserable with colds, or she herself long to lie down with a bad headache. The housemaid will go to her ‘church or

chapel,' to her promenade with her ever-changing young man, whether she has unexpected guests or not; and she will never know the extreme bliss and comfort of possessing friends in the kitchen, who give up their own holidays because they are sure their mistress is not fit to be left, who regard the children as if they were as much theirs as they are the mistress's, and who finally think of her and hers, and her comfort, as she does herself. No mere hired help will do all this. You must have maidens whom you have carefully trained; you must take trouble—aye, and never-ending trouble—about them, unless you wish to join the ranks of those who are always abusing their maids and yet would not lift their fingers to assist themselves. And then, again, you must undoubtedly train yourself at the same time not to expect perfection.

Think of our own girls. Are they always to be trusted at tennis and at balls to maintain that serene and demure deportment which of course we always did, and which we naturally expect from our daughters, especially where young men are concerned?

Do they never flirt? Are they never found missing at critical moments, for example, when the carriage is at the door, and Paterfamilias is divided between anxiety for his horses and wrath at being kept waiting? Do foolish little notes never pass? Are flowers never given to the most detrimental youths of one's acquaintance? And finally, do our own daughters always keep men at arm's length? Are they always truthful, always obliging, always careful about their own rooms and the things which are committed to their charge?

I leave each mother to answer for her own daughters. I should not like to answer for all the girls I know, and I seem to remember episodes in my own past (was it mine, or did it belong to some one I once knew very well indeed, I wonder?) which I should rather not confide to my daughter, and indeed which I should not care to hold up to her as an example of what all girls should do, and which often make me very kind to the maids when I meet them promenading with the youth who calls for orders or the man whom I scarcely recognise out of his livery; and it is far better to know such things will happen, and to keep a kindly eye over these affairs, than to scold

vigorously and declare that whatever happens no followers of any sort or kind shall enter your chaste abode. Neither should they until the engagement is a *bonâ-fide* one, and one that you know is allowed and smiled upon by the girl's parents. This you should ascertain for yourself—another reason for taking your maids young and from a family of whose antecedents you know something from your own observation. And I never think much harm can happen from these promenades if great stress is laid upon the fact that all must be at home after dark, and that in winter no one must stay out after 8.30. Then the house door should be locked and the key brought upstairs, either in town or country; there is always the front door to come to, and there is no reason why everyone should not come to that.

I am no advocate either of very hard and fast rules, and I maintain that it is very difficult to make, and still more difficult to keep, set regulations which circumstances may alter at any given moment. The only thing that must be insisted on is punctuality; without punctuality no household can go on, no establishment can be in the very least degree managed or carried on. The servants become slovenly; and it is impossible to get through the work, because no one knows when the meals are to be, or when the beds can be made. Therefore, the first rule, and indeed the only really important rule, is that which makes the meals regular, and the attendance thereat compulsory on all members of the family, children and temporary members, such as visitors, alike. After that, and when we have demonstrated how the work is to be done, we should stand aside and not interfere unless it is absolutely necessary; then a few quiet words are enough. Whatever you do, do not 'nag;' a servant that requires acrimonious scolding and continual 'telling' had better go, and another should be had at once.

The best way to find a servant (if your 'place' has a good name) is to inquire among the tradesmen. If a good servant is leaving her place, she always tells the butcher and baker; she never goes to a registry office. If she is leaving to better herself, her mistress can soon find her a place among her own friends; there would be no need for her to go elsewhere, and I do not think a really first-rate maid ever goes anywhere except

to her mistress or to the tradespeople, who are all delighted to help her to find what she wants. An advertisement in the ‘Guardian’ or ‘Morning Post’ is another excellent means of obtaining a recommended servant, and I hope some day to find that the clergyman’s wife in each country parish will turn herself into an amateur registry office for all the young girls under her husband’s charge. She should teach them in the kitchen and nursery and train them in nice ways, and be always possessed of some maiden she can send out into a better place. Of course the Girls’ Friendly Society does something of the kind, but the good that it does is largely discounted by the evil ways of many of the ‘associates,’ who cannot help interfering egregiously and stupidly, and so bringing what ought to be an absolutely perfect organisation into contempt.

In London there is only one way of finding good servants, and that is by advertising in either of the papers I have suggested, saying ‘Apply by letter only,’ or else the advertiser will be inundated with a class of persons who apply on the chance of picking up something in the hall, or of getting their ‘expenses’ paid. No unknown person should ever be left alone for a moment in the hall, and on no consideration should anyone pay the ‘expenses,’ which often exist in the imagination only, and would be amply recouped were twopence handed over to the applicant to cover her omnibus fare; that even should be given with caution, for, absurd as it may sound, there are people who exist on applying for situations, which they accept and give excellent references to empty houses, and promise to come in at once, to commence the duties required immediately. The mistress, overjoyed at the idea of securing such a treasure, gladly pays the fare to some country station, to be refunded, of course, out of the first quarter’s salary, and goes off for the treasure’s character, when she promptly discovers she has been done, and that if such a house does exist at all it is either closed entirely or lived in by someone who has never heard of the treasure, who naturally is also not to be found at the home address, that was given so glibly and written down so very carefully.

A written character should also never be taken. The most exquisite handwriting, the best of all note-paper, duly

embellished with a crest, address, and monogram complete, are no safeguard, for servants have been known to steal note-paper, and in these days of universal education a good hand is not to be trusted in the least. Even if the family with whom the servant lived has gone abroad—and this is the favourite reason always given when a written character is produced—there must be some relation or friend of the last employer still left in England who would not object to speak for a maid, who if worth anything at all must be known to someone outside the mere inner circle of the house itself; and this should be insisted on, especially in London, where an unknown servant is often the friend of the gentle burglar, and can do an immense amount of mischief. Indeed, when I thoroughly sift the numerous complaints which reach me about servants, I invariably find them caused by the fact that the maid has either been procured by a registry office or taken with only a written character in the most careless way, and with not half the precautions we should take before we engaged ourselves to call on a new comer to our especial district. We demand very strict credentials from anyone we admit to our house as a mere acquaintance; we let anyone into the house to live as a servant who can produce any scrap of writing, or procure any registry-office keeper to speak for her capabilities and character.

I am not speaking without due thought on the matter. Of course there are absolutely trustworthy registry offices, and some written characters may be genuine; but as a rule neither is to be trusted, and it is far better to do one's household work oneself than to engage someone of whom we know no more than can be told us by an individual eager for the hiring fee, or from a bit of paper probably written on by the applicant herself.

I actually know a case where the mistress had to go into the neighbouring town to search for a cook who had been missing for twenty-four hours, and who found her locked up in the police court for drunkenness and riotous behaviour, and who discharging her on the spot was surprised to find the woman a few weeks after in a friend's house. The registry-office people had answered for her character; although the first mistress had taken the trouble to place the report of the case in the local papers in the registrar's hands, and the cook was in possession,

needless to remark that she broke out again and is no doubt carrying on her practices in another confiding mistress's house at this very moment.

A written character introduced a butler into a friend's house, which he promptly burned to the ground in a fit of blind drunkenness, while another servant in another house was found in the act of carefully concealing a burglarious parent in a convenient cupboard; and indeed I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that every case of 'bad servant' that is brought under my notice originates in either of these two particulars, and that if due care, aye, and even what may appear as *undue* care, is taken about the manner in which a servant is engaged we shall soon hear far fewer complaints than we do at present; while by raising the tone of our maids and ensuring that only really good-charactered servants will be employed, we shall get a better class of girl to take to service, and we shall thin the ranks of unemployed dressmakers, telegraph clerks, and shop-girls, and shall bring them back to the sheltered, safe, untempted lives that are the portions of all those who are in good places, under the care of conscientious and thoughtful mistresses.

I think many writers—Mr. Besant, for example—have done great harm by the manner in which domestic service has been run down; and when I am called on to pity and weep over the case of the 'sweated' sempstress, the underpaid, unsettled governess, the miserable shop-girl, who cannot sit down and to whom all sorts of unpleasant internal miseries happen because of her hard work, I absolutely refuse to do so. There are plenty of good sheltered homes waiting for these girls, either here or in Australia, where they can be fed and well looked after, where they have every comfort, and where they are as absolutely safe as if they were in a palace, indeed, much safer, as maids in palaces are left much to their own devices and can get into as much mischief as they please, and there is therefore no reason for their unhappiness save and except the absurd one of wishing to be their own mistresses.

'Freedom! I want my freedom. I would rather starve than be obliged to brush my hair neatly, to give up my drowned ostrich feather, my screams of unbridled laughter in the streets, the

delicious joy of trailing up and down a gas-lighted road, and, in fact, of being my own mistress.' That is the argument put into the mouth of the factory girl, only, of course, in not quite such plain language, and much applauded. Now, if so, don't ask me to weep over the girl who talks like this, because I shall not do it. Freedom is about the worst thing in the world for a young girl. She requires a guiding hand, as, indeed, in my opinion, all women require one, all through their lives; and, after all, who is freer and less trammelled than a good servant in a good place? She has no anxieties, no troubles. Whatever happens, her wages are paid to the day, and her food is unfailing. Indeed, when troubles are disporting themselves in the drawing-room the maids seem to think 'more food and oftener' an excellent panacea. And she can have her holidays and her walks too whenever they can be managed; while for the large class of girl who becomes, or rather wants to become, a nursery governess, are there not endless other situations crying out for them, where as upper nurses, ladies' maids, or good cooks they could be sure of occupation and of ending their days in comfort, having been able to save, which they could never have done on the 15*l.* a year of the ordinary nursery governess, who does all the mending and bathing, and, indeed, in some cases, much more of it than falls to the share of an upper nurse, who yet ranks below the governess, because she is a servant.

Now, I think that, if the young people who marry on about 300*l.* a year, and can only afford one maid, would try this plan of engaging some girl who cannot get a situation as nursery governess, and work together with her, they would be far more comfortable than they otherwise would be. All their things are new and pretty, the bedroom nice, the kitchen fresh and comfortable. A young bride on a small income must help with the cooking and bed-making. Surely this would be much more pleasantly carried out if the maid were in some measure a friend. I can assure you that old-fashioned servants I know have far better claims to be considered of a good family than dozens of girls who pitchfork themselves into the governess ranks, and consider themselves members of the aristocracy from that date.

To sum up, then, our case: if we require a comfortable house we must take our servants young and train them ourselves, or we must be very sure that the servant is what she claims to be, and that the character she is provided with is a good one; and, finally, we must endeavour to refill the ranks of upper and better-class servants from the overstocked ones of nursery governesses and unoccupied girls, whose parents have not provided for them, and who are unable to do a single thing by which they can in any measure help themselves.

There are stupid, careless, and even unkind mistresses in the world, but as a rule servants are considered and very kindly dealt with, and there can be no reason why a girl should refuse a sheltered home and work that is not as hard as many other kinds of labour, and that should be amusing and pleasant, in a small household, or even in a large one, where the housekeeper is a lady and the upper servants are distinct and separate; a nurse of course having her own rooms and being waited on far more than is the governess, who after all in the eyes of the domestics is neither one thing nor another, and has often enough to go without or see after her own comforts.

But until that halcyon day arrives we must, as I remarked just now, be very particular about the maid's references, and we ought then, if possible, to make the acquaintance of her mother, and also, if we can manage it, of the clergyman who prepared her for confirmation. Of course this means trouble. Yes, it does, but not half as much trouble as is caused in the endless procession of new servants which passes through so many houses, leaving behind it traces of its progress in the shape of ruined brooms and brushes, burned-out saucepans, smashed crockery, and bladeless knives, all of which must be replaced as one goes out and another comes in, in a manner which almost ruins the unfortunate master and enrages the mistress proportionally.

And now to turn to the question of how to make the kitchen a little pleasanter than it is at present, especially in those houses where there is no servants' hall. The best of cooks only succeeds in making her room look spotlessly clean and absolutely uninteresting; there is nothing pretty about it, and there is, as a rule, nothing save the ordinary hard Windsor

chair on which to sit. This is quite right and what it should be; but besides that there could be an easier chair for the tired servant, who presumably can get quite as fatigued as we can, and for whom we could provide a low-backed chair with cushions (easily taken out and washed) once we have come to the conclusion that she is

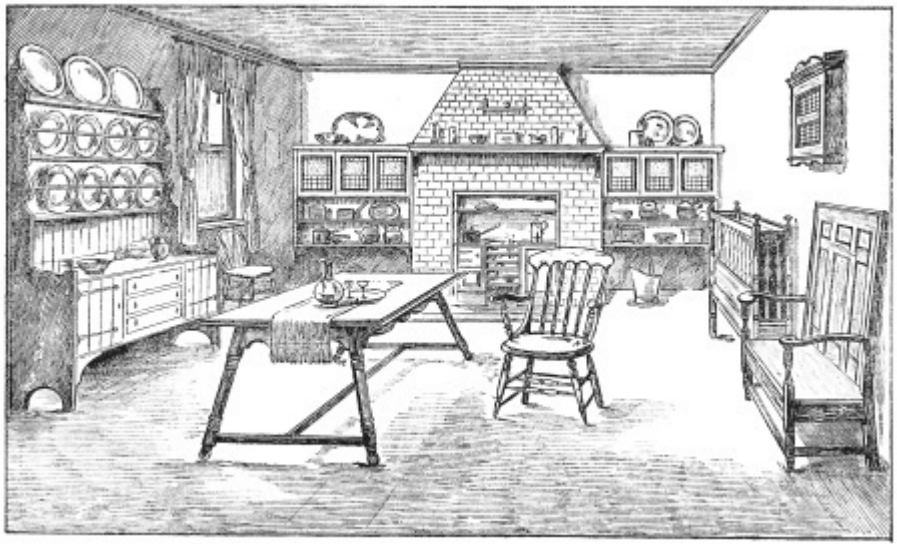


Fig. 17.—An Ideal Kitchen.

likely to stay with us and that she is to be trusted not to make hay with it.

Our artist has made a sketch of ‘an ideal kitchen’ from Mr. Faulkner Armitage’s designs, which I hope will some day be the kitchen of the future. Here the dresser and mantel-piece arrangement provide for all the necessary pots and pans, while the furniture is as simple as it is pretty, and in consequence has an artistic effect which is really charming.

This furniture is stained malachite green or russet brown, whichever is preferred; with the green furniture, the tiled paper on the wall, which is much nicer to live with than mere colour-wash and is quite as clean, as it can be wiped over with a damp duster quite easily, should be red and white, and the paint a dark shade of red; with the brown, the paper should be blue and white, and the paint a good blue, and all along the wall on the floor should be a two-inch band of wood; this keeps the chairs away from the wall; but if the base of the wall becomes shabby a dado of oilcloth can always be added with a real dado rail; this keeps a wall tidy for years, and can always be

washed, and finally painted over should the pattern crack or become in any measure worn and untidy. The ordinary boarded kitchen should be covered entirely with a good, well-seasoned linoleum, and a square of carpet lined with a thin American cloth should be given to the cook to place down on Sundays, or after the worst of the work is over; this gives a finished and furnished look to the room, and adds a great deal to the comfort of the maids. A stone floor should be painted with Hoskyn's Ben Trovato red, and some rugs laid down at all times, as this is very bad to stand upon. I had linoleum laid all over the only stone floor I ever possessed, and that answered excellently; it was put down so that it adhered to the stone in some manner, and lasted a very great many years in excellent condition; but should anyone object to this I can also recommend a square of Treloar's cocoa-nut matting, bound all round with a wide binding; but this should be rolled back for cooking, as grease adheres to it dreadfully and soon makes it shabby.

The kitchen windows are always rather a trouble to arrange, as generally they are basement windows, and muslin so soon gets out of order with the steam and general mess; but if the cook takes pride in her windows and likes to wash her curtains herself there is no reason why she should not have the same kind of white curtains that there are in the bedrooms; but let all come from the top of the window, half-blinds being dreadful, and looking worse, in my opinion, than no blinds at all. In windows on a level with the garden or street one must have obscured glass, either cathedral or ribbed glass. This, of course, is rather hard on the maids, who are not thus able to look out, but it cannot be helped: it is impossible for the kitchen to be so much in evidence as it otherwise would be, and no muslin is as effective a screen as the obscured glass is.

There should always be inside bars and shutters to any basement or ground-floor windows, and nothing should be kept downstairs which can possibly or in any way tempt the prowling burglar. All silver should be taken upstairs to the master's room, and there should be a small dog loose downstairs; a dog frightens a thief dreadfully, as he is quite as much afraid of his bark as ever he is of his bite.

The basement in a London house is often a dreadful possession, as there are so many places where a thief could conceal himself in the daytime. No doors, then, should ever be left unbolted; and the master should, furthermore, make a practice of going round the very last thing at night to see that all is safe, or else there can be no security at all. Sometimes the servants may descend again and hold unholy revels; sometimes an open or unguarded door leaves access to the place; and an unexpected visit from a tramp may alarm us as much as would a professional visit from a burglar. We cannot impress this on our servants too often, and we impress it on them a thousand times more forcibly than we otherwise should when they see our nightly patrol, and know we have supplemented their bolts with a visit of inspection. Then the door at the top of the stairs should be bolted, barred, and locked, and the key removed. This should be given into the care of the butler if there be one, or into the safe keeping of the cook; and we may retire to rest feeling safe that even if the tramp comes, or the thief is in hiding below, he will remain in the lower regions, and can do nothing worse than have a feast in the larder or break a few panes of glass in his efforts to escape.

It will seem to my readers that one has to take endless trouble, to see perpetually about endless trifles, as long as we are householders, and have the management of a family on our hands. Yet once started on good lines, and matters are not so difficult as they appear; still, of course, no life of great responsibility—indeed, no life at all—can ever be entirely happy and entirely easy. Those who have least to do become bored and tired by mere inactivity; those who have most, wearing out instead of rusting out.

All comes to an end some day; there is no doubt about that. Strive as we may, death waits for us all, and our carefully trained household falls apart and drifts away; our furniture wears out, our carefully amassed hoards are turned over and parted among our successors; some one else takes our house, and obliterates with his personality the last traces of ours; and if we have refused to do our work, or let things slide, we shall speedily be forgotten; but if we have honestly done our work, what of it? Our maids carry on our good lessons elsewhere;

our hoards make someone else happy, and the example we have set bears fruit a hundredfold, and someone is always happier, some household better for the work we have done. No matter, then, if we have fallen out of the ranks, tired out; we have done our work, and so can retire gracefully, being quite sure that none of our trouble is wasted, and that not one of us has toiled in vain.

And I maintain that we cannot ever take too much trouble about our homes, that we cannot have them too pretty or too well managed, and that, moreover, once they are started, they are easy to keep going, always supposing that we have regular ways and rules, that we do not muddle, and that we pass over nothing that requires attention, let it be a braid off a chair, or the misdemeanour or disobedience of a servant or child; the one should be mended, the other spoken to at once, then things will go on like clockwork, and we shall be fairly astonished to find how well things progress and how admirably they manage themselves.

Start well, start carefully, and then all one has to do is to steer straight; after all, steering is not very hard work, and that is all one has to do once the ship is fairly loaded and under way.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SICK ROOM.

In all large houses there ought undoubtedly to be some provision for infectious illness. Of course I know that there are excellent fever hospitals, where one can be despatched at almost a moment's notice, where an ambulance will deposit you, and where the best nursing and doctoring can be had at a most moderate outlay; and I, for one, highly applaud those courageous souls who telegraph for the proper conveyance, and depart, cutting themselves off from their homes, and at the same time from any chance of handing on their complaints elsewhere, with one fell swoop. But, much as I admire and applaud, nothing would, I fear, induce me to follow their laudable example. To know how to be ill is a fine art, and this accomplishment is quite thrown away on those who regard one merely as a 'case,' and talk about one as if one were a mere chattel left with them to repair, and return with the utmost speed. Moreover, I maintain always that one's bodily health depends immensely on one's surroundings, and that it would take double the time to get better in a hospital than one would in one's own home, where one could see one's friends out of the window and catch even a far-off whisper of what was happening, and see even from the greatest distance some of one's old, accustomed sights. In an ordinary house, as at present arranged, it would be absolutely impossible to have even the smallest amount of infectious disease without running the greatest risk of handing it on to all the rest of the family; but there could be in most houses such arrangements made, were the builder a man of sense, that we could have a hospital room, a room sufficiently isolated to ensure immunity from infection, and yet near enough to do away with the hopeless feeling which seizes the ordinary mortal the moment he hears he has 'something catching,' and which enables him to understand what were the feelings of the lepers of old, who had to flee from the sight of their fellow-creatures, calling out aloud as they ran, 'Unclean! unclean!' Of course we ought not

to feel angry with those who refuse to come near us; indeed, had I my way no one should ever enter a house where there was small-pox, scarlatina, or diphtheria; but we do resent it somehow, despite our own common sense and the knowledge that we should forbid the call our friends are so anxious not to make if they attempted to come near us; and there is no more miserable feeling than that which seizes us when we are told that we have a complaint in our midst which may prevent us from being on the same footing as the rest of mankind for several weary weeks, or may be months. But, before going into the matter of what we should do when infection is in our house, let me for a moment speak about the room we should all of us possess ready for an emergency and into which we could retire were we ill at all, not only 'infectious' but ill in such a way that we may require careful nursing, many fires, and absolute quiet and rest.

We should select a room at the top of the house unless we are building our house; in that case we should have a couple of rooms added on at one end, with a bathroom, lavatory, and tiny kitchen range in a third room. This should make a sort of annexe to the house; it should be reached from outside, and a passage, closed at one end with a plate-glass door, should communicate with the rest of the house. I once knew such an arrangement as this, and have always hankered after it, more especially as it allowed one member of a family of eight children to have scarlet fever at home without in the least endangering the lives of any others of the family, while the mother could see the child daily through the plate-glass door, although she could not nurse her herself. She ran absolutely no risk; the plate-glass door was as safe as the solid wall, and over it always hung a sheet steeped in carbolic acid. The child was nursed among familiar surroundings; the doctor could visit it without passing through the house; all the food could be placed so that the nurse received it without the smallest risk, and, in fact, the arrangement was so absolutely perfect that I cannot understand why possessors of large houses and good means do not always keep some rooms of the kind ready. No family can go through life without illness; it is much easier to bear when all is prepared for it, and there is no dreadful

domestic upset to add to our natural anxiety and trouble when illness comes upon us all.

Now, given such houses as these, or even the single room quite at the top of the house, which would be next best (and although these have their disadvantages, they are generally quieter than any other), I should proceed to decorate them prettily. I should paint the walls first, and then I should paper them with the very cheapest blue paper I could find. I think Maple's 4½*d.* blue and white paper would be best, and I should have ivory paint, the 4½*d.* a piece white and yellow ceiling paper, and curtains of 1*s.* 6*d.* a yard serge in art blue double. There is nothing here which cannot be replaced at a very small cost; yet everything would look pretty and bright and fresh; and I should have the floor parqueterie or else covered with matting and rugs. The rugs could be removed in a moment if anything infectious were the matter, while the matting could be disinfected or destroyed; but this should remain. It smells fresh, it never accumulates the dust, and always looks nice, in my opinion. In illness looks are everything, and it is absolutely necessary for things to be neat and pretty; else the patient will be worried to death without really understanding why he is being worried.

The bed should be a good wide one—a double one. This gives room for the patient to move about in. It should have a wire mattress and a good hair mattress at the top, four pillows, and a bolster, and it should have an ample supply of venerable blankets for under use. Those for over use should depend on what is the matter. New blankets and an eider-down are lighter and warmer than anything, and if these are required they must be had, even if afterwards they have to be destroyed. There should be no washing or dressing apparatus visible (these can be kept in the lavatory), but there should be two or three of the stained wooden chairs sold by Pither, 38 Mortimer Street, W., which are comfortable enough for the doctor and an occasional visitor or for the nurse on duty (too much comfort often induces sleep), and which can be wiped over daily. There should also be a wide, deep wicker armchair, nicely cushioned, and there should be a long chair for the invalid, where he or she could rest while the bed is made or remain when convalescence has begun, and the bed may be left for some

hours at least. The long deck chairs are not suitable for this purpose, as, being made of wicker, they creak in the most awful manner, and are not comfortable in the least; but there are some long narrow beds used as camp beds, which can be put up at any angle, and have an iron frame filled in with sacking, on which a cushion is placed. This makes the most comfortable lounge of which I know, and should be in every sick room or room set apart for the purpose of nursing. They can be bought at almost any ironmonger's, or at any place which caters for Volunteers or those who do any luxurious camping out. There should be pictures on the walls, and a bookcase, and above all there should be a screen of some kind or other. The pictures should be of the cheapest; some of those lately issued by the 'Illustrated News' people, which resemble old Bartolozzi prints, would do admirably, as the frames could be disinfected, the glass washed, and the pictures themselves destroyed. The bookcase could be varnished or re-Aspinalled, and the books burned. Books are fearful methods of conveying infection, and carelessness about this cannot be too harshly condemned. It is far better to destroy everything, no matter how precious it may be, than run the very smallest risk of passing on even what may be considered a mild complaint, for that which is mild in one patient often causes death or great suffering in another whose constitution is unfitted to cope with that special disease.

Once the room is ready and looking pretty, the next care must be to see that it is kept properly aired and that nothing gets out of order, and that all the things for use are in their places; then we need not think any more about the room, which should be under the charge of the head-nurse of the establishment; but, especially where there are children, it is absolutely necessary that we should be prepared for emergencies, and know exactly what to do should there be any necessity for prompt action. There are a series of rules printed by the National Health Society, which should be hung up in every nursery, and there should be, moreover, a box containing simple remedies for sprains (arnica), cuts (calendula), and burns (oiled silk, oil, and cotton wool), and the nurse should keep the key. But, whatever happens, her remedies can only be

temporary ones; all her instructions should end like those to the ambulance experts, ‘Send for the doctor.’

Now, although I am certainly no advocate for constantly sending for the doctor, and though I maintain that for small children a good nurse is worth all the doctors under the sun, I do maintain that immense comfort and safety are procured by an early visit from the doctor if we are fearful that anything is wrong above the common. But I maintain equally strongly that to be able to do this we must be very sure of our man; we must be able to trust him, and we must be quite certain that he is an honest man, who will not trespass on our credulity or fatten on our fears, and who will have the necessary courage to tell us straight out that we have nothing to fear and that we need not send for him again, or at least that he will not come again until we do send for him. Above all, let us, if possible, keep to the same doctor. Nothing is more stupid than to change him, unless we are absolutely obliged to do so, for he understands his patients’ constitutions if he has always had to see after them. A new man cannot possibly do so at first, and much more depends on a doctor understanding what he has to deal with, as far as heredity is concerned, than one quite comprehends. People would not be quite so ready to change their medical attendant as they very often seem to me to be if they thoroughly believed in this.

And now comes the great subject of nursing. I was much amused the other day to see an indignant article from someone who abused the present generation of mothers because they did not nurse their children themselves in cases of infection, and because their first idea in an emergency was to send for a nurse. Now I maintain that that is the very wisest thing anyone can do. A mother, as a rule, is the worst person in the world to nurse her own child; her fearful anxiety makes her nervous and communicates itself to the patient, who ought never to know that anyone is the least anxious about him. Her face betrays her, and her shaking hands play her false, and on a thousand grounds it is far better to have a trained nurse than to trust to unskilled though loving nursing. A mother may never have had the smallest experience of nursing until she is called upon to exercise any little talent she may have for it on behalf of her nearest and dearest. She becomes frantically miserable at

symptoms a nurse understands, and are often enough symptoms for good; she cannot raise a patient and give him food comfortably, as does a woman trained to the work, and she cannot be the ‘half-doctor’ all nurses ought undoubtedly to be, and indeed are nowadays, unless she has had training; a course of training, by the way, which would be most distasteful to many and absolutely impossible to the few.

A nurse is born, not made; of that I am absolutely convinced from my own experience. I do not think anything would make me personally fit to nurse anyone, much as I should like to do it. Were I called upon to turn nurse I could undoubtedly keep a room neat, smooth a pillow, and fold a sheet over properly; but I stand by in amaze and watch a friend of mine who has never been trained, but is a born nurse, who knows exactly how to lift her patient, when and how to give beef-tea and medicine, and who does easily and without effort what I cannot do at all, try as hard as I may to follow her excellent example. She may be anxious, she never shows it in the least; she may be tired to death, she does not look it; her voice is always at the right pitch, and though she naturally is not merry when there is danger, she maintains an even cheerfulness which is delightful, and as restful to the patient as it is most undoubtedly restful and reassuring to the patient’s friends. Now, sentiment apart—and sentiment should never be considered in the very least degree where real work has to be done—surely my friend is better able to nurse, and a much safer nurse, than I should be; I, who have honestly and seriously tried to overcome my stupidity and dread of sick people, and who visited at a hospital regularly until I was utterly and completely routed by seeing a man in a fit, since when I have avoided hospitals and have quite come to the conclusion I should never be a nurse. Therefore, is it not wiser for people in real cases of dangerous illness to engage women who understand their work? I am convinced it is, and strongly recommend anyone who is advised by the doctor to send for a nurse to do so. He will always be able to tell them where to send; if not, they can find any amount of addresses in that most useful and excellent little book ‘Dickens’s Dictionary of London.’ But the doctor should find the nurse in infectious cases, for, as a rule, he knows someone with whom he has worked already, and of course

these nurses have to be sent for in a hurry; one does not make preparations for and look out for fevers as one does when a small baby is expected; about that I have said all I have to say in my other book, and shall not therefore say anything here on that absorbing subject.

Everybody should remember that illness, instead of deadening our faculties, undoubtedly and at once heightens every one we possess. We see more acutely most certainly; our smell and taste are exaggerated in the most painful degree, and little annoyances and inferior cooking, which we scarcely notice, or indeed notice not at all, when we are well, try us most dreadfully. If we are to eat at all, all must be absolutely clean and free from grease, and sent up spotlessly; there must not be a suspicion of carelessness, or inevitably we shall turn against the food and send it down untouched. Likewise, creaking shoes, rustling paper, banging doors, crooked pictures, dusty tables and chairs must not exist where there are invalids; and, above all, I am convinced that until a person is actually and positively dead no one should talk about them over their bodies, thinking they are insensible. I am certain that insensible people, so called, are often far more sensitive than either doctor or nurse will allow, and I know I myself have often heard things which were never meant for me to hear when people have thought me asleep, but when I have really simply been too tired to open my eyes; and I shall never forget the expression that flitted across the face of a dear old lady who was absolutely dying, who had not swallowed for two days, or spoken for a great many more, when her daughter and maid spoke of the mourning and funeral by her bedside heartlessly. She heard and understood, although she undoubtedly had no power of letting us know that she did so. And I, moreover, have been told by a cousin whose recovery from a frightful attack of blood-poisoning was miraculous, and who most certainly was merely saved from death by her doctor's unremitting care and the excellent nursing she received from him—he never left her once for over forty-eight hours—that she knew absolutely everything that went on, that she heard every single word and whisper, and that she most certainly would never say a word in the presence of any 'insensible' person that could pain or agitate him in the least,

for when she appeared most insensible to on-lookers she was really far more sensitive than she had ever been in all her life: her hearing was absolutely acute, and every sense seemed on end, a feeling I can corroborate from my own experience, though I have had no really very serious illness, but have been ill enough to comprehend this supersensitiveness and to understand how absolutely quiet and restful should be the conditions of any invalid. It sounds absurd to say that noise can kill anyone, but noise can; a sudden shock can undoubtedly snap the thread of life, while noise constantly wearing on the brain can do endless harm, especially to those who are predisposed to notice and resent continually unpleasant sounds. And now I want to give a hint to many among us who are abjectly miserable because they fancy they have some incurable complaint, and yet have not the sense or courage to really go to a good doctor and learn what is the matter, or indeed whether there is anything the matter at all. The tiny lump which appears on the neck may be nothing but a little swelling of a gland, or it may be cancer; the dreadful pain that seizes the chest may be heart or it may be indigestion; anyhow, whatever it is, it is far better to know what is the matter than to wear oneself to death in wondering if we have or have not a fatal disease.

If we have not, well and good; if we have, what, after all, does it matter? We have all fatal diseases, if it comes to that, and we are all absolutely sure, unpleasant as is the fact, that we must die, and it is something to know a little about the means and time by which we shall have to shuffle off this mortal coil; and, moreover, we can undoubtedly save ourselves endless trouble, and stave off the last day of our lives, if we learn early in the day what we have to avoid, and how best we can manage our lives, many having lost them entirely because they literally had not the courage to go to the doctor, or went to him so late that he had sorrowfully to confess he could do nothing, albeit he could have done much had the patient come to him when she or he first began to suspect there was anything amiss. I could, I am sorry to say, quote examples from my own dear and intimate friends of the evil done by this cowardly dislike to face the worst, and I therefore feel very strongly on the subject, and implore any of my readers who may suspect a

lurking disease to face it. It may be nothing but fancy; even so, the fancy should be exorcised. It may be fatal; then the doctor will lay down rules at once for guidance, and even if death is imminent it is just as well to know this. There are things to do quietly, and one's house to set in order, albeit there is no need to make the lives of all one's relations burdens to them; neither need we make ourselves miserable beforehand by everlasting contemplation of the inevitable parting. Be quite sure, whether it comes at 100, at 20, at 40, we none of us realise or relish the idea, but when a thing must be it is best to accept it gracefully; people will remember us much more kindly if we go cheerfully, and do not make them all wretched by kicking against the pricks.

And, above all, remember if you have a disease to keep the fact to yourself and to your doctor; no one else wants to hear about it, and it is interesting to no one else. If you become an invalid you can be both cheerful and useful, although I know how hateful—how truly hateful—it is to put up the once active feet, and cross the once busy hands, and simply listen to what we once used to do. I know too that a good listener is highly appreciated, and that many a happy home finds the heart of the house round the invalid sofa, where can always be found someone who is always at home, always disengaged, always willing to help and anxious to hear, and who has a most profound interest in all that is going on, despite the fact that she is out of the action, and can only take a passive part in the life that seemed once as if it could never go on without her.

Moreover, an invalid should never become absorbed in herself, in her treatment, her medicine, and the progress of her malady; having found her doctor to be trustworthy, she should do as he tells her, and after his visit she should utterly decline to speak of herself; she should read, if possible work (how I do wish I could sew, or knit, or do anything on earth save read and write!), and, above all she should be absolutely nice and particular about her clothes, which should never degenerate (unless it is absolutely necessary) into the dressing-gown stage. Loose garments are untidy, and anything untidy or 'dressing-gowny' assists the invalid idea, which should be kept in the background as much as possible.

Then there is another thing I should like to mention, and that is that invalids should always have their affairs settled, and their wishes as regards the future of their children or their property entirely and properly understood—that is to say, understood and settled as far as anything can be settled that is so unknown as the future—and while a man is an absolute criminal who neglects to make his will, a woman is equally foolish who, having strong feelings on subjects which will concern her children, or may be the place of her burial, does not write such a letter on the subject to her husband, to be opened after her death, as shall lay all her wishes before him, but only as wishes: the dead hand should never fetter anyone; at best it should only indicate the course which the owner would have followed.

In but one case should a man or a woman who has property put an emphatic embargo on the future proceedings of the husband or wife, and then only if there are children, and that is in the case of the husband or wife remarrying. Under these circumstances the property should go absolutely into the hands of trustees, to be administered entirely for the use of the children, who are often enough defrauded of their father's or mother's money, which goes to keep some lazy man or extravagant woman who in their time may produce children to share that which was only meant for the owner's own offspring.

This rule should never be departed from under any circumstances: it should be absolutely out of anyone's power to defraud children of what was intended for them alone by the one parent who had money. This does not prevent a man or a woman marrying again; they had the same chances, if they wanted them, as they had before; but it does prevent the children being robbed, as I have known them robbed, in more than one case, by their silly mothers, who, yearning for the love and protection they have lost, cast themselves into the arms of number two, doubly flattered at being wooed when their first bloom has vanished, and find themselves saddled with men who neglect the business they were supposed to keep together, or squander the money saved so hardly and set aside so carefully for those who cannot help themselves or stay the

marriage that will inevitably spoil their home life if it do not wreck their futures.

Let the wife have all control until she marries again; then someone else should step in, as undoubtedly if a woman does not care to remember her husband she will not care to assure herself and protect his children from an extravagant, improvident man; and of course a man should be treated in the same way; all control as long as he remembers his wife, none when he ceases to do so and would maintain a successor out of the money she meant for her children's welfare.

Now all this can be managed, and, indeed, should be managed, on the wife's part by a letter written to her husband, and on a man's by a calm conversation with his wife, who of course will vow that nothing on this earth would induce her to marry again; but, unfortunately for her argument, example can be brought against her of people who have said just the same, who have wept in the marketplace and wrung their hands in high places, 'so to speak,' and yet have married generally 'for the sake of the dear children' before they had worn out their mourning, and therefore her protestations can be gently set on one side with the quiet statement that in that case the money will be in her own power. This can show no lack of confidence in the wife; it simply shows a lack of confidence in any possible future husband, and a consummate knowledge of human nature, which forgets disagreeables speedily, alas! and accepts hurriedly any chance that may present itself of obliterating a mournful memory and changing one's trappings of woe for newer and far more beaming garments.

I never could understand the sensitiveness that prevents some wives and husbands from ever speaking of the future that must come when they will be separated. There need be no continual discussion of the mournful subject, but it should be discussed thoroughly when the will is made; it need never be spoken of again until circumstances arise that may cause some alterations to be made, or codicils added; anything that may be too painful to discuss can be written in the final letter of farewell. Then, if one has no accumulations of other folks' letters, if one's drawers are tidy, one's bills paid, and one's conscience clear, there will be nothing to make anyone extra-

miserable after we have departed; we shall have done our work, left everything in order, and shall leave nothing but a pleasant memory behind us.

Death as a rule is either made unduly awful, or is a time of the most extravagant expenditure. The immense quantities of florists' wreaths sent nowadays have brought into disrepute one of the most charming ideas possible, and the money once devoted to black plumes and undertaker's millinery of all kinds, to extravagant mourning and absurd woe, is now squandered equally extravagantly and absurdly on wreaths, which cost from 15*s.* to 30*s.* each, and which are simply thrown into the earth to perish there untimely. Not for one moment would I deprecate the use of flowers entirely, but let them be arranged by people who loved me, and really bound them together because they knew I loved them. I would rather spend money, or have money spent, on some useful memorial than on a perishable wreath; and were I to die to-morrow I should say, Give me as simple, as cheap a funeral as you can, and give the money to my pet charity. It could be done in my name, and would be a practical remembrance of me, and a far more useful one than hundreds of wreaths. Why, I once saw a funeral in mid-winter where there were over 300 wreaths. This would have almost built a ward in the Hospital for Sick Children; it would certainly have helped the good Sisters at Kilburn, and have done great good to the children there, who had always been loved by her whose funeral it was. And in the same way would I deprecate a 'handsome' coffin and elaborate headstone; neither can do any good to the dead, and the memory of those we have loved can be perpetuated a thousand times longer should we content ourselves with the simplest oak coffin we can get and the plain cross, which will last as long as anyone could wish it to, while the money saved can be given elsewhere. Everyone has some pet scheme that could be benefited by his or her death; no one but the undertaker and florist is benefited now.

Another reason why we should not encourage the sending of an immense quantity of flowers from our friends is, that there is something almost ghastly about the false air of festivity given by the constant receipt and opening of the parcels and boxes in which they are sent; in the list of names which, must

be written out, in order that all who sent may be thanked or their names mentioned in the local paper; and in the smothered remarks of the servants and children as they look at the beauties, and compare the present one with the last one laid on the coffin in the room which is so familiar and yet has become so fearfully and wonderfully strange.

But if flowers need not be sent (and I wish I could think all would send the money instead to some special fund), letters should always be written. They may not be read at first—nay may never be really read at all—but the name of the writer will always be remembered warmly, and as that of one who knew that sympathy is the most precious gift we can any of us receive when we are in the depths, and that dark curtain descends which seems as if it would lie for ever between us and the outside world. Ah me! no matter who has died, it will rise again, and life will flow on just the same as if we had never lost those who were so near and so dear to us.

Undoubtedly, too, though we should none of us ever call at the house to inquire after a scarlet fever, small-pox, or diphtheria case, we should let our friends know through the post that we are thinking of them. If their child is ill we can make up tiny parcels to send. A few flowers; a paper doll; a few old books, which can be burned as soon as read; ‘scraps’ to paste into books; odds and ends which cost nothing and can be destroyed without a pang, often making a small child’s day of tedious weariness and slow convalescence, an entirely different thing to what it might have otherwise been; and the idea of what to-morrow’s post may bring has, to my knowledge, more than once soothed a tired little girl to rest; for she would go to sleep easier when she remembered that the sooner the night was over the sooner the familiar ring would be heard, and the lovely parcel would arrive, which might contain nothing more costly than glass beads for stringing, or some roses and a cheap little vase to put them in, but which was a never-ending source of wonder and delight, until the child was well and able to take her place again among her brothers and sisters.

In the sick room, which may be the death chamber, sympathy, always precious, becomes an absolute necessity,

and a tedious day of pain is often borne more courageously than it otherwise would have been, and passes quicker than it otherwise might have done, if we know that people are thinking of us and wondering if there is anything they can do to lighten our time of trouble and to help us bear the inevitable misery of it all. A sick person, or an invalid, should never be forgotten. I verily believe half our dread of death comes from the fact that we know that soon we shall be as if we had never been, and that our place shall be taken by another and shall know us no more.

When we are quite sure that there is an infectious disease in our house, we ought to be compelled by Act of Parliament to register the fact at some convenient place, where a list of houses similarly infected should undoubtedly be exposed in a prominent place. None should be exempt from this law, and the doctor should be the person responsible for the registration, a severe penalty, moreover, being inflicted in any case of wilful misrepresentation or of the withholding of proper information of the outbreak.

That the penalty is necessary is proved by the fact that I once knew a country doctor speak of a bad attack of scarlet fever as a mild case of rose rash, because he was abjectly afraid of losing the patronage of the dame whose child it was, and who objected to the isolation which would have been her portion had the truth been known. Still the disease spread, owing to her selfishness and the doctor's supineness, and the truth came out, but not before she had done endless mischief and caused the death of a child of one of her relations, who was sent into the house with his nurse to inquire after the 'rose rash,' and who would never have been allowed to pass even the same side of the street had his mother known the truth; and both the doctor and the patient's mother were in consequence ostracised and isolated from their fellow-creatures far more completely and for a much longer period than they would have been had they boldly and at once told the truth.

Nowadays, with the slight exception of the law that we must not wilfully expose anyone suffering from an infectious disease in a public conveyance, we may do pretty much as we like.[A] We can send other members of the family to church or

the theatre; we can send our washing to the public laundry, we may let our friends come and see us without mentioning what is the matter, and, in fact, there is no law except the moral law (which governs so few of us) to prevent us handing on the complaint to as many people as we can comfortably manage to infect. The registration would prevent this, as it would prevent us from stopping in a fever-bed or (as happened to me not a month ago) from sending a cat to be doctored in a house where there was a fatal case of scarlet fever; and how that cat didn't bring it back to us is more than I can understand, but it did not. Albeit, any mother can understand what I felt until I knew all chance of infection was over from that source at all events.

[A] Since the above was written a law has been passed to make the notification of disease compulsory in London; so there is one step already made in advance.

It is the selfishness of other people that spreads so much disease, and therefore the law should force people to be more considerate; then disease will be stamped out undoubtedly, and we can exist without the many qualms and dreads which harass us now, and certainly go far to make life anything but worth living.

Now, I think if I had an infectious complaint in the house my first idea would be to keep people out of it. I should place a placard on the door, and then leave folks to do as they chose in the matter. I should keep the rest of the household to the grounds and garden, and I should—- much as I should hate it —stay as much at home as I possibly could. Of course the usual means of disinfection would be largely used; still no one should run the risk of giving the complaint to any other soul.

The doctor would be the person to say what is infectious and what is not, but, despite the 'Lancet,' I am quite certain measles and mumps cannot be carried and cannot be given to another, unless by the person who actually has the complaint on him. About scarlet fever, small-pox, and diphtheria there can be no doubt, but typhoid cannot be carried from one to the other, although typhus most undoubtedly may be. But in any case the doctor is the person to apply to, and if we have his consent we can go about the world as usual; only we should always tell our friends what is the matter, and if they object to us we must not be offended with them. They are quite right to object, and we should not resent their care for their own. We should not feel happy if we handed on the complaint, and what should we experience if it had a fatal termination? I, for one, cannot imagine.

There is absolutely no place on earth which requires so much good breeding to inhabit or arrange for properly as does the sick room; therefore I trust I may be forgiven if I write rather fully on the matter, more especially as this book is coming now to an end, and I shall never write any more on the ever-fascinating subject of the home, and I want to say a word to the patient.

Remember, however bad it is for you to be ill, it is fifty times worse for those who have to see you suffer, and that you must even at your worst think about that and remember other people. Do not make their anxiety greater by refusing food or medicine, or by disobeying your doctor or nurse; for the time give yourself entirely into their hands, and do not refuse or kick against their remedies, their rules and regulations. Be absolutely calm, absolutely quiet, and, above all, if you want to get well do not lose your hold on life if you can, and don't fret or become terrified. Fear and fretting are a doctor's worst foes—almost worse than disobedience. If you can recollect that whatever is is best, and that you will recover if it is better that you should, you will have a thousand chances that the irritable invalid can never have, and, at all events, if you do die you will die courageously and resignedly, and not screaming and kicking like a naughty child does whose nurse fetches it away to bed before it thinks it is ready to retire to rest. Its nurse knows best; and so does God, and if you are fetched ten chances to one your work is done, and you can retire from the scene gracefully even if you cannot feel you are quite glad to go.

I am certain that the mind has a great deal to do with one's body from a small experience of my own when once I was saved from being very ill by a mere exercise of will, rendered necessary by a sudden shock received when one of my children was only two days old. My dear old nurse was in my room at 12, and at 7 she was dead in the room next to mine, and I knew all about it. There were the two eldest children—who were five and three—running about calling for 'Nan,' from whom they had never been separated five minutes since the hour they were born. I had a new housemaid. I had seen in the looking-glass the monthly nurse drinking brandy out of the bottle, and told Nan of this, and I was absolutely alone as far as friends were concerned. Could any situation be worse? And yet before I slept I had arranged for the children to go to London, for the funeral to take place soon, and for the friends to be told. And then began the struggle. My doctor was confined to the house with bronchitis; circumstances made his partner impossible; the nearest medical man on whom one could depend was fourteen miles away, and I knew I must not

be ill; and all that wretched night I kept saying this to myself, repeating who I was, where I was, and what had happened, until I felt I was master of the situation. Surely had I given in then I should have had a fever; as it was, I occasionally felt my head was loose and swimming round the room by itself, and it was only by repeating to myself that this was impossible that I kept off the delusion, and after a day or two I was nearly well, or at all events was not ill in the accepted sense of the word, though my dear old doctor nearly wept when I told him what I had endured, and never could understand to his dying day why I had not had a serious illness, which I undoubtedly must have had had I not staved it off in the manner I have just described. Therefore, I am convinced those patients have the best chance of recovering who are quiet, obedient, and who, furthermore, try their best to live, and believe that there is something worth living for.

And now a few words on that saddest of all subjects, a death, and I must devote my last chapter to more cheerful subjects—namely, how best to get strong and well again once we have emerged from the sick room, and are pronounced fit and able to go for a change.

When death has actually occurred I would strongly advocate that those who have loved and nursed the dead may prepare the body for the last resting-place. It can be gently washed and attired in the clean night-dress, and the hands can be crossed on the breast. Someone who can be trusted—not a mere hireling—should be present when the last measurements are taken; then the room should be at once turned into a mortuary chamber, the bed hung with white, candles lighted head and foot, which should not go out until the funeral day, and fresh flowers should be kept there; these should be changed every single day; and, furthermore, the windows should be left a little open, and on no account should the dead person be left unwatched for a moment until the coffin is screwed down; this should never be done until there is no doubt that death has ensued, and then the sooner the funeral is the better; though I trust some day cremation may be universal, then there can be no dread of the awful fate of one who is buried alive. That ought to be made impossible in all cases by the doctor

performing some simple surgical operation—I think it is the dividing of some artery in the arm.

If the dead person has been attached to any particular church in his or her life-time the coffin should be placed in that church the night before the funeral, so that the last night above ground the body may rest in that hallowed spot. Of course it should be watched there, and the candles and flowers should be arranged as in the mortuary chamber, and the first part of the service should be read there; not by a stranger, but by the family priest of whom I have spoken before; and then when the ceremony is over no one but the clergyman should return to the house with the mourners, who should separate and go to their own rooms. There should be no general family meal that day at least; certainly there should be no gathering even of relations and friends round the dinner-table. I have experienced more than one of these awful meals, and I can truthfully say that there is nothing more terrible on earth; people must talk, they cannot remain silent, they must eat and drink, and the *pseudo*-festivity and the endeavour to keep off and avoid *the* subject are so truly ghastly, that under no circumstances can I understand such a thing can be in any way necessary in the least. Surely as unnecessary is also the reading of the will. What concerns the public can be told the public, the lawyers should manage the rest. Under no circumstances should the display of evil passions and disappointments be allowed that almost inevitably follows this institution.

Let the burial-day be a day of meditation and quiet. In the evening the bereaved family can gather alone and talk over what has to be done. Then the next day let all the clothes be sent to the Kilburn Orphanage; and the personal property distributed according to the wish of the dead. Let the death room be entirely repapered and painted, and, if possible, refurnished; and, above all, do not be afraid to speak of those who have gone. I know how I should resent being forgotten; and perhaps those with whom we have just parted may hunger to hear all about us still; at all events, we cannot know they do not. *De mortuis* may mean a great deal more than we think; it is doubly evil, surely, to speak aught but good of the dead if we remember not only the defencelessness which caused that proverb, but the idea that all we may say about them we say in

their dumb presence, and before those who are silent, and cannot speak in their own defence.

Death is a dreadful thing because of its silence, its separation. Yet if we meet it patiently—if we believe our dead are still within reach—we can bear it, more especially if we do our best to carry out their wishes, and do not, the moment they are gone, begin to reverse all their ideas and plans, and to forget them as speedily as may be; while, when our own time comes, we can face it bravely, feeling we are setting a good example, and leaving behind us nothing to pain or embarrass anyone, nothing but a bright remembrance, a good record, that may sooner or later be of use to others after us.

The sick room has more than once been the heart of the house; the death chamber in its turn can become, if properly thought of, the very gate of heaven itself.

CHAPTER XII.

WHERE SHALL WE GO FOR A CHANGE?

I THINK there is nothing that tries an ordinary householder more than answering the question with which I have headed this, my last chapter.

In the first place, as a rule, few men consider that a change can possibly be required. It seems only the other day that they returned from the last uncomfortable sojourn at some unhappy seaside town, and they are quite convinced that a second martyrdom cannot be necessary just at present. In the second, when change is really wanted, no one knows where to go; and in the third, if the place be selected, and the rooms taken, the unfortunate creature is sure to meet someone who knows all about it, and proceeds to make his friend profoundly miserable by telling him that that especial town is only decent at the very time of year when he cannot possibly go there; that he knows for certain an epidemic is raging there; and that the rooms taken for 'six weeks certain' are in the very worst part both for health and comfort, and that he can but wish him well home again. And the unfortunate traveller starts depressed and nervous; and having made up his mind to be miserable, is so, and derives no benefit whatever from that which was to do him and his soul an immense amount of good.

Now I cannot help thinking that English people, as a rule, do not show the smallest common sense in the manner they manage their holidays, more especially, of course, among the middle classes; the upper portion of which often enough have a tiny cottage somewhere, of which they speak grandly as 'my country house,' and the address of which is inscribed on their cards, and mentioned in the 'blue book.' And they fly to this the moment the weather becomes in the least warm, remaining there until they are driven back by the falling leaves and chilling fogs of an October in the country; and then wonder they are so little benefited. Why, they have not had any change; no more, at least, than those a shade lower in the social scale, who go to the same watering-place year after year,

spend their mornings on the beach, their afternoons in slumber, or a ‘country walk,’ and their evenings on the pier or parade, and who see the same people, say the same things, and do the same actions mechanically as they do in town, only perhaps in a smaller space, and under far more uncomfortable circumstances.

The very stupidest thing on earth, to my mind, is the annual sojourn of a large family of small children, accompanied by their parents, to the orthodox seaside rooms or lodgings. In the first place, the parents, children, and nurses are very much too much together; the annoyances of the predatory habits of the landladies spoil Materfamilias’ temper; the servants are disorganised, and imagine that because the family makes holiday they are to be in some measure allowed to do just as they like, and much resent being unable to make excursions and ramble at large, whether it is convenient or not for their mistress to spare them. And, indeed, I do not know a more hard-worked, driven creature than the ordinary Materfamilias at the seaside, more especially if she has left her own large airy house, with its nurseries and schoolrooms, and taken lodgings at a fashionable spot, where every inch of space costs pounds, and where she can never rid herself of her family for one moment.

It is in her defence that I suggest that change of air should be obtained in a far easier and more satisfactory manner than it can be under the circumstances of which I have been speaking. As long as the children are quite small, I most strongly advise any mother to send them to the seaside in the end of May, and let them remain there until the first or second week in July. She should send them to some plainly-furnished cottage under the care of a lady who would be thankful to superintend them for the mere fare, change, keep, &c., that would be such a boon to her; and she should send their nurses with them. In this early portion of the year lodgings are cheap and clean, and so are provisions; the days are longer, the heat not so great as later on; and the children would come back when London was thinning and the parks and streets safe for them to be in; and at the end of July, having settled the children in, the father and mother could go for the complete change and rest they both need so greatly, and which it is impossible for them to have,

encumbered by their household duties and cares, which must be taken with them if they move their servants and children *en masse* to some seaside place for August and September.

Very young children, if proper nurses and superintendents are found for them, do not require the companionship we shall not be able to give them later on if we wear ourselves out in their service when they are very small. By this I do not naturally mean that children should be neglected or left entirely to the mercy of hirelings. Far be it from me to suggest anything so dreadful; but I do maintain that for six weeks of the year they would be quite as well at the seaside without their parents as they would be with them, more especially if the cottage they are sent to is well known and the people who keep it are acquaintances, while of course both the lady superintendent and the nurses should not be new, but should be thoroughly tested by some amount of service before they are trusted.

It is better, should we determine to send the children away as I have suggested, to pay so much per head for all the board and lodging expenses combined. No servant, and indeed very few governesses, can be trusted to 'housekeep.' I cannot tell why, but the moment they are allowed to order the food and make purchases for the household, they all become most wildly extravagant, and have no more notion of managing than they have of flying. They may, of course, have the truly British notion that holiday-making and over-eating must go hand-in-hand, and proceed to demonstrate this by the exorbitant demands made upon one's purse. Anyhow, whatever the reason, it is an axiom that housekeeping cannot be trusted to either, and that we should make arrangements for board as well as lodging unless we wish to be fairly appalled by the weekly bills. As an illustration, I may mention that the only time I sent my children to the sea with the governess, allowing her to cater for them all, the bills she sent me home for herself, the German maid and three children, were exactly treble what I paid for ourselves and the same number of children and six servants, and that she did not consider it improper to give 6*s.* for a chicken and 8*s.* for a pound of grapes. From this my readers will perceive that I am warning them out of my own experience. And this governess, moreover, was an elderly

woman who had lived with us a great many years, and really had in some measure our interest at heart. Therefore I am convinced neither governess nor servants can make good managers; they are always provided for as far as food is concerned; they never have to provide, and therefore know nothing about it.

I think, once we have discovered a spot that really suits the children, it is best to keep to that, as children simply require good sands and good air, and do not trouble themselves about scenery. Deal is absolutely delightful as regards air, but the beach is unsafe and pebbly, and has no sand; Margate is quite perfect; so is Westgate; while Swanage in spring leaves nothing to be desired except for children who require bracing air; then Swanage is not for one moment to be compared to either of the places I have named, which are also near enough to town for the parents to run down and see the children should they wish to do so, and, indeed, as they ought to do, to learn how they are getting on.

Personally I know nothing of the east coast, but I believe there are plenty of little places about there where the children would be happy, well, and safe; and I should recommend anyone before finally choosing the summer home of the children to make an exhaustive survey of the English coast, and, having found one place which will suit, then to stick to that until the children are twelve years old. Then one would have to begin to alter one's plans a little, more especially if the boys go to school and are only at home in the holidays; then the children and parents must go out together, else they will never meet, and will grow up like strangers to each other.

During the minority, so to speak, of the children, the parents would be wise to spend their holidays in learning which would be the nicest places to take the children to when they are beginning to grow up; they should make and keep notes of excursions, advantages, prices, and houses, and should be able to refer to them in a moment, when they have to decide on the place where they are to spend their holiday in; they must not trust to their memory, the best of memories will not retain the names of the house agents, the position of the different streets, and the aspect of the different houses, while the notes would

be always there to refer to, and would be of immense service to them in more ways than one.

Now, having made up their minds to the change, it is absolutely necessary that a house, not rooms, should be taken, if anyone is to enjoy the holiday at all.

There can be no freedom and very little enjoyment, and there is great risk of infection at the seaside unless the house is shared by someone we may happen to know, if we take only a part of a house. We may have a fidgety mortal who sends up twenty times a day to ask our children to be quiet, or we may have a screaming, badly managed baby near us, a piano which plays just when we don't want it to play, or we may meet on the stairs a convalescent from some childish complaint, who may hand it on to our children, and bring our holiday to an abrupt conclusion with measles or whooping-cough. Then there are always the landlady, the larder difficulties, and the horrors of being waited on by strange servants, generally most inferior ones, and always those who cannot and do not understand our ways. Therefore I maintain that a house is a *sine quâ non*, and that if we cannot afford to take one and go away comfortably we had better remain at home; if we leave we may get fresher air, we shall have the necessary change, but the change will be for the worse, and the good the fresher air may do will be more than outbalanced by the continual rasping worry of arranging, and very likely battling with the servants, who resent the landlady's interference, and won't do any more work than they can help, under the mistaken idea that the house-servants are to wait on them, and in the endless worries caused by the disappearance of one's food, and the disagreeable feeling that everything one touches has probably been well 'pawed over' by the lodging-house maid, if not by the mistress herself.

If, therefore, as I remarked before, we cannot afford to go away comfortably we had better remain at home, going away in detachments if the doctor thinks that the weaker members must have sea air; in that case visits can always be managed, for everyone almost has relations or friends in the country, or knows of some nice family who will take in a stray child or two and 'do for them' with their own; while if the boys are

away at school, they are quite satisfied to return to their own haunts, while no end of excursions can be made from London and in and round London, which is, it must be confessed, just a little hot in August, and smells just a little of over-ripe fruit and dead cabbage leaves, but is positively delightful in September with its soft skies and its wonderful effects of cloud and sunshine, and which has always something amusing to show those who really appreciate the most delightful and picturesque city in the whole world. I love my London, even in August, when the parks are empty of fashionable people, but full of the most beautiful flowers and palms, which only those who remain in town in that unfashionable month ever see at their prime; and despite the heat and the odours in the streets, I would rather be in London than in a cramped lodging at the sea, where I was inundated with children, worried by bad service, and had none of my own belongings about me; and, in fact, had not time to read or sit alone to enjoy myself in the peace and quiet that are absolutely necessary to make a holiday even endurable.

I hope my readers will not think I am writing of what I do not know when I say that London in August and September is quite as beautiful and entrancing as it is in the heart of the season. I have been for the last seven years constantly in the beloved city in those unfashionable months, and I unreservedly advise anyone in want of a real change to go up to town then. They will learn and see more then than at any other time; they will not be hurried; they will be able to see everything quietly, and will really see what they never can when the roads are crammed with carriages and the streets with people—*i.e.* how beautiful London is, and how many things she possesses we never dream of when we are simply rushing from occupation to amusement, and are only thinking of our work or pleasure. However, as I cannot expect all to believe me, or to share my enthusiasm for the streets and chimney-pots that I adore, I will simply now advise my readers how to proceed once they have made up their minds to go away. If possible they should let their own house; if not, they should endeavour always to keep to the same caretaker who should, if possible, be married to a policeman and have a dog, but no children; the furniture should be covered over, and ‘put to bed’ by the upholsterer,

who understands how to prepare for possible moth and damp, and who will not make an exorbitant charge for what will, as a rule, prevent most of the things from being spoiled. Fires should be ordered, no matter what the weather may be, in rotation all through the house, for one that is uninhabited, and in which very little gas, if any, will be burned, always becomes damp in our climate; while it would be wise to have the gas cut off at the meter entirely. We should save a great deal of waste; and as caretakers are used to lamps in their own abodes, we should run no risk of fire, not as much as we do when we leave the gas for the use of those who often enough have never had any control over it on their own account, and so have not learned how to save it or even use it.

No valuables should be left in the house; all should be sent to the bank; and we should naturally take our plate with us for use. But, having taken our house by the sea, we should in some measure know what it wants, and we should invariably have ornaments, photographs, &c., to take with us to brighten up the house and to make it home-like; while the children must take their story-books, work, and playthings. We must, in fact, prepare in every way we can for a rainy day; rain must fall, and if the children have their books and toys, and their own rooms, they will be as happy, and be no more of a nuisance by the sea than they are at home; at least, if they are, it will be the fault of the parents and not of the unfortunate children themselves.

I have always had three very large wicker baskets set apart for using at similar crises of our existence. One holds the household linen, another the nursery and schoolroom toys and books, and the third is set apart for loose cretonne covers, serge table-cloths, and any amount of photographs and ornaments to render the temporary house home-like; for even if I find my new domicile replete with ornaments, I always put them all away at once. Ornaments are always priceless when the reckoning comes to be taken; they can’t possibly be harmed if they retired into a cupboard the moment we arrived, and only emerged from their seclusion the day we leave.

If the china and glass in a house are really expensive and good, I also put them all away, and I purchase for our own use

the very cheapest ware I can find. China and glass are so very cheap nowadays, that it is far better to do this than be made to pay fabulous sums for the owner's china, which seems to one so hideous, and is only costly because in these artistic days of ours it is impossible to match it.

The contents of my basket soon make even a hideous room much better; while one feels that one need not always be on the look-out, as one must be to protect another person's property if one does not take these precautions; but, as a rule, furnished houses are so absolutely unfurnished and ugly, I am thankful to cover up what I find, and so in some measure mitigate the horrors of my surroundings, by putting about as many of my own belongings as I can take with me. We also, when we go away, always put at the top of each separate person's box that individual's own sheets, pillow-cases, and eider-down quilt; and I never go away without some spare pillows, and any amount of cushions. This sounds luxurious; but why should we be uncomfortable because we are not at home? On the contrary, because we are not we ought to take more care than ever that all shall be as nice as we can make it; while, the sheets and pillow-cases being ready, the servants have no trouble in settling in the first evening. They open the boxes and make the beds at once, with sheets we know are aired; and therefore, even in the confusion that is generally apparent at these times, we have no risk of spending our first night between damp sheets.

Another thing we should provide ourselves with is a hamper of groceries, and, if we are to arrive late, with sufficient cooked food to supply the establishment for the night and next morning. Each servant should be told off to certain duties, and no hurry or confusion should be allowed. All, except one box in which to put the last things, should be locked and strapped the night before, and the luggage should be at the station in good time; the tickets should all be procured; or at least ordered, the day before; and if these simple precautions are taken the journey need be hardly any trouble at all. It must be some, but nothing to speak of, when the servants know their work, are ready in advance, and are not allowed to forget anything, not even the harmless necessary cat.

Now a few words about the animals: and let me beg anyone who has cats and dogs to take these poor things with them. We always do; the dogs go with the horses, the cats with the servants, and they never attempt to stray. They are absolutely and abjectly miserable if we leave them at home, even with a caretaker; while they cost nothing to take, and are happy with us, just as, in fact, they are at home. I have nothing to say about or to those people who are wicked enough to 'stray' their cats, or leave them shut out in the garden, to forage for themselves. They must be such cruel wretches, that I hope they may not even read this book; but many people, possessed of the kindest hearts have no compunction in leaving their cats to caretakers, little understanding how these poor things pine for the human companionship to which they are accustomed, and after which they long pitifully. Now a cat costs nothing, a dog very little, to take; so I do hope all who can will consider if their holiday cannot be shared by their dumb friends. I am sure they will never regret it if they make up their minds to take them with them.

When once settled in the temporary house, all should be found out that there is to be found out about the points of interest in the neighbourhood, and all these should be visited; as a rule, a local guide-book is very little real use; but one should always be obtained and studied in connection with the county history. One's holiday is a thousand times more profitable and pleasant if we see all there is to be seen, and do not waste our time listening to an inferior band, or hanging about on the pier, wearing smart clothes, which are entirely out of place by the sea.

Indeed, blue serge should be the only wear, as far as young people are concerned, with flannels for boys. I remember how wretched we used to be over our light print and muslin frocks; in consequence of which I have always taken care our children should never have anything that they had to think about on the shore. Half our pleasure used to be spoiled by the idea that we should have to pay for it by being scolded by our governess for the sandy, wet garments, inseparable from any real play by the fascinating sea. Now, with the high india-rubber boots we buy at Scarborough, and serge skirts, and under-drawers of serge, no girl can possibly harm, paddle how she may; while the

same high boots and serge or flannel suits make the boys quite happy. The boots protect the feet from possible cuts, and do away with any hygienic difficulties; many people refusing to allow their children to paddle because feet should not be wet if the heads cannot be wet too; the feet do not get wet in these high boots, and therefore, provided with them, the last objection to paddling is quite done away with; and without paddling, what is the seashore? Very little to the children, who cannot have too much of this most delightful amusement. The sea is the best holiday companion one can have. I therefore most strongly advise all who are bent on a holiday for the children to take them to the sea and not to the inland country; where, if it be wet, mud keeps them prisoners, whereas by the sea rain dries up at once, and there is always something to look at; for, of course, the ideal holiday house faces the sea, and has a good view of whatever is going on.

And now, having said all I can about the children's holiday, let me add just a few words about sharing the holiday, if in any way possible, with some child or someone who cannot afford to go away at all, unless a friendly invitation manages this for them.

I have written very little about charities in this book, but I could have set down much on the subject, and I may say that the truest of all charities is that which quietly and unostentatiously helps that most unfortunate, most deserving of all classes—the poor lady or gentleman, who is too well-born to be assisted with money, but who requires help a thousand times more than the very, very poor to whom one can give a few shillings. No one ever thinks of the over-worked, underpaid curate or the orphan child. We could, when we take our house for the holidays, surely reserve a corner for them. They are pleasant visitors, and we shall have the delightful feeling that while our children have been gaining strength we have helped others to do the same. Most people contrive to have visitors while they are away; let them be those who would not have gone away at all had we not asked them to come to us while we are at the sea. They can generally manage the railway fare, while of course we can judiciously contrive that they are not forced into any expense for excursions if we take them; we can easily manage this if we have the smallest

tact, while of course we must not affront them by boldly offering to pay their fare, but if we are accustomed to go first-class, and yet know third-class would suit our friend's pocket better, we can all go third boldly; it will not hurt us one bit, and it will save them from the unpleasantness of spending more than they can afford, or of being paid for by us, which would be terrible for them.

There is still another holiday of which I wish to speak, and then I shall lay down my pen and close my book, and that is the yearly honeymoon-holiday all husbands and wives should try and manage to take together.

Nothing so keeps up the bond of affection between them as this, particularly when both are busy people and see nothing at all of each other during the day, and are often too tired in the evening to speak at all except on the most necessary subjects; and even if they are not tired there are always the boys and girls about, once they have begun to grow up, and there is no time they can call their own—none in which they can talk as they used to do—none in which they can discuss the children's future or talk about their own plans and hopes and wishes. Of course I am told many husbands and wives are only too thankful to be spared the chance of a *tête-à-tête* that must be nothing save a bore. I maintain that this is not in the least degree true; that those who have been married many years have far more in common, far more to say to each other, than the young folks just starting on life's journey can possibly have to say, and that the yearly holiday taken together does more to make the domestic car move along gracefully and lightly than anything else I know. The wife is relieved from the unceasing ordering of the dinner and planning of everything, while the husband once more finds himself responsible for all the little details, and delights once again to have his wife to himself and to look after and wait upon as in the days of old; while the children are safe at their lessons or looking after the house in their absence; and once more there is a real holiday feeling in the air, and they can fancy themselves young and starting on life's journey hand-in-hand over again. There is nothing so amusing to me as the discovery that grown-up daughters and sons have no idea that their father and mother can really want to be alone together, or that they can possibly

prefer each other's society to that of their friends or their own children. But, my dear young people, it is the case; and though of course your parents are always delighted to have you with them, they do occasionally wish to be alone together. The yearly holiday allows for that, as does an occasional holiday together during the year; and these holidays should never be forgotten or omitted. They should be kept up vigorously, and no blandishments from our children should be allowed to break in upon the *solitude à deux*—the honeymoon-holiday should be taken together or not at all.

And now, reluctantly and regretfully, I must say farewell to those with whom I have conversed so long in these pages. I feel this book has not the light-hearted gaiety with which Angelina and Edwin plan out their newly-married life, and with which they start out to furnish their little home, in 'From Kitchen to Garret;' but if I am more serious here it is because life grows more serious as one grows older, as one realises how much there is to do and how difficult it is to steer the bark freighted with one's growing-up children, and with more money to be spent judiciously, a larger house to be managed, so that we may do as much good as we possibly can, so that it may give as much happiness to as many as can be managed, and in some measure so exist as to leave the world immediately within its influence just a little bit better than we found it.

We must realise, wherever we are, that we influence someone, perhaps very many people, either for good or for evil. It is no use to bury our heads in the sand, and pretend that no one need be influenced by us unless they like, and that it is not our fault if they are. It is our fault, and we cannot get rid of our responsibility in this way; while if we boldly accept our fate, and do our duty manfully, we shall have our reward, more especially if we endeavour not to know the 'best' people because we crave for social exaltation, and to mix with those who resent our intrusion and laugh at our pretensions, but to associate with those whose noble minds and good thoughts and bright intellects will help our own, and assist us on our mental progress through the world; and to have as friends, not those who can give us dinner for dinner, ball for ball, but those to whom we can give pleasure they would never have did we

refuse to open our doors to them, and to those whose large hearts and brilliant minds influence ours for good, and lead us insensibly along a path of peace and safety.

The truest socialism should begin in the perfect home; the socialism which shares or administers but does not disperse or destroy; the socialism which opens the park gates to the poor, or the picture-galleries to those who could never see anything were it not for the action of the owner, that never receives a benefit without in some measure sharing it with a poorer brother, and that finally has a noble end in life; nay, the noblest of all, that of leaving the world a little better for one's having lived and loved and worked and suffered in it.

By these rules should the home be formed; in these paths should the children be led, who should never be allowed for one moment to despise those they may consider below them in the social scale; who should always be taught to share their flowers, their shells, their holidays and pleasures with others; and who should one and all be brought up to do something in life, something to assist the toiling millions around us, something to do good to someone besides themselves. Of course this is hard and anxious work; work, could we have realised it was before us when we so lightly accepted our fate, and laid together the foundations of a new home, we might never have found courage to take up; but it is the work set before every married man and woman in the world. They can either accept it or reject it; but if they do leave it alone, the undone work will bring its own punishment in the unhappy wicked children, and the wrecked and miserable home that will take the place of that which might have been the home which is the rule, not the exception, in England, and that we can all have if we have powers of endless work in us, and realise from others' experience what is before us all. Then, when the curtain falls, when the hands part which have held each other so fondly, so faithfully, all through the journey, the worst parts of which have been gilded by the unfailing love which is God's best gift, the one who goes can go boldly into the darkness, content to leave all to that Higher Power who has helped them so gallantly all through the struggle, while the one who stays knows that the link still binds them together, and will draw them some day back to each other again. When love

can do this, when love can build, maintain, and keep our homes together, as love does, and as only love can, who shall dare to sneer and laugh at it, and looking at such homes dare ask sarcastically if marriage be a failure?

Marriage never is, never can be, a failure, if the home is a true home, not an abode of vanity, an entertaining house, for gaiety and waste; and it is to help others just a little more from my own experience of the happiest of all homes—my own—that I have written this other book about the household and all that appertains to it, which I now leave to my good friends and readers, content to feel that they will read me kindly, knowing of old how kind they can be to one who has said as much to them on this all-fascinating subject as I have.

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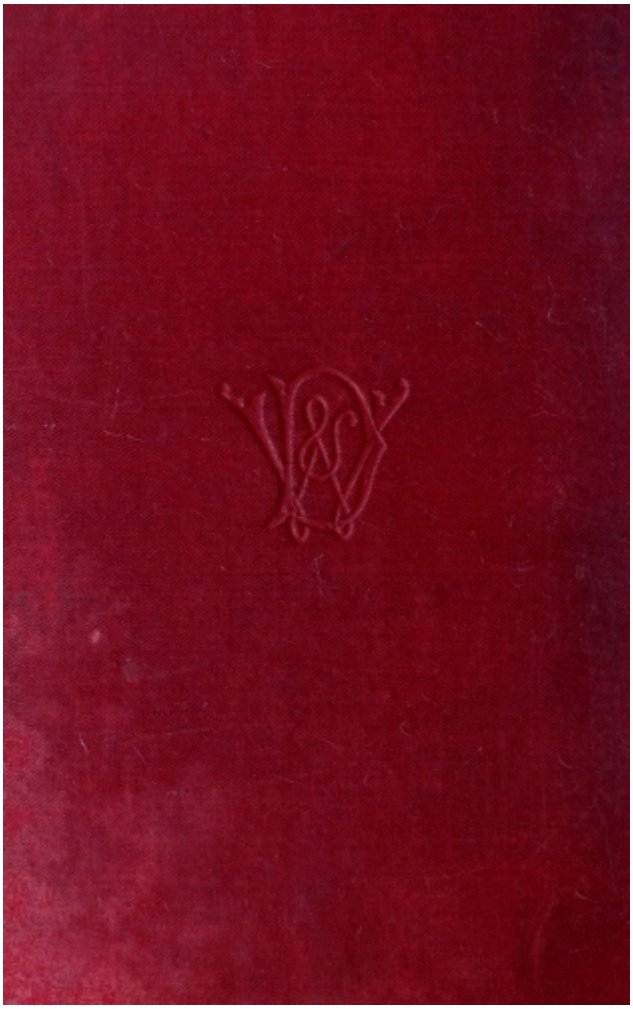
Typographical errors corrected by the etext transcriber:

hundreds of unformed units=> hundreds of uniformed units {pg 114}

and, as they as generally shrink in the was=> and, as they generally shrink in the was {pg 147}

allowing great familarity=> allowing great familiarity {pg 167}

they are fourteen and and not a day before=> they are fourteen and not a day before {pg 179}



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BY THE AUTHOR OF

"FROM KITCHEN TO GARRET"

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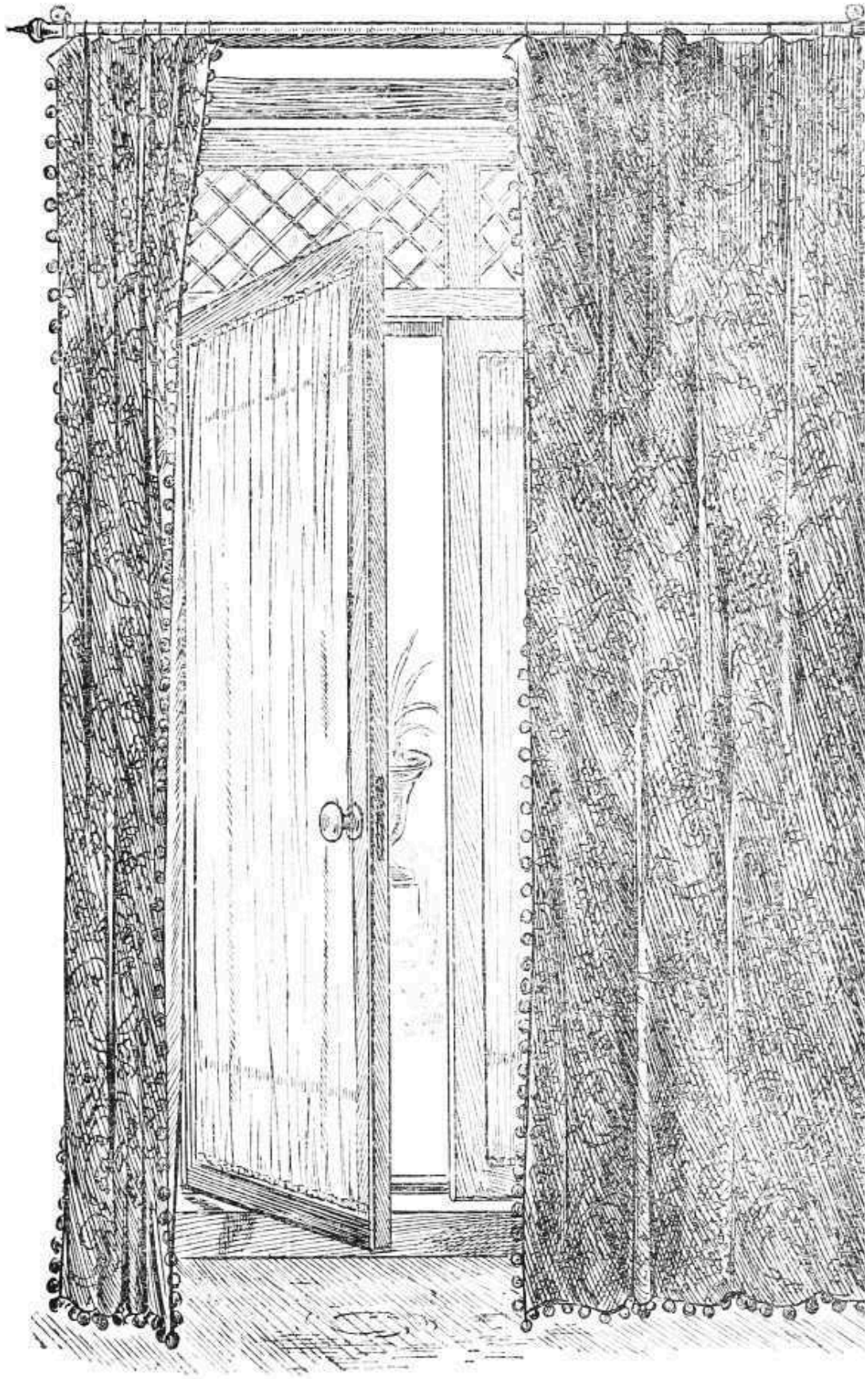

A French Window

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FIG. 1.—Hall Arrangement.

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FIG. 2.—Oak Buffet.

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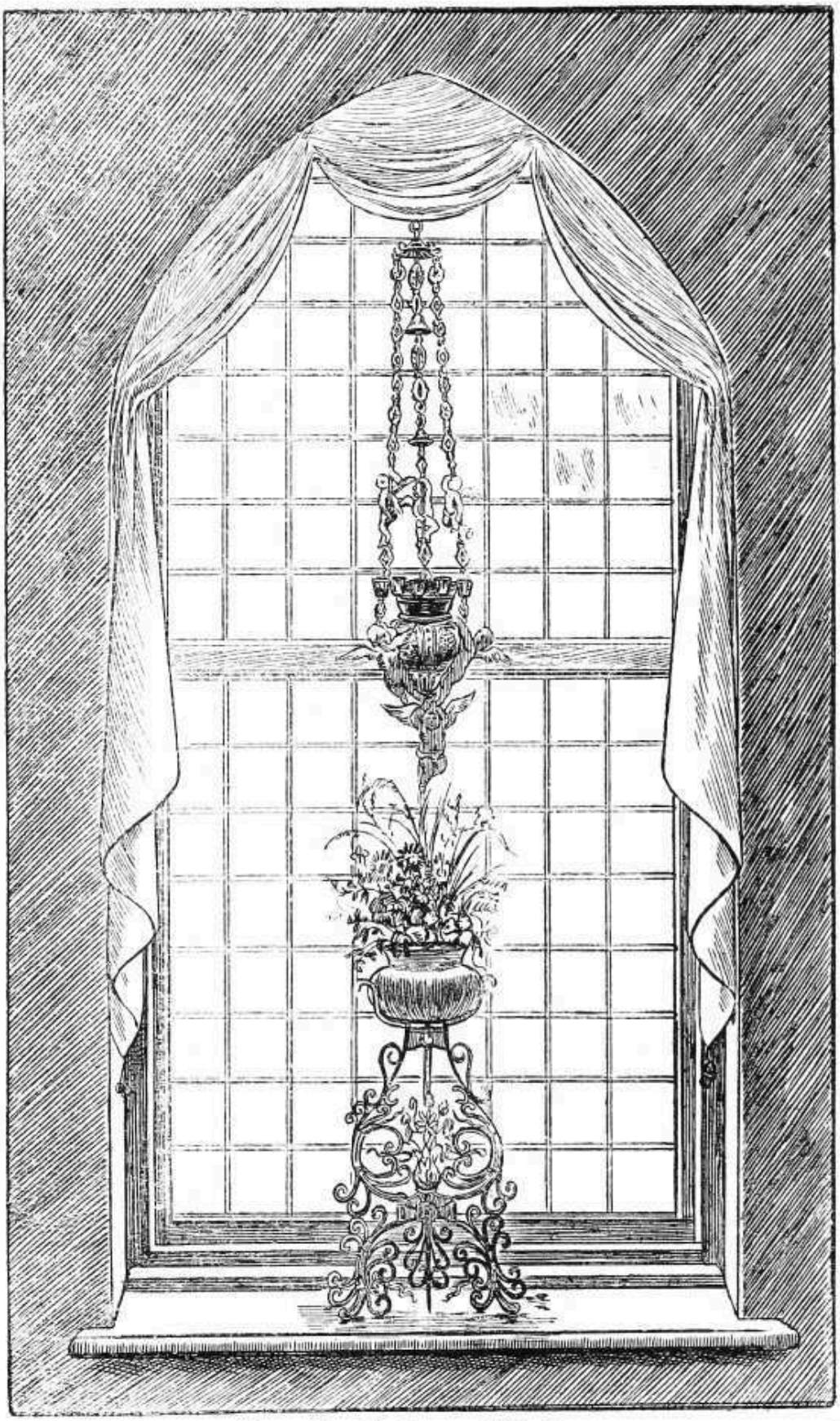

FIG. 3.—Staircase Window.

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FIG. 4.—A London Landing.

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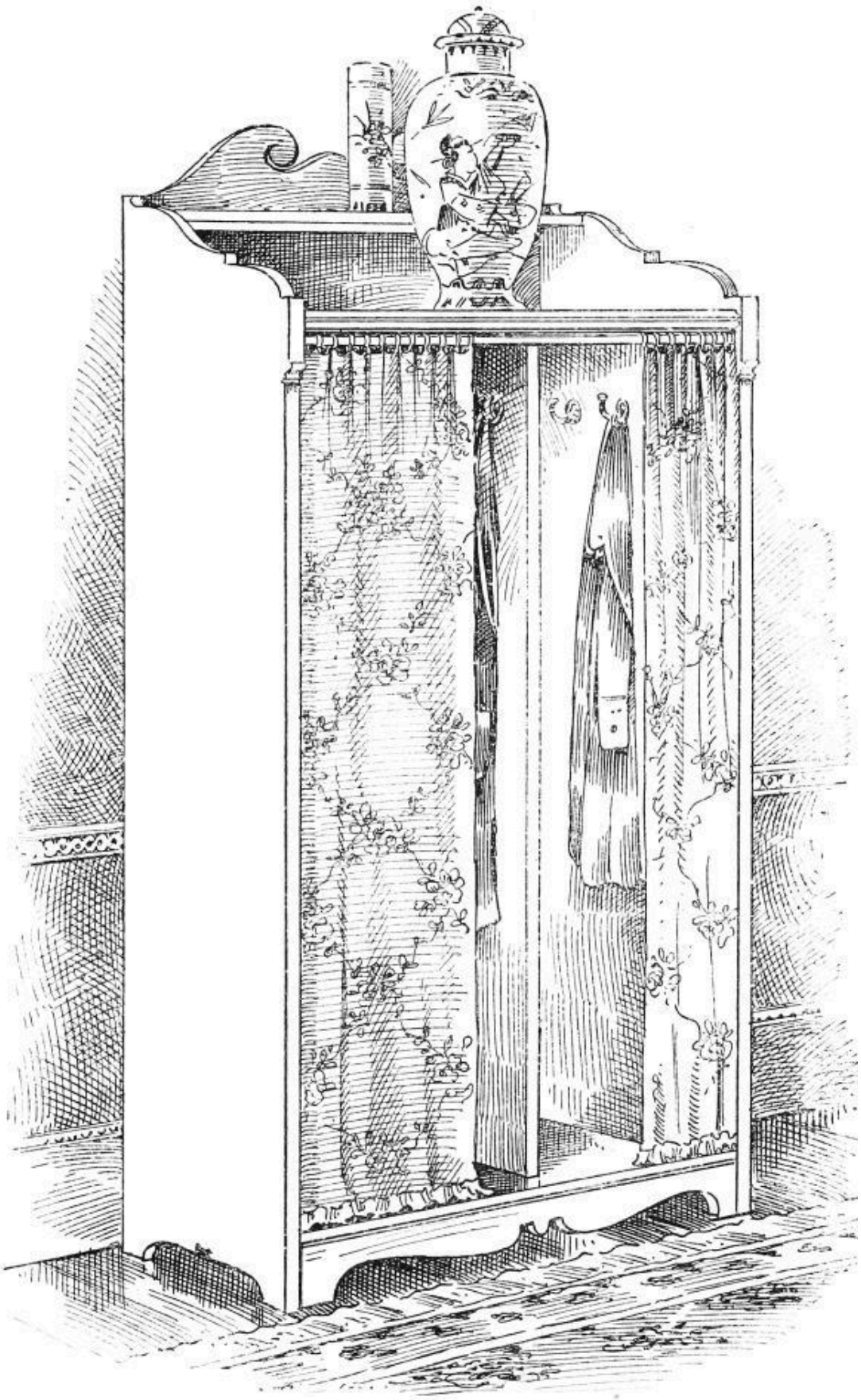

FIG. 5.—Hall Wardrobe (No. 1).

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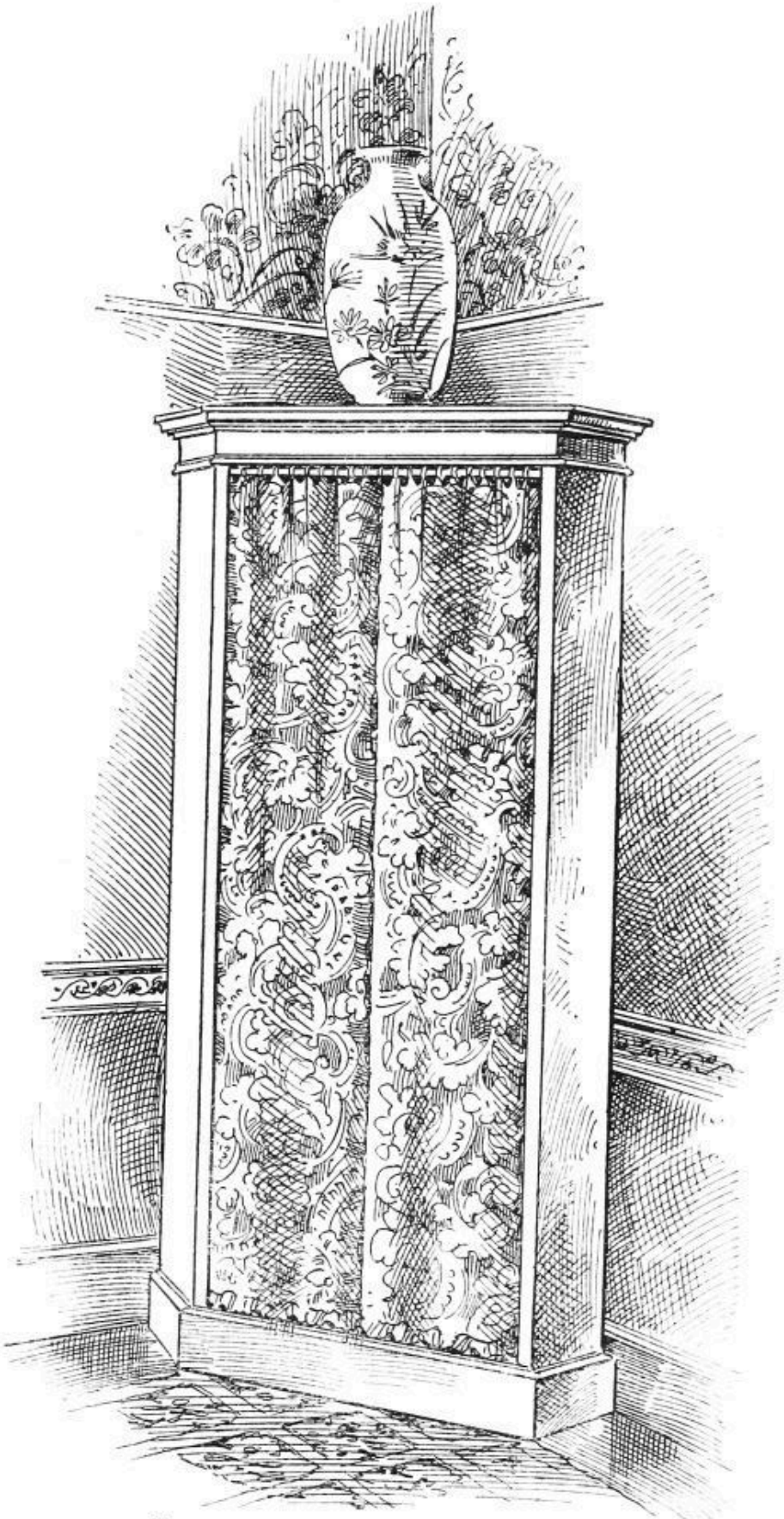

FIG. 6.—Hall Wardrobe (No. 2).

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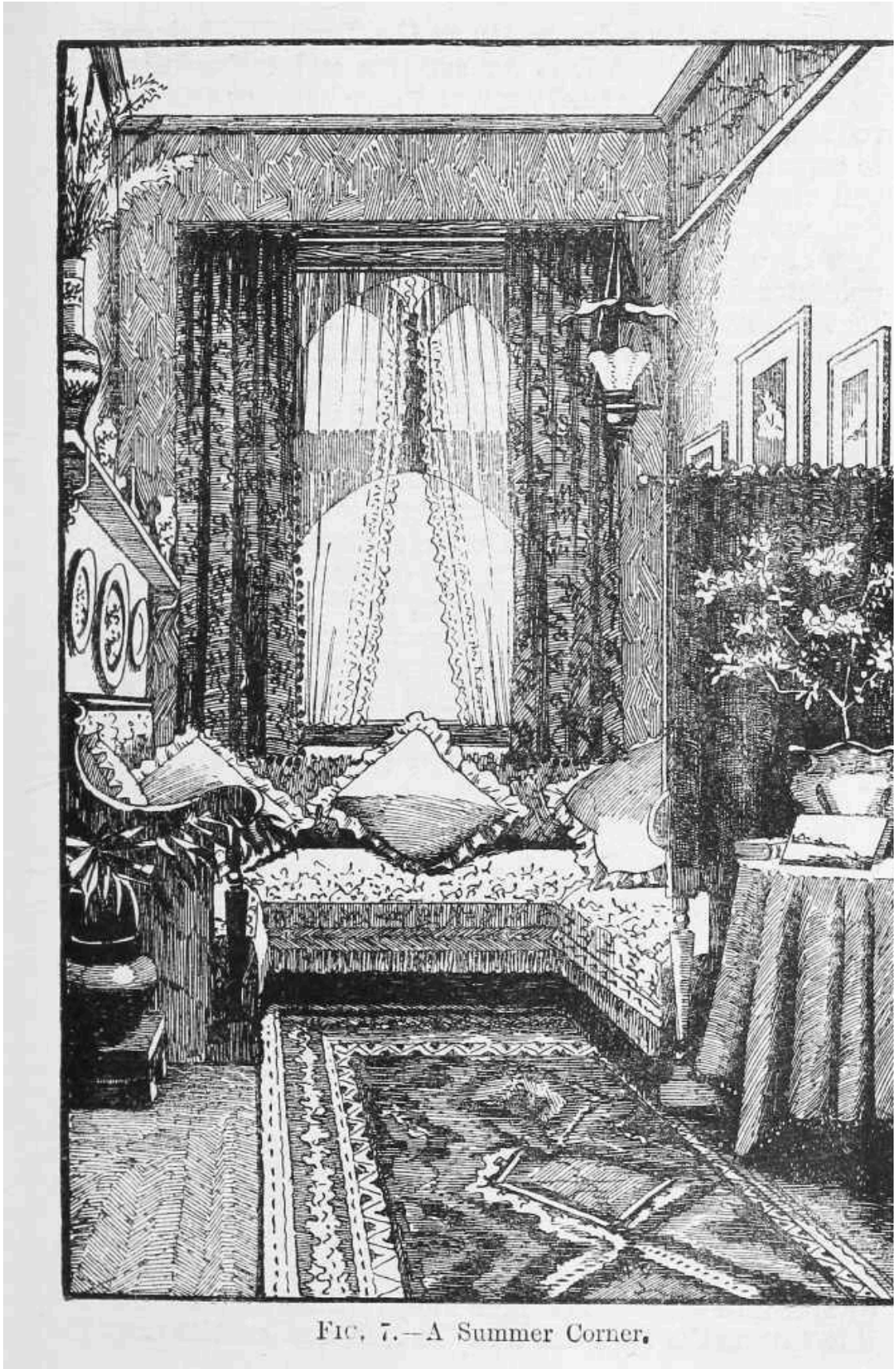

FIG. 7.—A Summer Corner.

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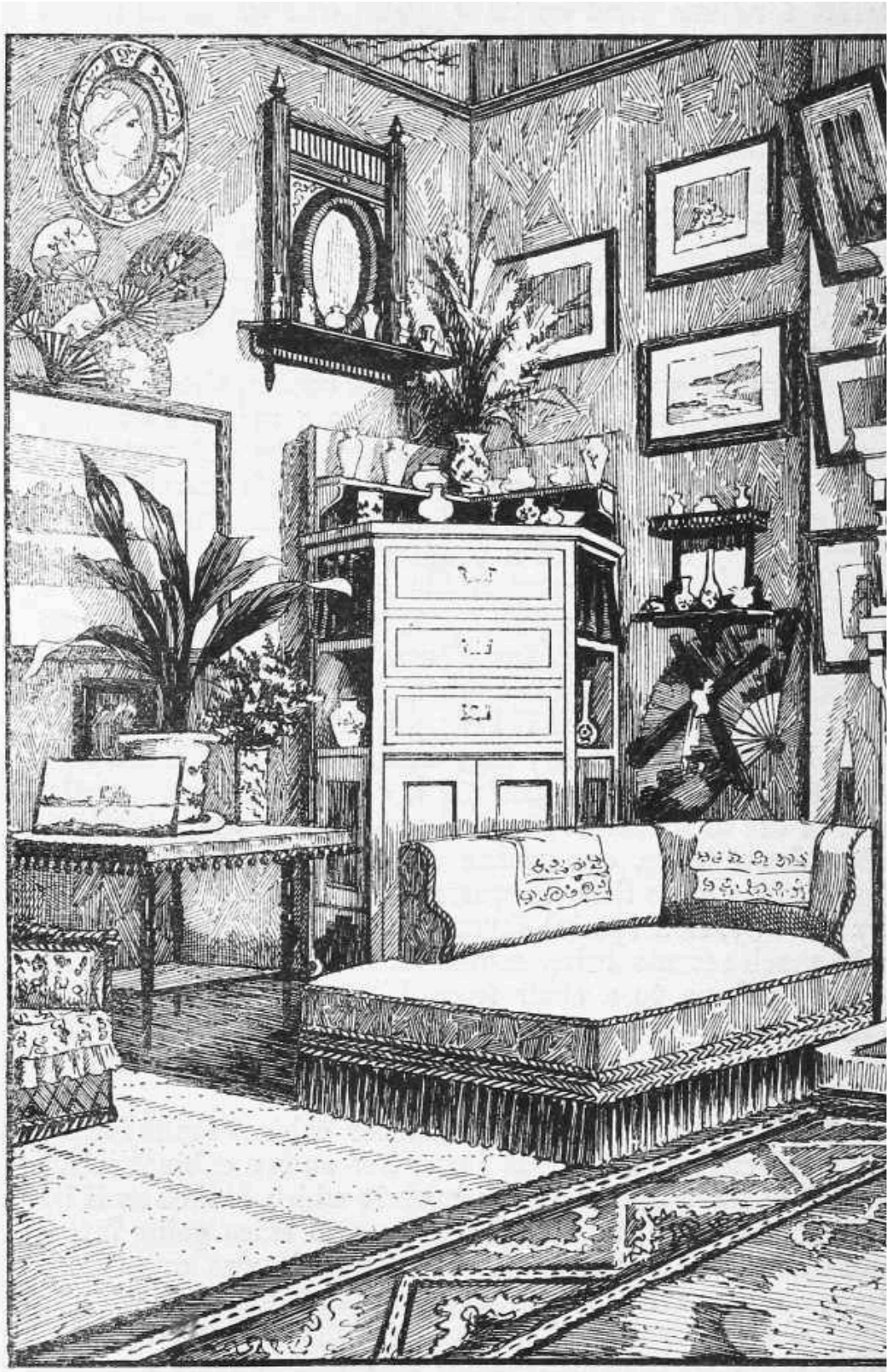

FIG. 8.—A Winter Corner.

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FIG. 9.—Arches for a Double Room.

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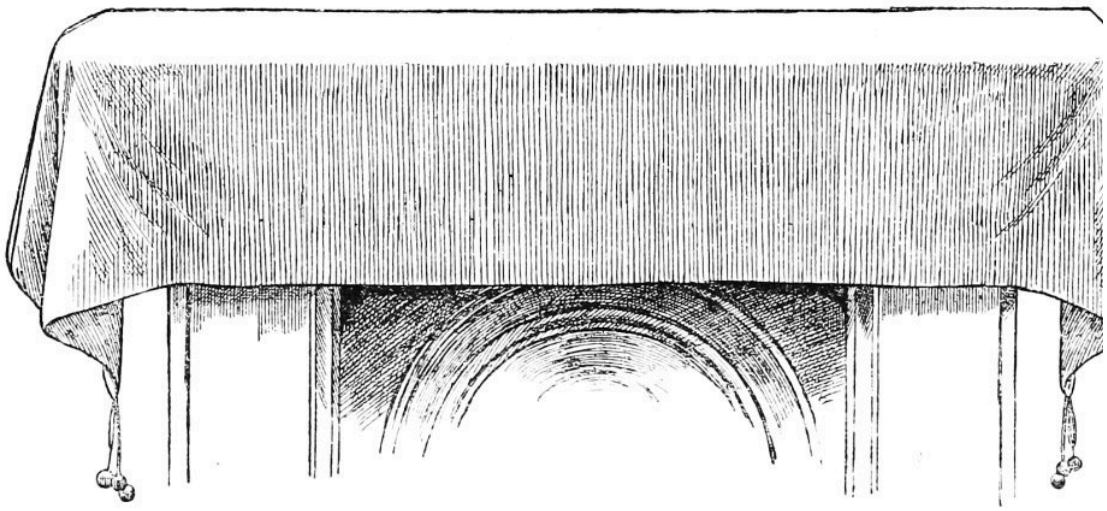

FIG. 10.—Simple Mantel Draping.

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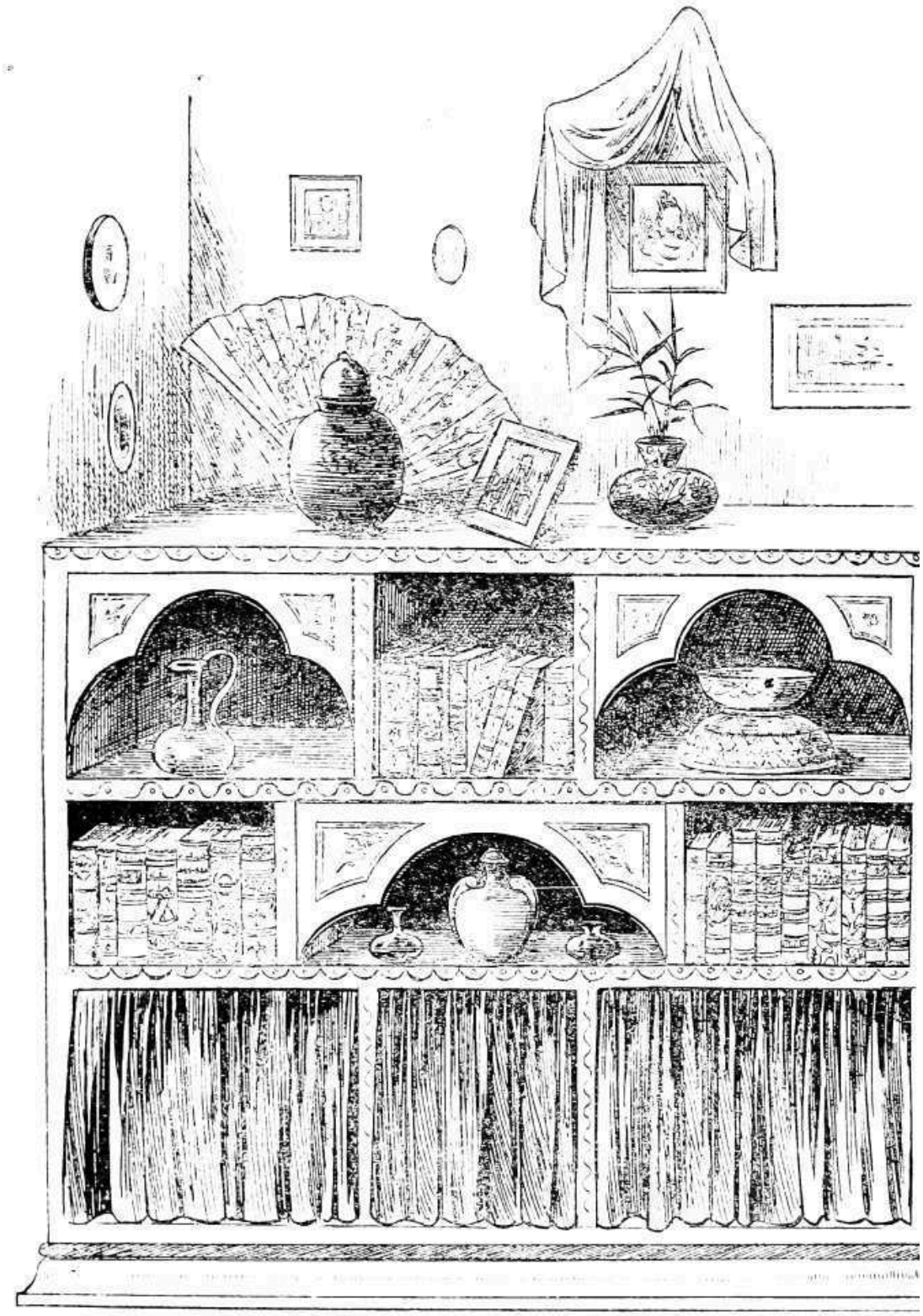

FIG. 11.—A Recess.

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FIG. 12.—A Draped Piano.

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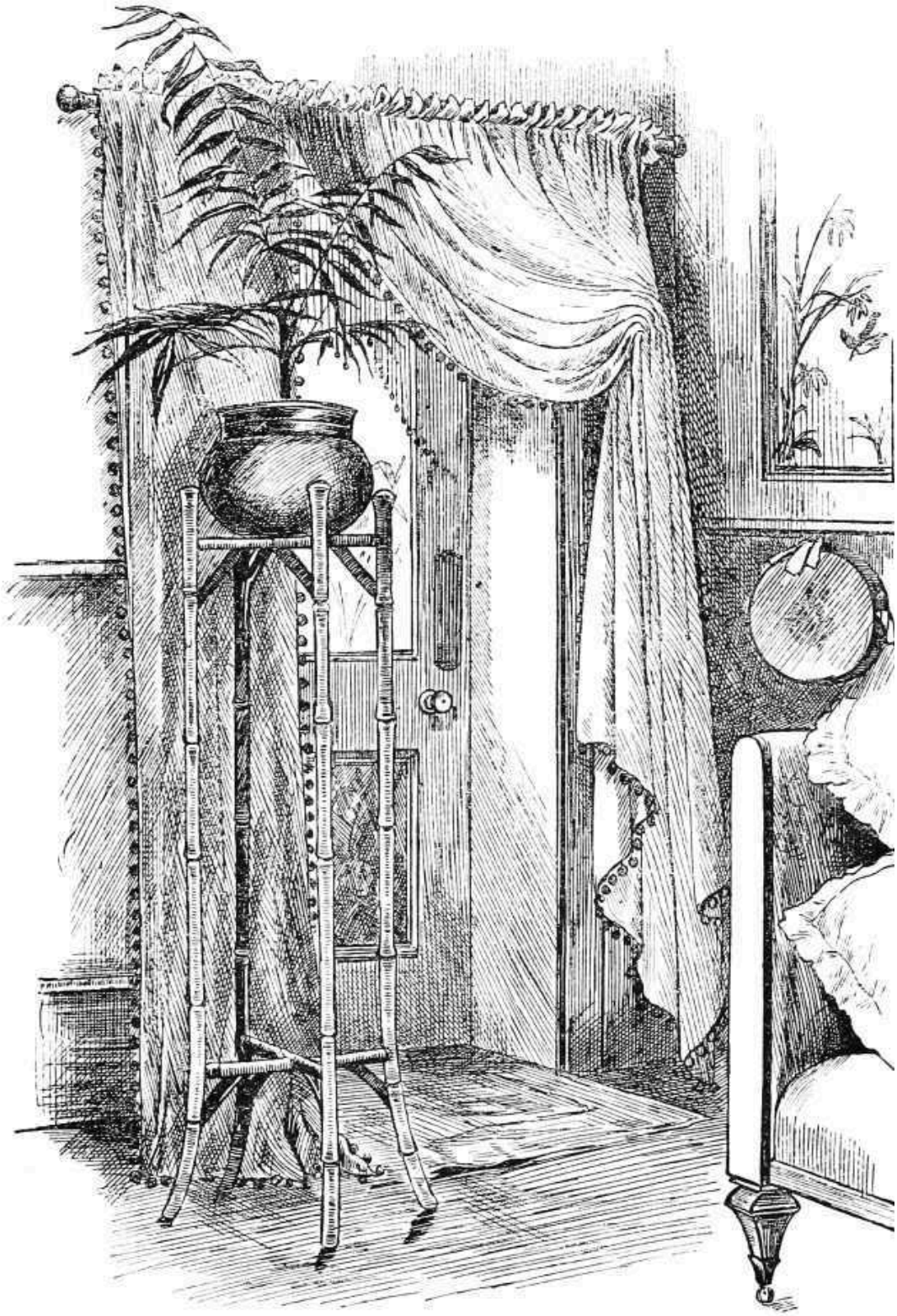

FIG. 13.—Conservatory Door.

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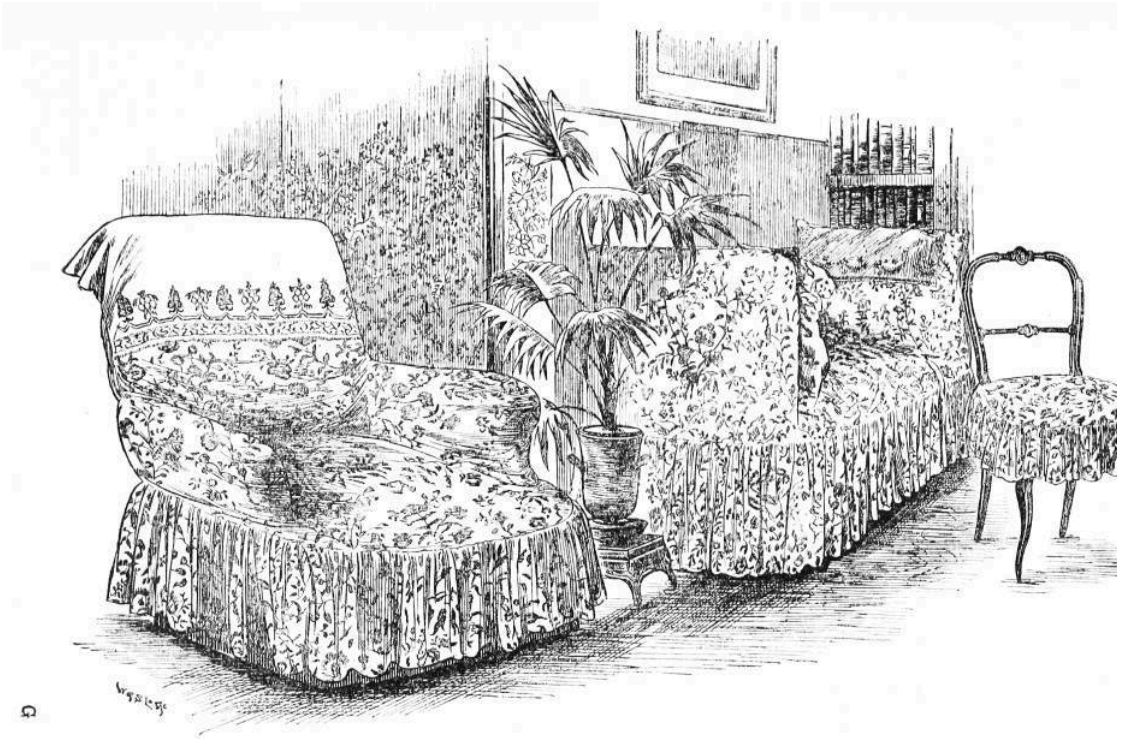

FIG. 11.—Frilled Chairs and Sofa.

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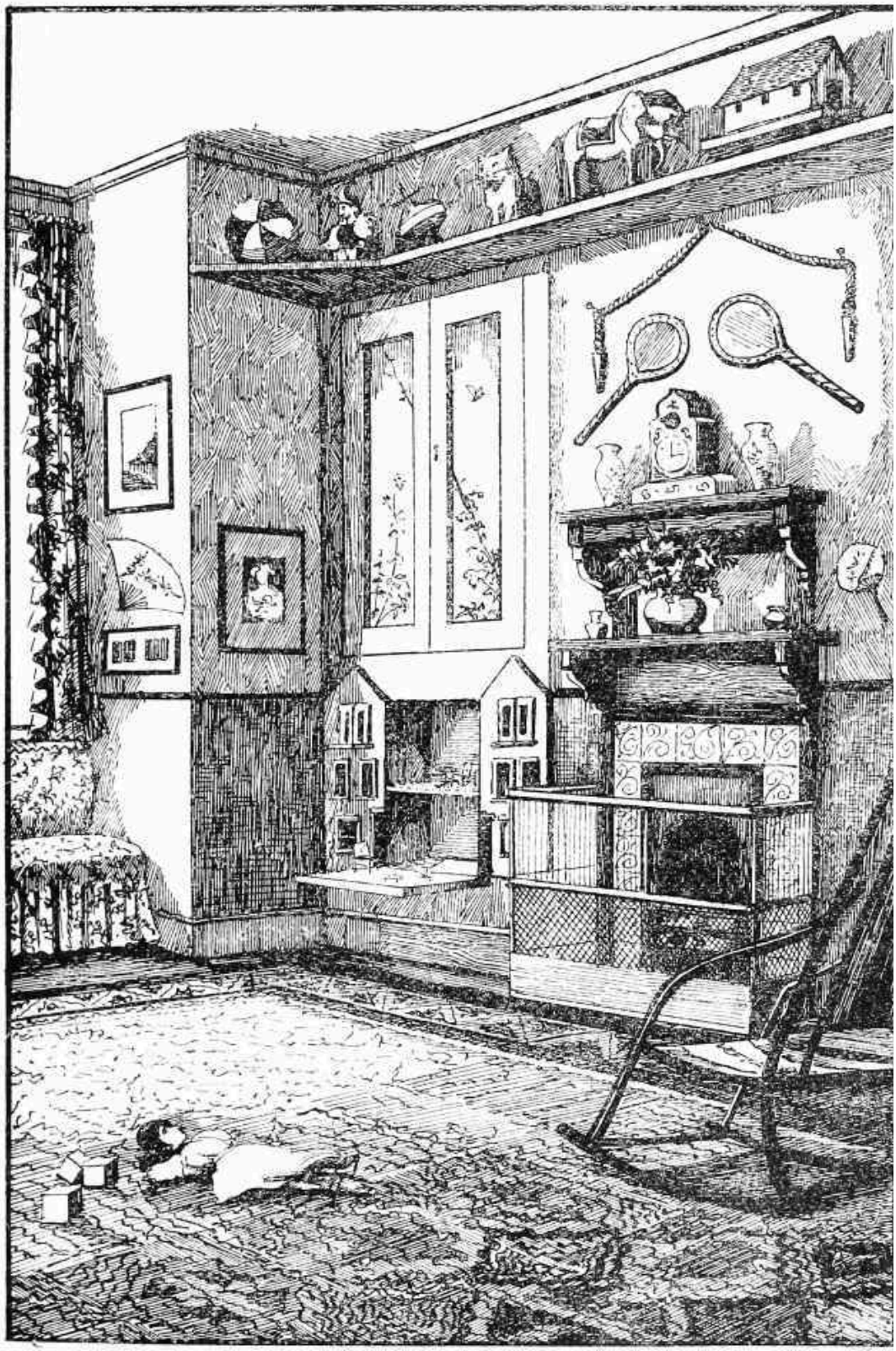

FIG. 15.—An Empty Nursery.

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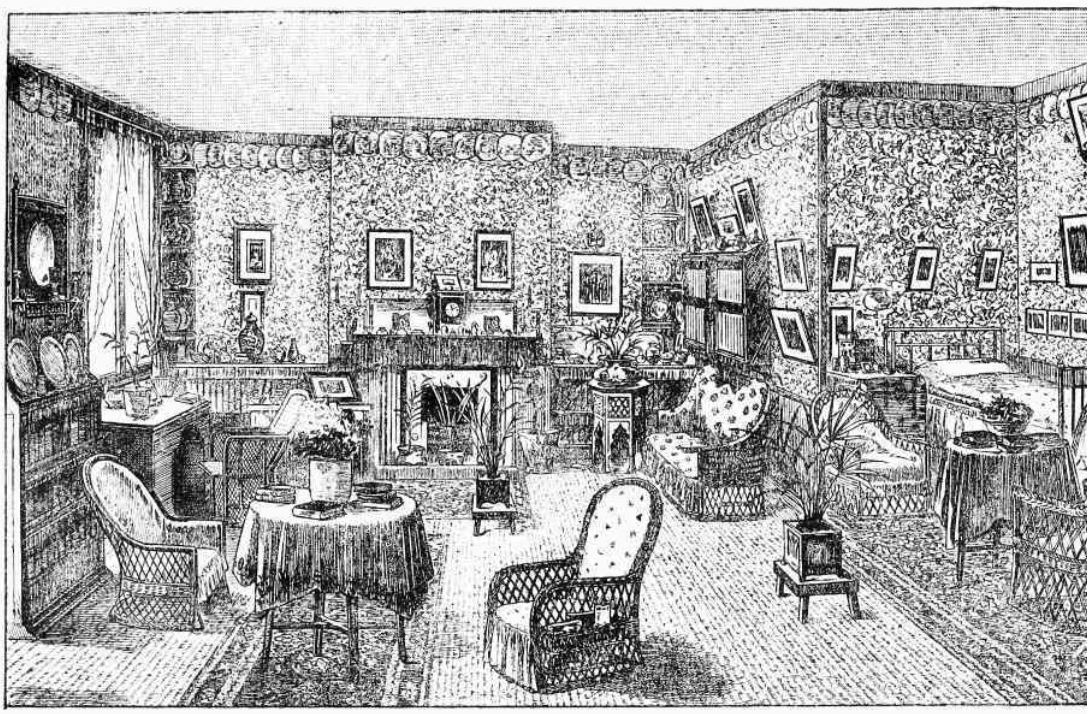

FIG. 16.—Boudoir-Bedroom.

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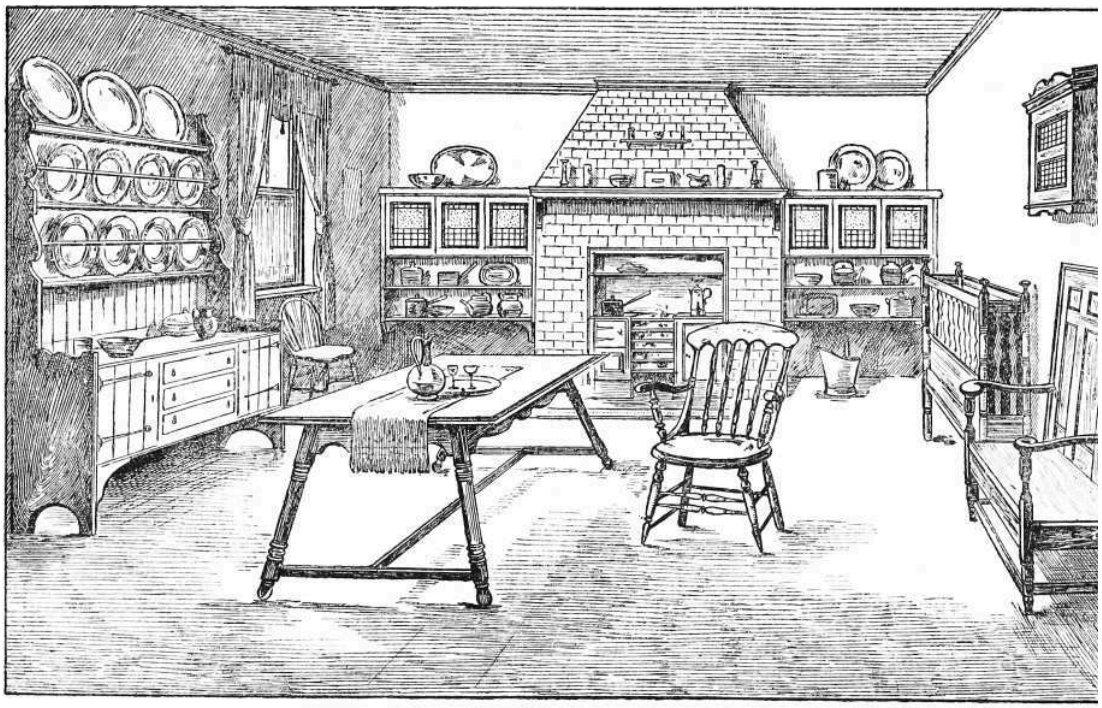

FIG. 17.—An Ideal Kitchen.

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