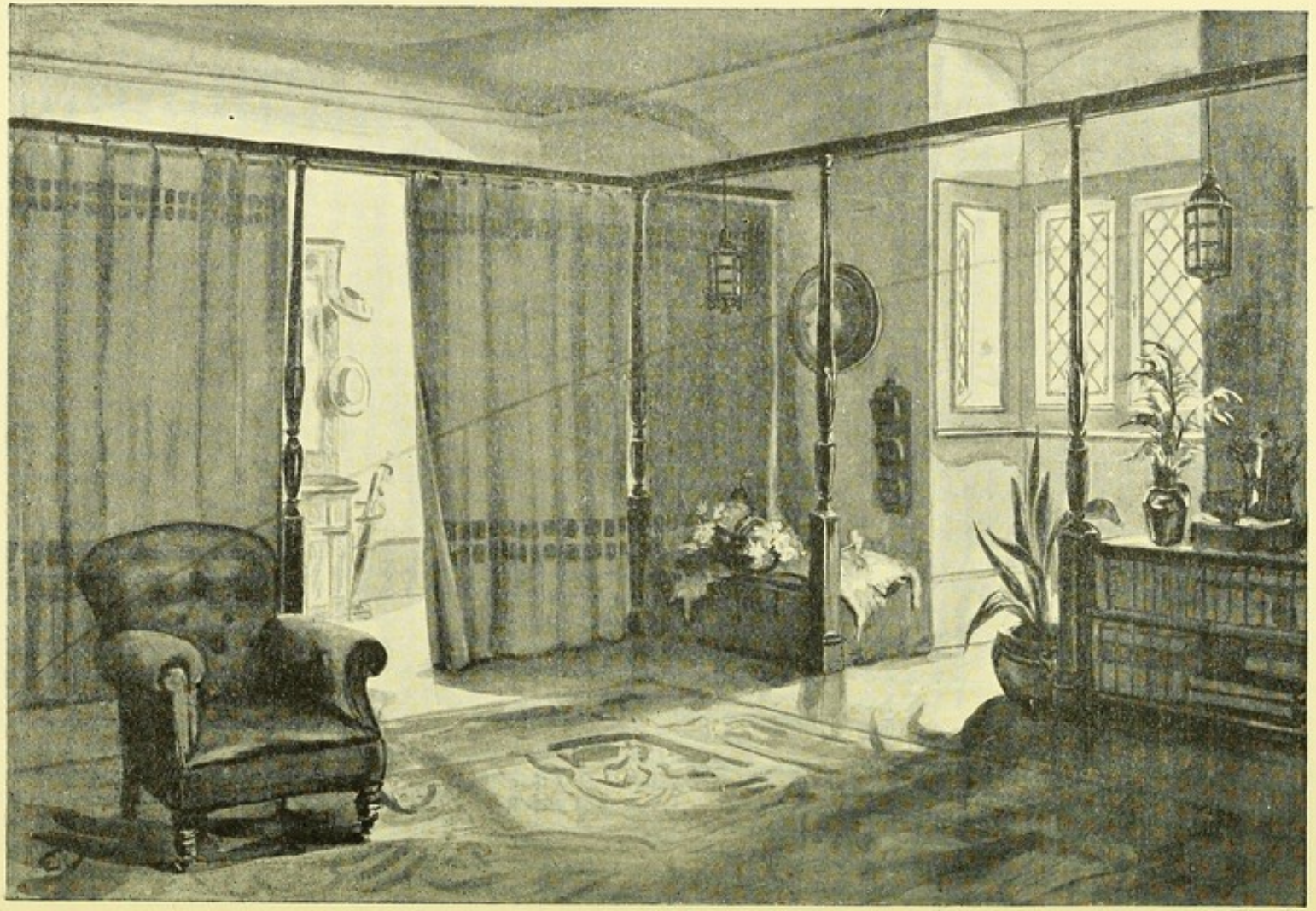
Woman's kingdom : containing suggestions as to furnishing, decorating and economically managing the home for people of limited means / by Mrs. Willoughby Wallace ; illustrations by Mrs. Herbert Davis.

WOMAN'S KINGDOM

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY WALLACE



A Hall Sitting-Room

Woman's Kingdom

CONTAINING SUGGESTIONS AS TO FURNISHING DECORATING AND ECONOMICALLY MANAGING THE HOME FOR PEOPLE OF LIMITED MEANS

BY

MRS. WILLOUGHBY WALLACE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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industry soars superior to monetary difficulties is worthy of a high place in the kingdom which is so essentially her own.

As it is above all things necessary to be practical, I have gleaned as much information as possible from the experiences of various friends as well as from personal observations, and have plundered the recipe books of my neighbours as ruthlessly as my own.

AGATHA WILLOUGHBY WALLACE.

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CHAPTER I

How to Choose a House

"WHERE to live" is a point of great moment to those who are seeking a house and upon whom there are no claims as to locality. They will probably procure lists from numerous house agents and find alluring descriptions of ideal residences in every one of them. They will make long pilgrimages to various places, only to meet with disappointment when they discover that the reality in no wise comes up to the glowing pictures they had in their mind. The picturesque, old-world cottage, with low raftered ceilings, casement windows, well stocked garden, exquisite views, and, of course, all modern conveniences, such as bath-room and gas, *rent not to exceed £20 a year*, exists, as far as I know, only in the imagination of the optimist; if such a treasure is to be found, it is either about eight miles from a station or it must be haunted!

"When in doubt write to the papers" is an excellent axiom, and most of the papers for ladies which are published nowadays will always give

reliable and explicit information as to the choice of houses, and the rents thereof, soil, climate, society, and other points of importance. As a rough idea, I may say that Essex is looked upon as the cheapest county, in some parts, but unfortunately those parts have not the reputation of being healthy. Dorsetshire and some parts of Somersetshire are cheap, but they are very far away from London (and none of us like to lose touch with the Metropolis entirely). Bedford is cheap, and an excellent place for those who have children to be educated, for houses here containing a large number of rooms are to be obtained at most moderate rents.

For those whose daily work demands that they live in or very near London, it only remains to choose between a small house in the suburbs or a flat in Town. The suburb will be airier and cleaner, the flat more convenient. The rent of the flat will be more than that of the suburban house, but on to the latter must be added the cost of the railway season-ticket for the husband, and the various train and tram fares for the wife ; moreover, it is far easier to manage with one servant in a flat than in a house. This book is designed only to be of use to people of limited means, therefore the servant question is one to be greatly considered, but for those who are blessed with an ample sufficiency of this world's wealth, I would advocate a small flat in town and

a cottage or bungalow in the country rather than one big house. A rural retreat is a perfect boon, not only for week-ends and holidays, but for such times as you are out of temper or suffering from the fashionable ailment called brain-fag.

Before finally pitching your tent there are various subjects to be considered. The first is the terms of the lease ; a repairing lease should always be avoided, as the repairs and renovations of a house—especially an old one—are a constant source of expense. Most landlords will agree to keep the outside in order and to thoroughly do up the interior before the newcomer takes possession, the agreement being that at the end of his tenure he shall leave it in good repair, *subject to reasonable wear and tear*. The last clause is a most important one, as without it, it is quite within the landlord's rights to make the outgoing tenant paper and paint the house afresh from attic to basement before he leaves it.

It is a mistake to take a new house, however attractive the exterior may be. The walls are usually damp, with the result that the paper or distemper shows ugly patches at the end of a few months, the window frames and doors, being of unseasoned wood, either shrink or swell, and shelves or cupboards are conspicuous by their absence ; it is generally the unfortunate first tenant who, for his own comfort's sake, has to put these up. I have a vivid recollection of a

new house I once went over which was distinctly of what I call the "flat-catcher" type. The exterior was charming, being a medley of red brick with decorations of "rubble-and-timber," of queer shaped casement windows and a quaint, old-fashioned porch. Within the aspect was equally attractive—at first sight. The walls of the rooms were colour-washed, with deep friezes at the top, the woodwork was all stained dull, dark oak, and the drawing-room window opened into an infinitesimal conservatory which might, when well filled with plants, hide the view of the back kitchen. But a closer inspection disclosed the fact that there were no bells in the bedrooms, no shelves in kitchen or scullery, no box-room, no cupboards, and no outside entrance to the coal hole.

Having found a well-seasoned house that wants redecorating entirely, persuade the landlord to let you choose your own wall-papers; tastes in this respect differ widely, and every one has her own pet schemes of colouring. Taken as a broad rule, for small houses and flats plain wall papers with artistic friezes are quite the best. If the landlord considers a frieze to be too expensive a luxury, the difficulty might be met by having the walls distempered, the money thus saved being expended on handsome friezes for the reception rooms and the hall, whilst in the bedrooms the friezes could be plainly distempered

ivory white, with a narrow white moulding to mark the line between them and the colour beneath. The woodwork of the dining-room will be best stained dull oak, but the drawing-room and all the bedrooms should be painted with Aspinall's ivory enamel, the glossy surface of which seems to defy dust and dirt. If the hall and staircase are light and sunny, have all the woodwork, including the stairs themselves, stained dull oak, but if they are dark and gloomy, white enamel must be used instead.

Every householder knows the vital importance of proper sanitation and a good water supply. With regard to the first, nothing appeals to me as being absolutely adequate save the thorough overhauling of the drainage system by the local sanitary inspector. This fee will only be a small one, and if he passes the drains as being all right, the tenant can take possession with complete confidence as far as hygiene is concerned.

In flats there is seldom any difficulty about the hot and cold water supply, as they are usually constructed on the most up-to-date principles, but this does not apply to houses in the suburbs and still less to country cottages. It is not fair on a maidservant to expect her to carry cans of hot water upstairs for baths, etc., and in many houses I know of which boast bath-rooms with hot and cold water, the former seems to have a knack of never getting beyond the lukewarm

stage, more especially where the family require early breakfast and the cook does not rise betimes. For this and for other reasons I am a great advocate for a geyser in the bathroom. Boiling water is then forthcoming at any hour of the day or night (the last being invaluable in cases of illness). Any number of baths can be obtained one after the other if wanted; moreover, as it is quite independent of the kitchen boiler, there is no need to keep a fire going in the kitchen during the hot days of summer, save when it is absolutely wanted for cooking a dinner. In country places where there is no gas the geyser can be heated with oil. Ewart's geysers (the firm is in the Euston Road) are perfectly safe, provided there is a window in the bathroom, and the pipe from the geyser goes through the wall into the outside air.

Besides employing a sanitary inspector to overhaul the drains, it is wise to get a competent man to look at the kitchen range, the cisterns, the pipes, and the gas. Old-fashioned grates are proverbially hungry ones, and antiquated gas burners waste gas to an alarming extent. In modern houses, and especially in newly built flats, electric light is often laid on, and this is not so very expensive if lamps of moderate power only are used. Besides seeing to these things, the windows, doors, and floors thould be looked at. Small draughts are not noticeable in the summer,

but when winter sets in and they seem to whistle through innumerable crevices, it is a very different matter.

Where only one servant is kept, gas stoves are a great saving of labour; at all events, there should be one in the dining-room and one in each of the best bedrooms. The former can be lighted at meal times or whenever the room is occupied, and turned out when not required, and the latter can just be used for dressing and undressing by. Many a woman dresses for a dance or a theatre in an icily cold room (and very detrimental to her personal appearance it is !) to avoid giving her servant the trouble of lighting a fire and of cleaning up the grate on the following morning. The gas stoves need not be bought, as gas companies will usually let them out on hire.

With regard to the interior construction of a house, some builders are good enough to make a feature of the labour-saving question, whilst others ignore it entirely. Where only a very modest staff of servants can be kept, an underground kitchen should be avoided, if possible. Think of the amount of extra running up and down stairs which this involves ! and beyond this, for the maid to live in what is nothing better than a glorified cellar is neither conducive to cheerfulness nor health. In houses which are in the very hearts of towns, underground kitchens

must, perforce, exist, and the only amelioration is to have a lift to the dining-room, on which everything can be pulled up and down. As it will add considerably to the attraction of the house, a landlord will often put this up for a small addition to the rent. The objection to a kitchen next to the dining-room is that the smell of cooking often pervades the hall to a terrible extent. This can in a great measure be obviated by a baize door which shall shut off the kitchen premises, especially if it has a spring attached to it, which will ensure that it always remains closed unless propped open ; or, if a door is impossible, a very thick portière will have almost the same effect. As a further remedy, the cook should be kept supplied with cedar-wood powder with which to sprinkle the stove during any very savoury culinary operations.

In houses such as these, built on the " ladder " system, speaking tubes are most convenient and very easily put up. One should be fixed from the hall to the kitchen, by means of which the mistress can hold a conversation with the cook without calling her upstairs or going down herself. There should also be a tube from the first floor landing (on to which the bedrooms " give ") to the kitchen, and if there is likewise a second floor on which there are several bedrooms, this should be put in communication with the basement in the same way. Where

there is a nursery at the top of the house, a tube into the hall will be highly appreciated.

I write feelingly on the subject of speaking tubes, owing to my own experience. I lived for very many years in a rambling old country house in which my study was an unconscionable distance from the kitchen premises. If I rang the bell to make some inquiry which wanted an answer, it seemed about half an hour before a reply was forthcoming—a dreadful interruption to my work. One day a clever friend suggested a speaking tube, which I had put up forthwith, and through which I could hold long conversations anent the butcher and the baker, if need be. This sounds like bad housekeeping, as all orders ought to be given at one time, but those who live far from a town, or even a village, will know full well the exasperating ways of provincial tradesmen. The butcher, for example, brings round what he is pleased to call "a choice selection" of joints in his cart, and the chances are that nothing you have ordered for the day's meals is amongst them.

Still, with all its drawbacks, I adore the country, benighted, muddy, and earwiggy though it be.

CHAPTER II

How to Furnish a House for £110

It is my intention to go seriously into the matter of house furnishing. In the days when I was young this cost a great deal more money than it does now, when, owing to severe competition and the advantages offered by machinery, things are far cheaper than they used to be. Those about to marry need not have such a very big sum in the savings bank with which to start a home, and I am going to plan out how a small house may be furnished for £110, a country cottage for £85, and a little flat or bungalow for £60. In these estimates I shall not include linen, plate, glass or china, because these are, more often than not, provided by the kind friends who send wedding gifts; but where they are lacking, I may as well say that £25 will purchase a sufficient amount of these items with which to make a fair start, linen being £15; plate, £5; glass, £1 10*s*.; and china, £3 10*s*.

The linen can be reckoned as follows: for each bed two pairs of sheets, two top blankets, one under blanket, one quilt and four pillow cases; one dozen damask towels, six huckaback

towels, six servants' towels, and three bath towels; four damask table cloths, twelve serviettes, two kitchen table cloths, four sideboard cloths, two afternoon tea cloths; twelve dusters, six pantry cloths, six tea cloths, and six kitchen cloths. For £5 knives, forks, spoons, butter knife and sugar tongs can be bought for six persons. A complete set of table glass for six persons will cost under £1, and there will be at least 10*s.* left for glass dishes, pickle jars, salt cellars, and finger bowls. A dinner service for eight persons, comprising eighty-two pieces, can be bought for £1 18*s.* 6*d.* from Hampton & Sons, Pall Mall East, a great favourite of mine being their Delft pattern in dark blue on a white ground, and for dessert, breakfast and tea services there is the charming white china named the "Carn Brea," sold by Jarvis, Redruth, Cornwall, at very low prices. This is very fine china, but each piece has an imperceptible flaw in it, which accounts for the small cost. A dessert service for eight persons would be 11*s.*, consisting of eight plates, two high dishes and two low ones. A breakfast service for six persons, consisting of six cups and saucers, six plates, six egg cups, two dishes, coffee pot, milk jug, sugar basin and slop basin would be 11*s.* 9*d.*; whilst a tea service for twelve persons, complete with tea-pot, milk jug sugar basin, and bread and butter plates, would, be just 10*s.* One of the great advantages of this

ware is that if any of it is broken, there is no difficulty in replacing it.

The house to be furnished for £110 is of the type which one sees by hundreds in all the outlying parts of London and large provincial towns. It contains two reception rooms, four bedrooms, kitchen and bath room. The rent may be anything from £36 to £50 a year, as this will depend upon locality and outside appearance. The latter is always a matter of importance, as no house-proud woman cares to introduce her friends to an abode which lacks any individuality or style. The plan within is usually about the same: on the ground floor, drawing-room, dining-room and kitchen; on the half landing, a small bedroom above the kitchen; on the first floor, two bedrooms and a bath room; and on the top floor, an attic. This is how the expenditure could be divided:—

	£	s.	d.
Dining-room	25	0	0
Drawing-room	20	0	0
Best bedroom	20	0	0
Second bedroom	15	0	0
Third bedroom (or Study)	10	0	0
Servants' bedroom	4	0	0
Hall and Staircase	7	0	0
Bath-room	2	0	0
Kitchen	7	0	0
	£110	0	0

Fumed oak furniture is very popular just now, both for dining-rooms and bedrooms: it has many advantages, as it is easy to keep in order and harmonizes with almost any scheme of colouring. As I have a great partiality for a plain coloured wall with an artistic frieze, I will, in this case, decorate my imaginary parlour with pale electric blue, the frieze above being the "Mountain," 1*s.* 3*d.* the yard, from Knowles, Chelsea, in soft tones of blue, with rich brown for the tall trunks of trees in the foreground, and purple for the hills in the distance. The woodwork should be painted the same tone as the fumed oak furniture, and finished with a dull instead of a shiny surface. Money has to be carefully considered, therefore I should choose the Ewelme suite in fumed oak, the chair seats being covered with fawn and blue tapestry, the price of which comes to £17 2*s.* 6*d.*, comprising sideboard, dining-table, four small chairs, and two arm-chairs. This can be bought from Bartholomew & Fletcher, 219, Tottenham Court Road. Something in the way of an overmantel is required to give a finish to the chimney-piece, but the type which was in favour some years ago and which consists mainly of wooden brackets and odd bits of looking-glass, is now rarely to be seen save in a lodging-house. A coloured print, after the style of Cecil Aldin's pictures, or a brown engraving would be charming in a fumed oak frame of the Nouveau Art style, and the price would be about £2 10*s.*

The carpet should be of Oriental design with dull blue, red and fawn colouring. A square of good, hard-wearing Brussels would cost about £3, and the margin of surrounding boards could be stained and polished. Twenty-five shillings will buy fender, fireirons and coal-vase in black and copper, and £1 2*s*. 6*d*. will then remain for curtains. Electric blue linen plush, at 3*s*. the yard, can be used for the heavy ones, and if they are made to the sill only, five yards will be sufficient. The inner curtains should be of cream Madras muslin.

Another dining-room scheme, less severe in style, could be carried out with a floral wall-paper and black carved oak furniture. The paper could be a chintz design in old-world colouring to tone down the brilliancy of which the paint should be "bog-oak." The Penshurst suite in black carved oak costs a little over £16, and as the picture overmantel would not be in harmony with this furniture, I would spend the £3 10*s*. which would be in hand by this and the lower cost of the suite in about half a dozen engravings in plain black frames. The carpet could be the same as in the first scheme, but the curtains should be of soft deep red instead of electric blue.

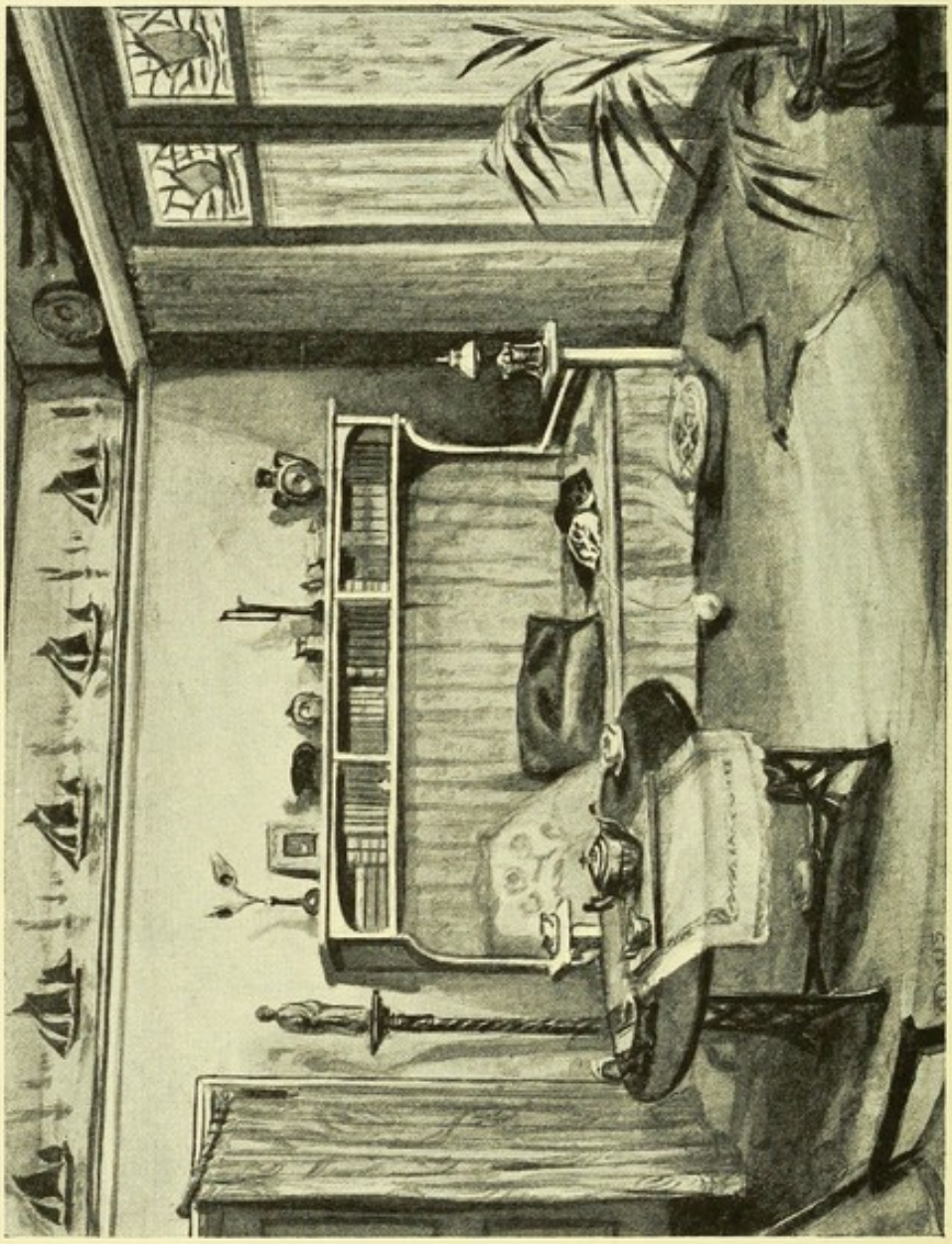
To furnish a drawing-room for £20 is not an easy matter; fortunately this apartment in the small suburban house is not usually a spacious one, and will not therefore require a great number of

chairs and tables. There, as in every other room in the house, I cannot preach too forcibly against what I call cheap finery. Better far to have only half a dozen things which are good of their kind than a quantity of low-priced rubbish which really never looks well and which certainly does not wear. I can recall drawing-rooms which used to set my teeth on edge in bygone days, mantel draperies of art muslin, piano backs swathed in the same with a further adornment of a painted tambourine suspended by ribbons, china ornaments at $6\frac{3}{4}d.$ apiece, and wonderful antimaccassars of muslin, silk and lace with which to conceal the commonness of the chairs.

The walls of my little drawing-room should be pale lettuce green with a pretty frieze at the top, or the paper might be of green stripes with a four-foot frieze of ivory white anaglypta, the woodwork being ivory white also. A carpet square in two tones of green will cost about £2, and as the walls and floor will thus be of one colour only there will be a good opportunity for vivid touches of brightness in the coverings of the chairs.

Of cosy corners I am getting tired, but the original design for a seat on page 16 may suggest a little deviation from the commonplace to those who are looking out for something of the kind. It would seem that this seat and the door take up the whole of one side of the room, and that, in

consequence, no sofa is admissible. Any ordinarily intelligent carpenter could make the framework in wood from the drawing, and this should



Suggestion for Drawing-room Seat.

be carefully enamelled white. The mattress on the seat and the empty space of wall at the back should be covered with a pretty cretonne of rose design. I do not think this seat ought to cost

more than £3 10*s*. complete. There is really very little wood in the framework, as neither the seat nor back are solid, the former consisting of a criss-cross of strong webbing supported by two or three short battens. There is no ornamental work, the outlines being perfectly straight, and I think it ought to be made in deal for £2, or, if the house is blessed with a master who delights in carpentry, about 10*s*. to 15*s*. would supply the wood. The mattress, if made at home, would cost about 10*s*., and £1 would be an ample allowance for cretonne and some ivory enamel.

Six chairs would be sufficient for this room, and for this I would allow £6, four to be easy chairs averaging 25*s*. each, and two occasional chairs at 10*s*. each : they should all be upholstered in pale pink tapestry. I would spend £3 on three tables, one of fair size costing about £2, and two little ones at 10*s*. each ; black and brass fender, fireirons and coal vase would come to 30*s*., and for £1 a jardinière and black pedestal could be bought. £3 would then remain out of the £20, and I think £2 might be spent on curtains, portière and rod, and £1 on a couple of brown engravings in simple white reeded frames. The heavy curtain could be made of cretonne similar to that with which the seat is covered, the ones next to the French window being of ivory muslin. The portière should be of lettuce green damask, and the rod at the top should be fixed at right

angles with the door instead of against it, as this makes a rather pretty entrance. Above the window I would fix a white shelf, six inches wide, on which to arrange pottery.

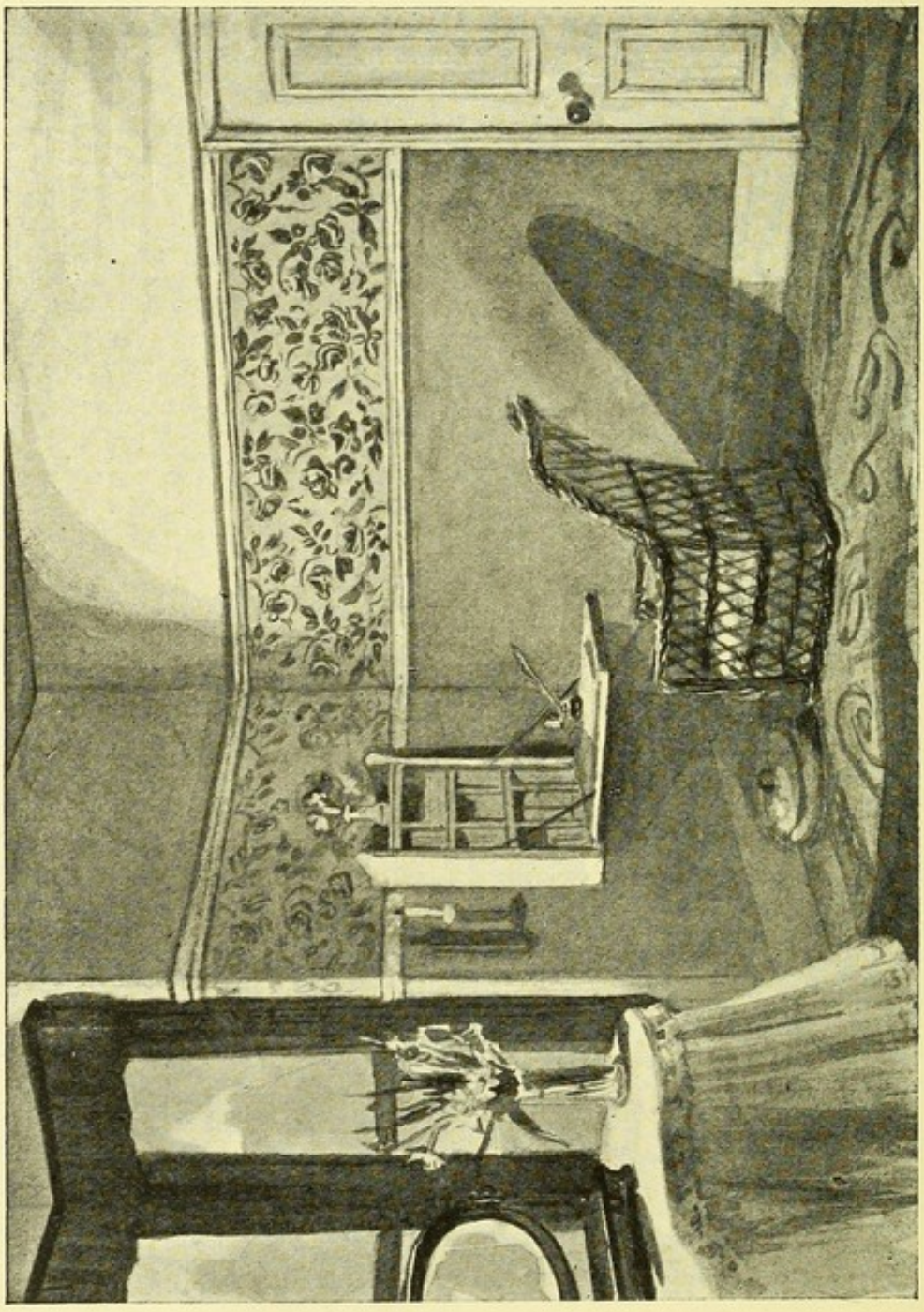
This is a very simple scheme for arranging a little drawing-room for £20. It may appeal to the many poor gentlewomen who have no more to spend, whilst those who have a sufficiency of this world's wealth may be able to use the suggestions for a little boudoir or for a girls' sitting-room. I do not include a piano, as this obviously could not come into an estimate for furnishing a seven-roomed house for £110. Unless this is amongst the wedding gifts it will be best to buy it on the Hire Purchase System; a music-stool would have to be substituted for one of the easy chairs.

The best bedroom has to be furnished for £20, and here I want to get away from the ordinary "suite." A large cupboard well equipped with pegs is an absolute necessity, in fact I believe firmly in having these in every bedroom. I was once obliged to spend a year in a furnished house in which there was not a single cupboard, therefore I well know the inconvenience of having to invent all sorts of makeshifts with packing cases or with pegs in the wall concealed by a cretonne curtain. When searching for a permanent home I simply told the agent it was useless to give me an order to view any house which was not well supplied

with cupboards, and if tenants always insisted on this the cupboardless house would soon cease to exist, as it would be found to be unlettable.

The illustration of a corner of the best bedroom on page 20 will show the scheme of decoration I would suggest. The lower part of the walls should be covered to a height of 4 ft. 6 ins. with a plain, rose-pink paper ; above this there should be a deep band, about a yard wide, of a paper which has a design of big La France roses on a cream ground, and from the band to the ceiling the walls should be distempered plain cream. All the woodwork, including the moulding which frames the band, should be painted cream. As the cupboard is to do duty for a wardrobe in this room the panel of the door should be filled in with looking-glass, a long mirror being regarded as an essential by most women. If—and only "if"—the house mistress can paint flowers really well, some trailing branches of La France roses on the cream-coloured wood which frames the glass would be a charming finishing touch. For the furniture I would have an old mahogany bow-fronted chest of drawers, which I know can be bought for about £4, a semi-circular washstand price £1, a quaint toilet glass £1 15*s*., two small chairs 10*s*., and a draped dressing-table made of deal and trimmed with petticoats of white muslin over pink cotton, which would cost about 10*s*. complete.

There ought to be a bedstead with head and foot boards of inlaid mahogany in this room, but



A Bedroom Corner.

I am afraid the £20 estimate will not permit it; we must therefore be contented with a bedstead of white enamel and brass which, with all bedding

complete in a 4 ft. 6 in. size, can be had for £5. The carpet can be a plain rose-red square of Abingdon Cord, which the Abingdon Carpet Co. will supply for £1, whilst fender, fireirons and a set of toilet ware will come to about another £1.

It will be remembered that the chances are no third sitting-room is possible in this abode unless one of the bedrooms is used as a sort of sanctum; for this reason a writing cabinet which takes up very little room, and a comfortable wicker chair will be a boon to the housewife who yearns for even a "corner" of her own where she can write or read in seclusion. The Pamela cabinet (as shown in the sketch) can be nailed to the wall. The flap which forms the desk closes up and locks at the top when not in use, which renders the contents of the pigeon-holes quite secure from observation; I believe the price is 48*s*. A wicker chair nicely upholstered with cretonne costs 9*s*. When all these things have been purchased, about 30*s*. will remain for window curtains and bed-spread (for which plain pink Cassia cloth at 7¾*d*. the yard would be an excellent material) and for a few chimney-piece ornaments.

In the second bedroom, which is to be furnished for £15, I should incline to a striped wall-paper of two tints of turquoise blue, one stripe dull and one stripe glossy, with a frieze above of buff distemper, the woodwork to be painted buff. This is the nearest name I can think of to a shade

of yellow which shall be as much as possible the same as hazelwood, and I am suggesting it only because I am going to give the room a hazelwood suite. One with wardrobe, dressing-table, glass, washstand and two chairs can be bought for £6 10*s*., and a very good double bedstead (or two small ones) can be bought, with bedding complete, for three guineas, provided the frames are plain black with no brass ornamentation. This will not be of any moment, as I would make cases for the head and foot rails of prettily frilled cretonne in blue and white. The window curtains should be of cretonne in a French design of dainty stripes, the cost of material for these, as well as for the bed draperies, not to exceed £1. An art carpet in two tones of blue will come to 30*s*.; the fender, fireirons and coal vase to 15*s*., and a set of blue toilet ware 10*s*. This will leave a surplus of £1 12*s*., which might be expended on a small table, a wicker chair with cushions, a bookshelf and the materials for a bedspread, all of which will be useful adjuncts in a spare room. If there is a good cupboard in this room rendering a wardrobe unnecessary, a superior suite consisting only of dressing-chest with glass, washstand and two chairs can be substituted for the one previously suggested at the same price.

The bedroom for £10 must depend chiefly on its decorations for its effect. With these I would take especial pains, and, to begin with, the walls

should be distempered ivory white. To form a deep frieze I would use a paper which has trails of the most realistic looking ivy on a white ground; the price is 7*s*. the piece, but as this consists of twelve yards it will go a long way. From all the lower part of the frieze the white must be cut away, leaving only the leaves, and these trails should be irregular, cutting them short in places and pasting extra bits on in others. When attached to the wall the effect will be that of a painted frieze, especially if long trails come down each corner of the room. The woodwork must be painted the fresh green of young ivy. An iron bedstead (single) can be bought, with bedding, for £2, and the framework must be painted pale green. Curtains, to the sill only, of green cotton, will cost about 8*s*., if home made, a set of white toilet ware will be 7*s*., a white matting for the floor will cost £1, a fender and fireirons will be 10*s*., and then £5 15*s*. will remain for furniture. A small wardrobe, dressing-table, glass, washstand and chair in green stained wood can be bought for this sum.

Supposing that this room has to be used as a study, I would keep to the same scheme of decoration, but in place of the white matting on the floor I should like a green Abingdon cord carpet square for the same money, and instead of the short cotton curtains I would have long ones of cream Bolton sheeting, 8¾*d*. the yard, with a band

all round them of rich green linen plush. With a somewhat superior fender and fireirons there would be about £7 left for furniture, which could consist of a couple of stained green wicker chairs with green cushions, two highback chairs with rush seats, and green frames, and two ornamental chairs of green and white rush; two or three small green stained tables would also be wanted. For a really workmanlike study it would be better to dispense with the frivolity of pretty chairs and little tables, and to have a small bureau, price two guineas, a long table for £1, two armchairs for 25*s.* 6*d.*, two rush-seated chairs for 12*s.*, book-shelves fixed to the walls, and one lounge chair, all of which should be stained green.

The servants' bedroom for £4 hardly needs any comment. For £3 10*s.*, bed, bedding, furniture and toilet ware can be bought at almost any furniture shop, and I would spend the extra 10*s.* on a small square of Abingdon cord carpet, costing 6*s.*, and some pretty, light cretonne for a pair of window curtains just to the sill.

The hall and staircase must depend for the amount and quality of the furniture chiefly on the number of stairs, because I firmly believe in a good stair carpet being essential. It is not possible to get a good one of handsome design under 3*s.* the yard. Allowing for 15 yards at this price the cost would be £2 5*s.* There is another alternative which is charming in a house of the quaintly

artistic type, namely, to stain and polish the stairs dark oak, dispensing with carpet entirely. This idea is carried out in the illustration on page 26 of one of the typical small entrance halls which seem often to be absolutely hopeless of improvement. There is a corridor rug along the polished floor, and a small and narrow oak dowry chest with a home-made mirror above it. I call it "home-made," as it consists of a square of looking-glass in a flat deal frame, which is covered with copper sheeting, attached by copper nails. The scheme of decoration I would suggest for this hall and staircase is that the walls are coloured brick red and all the woodwork painted white, with the exception of the stairs themselves and the hall floor, which should be stained dark oak. A carved wooden bed-post, supporting a flower-bowl, makes a most excellent "newel."

Across the end of the front part of the hall a shelf for pottery has been fixed, just below which a narrow pole supports a pair of tapestry curtains. There is another shelf for pottery above the door of the front sitting-room, and with a china jar for umbrellas and sticks the hall furniture (with a door mat) is complete. Hats and rugs can be put into the oak chest, but if it is imperative to have some place on which to hang coats, etc., I would improvise an array of pegs screwed into the kitchen door (to be seen at the far end of the passage). These could be hidden by a curtain,

A Narrow Entrance Hall.

suspended from a fairly broad shelf at the top. There is an extremely effective printed canvas with various designs, such as fearsome blue dragons on a string-coloured ground which would do excellently for this curtain, as it would certainly be striking though not too dark.

Perhaps, as these small halls are most knotty problems to the amateur decorator, it will be as well to suggest another scheme which is perfectly simple and may be carried out by the veriest novice. Presuming that the hall is the same awkward shape as the one I have already described, I would petition the landlord (or save up my pennies wherewith to do it myself) to put up a 5 ft. dado all round the hall, or, at any rate, round the front part of it, with a ledge along the top. All this should be enamelled ivory white, and above it I would have a yellow and white wall paper. Like the hall, the entire staircase should be white, but I would keep all the doors to stained mahogany, though the surrounding frames were white. I would indulge in a good stair-carpet in two tones of blue and cover the floor of the hall with a tile linoleum of very light colours. With door mats, slip mats and carpet about £4 would have been spent. No table would be required, as the ledge surmounting the dado would hold salver, brushes, and all such small things, but there could be a quaintly carved hat-rack with mirror to hang against the wall, a china umbrella pipe

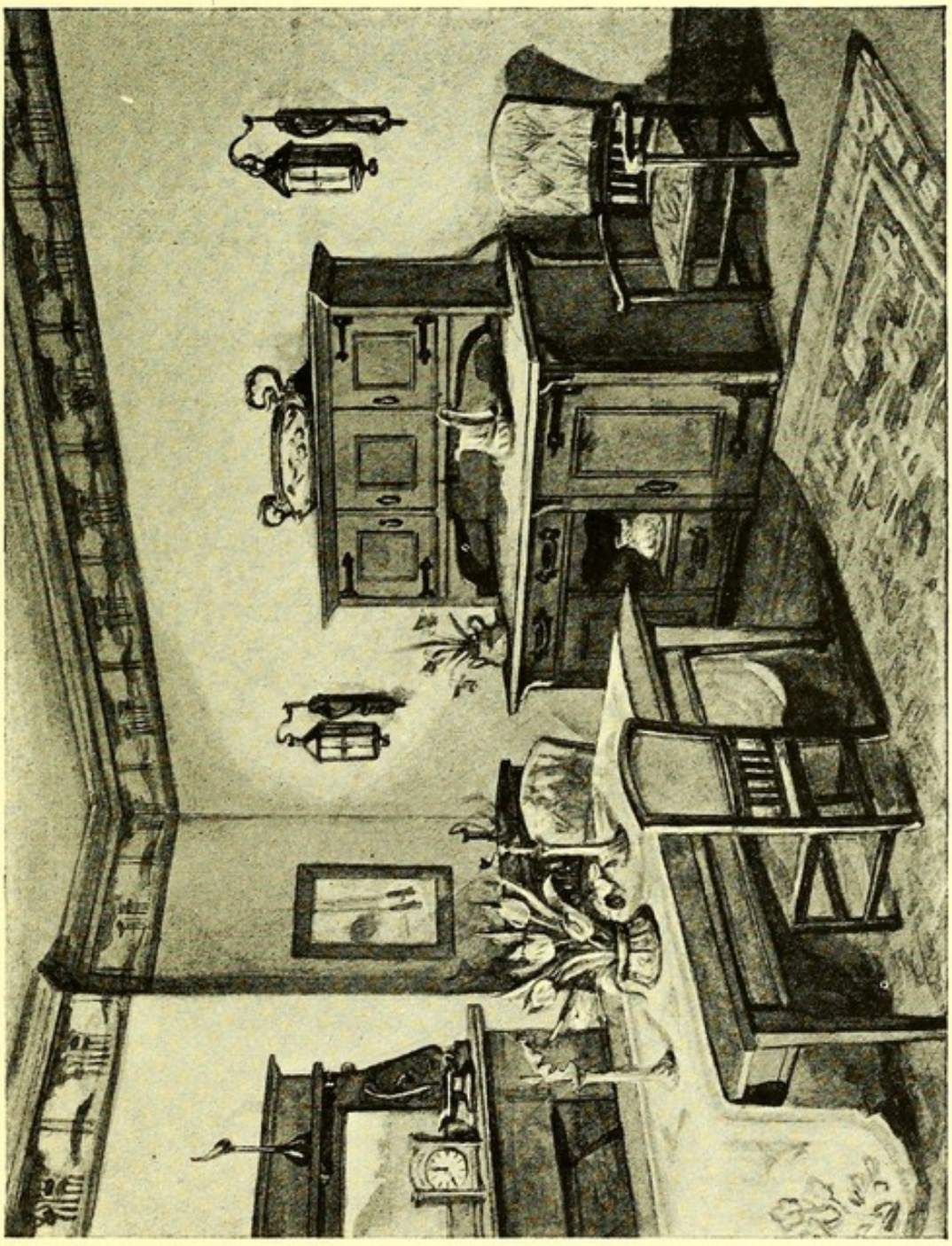
and a jardinière for a big palm, and yet the £7 would not be exceeded.

In a good many houses a bathroom is large enough for a man to use as a dressing room, and in this case I should invest in a small chest of drawers painted sea green, a cane-seated chair, a towel rail to fix to the wall, and a small mirror to be hung near the window in a good light, all of which could be bought for about 30*s*.; the remaining 10*s*. would provide cork linoleum in a very light design for the floor. A white tile paper should form a 5 ft. dado, and above this the walls should be distempered pale sea green, the same colour in enamel being used for the woodwork. The bath should be sea green inside and white outside.

The subject of decorating the kitchen will be expounded in another chapter. With reference to the expenditure of the £7 I can only say that £2 will provide a table, two chairs, a square of linoleum, fender, fireirons and coal box, and that £5 will buy a fair amount of cooking and cleaning utensils and of kitchen ware.

Before quitting the discussion on furnishing a house for £110, I must say something about the houses with underground kitchens. To me they are anathema maranatha, but as long as they continue to be inhabited I suppose we must try to make the best of them. At all events, the sitting-room which is over the kitchen should be used as a

dining-room, as this suggests the possibility of a lift being constructed.



A Lift-Sideboard.

The ordinary exterior of the lift is anything but sightly, presenting, for the most part, the appearance of a lanky cupboard with no reason for its

existence. Sometimes there happens to be a dwarf cupboard in both the fireplace recesses, when one of these can be utilized for lift purposes. On page 20 will be found what seems to be a very charming dining-room with the usual sideboard, but closer inspection reveals the fact that the cupboard on the right hand side comes right down to the ground, and herein abides the mechanism of the lift. An ordinary sideboard can be used, with the addition along the front and side of one cupboard of a cleverly added band of wood, or one of those inexpensive sideboards (more like the old chiffoniers) which stand on the floor without the intervention of any legs might easily be adapted. If the lift sideboard is to be made by the local carpenter, it had better take the form of a large dinner wagon, with a cupboard from the third shelf to the ground, as this would be quite simple to make and come to much less money.

CHAPTER III

How to Furnish a Country Cottage for £85

A COTTAGE in the country is the ideal residence for those who can pitch their tent just wherever they choose and who want to live as inexpensively as possible. Some people say that one can live on less in London than anywhere else, but after a great deal of consideration, and from the results of statistics gleaned from the account books of many of my friends, I have come to the conclusion that this is an absolute fallacy. In the first place rents are far higher in the Metropolis than in a country village, secondly one is obliged to spend a great deal more on dress, and thirdly, there is the frequent temptation of taking a cab and of going to some place of amusement. In the country one's pleasures are simple, and consist, for the most part, of social gatherings, the bulk of provisions are no dearer, and garden and farm produce very considerably cheaper ; the cost of furnishing and of keeping up a house is certainly less, if we only take, as an example, the time that muslin curtains and cretonne covers remain clean, whereas, in town, their visits to the laundry are frequent and destructive.

One of the charms of a country house is the opportunity it affords of extending hospitality to one's friends, and who amongst the dwellers in town is not delighted at having an invitation to spend a week or so far from the madding crowd. I know one lady who tells me she lives very nearly rent free. She has a delightful old-fashioned cottage in Kent, with a large and productive garden. She pays what appears to us town folk the absurdly small rent of £30 a year for it, and for two months in the summer she has no difficulty in letting it for 4 guineas a week; during this time she pays a round of visits to friends who have been her guests during the year.

The type of cottage with which I am dealing contains two sitting-rooms and four bedrooms. The cost of building a cottage of this size would be about £400, according to a book on house building which I have lately been studying, therefore with something considerably under £1,000 capital it is quite possible to buy a piece of land, build a cottage, furnish it completely and lay out and stock the garden. Nowadays people seldom get more than four per cent. for their money, consequently this home, which would be a permanent possession, can be reckoned to cost something less than £40 a year. I prefer an old house to a new one, however, especially as far as the garden is concerned.

The cottage I have in my mind's eye consists of

one story only. There is a small porch at the entrance, and the front door opens into a hall-sitting-room, out of which one door leads to the dining-room, and another to a small staircase, which terminates in a long landing on to which the four bedrooms open. The advantage of this plan is that the hall makes a large sitting-room and is far more artistic than the usual narrow passage entrance with an ordinary drawing-room in front and dining-room behind; the kitchen is, of course, beyond the dining-room. The furniture, to be in keeping with the cottage, should be as simple as possible; the £85 I should apportion as follows :—

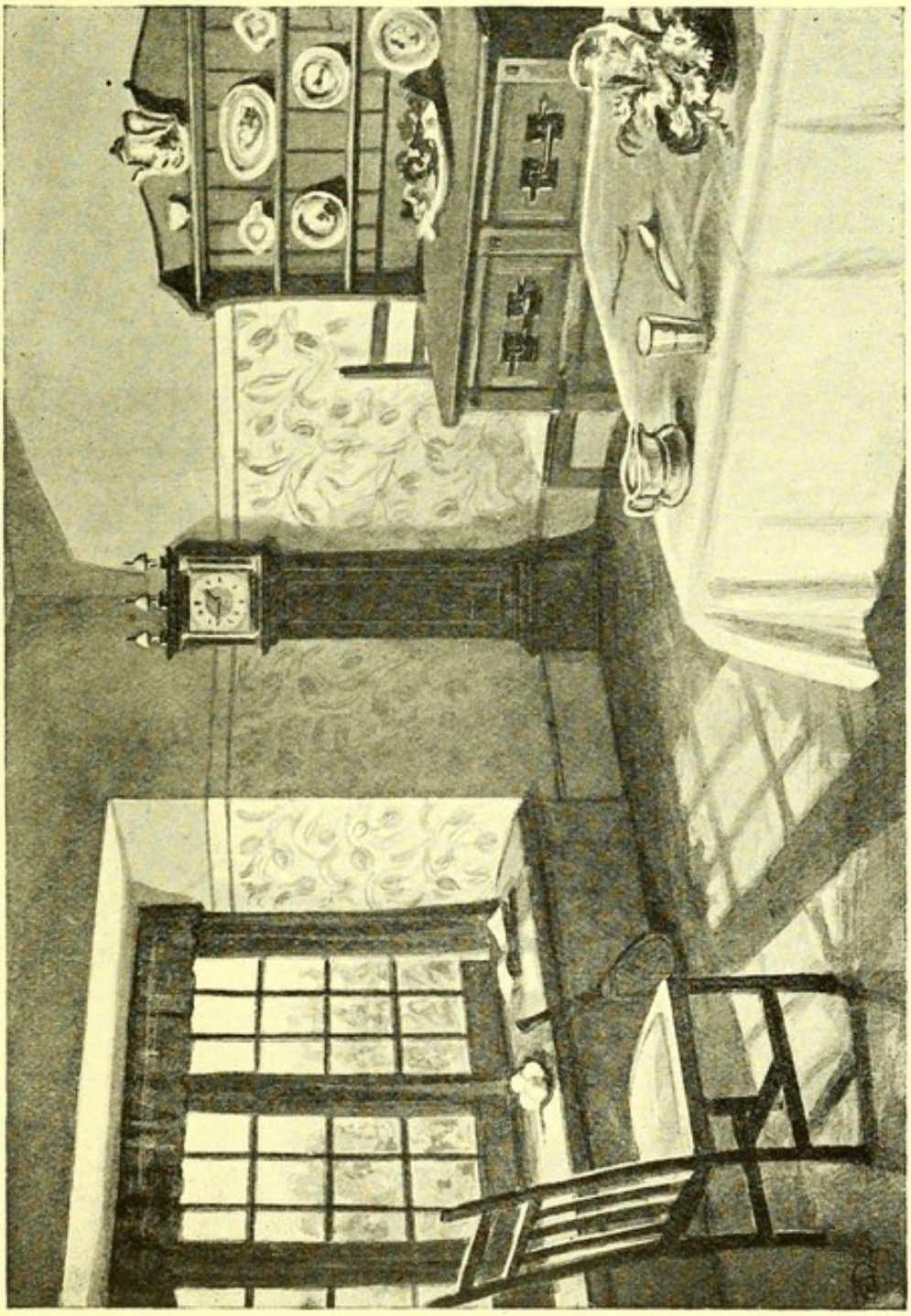
	£	s.	d.
Hall-Sitting-room . .	14	0	0
Dining-room . . .	18	0	0
Best bedroom . . .	17	0	0
Second bedroom . .	13	0	0
Third bedroom . .	10	0	0
Servants' room . .	4	0	0
Staircase . . .	3	0	0
Kitchen	6	0	0
	£85	0	0

The walls of the hall-sitting-room shall be coloured pink—such a faint tint that it is hardly removed from a warm cream—and all the woodwork, including the floor, must be stained dark oak. These light-toned walls form an admirable back-

ground for old prints in narrow black frames. The hall mat of cocoanut fibre and the China "pipe" for umbrellas and sticks must be relegated to the porch, and these can be bought for 10*s*. As anything like a hanging stand for coats and hats would be unsightly in the sitting-room, I would invest in a "wardrobe stand" in white wood (to be stained dark oak), price 10*s*. 3*d*., which has six strong hooks at the back and a curtain rail across the top. The curtain should be of heavy tapestry in tones of blues and browns, and the cost of the whole will not exceed £1. Four stuff-over easy chairs upholstered in tapestry can be purchased for 4 guineas, and two rush-seated ones with high backs and arms will be a guinea. In the middle of the room there should be a round table, which can be bought for 45*s*., and a small occasional one in white wood stained oak will cost 5*s*. The only other piece of furniture required will be a small oak bureau-bookcase, which I have seen at J. J. Allen's in Sussex Place, South Kensington, for £2 2*s*. As the floor is stained all over, only a couple of Axminster rugs, one to go in front of the fireplace and one under the centre table, at 9*s*. each, will be wanted. Casement curtains of cream Cassia cloth will cost about 8*s*. for a dozen yards, and this will leave 17*s*. for a plain fender, fireirons, and log basket, the ideal fuel in such a room being wood.

Although the dining-room is to be furnished

for £18, there is no reason why, though perfectly simple in its equipment, it should not be an ex-



A Cottage Dining-room.

ample of unpretentious taste. The sketch on this page shows the room at its best on a summer's

day, with the sun streaming in at the casement window, but it would be just as cheery when the snow lies thick on the ground, provided there is a blazing fire on the hearth. To begin with the scheme of decoration : the lower part of the walls should be covered with a paper which has a design of tulips on a cream ground, the colours of the flowers being faint reds and blues ; the deep frieze above should be of plain cream colour, and all the woodwork can be stained brown oak. The floor should also be stained and polished, the centre being covered by a square of copper-red Abingdon cord carpet, as supplied by the Abingdon Carpet Co. (101, Thames Wharf, Abingdon), for 15*s*. In front of the fireplace I would lay a "Reviredis" rug, price 10*s*., which is made in thick worsted pile by the same firm, to match in colour any of their plain carpets. The casement windows will want no blinds if they are fitted with short curtains and a valance as illustrated. There can be no difficulty in making these at home, as the valance across the top just conceals the thin rod from which the curtains are suspended by rings. A casement flax in a soft tone of red, which costs 1*s*. 3*d*. the yard, thirty-six inches wide, is an admirable fabric for wear, and as each curtain will not require to be more than two yards long, twelve yards will make the four curtains, the valance and a cover for the cushion of the broad window seat, at a cost of 15*s*. I should dearly

like a home-made kerb and log box of oak and copper, as described in the chapter on "Odds and Ends," which, with a set of irons, would come to something under £1, but where the tenants or owners of the cottage have neither time nor inclination for such work the best substitute will be a kerb, dogs, irons and gipsy coal cauldron in black, which can be obtained for £1 2*s*. 6*d*.

The chief piece of furniture in the room is the dresser which does duty as a sideboard. This in plain wood stained oak can be bought for £4, with the lower part enclosed to make two cupboards, but in my estimate I have allowed an extra £1 for the heavy handles, which will transform its commonplace appearance entirely. A dining-table, stained oak, will cost £2 15*s*. Six small chairs, with oak frames and rush seats, will be £3 3*s*., and two armchairs to match, will be £1 17*s*. The whole expenditure has now amounted to £12 17*s*. 6*d*. With the remaining 2 guineas I should try to pick up an old grandfather's clock; this is not as impossible as it sounds, according to my own experience, for I am the happy possessor of three, for neither of which did I give so much.

Naming the bedrooms after the flowers which form the theme of the various wall papers is a far prettier idea than numbering them, which savours strongly of a hotel, therefore I will call them the Pansy room, the Poppy room, and the May-blossom room. In all these I would have, as in

the dining-room, a frieze of plain ivory-white, with woodwork painted to match. A square of Abingdon cord carpet, in a soft tone of green, will be a suitable and inexpensive floor covering for all three rooms, the surround of boards being stained and varnished.

In the Pansy room, to be furnished for £17, the wall paper I am so fond of has a straggling design of mauve and purple pansies, held together with knots of pale blue ribbons. A suite, called the "Otway," in fumed oak, is sold by Maple & Co., for £9 15*s*., a substantial bedstead, with bedding complete, in a 4 ft. 6 ins. size, will be £3 3*s*., a pretty set of toilet ware can be bought for 10*s*., a fender and fireirons for 6*s*., a large square of carpet for £1, and 10*s*. will buy sufficient pale green Cassia cloth to make casement curtains and bedspread. To embellish the latter some pansies can be worked on the corners in mauve flax threads, or, if the lady of the house is given to stitchery, both curtains and bedspread can be of cream Cassia cloth, upon which is wrought a "powdering" of these flowers.

£1 16*s*. still remains out of the estimated sum which can be expended in a sofa ottoman covered with cretonne, price 29*s*. 6*d*., and a small stained oak table.

The Mayblossom room can be treated in the same way as the Pansy room, but the Mayblossom paper should be surmounted by a pale pink dis-

tempered frieze: the curtains and bedspread should in this case be pink, and, as a smaller square of carpet will be sufficient here, these three items will not exceed 25*s.*; the fender, fireirons and toilet ware will come to 12*s.*, and two small bedsteads, with bedding, or one large one, will be £3 3*s.* This amounts altogether to £5, so a suite in hazelwood for £6 16*s.* 6*d.* (from Maple & Co.) can well be afforded, leaving a surplus for a wicker chair with cretonne cushions, and a small table.

The Poppy room will be the smallest one, and used for a single guest. The frieze here should be white and the curtains pale green. If a small, white enamelled suite, for £5, is put into this room, it will leave sufficient for a wicker chair and table in addition to bedstead, carpet, curtains, and toilet ware.

The cost of the complete furniture, bedding and toilet ware for a servants' room comes to £3 10*s.*, but I should spend another 10*s.* on a square of cottage carpet, price 5*s.*, and some reversible cretonne for window curtains.

As the hall has been disposed of already, there is only the staircase to be considered, and £3 will be found ample for carpet of Abingdon cord on stairs and landing, for brass stair rods and for slip mats to place outside the doors.

The kitchen should have a blue and white tile paper, and brown oak paint. The furniture, as far as chairs, table, fender and linoleum are con-

cerned, will cost about £2, the remaining £4 being spent on cooking and cleaning utensils. As there is no bathroom in the cottage, a sponge bath should be provided for each room. The absence of a proper bathroom is, in my opinion, the only drawback to the cottage, but a very fair makeshift can be contrived if the bath in each bedroom is partially filled with cold water over night and a canful of absolutely boiling water added in the morning.

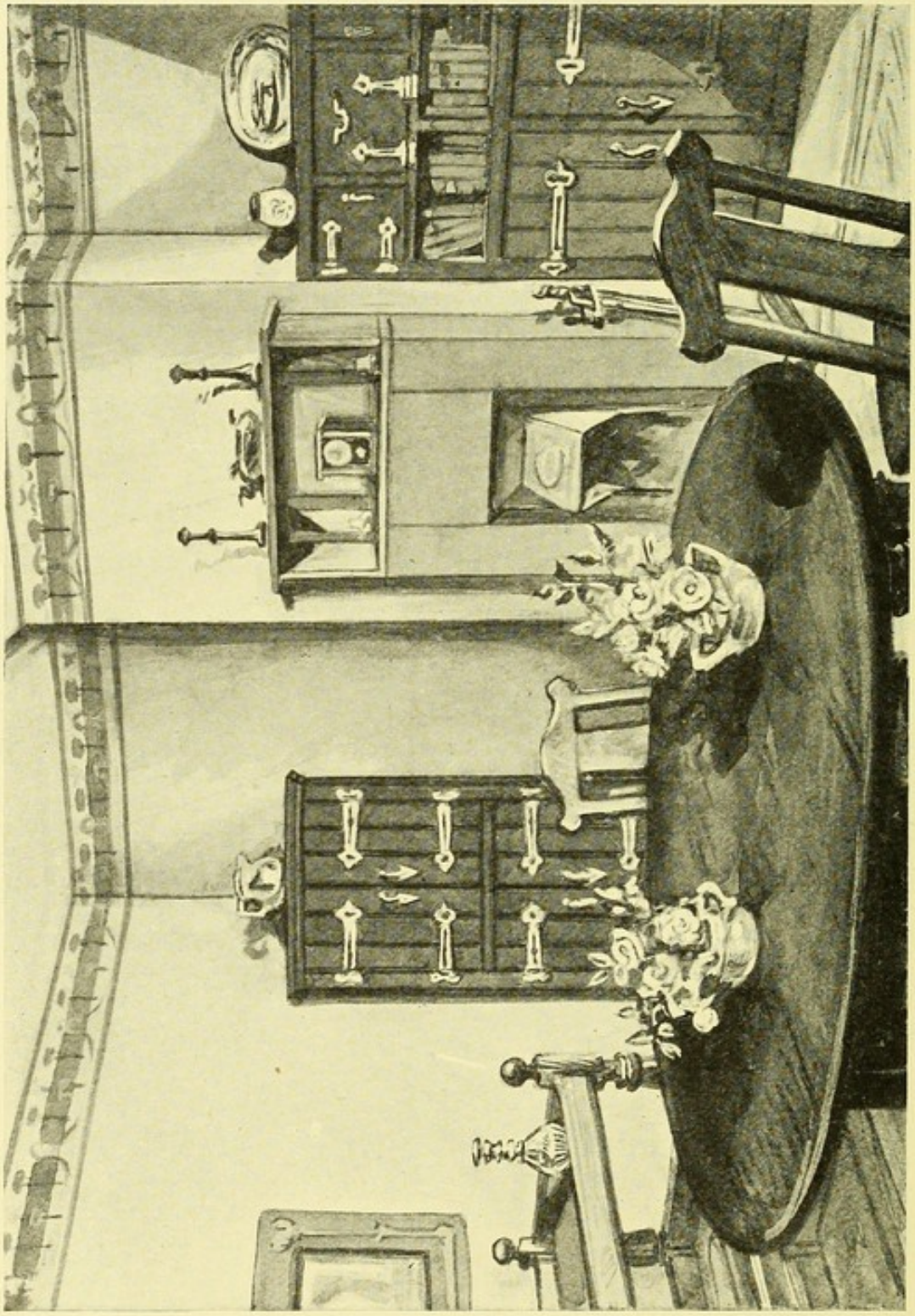
CHAPTER IV

How to Furnish a Flat or Bungalow for £60

Of course, the residence which has to be furnished for this sum must of necessity be a small one. The flat of which I am thinking contains two sitting-rooms, one large bedroom, a tiny one for a maid, kitchen, hall, and bathroom. It can be furnished quite comfortably for £60, or, in fact, for less, judging by the experience related to me by a house agent who has the letting of many flats, and who assured me that the typical "flat furniture" was well known, seeming to consist chiefly, in his opinion, of draped egg boxes, deal tables and basket chairs, with a profusion of coloured muslin curtains.

I propose to furnish my flat in this way :—

	£	s.	d.
Dining-room	20	0	0
Drawing-room	11	0	0
Bedroom	17	0	0
Servants' room	3	0	0
Hall	3	0	0
Kitchen	5	0	0
Bathroom	1	0	0
	£60	0	0



Dining-room with Fitment Cupboards.

If it is a bungalow instead of a flat there will be no bathroom, in which case the £1 allowed for that can be added to the sum to be spent on the drawing-room, which is certainly small.

In a flat the great object is to have as many cupboards as possible; without these it is absolutely impossible to get one's belongings stowed away in order and comfort. Besides the ordinary kitchen cupboards, one of which must be made into a larder and another into a store cupboard, it is necessary to have a place in which to put the house linen, and, if possible, another cupboard for spare china and glass. For this reason the illustration of the flat dining-room on page 42 shows two simple fitments in place of the ordinary sideboard. I will suppose that there is a dwarf cupboard fitted into one of the fireplace's recesses, as this could be augmented by two shelves above, with doors in the front, to form a long narrow cupboard, which would make an excellent receptacle for spare china and glass, the large cupboard below being used as a linen press. In the other recess a three-cornered cupboard is fitted to the angle of the wall; as only the triangular shelves and the doors are required, this ought not to be costly if made of deal, considering that a similar but smaller cupboard can be bought in white wood for 7s. As two of these, one screwed on to the top of the other, would be wanted, the price being 14s., therefore I calculate that £2

would pay a carpenter for making both the corner fitment and the one above the dwarf cupboard. I will allow another £2 for the oak staining and for the apparently elaborate hinges of copper, but for a much less sum these could be made at home if they were cut out of sheet copper and nailed on with large studs. Failing this, they could be obtained cheaply and quickly from the Labourers' Art Metal Works, if a paper pattern were sent to the hon. secretary, 20, Carlton Crescent, Southampton, and it would be encouraging a most praiseworthy industry at the same time.

Having devoted £4 to the fitments, I would spend £2 10*s.* on a fumed oak dinner waggon, £2 12*s.* 6*d.* on a dining table with the corners rounded off (this is so much more convenient than a square one in a small room), 2 guineas on four rush-seated chairs, £1 17*s.* on two arm-chairs to match, £1 10*s.* on black and copper fender, fireirons, and coal cauldron, and £2 12*s.* 6*d.* on a Grecian carpet which has a self coloured centre with a border in two shades of the same.

But now I must consider the matter of colouring. The frieze represents a stiff, old-world garden with hedge and quaint birds cut out of yew, and the tops of an extraordinary number of windmills beyond. This is carried out in shades of subdued blue, green, buff and mauve, therefore a plain filling of dove-grey is most

effective below it, besides possessing the advantage of being decidedly uncommon. With this the carpet should be in tones of snuff-brown and gold, and the window curtains, to the sill only, of orange Corona velvet. This is 4*s.* 11*d.* the yard, and four yards will be required, therefore with inner curtains of ivory Madras muslin the cost of draping the windows will amount to 30*s.* £18 14*s.* will now have been spent, and so the remaining 26*s.* can be invested in a comfortable chair.

For those who prefer something different to fumed oak, I would suggest that the furniture should be of dark mahogany, and that the fitments, stained to match, should be ornamented with panels of marquetry work, as described further on in the chapter on "Home Employments." In this case the wall-paper should be a striped one of turquoise blue, with a frieze to match.

As the amount to be laid out on the drawing-room is only £11, the scheme must be an extremely simple one. On the walls I would have a rose-pink and white paper of stripes and medallions, with a plain ivory white frieze above, and ivory white paint for all the woodwork. On the floor there could be a small square of crimson Abingdon cord carpet, which will cost 15*s.*, and in front of the fireplace a white sheepskin rug, price 12*s.* 6*d.* A black and brass kerb fender,

with fireirons to match, and small coal cauldron, can be purchased for £1. The window curtains, which need only reach the sill, need not be more than two yards in length, and as there are many pretty jute tapestries in rose-red for 2*s.* the yard, a pair of this material, with an inner pair of Madras muslin, will not exceed 12*s.* On these necessities £2 19*s.* 6*d.* will have been spent, leaving £8 0*s.* 6*d.* for furniture.

Three easy chairs covered with tapestry can be bought for a guinea each, and three small occasional chairs for 10*s.* each. A shaped box ottoman covered in cretonne will look well in one of the fireplace recesses, and can be bought for 19*s.* 6*d.* For those who prefer a suite (though I must say that I am not amongst them) there are several to be had for about 5 guineas. These comprise a settee, two armchairs, and four small occasional chairs, the frames being of mahogany and the seats covered with silk tapestry. I should spend 30*s.* on two tables, one of octagon shape, for £1, and a small, square one for 10*s.*; these should be of mahogany. Eighteen shillings now remain to be invested in jardinières. A giant flower tube of bamboo, which will make a pretty feature in one of the corners, will cost 4*s.* 6*d.*, and there will be sufficient to buy a pedestal of stained wood also, with a china bowl on the top.

The bedroom for £17 can be carried out in a

scheme of blue. The walls should be coloured pale electric blue, and the woodwork painted cream. The bedstead and bedding can be reckoned at £5; an Abingdon cord carpet in blue will be 15*s*.; fender and fireirons, 6*s*; a set of blue and white toilet ware, 7*s*.; and sufficient blue and white reversible cretonne for window curtains and bedspread will come to 12*s*., the whole expenditure, so far, amounting to £7.

It must be borne in mind that the flat or bungalow only contains one bedroom besides the servant's room, therefore ample accommodation must be provided in it for one's clothes. For this reason I should advise a suite in ash called the "Weymouth," sold by Maple & Co. for £8 17*s* 6*d*., which comprises a chest of drawers as well as a wardrobe, and that accommodation for hanging dresses and coats should be further augmented by one of the white wood wardrobe stands (to be stained oak), which, with a cretonne curtain in front, will cost about 15*s*. There will still be a few shillings over for a kitchen chair, if space can be found for it.

In the small servant's apartment to be furnished for £3, there will only be room for a single bedstead, a chest of drawers with toilet glass on the top, a washstand and a chair. The money will also provide a set of toilet ware and a strip of carpet for the bedside.

If it is a bungalow which has to be furnished

instead of a flat, the £1 allowed for equipping the bathroom (which will not exist) can be spent on this bedroom, if, as is often the case, no servant sleeps in the house, the work being done by a woman who comes in every day. In this case I should put a pretty apple green paper on the walls, enamel the furniture white, lay down a small square of moss-green carpet, which will cost about 9*s*., and invest in some green and white reversible cretonne for curtains and bedspread.

The principal requirements of the hall will be linoleum and mats, which can all be bought for £1 10*s*. An umbrella jar will be 10*s*., and a small carved oak table 17*s*. 6*d*., leaving 2*s*. 6*d*. for the inevitable (and supremely ugly) hat and coat pegs.

A bathroom should always have a light tiled paper which is varnished, as splashes on the wall are almost inevitable. About six yards of a light linoleum in tile design will cost 8*s*., a lavatory-glass with shelf and towel rail beneath is 8*s*. 6*d*., and a cane-seated chair 3*s*. 6*d*.

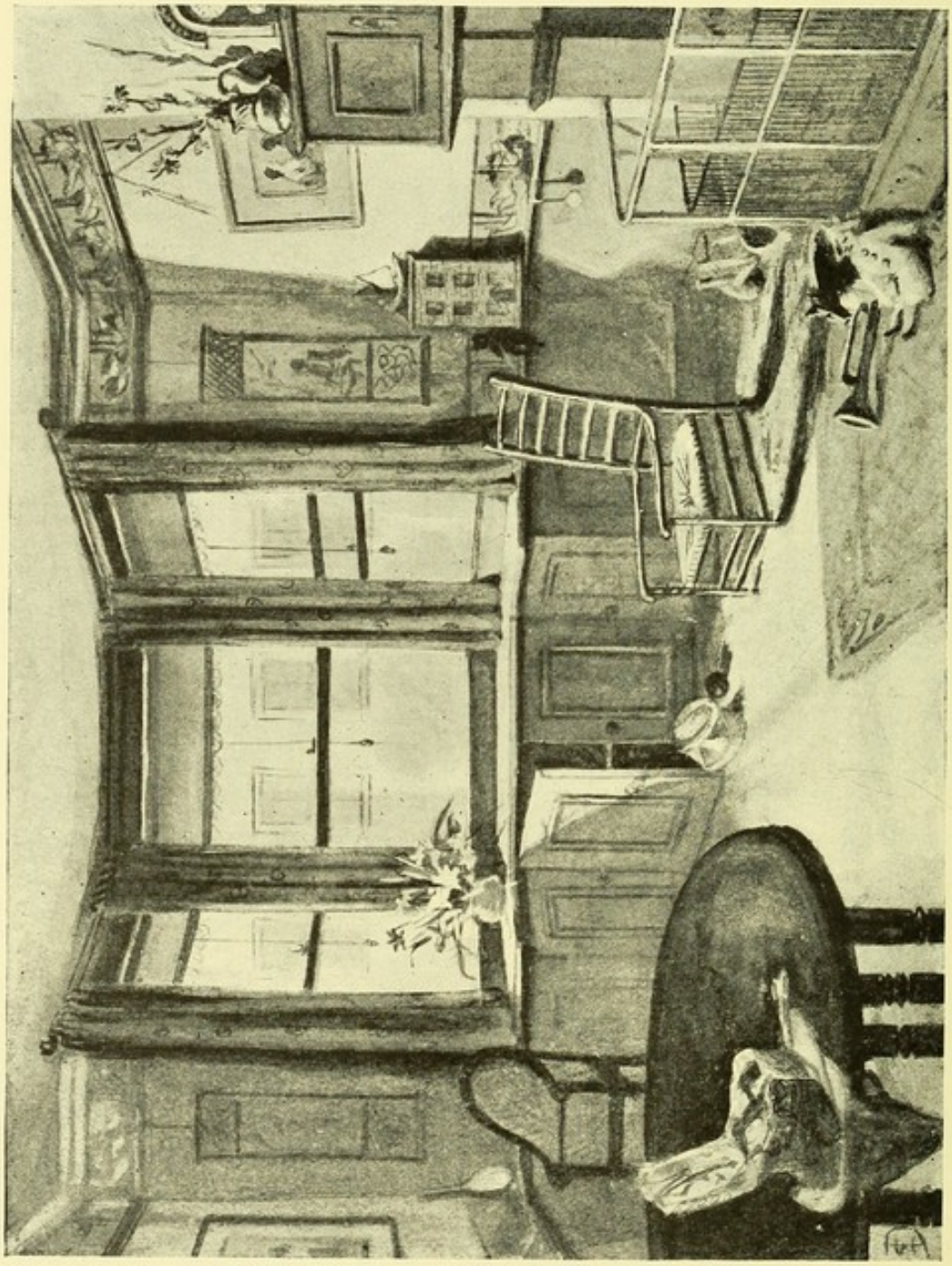
This, with £5 to be spent on the kitchen, completes the description of how to furnish for £60. Although the estimate is so low, there will be a sufficiency of things for one's comfort, and cheap tawdryness has been avoided.

CHAPTER V

The Nursery

It is certainly a matter for congratulation that we have so greatly reformed our ideas as to what a nursery ought to be. Not so very many years ago this was the place in which all the decrepit furniture of the house found its last resting place, and if there were a more or less ricketty table, half a dozen shabby chairs, a cupboard and a toy box, the happy mother thought she had fitted up her nursery quite nicely. These were the times when a grey wall-paper with an irritating pattern of red roses or brown fern leaves was considered quite sufficiently artistic; with such a wall covering the woodwork would be painted a brownish drab. We improved in our furnishing, and broke out into a sort of craze for "Nursery Rhymes" wall papers. These obtained until quite recently, and I have often thought how utterly sick the children must have got of Little Boy Blue, Little Miss Muffett, and other denisons of Nursery Rhymia.

The equipment and decoration of the nursery need not by any means be expensive, but, above



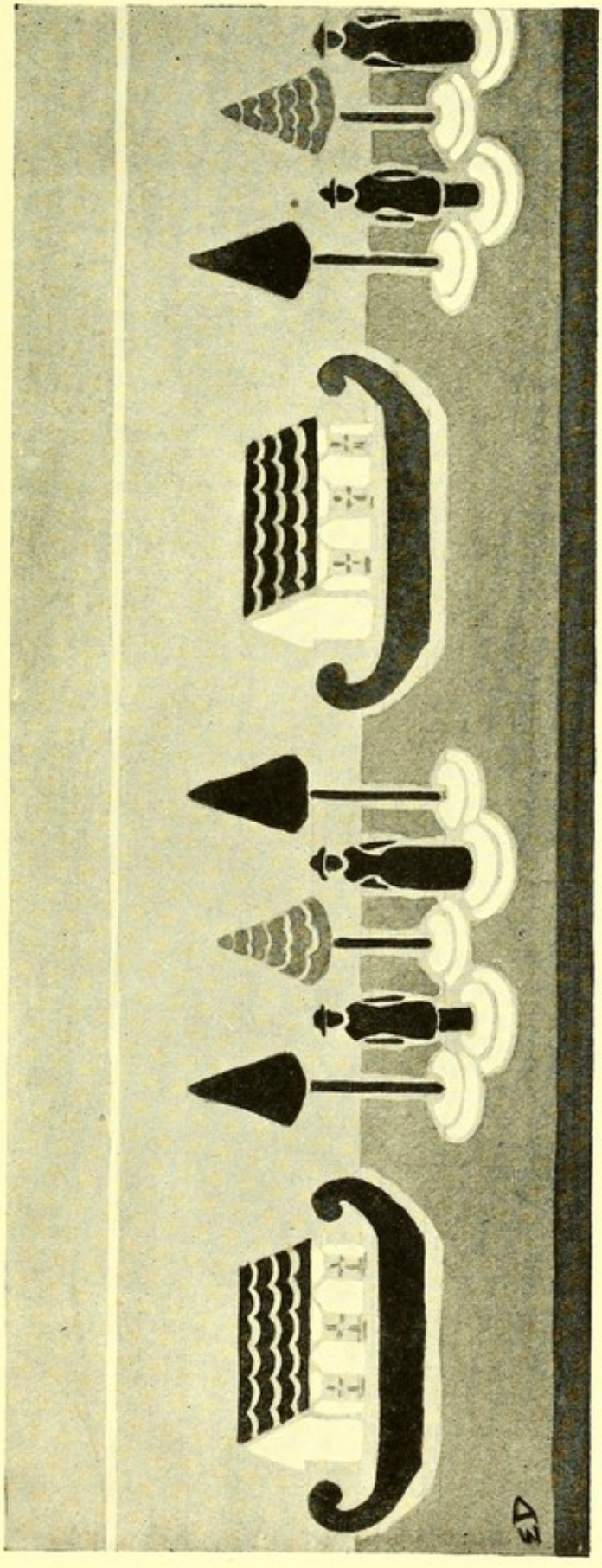
The Nursery.

all things, they should be cleanly and convenient. I do not believe in much furniture ; in fact, the less the better, as there will be more space in

which the little ones can play and—which is most necessary—more air. A light, sunny room, facing south or west, should be chosen for the day nursery; the aspect of the night nursery is not so important. The walls should be pale blue, either a plain paper or Aspinall's Wapicti distemper, which can always be wiped over with a damp cloth. The woodwork should be of ivory white enamel, as this also is washable. Also round the room, at a height of 2 feet 6 inches from the floor, I would have a wooden shelf, as this will be a lovely promenade for Noah's ark animals and a resting-place for both dolls and their houses. Just above the shelf let there be a picture border. In the illustration of a nursery on page 50, the Goose Girl frieze, 9*d*. the yard (sold by Knowles, King's Road, Chelsea), is used, and is repeated again at the top of the wall. For those who can afford something rather more costly, there is the Farm Yard frieze, by Cecil Aldin, where the most lovely fowls, and, I think, a pig or two, pursue each other round the room (this is to be obtained from Liberty, Regent Street). As the window is a bay, it makes an excellent place for a fitment toy cupboard, and the other cupboard (a bit of which can just be descried above the mantelshelf) will make a convenient abode for the nursery crockery, such as cups and saucers, bowls and spoons, and so forth. A cork carpet in two tones of blue will

form the best floor covering, with a rug in front of the high fender. A round table (the corners of a square one give such awkward knocks to little heads), a low chair, a high chair, and a couple of other chairs, will complete the necessary furniture. If the children are no longer tinies, and are promoted to the dignity of being called "little boys and girls," they may like to make their own frieze (the one above the shelf, I mean) by stencilling the Noah's ark design on page 53. How stencilling is done is clearly described in the chapter on "Home Employments," and it is certainly quite an easy accomplishment. I am afraid the ark hardly seems commodious enough for Mr. and Mrs. Noah and all the animals, but one cannot expect everything to be easy in this world, and I daresay they would pack in with a little shaking.

The night nursery should have a washable paper on the walls, presumably of a pale salmon-pink colour, with oak-brown paint. Pretty pictures should be hung around, which will comfort the mind of the child who happens to awaken when his nurse is away. I shall never forget being introduced to what was considered a model nursery, wherein all the furniture, including the cot and the nurse's bedstead, was of black oak, and where, against dark greyish-blue walls, there were pictures of austere angels carrying dead children in their arms.



Noah's Ark Frieze.

But the picture of the nursery is not complete without the nurse; and what an important person she is! I think parents ought to make any sacrifice to enable them to employ a thoroughly competent and experienced nurse for their little ones; and yet so many will engage what they call "a nice girl" at about £16 a year or less. A good nurse saves the extra amount in wages by her ability to make the children's clothes, and by her knowledge of the small ailments of the young, whereby she can often avoid a doctor's bill. And then, she will teach them nice manners and a proper mode of speaking, both of which may be lacking with the cheaper servant, be she never so willing and conscientious.

A great many ladies insist upon their nurses wearing white. It is beautifully clean and fresh looking when just back from the laundry, but how long will it remain so in London? I am in favour of silver grey or dark blue. With the former the morning gowns can be of linen and the afternoon ones of alpaca. With this a thick jacket of light grey cloth can be worn in the winter and a small grey bonnet. Blue is still more serviceable, as excellent gowns can be made of blue cotton with a small white spot upon it. The afternoon dress may be either of alpaca or serge.

The nursery cupboard, to which I have before alluded, should contain all the ware for breakfast

and tea, as it is far better for the nurse to have her own crockery than to be dependent on a supply from the kitchen, to say nothing of the extra weight on the tray which has to be carried upstairs.

Without going into a long dissertation on nursery routine, I may say as a broad rule that the two most important points in a nurse's character are, first, that she should be scrupulously clean, and, secondly, that she should have an even temper. The merits of being a good needlewoman and of being able to keep the little ones happy and amused are essential but secondary.

Where the children have passed beyond the infantile stage, she should rise betimes and have her day nursery swept and garnished and the fire alight before she begins the work of dressing and washing the children. Then breakfast must be prepared, and after it has been cleared away the little folk can play with their toys whilst the night nursery is being cleaned. Then comes the hour for the morning walk, after which—at 12 o'clock—the very little ones should go to bed for an hour, during which time the nurse can do some needlework. After nursery dinner there can be an hour for play, and then comes the afternoon walk, followed by tea, and later on by bedtime, but it is quite impossible for a nurse to keep in good temper if she is always with the

children. They should come downstairs for an hour before being got ready for bed, and this hour should be nurse's own. If possible, the mother should spend some time in the nursery, either whilst the night nursery is being cleaned or immediately after her luncheon. It is very unwise to allow children to have some one to sit in the room with them whilst they go to sleep. If this bad practice is once begun it is most difficult to stop, and it becomes a terrible tie. So much is the result of habit! and another bad one is to insist upon silence in the house when a child has gone to bed. How many times have I heard a young mother exclaim, "Oh, *please* don't make a noise, because baby is asleep!" The child who is accustomed to silence wakes and cries at a noise, but the child who is accustomed to noise sleeps through it. I know a lady who makes a point of playing the piano when the children go to bed, "because," she says, "then, if I give a musical party, it doesn't disturb them!"

CHAPTER VI

The Kitchen and the Pantry

THE kitchen is undoubtedly one of the most important parts in the house. A slovenly, untidy kitchen is a perpetual rebuke to both mistress and maid, whereas a bright and spotless one is a picture of home comfort. Landlords are apt to think that any odds and ends of wall paper and remnants of paint will be good enough for this apartment, but here tenants should make a firm stand. As lady-servants are now coming to the front, it is probable that more attention will be paid to the decoration of domestic offices.

A white kitchen always commends itself to me, and if the decorations are carried out in a proper manner there is no more difficulty in keeping this clean than where the paper is red and cream, and the paint mountain blue. I have seen the latter with my own eyes and groaned over it A white paper of "brick" design, very highly glazed, is undoubtedly the best, the outlines of the "bricks" being defined by grey lines. If all the woodwork is painted with Aspinall's "O" ivory enamel, there

will be no difficulty in keeping it clean, as a wet cloth will remove all marks from this just as it does from the varnished wall paper. The floor should be covered with linoleum, in a diamond pattern of black and white, and I need hardly say that the dresser and table should be of plain wood, kept white by frequent scrubbings with fuller's earth. Well-polished Windsor chairs are certainly better than any others for kitchen use, and those with arms and high backs are really very comfortable.

One cannot be too particular about the grate and the fender. Most grates have steel rims and a steel rack for hot plates and dishes, and these parts of the range, as well as the fender and fire-irons, should be kept scrupulously bright. There should be a warm rug to lay in front of the fireplace, when work is over, also a cheery coloured table cover to hide the bareness of the table and so far transform the room into one of the ideal kitchens so often thought of and written about, but by no means so often seen.

The kitchens in small flats must be a great trial to the tidy housewife who owns the domain. In the first place there is no scullery, for which reason all the washing-up and the cleaning of pots and pans must be done in the kitchen itself. Moreover, the coal cupboard, pantry cupboard, broom cupboard and larder are all located there, and I have a vivid recollection of one expensive flat (I

think the rent was £250) in which the dust-bin of galvanized zinc was also to be found in one corner. Even under these circumstances and in the midst of London smoke and fog, I still advocate white paper and paint : it seems to be the only chance of an appearance of light and cleanliness.

The scullery, which is attached to the kitchen in most houses, should have white-washed walls and white or stone coloured paint. I advocate white rather than colour-wash for the simple reason that a fresh coat can be applied by any handy man, or even by the cook herself, when it is required. I know one cook—she was of the old-fashioned type—who always gave her scullery a coat of whitewash every spring and autumn. If possible, in one angle of the walls I would fit up a tall corner cupboard : if the walls themselves were used as back and sides, all that would be required would be a triangular piece of wood for the top and a plain door in the front. This should be the abiding-place of brooms, brushes, dust-pans, pails and all the implements for cleaning. A broad shelf should be fixed to the walls, about 5 ft. 6 ins. from the ground, on which to arrange saucepans and fish kettles, and below this a row of hooks should be screwed on to the wall, as these will be wanted for saucepan lids, frying pans, gridiron, and, in fact, anything which can be hung up. To preserve the wall from getting

black, have a long piece of white American cloth, with rings sewn at intervals by which to attach it to the hooks : this can be washed over periodically and kept quite clean.

The copper saucepans and jelly moulds make a brave show in the kitchen, and a special shelf should be fixed up for the former, though the latter will look nice on the mantelshelf, with old-fashioned brass candlesticks at either end. Young folk who are just starting a home of their own will probably think these copper utensils too expensive to buy, in which case some tinware can be used as chimneypiece ornaments. These can be kept as bright as silver if they are cleaned with turpentine.

The pantry will be dealt with anon, but there are very many houses in which no pantry exists, in which case the kitchen arrangements will have to be very carefully thought out. The house-parlourmaid must not only have a cupboard of her own, but also a table on which she can wash up glass and silver. If there is only one cupboard in the kitchen, this must be given up to the house-parlourmaid, in which to keep all the glass and the best china, such as that used for tea and dessert. The dresser should have an enclosed lower part (which is really a cupboard furnished with shelves), and here the cook can keep all her kitchen stores ; the dresser drawers can contain dusters, kitchen cloths, and, in fact, all the small requisites for clean-

ing. The house-parlourmaid's washing-up table should really be the top of a dwarf cupboard, in which she will be able to keep her own bowls, leathers, brushes, plate-powder and so forth. In a small establishment where only two maids are kept, it is most important that each one has her own set of cleaning implements complete, otherwise they will both be wanting the same things at the same time, and much unnecessary discussion will ensue. It is an extra expense to begin with, but will be well worth it in the end.

If it is in anyway possible, I would give the maids a few square feet of garden or yard in which they can get a little fresh air. If any humane mistress has ever had occasion to go into the kitchen on a scorching day in August, when cooking is being done, she will quite endorse my opinion. To get the oven hot there must be a roaring fire, and to keep the temperature even neither door nor window can be allowed to remain open. With a large kitchen, and an expensive and up-to-date range, this would probably not be the case, but I am alluding to small houses and cheap kitcheners. I am thinking of a case in point and the remedy thereof. By the side of the kitchen there was a long strip of ground used as a tradesmen's entrance, and as this was screened from the front garden by a high gate, it was absolutely private. The paling at the side had been raised to a height of six feet, and some pretty

creepers had been trained over it (I think they were hops and honeysuckle). A long, narrow bench was placed against the wall of the house, and here the maids used to sit in the summer afternoons and evenings whenever it was not imperative that they should be in the kitchen—it was an excellent place for shelling peas or darning stockings !

The store cupboard, which is in the keeping of the cook, should be well equipped with tins. Groceries in paper bags not only deteriorate, but are inducements to mice to partake of nightly feasts. Tins which have contained biscuits or coffee should be collected, and when these are washed and polished, a white label, on which the name of the contents is plainly specified, should be pasted on the front of each The Army and Navy Stores sells coffee called " The Household," at 1*s.* the pound in the berry, or 1*s.* 0½*d.* if ground, the latter being put into a round, brown tin, with a cover, just the squat shape which is so convenient for holding rice, currants, or things of that kind. I mention this coffee, not only on account of the tins, but because I find it so exceedingly good. The collection of tins should be somewhat as follows : large biscuit tins can be for sugar, both moist and lump, candles and soap (the latter being all the better for keeping, as it becomes hard and does not waste in the water) ; small tins should be for currants, sultanas, raisins, rice, tapioca, arrow-

root, cornflour, etc. Other requisites of the larder are a spice-box, some small bottles of dried herbs, such as mint, sage, thyme, and the invaluable dried parsley, a bottle each of brown crumbs and white crumbs, ready for use, a half-gallon jar of pickles, which are much cheaper bought in this way than in small bottles, and a net of lemons. Home-made jams and sauces should be kept in the mistress's store cupboard and given out as required.

A well-arranged pantry is the greatest boon in a house and considerably minimises the work of the parlourmaid. If I were building a house and had even only a slip of a room to be utilised for this purpose, I would fit it up as follows : at the end where the window threw the best light there should be a sink with taps for hot and cold water. This sink should have a cover to fit over the top, thus making it available as a table when required. Beneath the sink there should be a cupboard to hold pails, pans, brushes, paraffin can, and, in fact, all the rough implements of cleaning. Along one of the side walls there should be a cupboard with sliding doors fitted from floor to ceiling, which would contain all the glass and china ; along the opposite wall there should be a long, narrow flap table, which would let down flush with the wall when not in use, but which would be invaluable for clothes-brushing or for ironing out muslin skirts and so forth. On the wall above

this I would have another cupboard, not more than six inches deep, which should contain shoe brushes and polishes of different kinds, plate-powder, leathers, Selvyts, Globe polish, turpentine, methylated spirits, soap of all sorts, from toilet soaps for the bedrooms, to Sunlight, Brookes's, Sapon and washing powder, bits of sponge and soft, old tooth brushes, wherewith to wash delicate china and glass, matches and candles, brown paper, white paper and string.

Even in these days there are many country houses, far from the madding crowd, in which neither gas nor electric light exist. This will mean a great deal of lamp-trimming, which is a somewhat arduous, and certainly an unpleasant, work. Unless the lamps are kept very clean, and the wicks are quite straight, a bad, smoky light and a particularly nasty odour of paraffin will be the result. The maid who trims the lamps should have a special piece of board for the purpose, as it is quite impossible to avoid spilling a little of the oil sometimes. The reservoirs should be cleaned out at least once a week, a small piece of lump camphor aiding considerably in keeping the oil clear. The wicks also want periodical washing, steeping in vinegar and drying, or the light will not be good.

CHAPTER VII

The Linen Press

It is absolutely imperative that there is a linen press or cupboard of some description in every house. Even in the smallest of flats it is just one of these things without which it is quite impossible to exist in any degree of comfort. I have met various hardy young housekeepers, full of the proud notion that they are capable of rising superior to any inconvenience, who tell me, in the most nonchalant fashion, that they keep all the household linen in a box or in the dowry chest in the hall. The result is almost inevitable : as the things are sent back from the laundry each week so are they put away at the top of the box, the consequence being, that only two sets are in use, the things at the bottom of the box remaining in *statu quo* for any amount of time. Perhaps a day arrives when something not in general use is wanted in a hurry, and then, *hey presto !* Everything is strewn broadcast on to the floor, and bundled back anyhow. If neither press nor cupboard is forthcoming, a chest of drawers will form a better receptacle for the linen than a box. At all events the linen will be more or less divided,

as one long drawer can contain sheets and pillow-cases, another table cloths and serviettes, whilst the two small drawers can hold towels and such little things as d'oyleys, tray cloths and sideboard cloths respectively. Of course this will only serve for a very limited supply of linen. The chest of drawers may be ornamental as well as useful, if an old one of the bow-fronted type is procured, and especially if the wood is inlaid. It might be quite an attractive feature in a small hall, or on a landing, the top being used as a resting-place for a quaint bowl of flowers or some china jars and figures.

But to go from one extreme to the other, an *édition de luxe* in the shape of a linen press is that named the "Whyte Walton," to be obtained from Wm. Wallace & Co., Ltd., 154, Curtain Road, E.C. It is over 6 ft. high, and 5 ft. 3 ins. wide, and is divided into several partitions of varied sizes to suit the different specimens of household linen which they are destined to contain. The front of each partition is covered by a wooden flap, which, when the handle at the top is turned, falls down to a horizontal level, but can go no further, as it is supported on either side by brass chains. Thus every division has, as it were, its own table in front of it when the flap is lowered. The advantage of this is obvious: when the linen returns from the laundry, instead of putting the two clean table

cloths (for example) on the top of those already in the division, these are lifted out on to the flap and the new arrivals placed at the bottom to await their regular turn for being used again. Every division is legibly labelled on the outside with an ivory tablet : on one " sheets " is inscribed, on another " face towels," on another " table cloths," and so on. And, really, the press is quite an imposing piece of furniture if it is stained Chippendale mahogany, or, for those who prefer it, it can be painted any art colour. The price is £8 15*s*. I am just thinking what a delightful wedding present this might be from a well-to-do old couple to a favourite niece : the uncle would say to the aunt, " My dear, *I* will give a ' Whyte Walton ' press, and *you* shall fill it with linen ! "

But every girl does not possess such charming relatives, and so, *faut de mieux*, she must make the best of the humble, ordinary cupboard. A good, tall cupboard can often be picked up in a second-hand shop for that unknown quantity called " a mere song." This will be better than having a new one made by a carpenter, because seasoned wood is not prone to warpings and shrinkings, as is the custom of new wood. If it is stained dark oak and adorned with quaint handles, it will be by no means ugly, or it might be painted some appropriate colour. In a hall, or on a landing, where the walls are cream and the woodwork dull red, the press should also be red, and with handles of

antique steel it will not look at all out of place. It must be furnished within with four or five shelves, each shelf should have its own wrapper. This consists of a piece of calico the same length as the shelf, but three times the width. When the shelf is equipped with its load of linen the wrapper is pulled up right over it and thus all inroads of dust are defied.

There are often many and perplexed discussions as to the amount of linen required for a fairly adequate stock. I think the easiest plan is to reckon as follows :

Bedrooms.—For each bed certainly two, and advisedly three, pairs of sheets, one under blanket, three top blankets, one quilt; for each bolster, three cases, for each pillow three slips. For each towel airer : 4 face towels, four huckaback towels, two bath towels. Pretty accessories for each room (except the servant's) are sheet shams, pillow shams, toilet slips, splashers, washstand mats, cancosies and bedspreads.

Dining-room.—Six everyday table cloths, two best table cloths, twelve everyday serviettes, twelve best serviettes, four sideboard cloths, four tray cloths, four serving cloths, twelve plate d'oyleys. Accessories : afternoon tea cloths, dessert d'oyleys.

Kitchen.—Four table cloths, four round towels, twelve kitchen cloths, twelve dusters, twelve pantry cloths, six pudding cloths, six knife cloths.

I have classified some of the things under the heading of accessories, as they are usually the work of the house-mistress's own hands, either before or after marriage. In each bedroom the splasher, can-cosy and bedspread should match, and these look charming when made of linen the same colour as the wall paper and adorned with stitchery or lace. I have in my mind's eye quite an inexpensive but very dainty room, with rose-pink walls, white paint, white furniture, and the "accessories" made of pink linen embroidered with big, white moon-daisies.

With regard to the bed-linen for the guest chamber, I am not an advocate for frilled sheets and pillow cases. The frills soon get torn and untidy-looking, and when they are well starched, those round the pillows are decidedly aggressive. Pillow slips with embroidered corners look just as nice and are not at all uncomfortable, and a strip of embroidery in white thread, along the turnover portion of a top sheet, adds greatly to the appearance of the bed. I have more than once seen industrious ladies working laboriously at the sheet itself—a most cumbrous affair, and one which has to be hastily smuggled away should visitors arrive! A far simpler method is to take an 18-inch strip of linen, just as long as the sheet is wide, and to work a bold pattern upon it. When completed the strip can be sewn on to the edge of the sheet (which should be a shorter one than

usual) the seam pressed open with an iron and then concealed by a narrow linen braid, attached along each side with a double row of feather stitching.

Some people prefer plain sheets and pillow slips with embroidered "shams," for both to be laid on the bed during the daytime. Towel shams are sometimes used with which to cover the damp and rumpled towels on the airer.

Bed valances have gone out of fashion greatly now that long bedspreads have taken their place, but where they are really required it is advisable to have some method of attaching them to the bedstead better than the old-fashioned one of tapes at intervals, which were very seldom absolutely tidy. Seam together some lengths of calico making a square exactly the size of the bedstead. The valance can be sewn on to this, and besides keeping it perfectly straight and tidy it will serve the double purpose of preventing the wire-wove mattress rusting the bedding above.

Besides having calico cases for bolsters and pillows, some people go to the extent of making cases for the mattresses also. This is not necessary, though I must say it looks very nice to see everything encased in white, when the beds are open for airing.

CHAPTER VIII

The Sick Room

We are not sufficiently appreciative of the blessing of health until we lose it, but how many of us are there who escape the weariness and pain of a long illness during some portion of our lives? In writing about sick rooms I am thinking principally of those invalids who have to pass weeks, or perhaps months, within four walls. In cases of this kind two rooms leading into each other are the greatest blessing, that is to say, if the invalid can be moved from her bed to the sofa, and besides the comfort to her, there is much to be said from a hygienic point of view, as it is impossible to thoroughly air and wash a bedroom when the patient is always in it, week in, week out. For this reason two tiny rooms or a bedroom and dressing-room are better than one large one. In the case of a chronic invalid the two-room system should always be contrived.

Quite a tiny slip of a room, provided it contains a fireplace, will be sufficient for the day-parlour, remembering that very little furniture will be required by its quiet inmate. If I had to fit one

up myself I should have a plain, soft colour for the distempered walls with a pretty floral frieze. A paper with a pattern is always irritating when one has to gaze upon it for hour after hour, moreover a plain background shows off pictures better than any other, and these should certainly be lavishly provided. I once heard a lady say that she should like to establish a sort of lending library of pictures for invalids. I believe this was the outcome of a month's illness, during which time she had been terribly worried by a picture of "Jephtha's Daughter" which hung over the fireplace facing the bed. She took a positive dislike to Jephtha's daughter and her maidens. The woodwork I would have enamelled ivory white.

If the window is at one end of the room and the door to the outside passage at the other, it will be necessary to have some protection against draught, for the invalid's couch must be placed alongside the window. On the side wall, about 3 ft. from the window, I would fix a revolving portière rod, with which arrangement the heavy curtain could be swung back right against the walls or brought out at right angles, forming quite a screen to the head of the couch. It is a great relief to a patient to be able to see something of the outside world, therefore I would not have the window heavily draped. A double rod should go along the top, with curtains of Madras

muslin on the under part, and of silk or tapestry on the upper. Both sets of curtains should reach the sill only, so that there would be no difficulty in pulling them right back when required. If the walls were pink or green the portière curtain should be of electric blue damask, which is reversible, and the heavier window curtains could be of a pretty blue and cream French tapestry for summer time, but something warmer and thicker would be wanted for the winter, and then both portière and curtains could be lettuce green Corona velvet, sold by Williamson & Cole, of Clapham, for 4*s.* 11*d.* the yard. This particular shade in the material is a great favourite of mine, as it seems to have a sort of silvery shimmer on the surface.

Besides the couch the furniture required would be a small table and two or three comfortable easy chairs for the visitors who came to have tea and a chat, a second small table (for choice a revolving book table) to stand beside the invalid's couch, on which could stand her work bag, writing pad and the newest magazines, and a couple of jardinières for palms or ferns. Lastly, wherever the couch is placed there must be a bell; perhaps it will be advisable on cold and dreary days to move the couch from the window to the wall opposite the fire, but in any case the bell must be within reach. There is not much difficulty in arranging this if the bell wire is passed round the ceiling into the

passage by a tiny hole in the wall, and attached to a bell outside. The pulley and ornamental bell-rope can be at the patient's side.

The bedroom should be as simply furnished as possible. A plainly stained polished floor can have two or three mats laid down, which can easily be taken up and shaken when the floor is washed, and the window curtains should be of linen or cretonne, which will not deteriorate with visits to the wash-tub. If the case is one in which the patient cannot be moved, the castors of the bed should be well oiled to run quite easily without any jar, so that the bed can be wheeled to the window on a bright day, and if the bed-spread is a pretty one of coloured satin or linen, two of the pillows are slipped into silk covers and the patient arrayed in a smart little bed jacket, she will feel that she is quite fit to look out into the world.

A few hints may be of service to the inexperienced in the event of infectious illnesses such as fevers. Take up the carpet and take down the curtains immediately, and remove all clothes from the wardrobe and chest of drawers except the linen which will be wanted for the patient. Nail an old sheet to the outer side of the door and keep it sprinkled with disinfectant. In the room have a bowl of water containing plenty of disinfectant, and into this plunge at once any glass, spoon or cup which the patient has used before

putting it outside to be properly washed. If a mother determines to nurse a child through an infectious illness, and feels competent to do so, she must make up her mind to complete isolation. If she possesses them it will be best for her to wear cotton dresses, and to have these, as well as her other clothes, soaked in a bath of disinfectant before allowing them to go to the laundry. If she wears a stuff dress it must either be destroyed when the danger of carrying germs is over or sent to be properly fumigated at some hospital or institute where they have a disinfecting room.

CHAPTER IX

Greeneries

We all love flowers, and if we can manage to grow them ourselves they give us double pleasure. The smallest of houses takes an additional charm in our eyes if a conservatory, however tiny, is attached to the drawing-room. In many unpretentious villas the drawing-room (if this is the back sitting-room) has a French window leading out into the garden—so called by courtesy only. A lean-to conservatory will cost very little to erect, and will be a lasting joy to the tenants. The scent of flowers which will pervade the drawing-room when the French window is open will give a particular air of refinement to the room, which flowers only can bestow, besides making a patch of green fragrance which will be both refreshing and beautiful.

The first expense of stocking the conservatory and of fitting it up with shelves is usually the last beyond the cost of a few bulbs and seeds each year. Geraniums, fuchsias, chrysanthemums and plants of this description can be propagated by means of cuttings, and a very few shillings spent

every year on seeds and bulbs will serve to keep the greenhouse full. Two of the sides of the lean-to will of necessity be the walls of the house, and over these some sweet-scented creeping plant should be trained. The roots can be put into a lard tub (which one's grocer will always supply for *6d.* or less) painted green on the outside and with holes bored in the bottom for drainage. These tubs should be filled with thoroughly good soil if the plants are to thrive, and an occasional sprinkling of Clay's Fertiliser will help them along wonderfully. In one tub I would have a climbing heliotrope, and in the other a Marèchal Neil rose.

The number of shelves must depend upon the height and shape of the greenhouse ; as a general rule there is one shelf, about 4 inches from the ground, on which to put pots of hardy fern which love the shade. About 3 ft. above this there is the broad shelf for all the principal plants, and, possibly, there will be another and quite narrow shelf, fixed about 3 ft. above the broad one on which other plants can be arranged. A very pretty effect can be obtained on both the middle and upper shelves by having small pots placed amongst the large ones in which trailing ivy, smilax, or tradescantia have been planted ; these fall over the pots and hang down from the shelves in graceful festoons.

With regard to the seeds which will produce

the best results I have a fancy for mignonette, musk, dwarf sweet peas and the tobacco plants, which give out such a sweet scent in the evening. The Penny Packet Seed Company, which has its headquarters in St. Albans, Herts, is of great advantage to those who own small conservatories or gardens. The seeds are of excellent quality, and every packet is "one penny," the quantity contained in the packet being dependent solely on the costliness of the seed : some packets only contain three or four seeds. Everybody, who wants just a few flowers only, knows the annoyance of having to buy a packet of seeds which costs 1*s.* or more, and of which more than three fourths is wasted, as it cannot possibly be used. The seeds for winter flowers would be cyclamen, primula and cineraria. As to bulbs, hyacinths, tulips, daffodils, and freezias will make the greenhouse fragrant and bright.

Another type of conservatory is one large enough to be used as an adjunct to the drawing-room, in which two or three comfortable easy chairs can find a place. I am thinking of quite a moderate-sized house in the suburbs, where the 16 ft. long drawing-room opens into a conservatory 7 ft. long, forming a most useful annex when several friends assemble for afternoon tea. To give additional space here none of the shelves should be very broad, neither should they extend to the ends, a space being left in each of the four

corners for a tub containing a tall fern or palm. Wicker chairs with cushions covered with scarlet silk or linen seem most in keeping with the surroundings. Across the roof a very strong wire should be fixed, or, perhaps, hooks can be screwed into a wooden beam. From this two big baskets of drooping ferns should be suspended, one on either side, and in the centre an Algerian lamp or Chinese lantern.

In houses where a conservatory is impossible, a staircase window can sometimes be utilised as a tiny "greenery." To accomplish this a false sill quite 12 inches wide must be fixed up, and another shelf about the same width nailed above the top of the window frame. With wooden side-pieces the window will thus be apparently sunk to the depth of 1 foot. The wood should be stained green and the edges ornamented with strips of virgin cork. It would be useless to put plants on the top shelf, as there would be so much difficulty in watering them, but two hooks could be screwed into the under part from which to suspend baskets of ferns. Brackets could be nailed to the side pieces on which to place pots of spreading ferns, whilst the lower shelf could hold tall flowering plants in the summer and ferns in the winter.

I am often sorry for those who dwell in flats because, in many cases, anything like a "greenery" is utterly out of the question : the window

boxes, of which one sees so many, are but a poor substitute. Great things may be accomplished, however, if there happens to be a balcony, as an example of which I will describe one which has always excited my profound admiration on account of its ingenuity. It is in a "top flat," and to each of the front corners of the balcony a tall iron upright is fixed, with an iron rod going across the front and round the corners to the walls of the house. Strong wire netting is attached to the rod forming a band about a foot deep. Virginia creeper is planted in a tub at either end, and this is twined through the meshes of the wire, hanging in graceful festoons at the corners. What I can only describe as a double box going right round close to the iron railing forms the "flower garden," one box is on the floor and the second just comes level with the top of the railing. Imagine both boxes filled with climbing nasturtiums of every shade of yellow, orange and red, with the Virginia creeper above, just when the first breath of autumn was touching the leaves with crimson!

Roof gardens must be reckoned amongst the greeneries of London. They must have existed even in the time of Dickens (or was it an inspiration on his part as to what the future might bring forth?), for in *Our Mutual Friend* the old Jew entertains Miss Jenny Wren and her friend amongst the chimney pots. Leads are excessively ugly, but they are found at the backs of

many old houses, and they make charming roof gardens if the adjoining chimneys are not too lavish with their black showers. Boxes and tubs must contain the soil, and the flowers and shrubs to be planted therein should not only be the hardiest, but those which grow the highest.

With a sigh of refreshment I turn from these makeshift greeneries to a veritable garden. Journeying by train in some of the outlying parts of London it is interesting to note the difference in the various back gardens. A whole row of houses will have precisely the same space at their command, but perhaps one will stand out pre-eminent for absolute beauty, owing to the manner in which it is laid out. The average garden consists of two types : it either has an oblong piece of turf in the centre, possibly big enough for a very limited game of tennis, with a narrow gravel path running all round and a flower bed against the walls, or it is boldly chopped in half, the portion next to the house being devoted to turf and flowers, whilst that beyond is given up to the culture of a few dilapidated-looking vegetables.

In these days when tennis and croquet clubs abound, I think I would give up all idea of playing games in the little garden, giving it up entirely to the growth of flowers. In the first place, I can see no reason why the path should go straight down the centre or all round the sides of the lawn. It would be far better to take it from corner to

corner in a somewhat uneven line. Rose trees, either bushes or standards, could be planted at intervals on either side, and one or two tall shrubs or trees could find room on the wedge-shaped pieces of lawn. Against the three walls I would plant fruit trees : plums and apples do very well if they are properly looked after, and in front of these the broad borders should be filled with herbaceous flowers—delphiniums, lupins, Canterbury bells and moon-daisies make a grand show, in company with hollyhocks and sunflowers, or, if the height of these should be deleterious to the fruit trees, they might be superseded by pink and white mallows, gaillardias, snapdragons, eschscholtzias, nasturtiums and love-in-a-mist ; the ordinary bedding-out plants, such as geraniums, calceolarias and lobelia, I would rigorously taboo. Close to the house I would have a herb-bed—I do not think any garden is complete without one —and there is a certain satisfaction in watching the cook gathering something for dinner, if it is only a few sprigs of mint for sauce !

The front garden of a suburban house is a difficult matter to deal with. Flowers are simply temptations to children to come in and steal ; besides, they do not serve as a screen from the observation of the passers-by. Shrubs, especially flowering ones, seem to be the best, and amongst them I would not forget some lavender bushes right under the windows.

But the beautiful old-fashioned country garden is the joy of my life, and I can remember one which is to me the ideal of all a garden ought to be—not one with stately terraces and elaborate carpet bedding, but just an acre of ground which breathes of home and peace at every turn. Perhaps some woman who loves flowers and has a neglected garden at her disposal may like to carry out the same idea. In front of the long, low casement windows there was a circular lawn surrounded by trees with here and there a gap to give a peep of the distant hills beyond. An archway covered with roses led into what was called " my lady's garden "—a large expanse intersected by grass paths which met in the centre, where the sundial stood. On either side of these paths there were very broad beds filled with old-world flowers, and these were flanked by espalier trees of apples, pears and plums which concealed the vegetable garden behind them. Not an inch of space was wasted, and yet it was all most beautiful, perhaps the loveliest part of any being the path on either side of which rows of Mary-lilies stood, like white sentinels. This was called " the white walk," as all the flowers therein were of the same pure hue.

CHAPTER X

Chimneypieces and Overmantels

CHIMNEYPIECES are a terrible stumbling-block in the way of the artistic decorator. Builders are improving in this particular, and they now generally use iron or wood ones which can be painted any colour to match the woodwork of the room : they content themselves by working their wicked will in the matter of tiles for the hearth and sides of grate, which are, as a rule, of the most setting-teeth-on-edge description.

But all houses are not new, and in most of the oldish ones marble mantelpieces still obtain in the " best " rooms, and, by an odd perversity of fate, these are usually black, red or grey in the room one wants to use as a drawing-room, and white—or what is called white—in the dining-room. With such as these only two courses remain open, one is to remove them altogether, and replace them with something more in accordance with our modern ideas of art, or to cover them up. The hideous chimneypieces were responsible for the introduction of mantel draperies which, in

my opinion, have nothing to recommend them save the fact that they hide the marble. They are dust-traps of the worst description, and are only to be tolerated in rooms decorated in the French style, for, where the windows and mirrors are hung with elaborate festoons and draperies of silk or brocade, a few more yards of fabric round the fireplace cannot make much difference. A number of firms have, from time to time, tried to bring out mantelpiece "casings" of wood or lincrusta, but I have never found any that were wholly satisfactory, or, if they were, the expense was greater than that of a new chimneypiece.

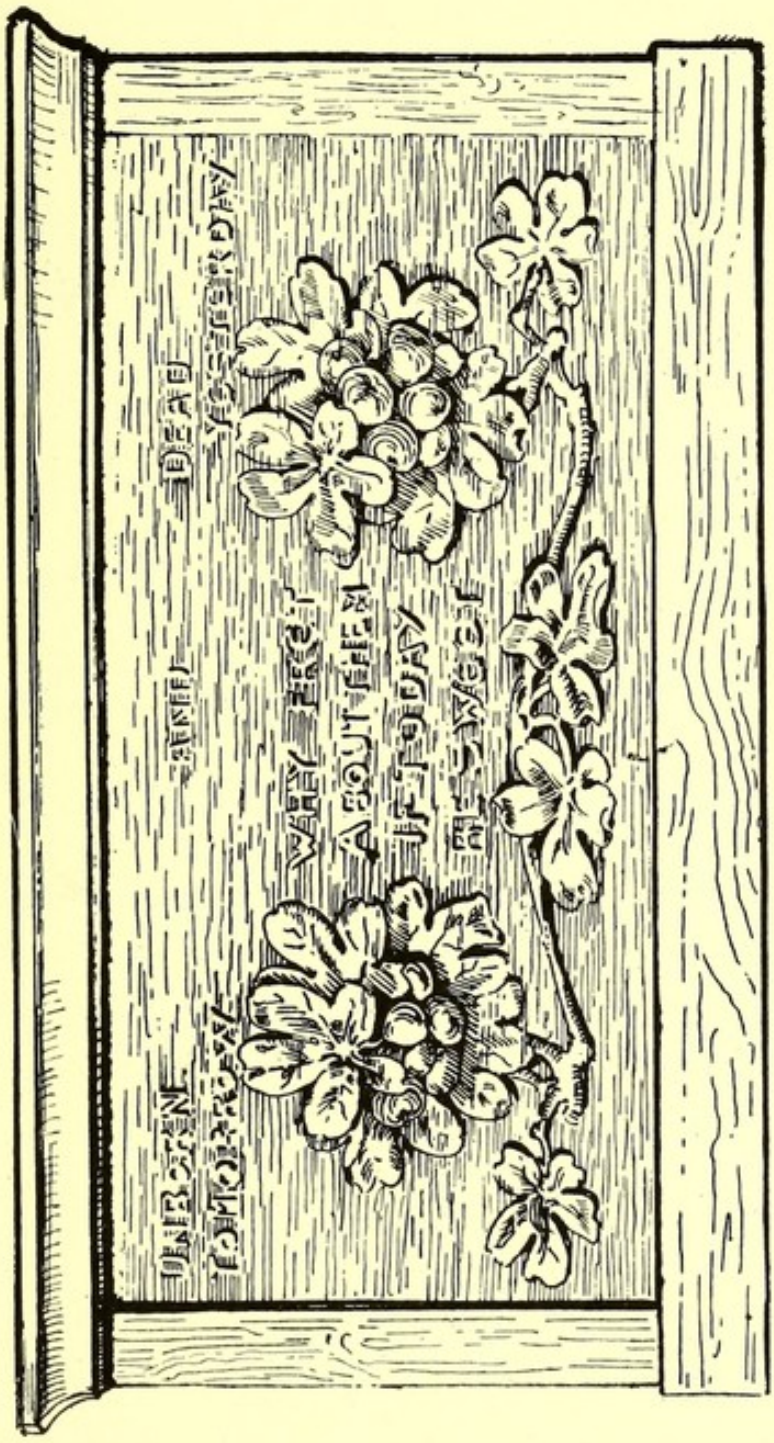
One can manage to conceal the top and front of a mantelpiece without having recourse to any drapery beyond a plain border nailed round a false board, but the jambs are still left terribly in evidence. Sometimes these can be painted like the rest of the woodwork in the room, and are then not so aggressively objectionable, but a still better and quite inexpensive plan is to encase them in a long hollow box of wood, much like one of the box-beams used as a means of transforming a modern ceiling into an old-fashioned one. The broader these casings are the better the effect will be, especially if small ledges are screwed to the front on which to place quaint bits of pottery or china.

Here is a suggestion for a somewhat severe dining-room, furnished with old oak, and boasting

an array of ancient pewter on the frieze shelf: the chimneypiece being of bad white marble utterly spoils the effect. The jambs are hidden by "boxes" of wood, stained oak, 14 inches wide, with a pewter plate on each of the ledges. Fixed to the shelf is a broad board of stained wood, round the front and sides of which a band of linen 12 inches deep is nailed with heavy copper studs. The linen is of string colour, and the intensely conventional flowers of the Tudor rose description are cut out in "faded" red linen and sewn on at intervals, the outlines being covered by thin green cord. Above the mantelshelf there can either be a needlework picture or another piece of linen, in the shape of a long, low panel, with the same Tudor rose design upon it, surmounted by an oak shelf for china or pewter.

The same idea could easily be carried out in a dainty drawing-room, the wood being enamelled white instead of stained oak, the band being of white satin embroidered in delicate shades with Italian arabesques or tulips in faint tints of mauve, pink and blue. The band should be bordered with gold braid about a quarter of an inch wide, which will look far better when it is a little tarnished than when quite new. The white mantelshelf is an excellent place on which to display some old silver, especially if a branch silver candlestick can be placed at each end: it will take the place of the ordinary silver table.

But when the chimneypiece itself is all one can wish, being either of wood or iron, there is still



The Omar Khayyám Panel

the wall space above to be dealt with. Thank goodness the "original' overmantels—those dreadful concoctions of bits of glass and wood—

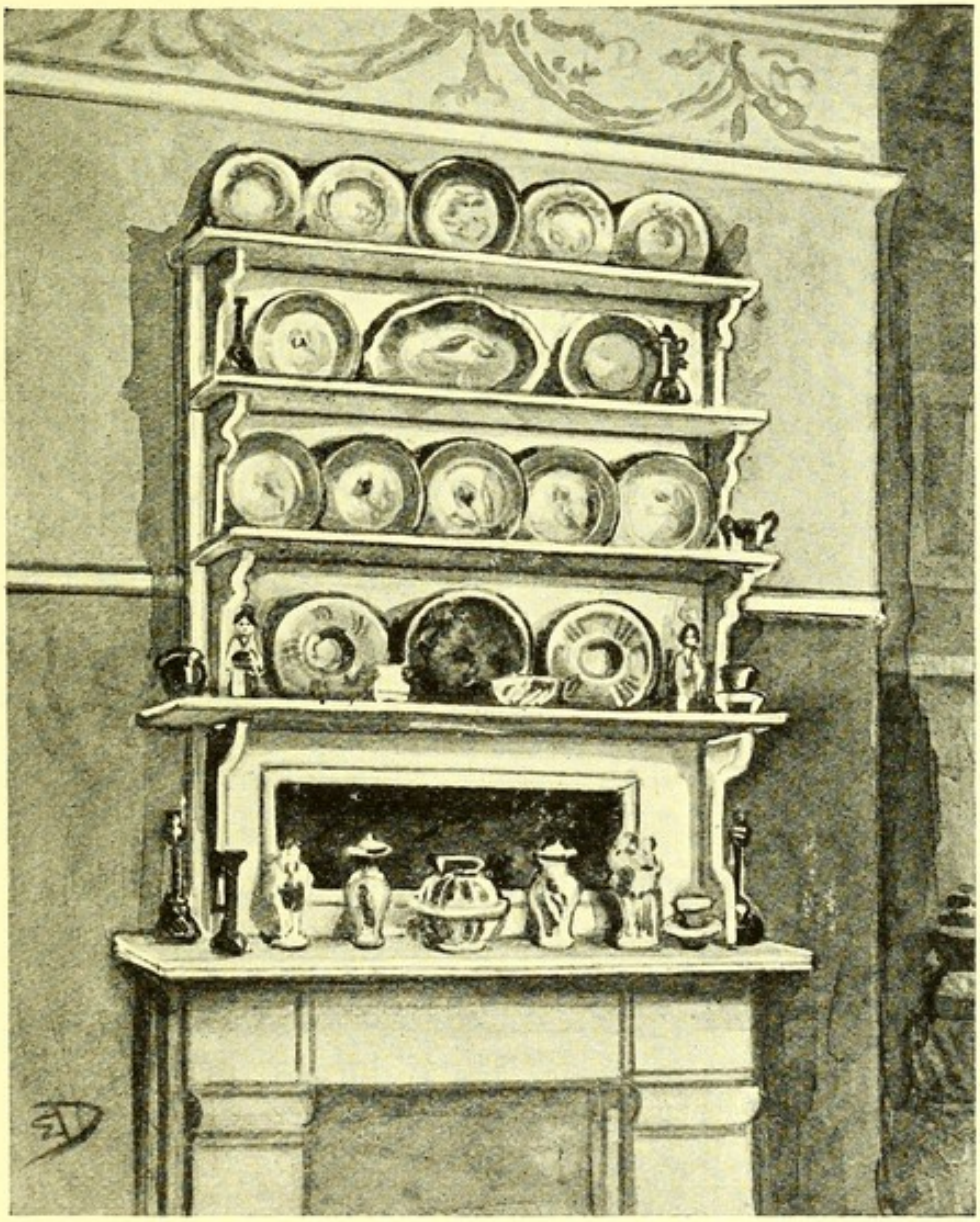
are now very seldom seen. In many rooms a picture or a mirror seems to be preferable to anything else. In a dining-room, for example, the walls of which are adorned with family portraits, surely the most prepossessing of the ancestresses ought to smile down on the household from the place of honour above the oak chimneypiece! In a dainty drawing-room in which Chippendale or Sheraton furniture obtains the old-fashioned round mirror in a gilt frame with eagle and ball at the top will be quite in keeping; or in a "Frenchy" room there could be a girandole, or a Louis XV glass in white enamelled frame. For a simply decorated study wherein green stained wood forms the chief part of the furniture the "overmantel" could be a long, low panel of three pictures of quaint Dutch figures in a green stained frame with a shelf at the top; if I remember rightly, the price of this is about £1 or rather less.

The illustration on page 87 shows an oak panel which would make an artistic overmantel in a low-ceilinged room such as study or dining-room, or it would be effective in an oak-panelled hall. The wood-carver will delight in the design, which is by no means difficult of execution, and I think the apt quotation from the works of that wise Persian poet, Omar Khayyám—

"Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday,
Why fret about them if To-day be sweet!"

—ought to be a standing rebuke to the grumbling husband or sighing wife.

The illustration on this page, which I have



The Dresser Overmantel.

named the "Dresser" overmantel, is the result of much cogitation on my part when I was asked to suggest something for the safe display of many valuable china plates other than hanging them

on a wall, or putting them into a cabinet. The shelves are of graduated widths, each one having a deep groove 3 inches from the back in which the plates lodge with absolute security. These overmantels are made by W. S. Brown & Sons, of Edinburgh, and the price, with a panel of looking-glass behind the lowest shelves, is 55*s.* 6*d.* in white enamel, or 52*s.* in stained and polished wood. For halls or dining-rooms in which there is a quantity of old blue and white china to be arranged, the mirror can be dispensed with, the price in stained wood being then reduced to 47*s.* 6*d.*

If I were left a legacy of a whole dinner service of blue and white Spode, I should yearn for a study in which the lower part of the walls were covered with pale brown paper (an excellent background for the big dishes interspersed with a few small prints in black frames !), surmounted by a frieze of flamingo red. Cabinets, tables, and Dresser overmantel should be of black oak, and I would have plenty of red silk cushions on the chairs and couch.

A simple and inexpensive overmantel for a bedroom is always welcomed by the woman who loves dainty accessories, though she cannot afford to pay much money for them. I think the expenditure of 6*s.* and a little industry will be a small amount wherewith to achieve a good result. What is called a " cloister bracket " in white wood

can be bought for 4*s.* 2*d*: this has two shelves with a spindle rail in front of the top one; it is 19½ inches high and 28½ inches long, being divided by small pillars into three niches in which to put china or pottery. One yard of white Cassia cloth for 7¾*d.*, and some embroidery silks are all that will be required besides the bracket and a little white enamel or wood stain with which to paint it. Cut a panel of the Cassia cloth 28 inches long and 27 inches deep, allowing 2 inches extra all round for hems. Work a border in coloured silks, or a scroll design about 4 inches wide, just above the bottom hem. Nail this panel to the back of the top shelf (a few little tintacks or brads will be sufficient), and then nail the bracket to the wall at such a height that the edge of the Cassia cloth just rests on the mantelshelf. The embroidered panel will make a much better background than the wall paper. If the room is very lofty the panel should be much deeper.

CHAPTER XI

The Eyes of the House

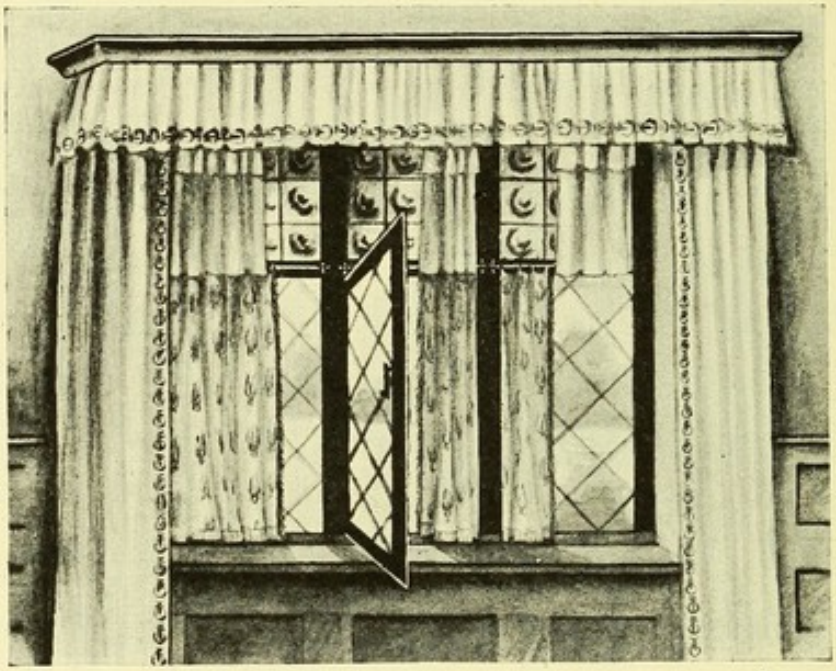
TAKE a walk down any road you like where there is a row of houses on either side bearing the strongest family resemblance to each other and note the difference in the appearance of the windows ; it is almost possible to form a fair estimate of the inmates of the house if one carefully studies what is aptly termed its " eyes." Of one it may be said the house mistress is extravagant, of another that she is thrifty, and then one sees the unmistakable sign of the artistic woman, the painfully clean woman (she always has dead white curtains, very starched and stiff !), the colour-blind woman, the slovenly woman, and the prim woman.

In London and the large towns of the provinces, it is absolutely essential that the windows have some sort of veil, otherwise the interiors of the rooms are plainly visible to the passers-by. In the country they can be left unshielded where the only inquisitive spectators are the flowers and

trees. Short blinds of the Brise-bise order have come greatly into vogue of late. I think they were originally designed for the denizens of flats where the outlook was depressing and ugly. They are usually made of thin silk with a flounce of lace at the lower edge and a band of lace insertion along the top. If these are used in one room they should be used in all—in the front of the house at least. A pretty fashion for bedrooms is to have a rod across the centre of the window from which to hang a pair of short muslin curtains edged with ball fringe ; as these are divided in the centre they should be slightly draped back, with white cotton cords and tassels, but by far the best effect is obtained by passing the cords over the rod at the top instead of fastening them to a hook at the side, which will inevitably pull the curtain too far back. The slight drapery required is better kept in position by sewing it lightly, instead of trusting to the cords, which can be added as ornament.

Although window curtains have been used from time immemorial, there are very few unprofessional upholstresses who know how to make them up to ensure an absolutely successful result. To begin with heavy winter fabrics, it is not at all uncommon to find that they have been gathered along the top by about five box pleats, into each of which a safety hook has been pinned. After a time the hook comes undone, and, pos-

sibly, the pleat unsewn, a most unsightly "sagging" being the consequence. Banish safety hooks and pleats altogether, and, for even the heaviest curtains, adopt this plan: take a piece of broad webbing just the length you wish the width of the curtain to be on the pole. Turn over a 3 inch fold at the top, with a strip of stiff canvas as an



Drapery of a Casement Window, by Messrs. Williamson & Cole.

interlining; gather the doubled fabric to the required size and stitch it twice (top and bottom) to the webbing band; there should be a heading of about an inch and a half. Sew the rings themselves to the band with waxed thread and they can then be slipped over the pole.

For thin curtains of muslin, lace, cretonne or

any light fabrics, the Spydre tapes are invaluable. These consist of two tapes, a broad one with holes perforated at intervals and a narrow one. Turn over a piece at the top of the curtains, as described before, and sew the broad tape along it without any gathering, which is done by passing the narrow tape through the slot made by the broad one, taking it out at each perforation to thread it through a curtain ring. When the curtains have to be washed the narrow tape is just pulled out, leaving them quite flat.

There are so many houses now built with casement windows that casement curtains have become quite a feature of the day. They are very inexpensive because, with them, no roller blinds are required. The sketch of a window furnished with these curtains by Messrs. Williamson & Cole, of Clapham, gives an excellent idea of how they may be arranged. The long curtains at the sides and the valance across the top should be of coloured material harmonizing with the decorations of the room and ornamented with the "Idyll" banding, which has a design in the same colour as the curtain on a white ground. The inner curtains, of which there are six, are arranged with rods or pulleys, enabling one or all of them to be drawn across the glass as desired.

A very simple method of treating a casement window is to fix a board about 6 or 8 inches wide above the top of the window where the curtain

pole usually goes, to stain it oak, or enamel it white, and round the front and sides to nail a gathered valance of linen or Cassia cloth, about 8 inches wide, with a border of the "Idyll" banding. Under the board, and quite close to the window frame, have a thin brass rod, furnished with a dozen or more rings large enough to slip backwards and forwards very easily. Curtains, of the same material as the valance and just long enough to touch the sills, are then sewn to the rings, and the window equipment is complete.

Something may be said about renovating handsome curtains which in the course of time have come to grief, or of utilizing odd lengths of brocade which are quite too small for the lofty drawing-room windows. I am thinking of a lovely piece of brocade which I once was called upon to moan over (in company with its owner), for it displayed many large slits when unfolded, "otherwise," she sighed, "it would have made four gorgeous curtains for the bay window in the drawing-room." Happily the slits were vertical and not horizontal. The groundwork of the brocade was palest fawn (the design being one of flowers and scrolls in puce, gold, pink and all kinds of delicate tones. So we bought some Roman satin, the exact tone of fawn or very deep cream that matched. We got some pale pink sateen the precise size we wished the curtain to be,

laid the brocade upon it and proceeded to cover the slits with stripes of the plain satin, concealing the edges with narrow gimp guipure and tiny pink tassels, sewn on at intervals. When finished, our handiwork was greatly admired. Most fabrics, which are worth it, can be lengthened, widened, or smartened up by bands of plain-coloured satin, plush or velvet.

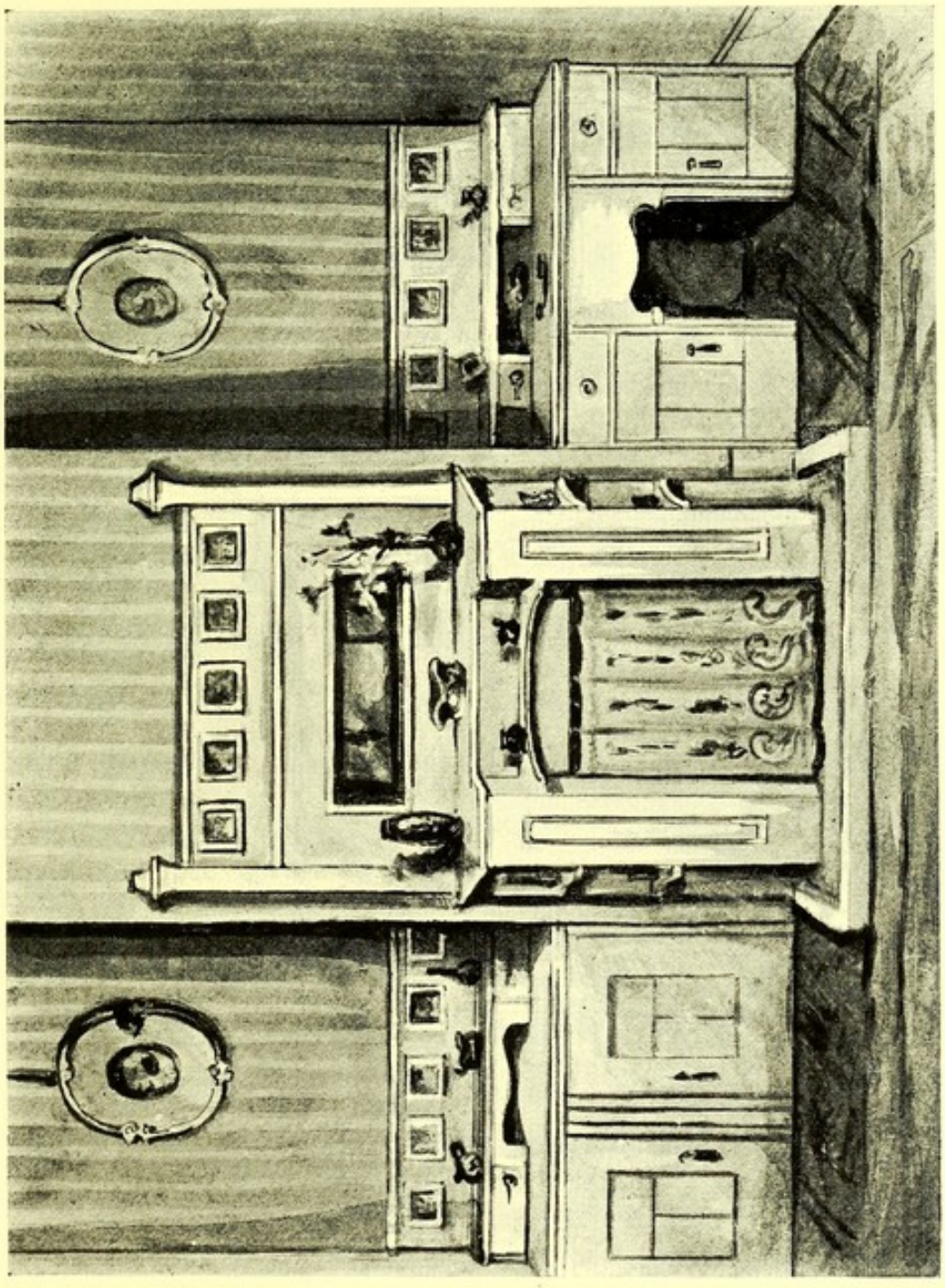
CHAPTER XII

Suggestions more or less Original

It had been my intention to make the heading of this chapter "Original Suggestions," but, on reflection, I decided to add the saving clause "more or less," remembering that there is nothing new under the sun, especially in furniture.

The illustration on page 99 depicts my idea of fitments in a woman's sanctum, whether it be a boudoir pure and simple or a "boudoir bedroom." I have, for many years, realized the importance to a busy woman of being able to keep all the materials for her work together, whether she be a scribbler, or an artist, or a needleworker. The second-named would hardly apply in this case, as she would naturally want a studio, unless her studies were only in black and white. The fitment might well be introduced into a drawing-room in an abode which only boasted two sitting-rooms—a flat, for example—because, without being in the least unsightly, it will contain no end of paraphernalia in the way of papers and ledgers.

The idea had its origin in the dwarf cupboards which are so often to be found in fireplace



Fitment for a Lady's Sanctum.

recesses. The one on the left-hand side remains in its pristine simplicity, with the addition of two drawers and a shelf on the top, but the other

one is transformed into a knee-hole writing table. This contains two smaller cupboards and two drawers. The handle in the centre of the top is used for lifting it up; pull out the drawers, turn the top over so that it rests upon them, and a commodious desk, big enough for even the most "littery" scribe to write on in comfort, will be the result. To ornament the fitments (which are enamelled white) a long panel is fixed to the wall at the back of each one, and these contain square openings, to be filled with small red autotypes or engravings.

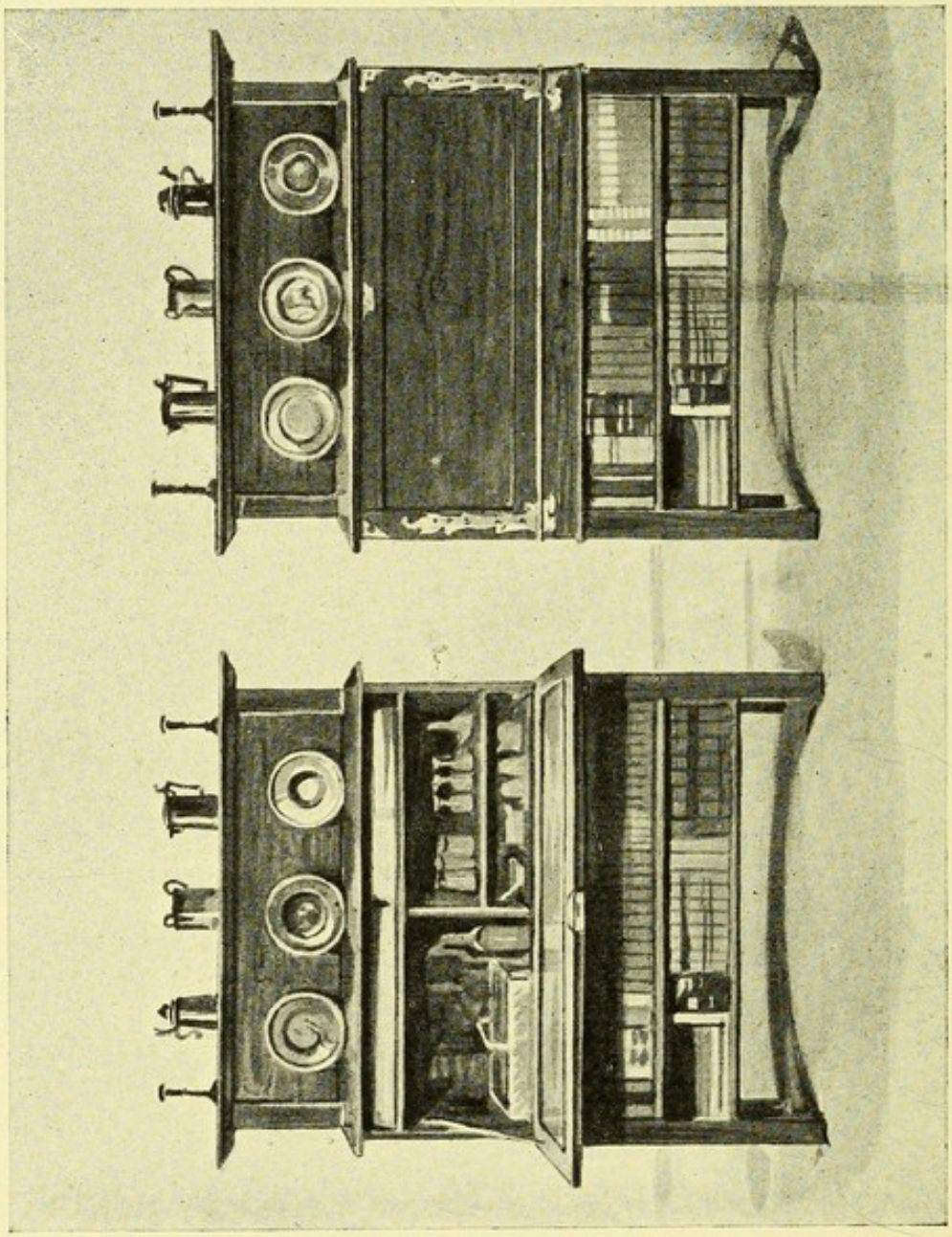
The overmantel is a continuation of the same idea, with five small engravings along the top and one large one beneath. An ugly chimneypiece is artistically concealed by a white wood casing, another novelty being the rod across the front from which is suspended an embroidered curtain answering the purpose of a fire screen during the summer. If I were carrying out the idea I should put a soft, blue-striped paper on the walls as an appropriate background.

The frontispiece picture is of a hall sitting-room so arranged that it can be made into a separate room or thrown entirely into the hall, simply by the adjustment of the curtains. The four carved oak posts of an old-fashioned bedstead and two strong beams form the framework. One beam commences at the side of the front door and ends at the opposite wall, which, we

will imagine, is just at the foot of the staircase. From the pole or rod beneath the beam the heavy curtains are suspended, and when these are closely drawn together the passage entrance is made into "a thing apart." The other beam, which is fixed at right angles with the first one, is used for the support of the hanging lamps, the carved posts making an effective framework for the low seat and the dwarf bookcase. The usual height of a bed post is seven feet, and these are raised on little four-inch pedestals. Supposing the room to be 9 feet 6 inches in height, the beams will be about 2 feet below the ceiling. The effect would not be half so good if they touched the cornice.

A great advantage of this scheme is that, if one possesses the bedposts, it is an admirable way of utilizing them, and, moreover, the idea is very inexpensive. The seat and book-shelves can be made of stained deal; the curtains can be of heavy linen or even of cream Bolton sheeting, which is only about 9*d*. the yard in a wide width. The decoration is very simple and very effective, consisting of squares of linen or silk neatly sewn on with some kind of fancy stitch. On cream sheeting they should be alternately of green and purple. The aspidistra, which stands just in the light of the window place, is in one of the quaint terra-cotta pots to be obtained from Liberty, and not at all expensive.

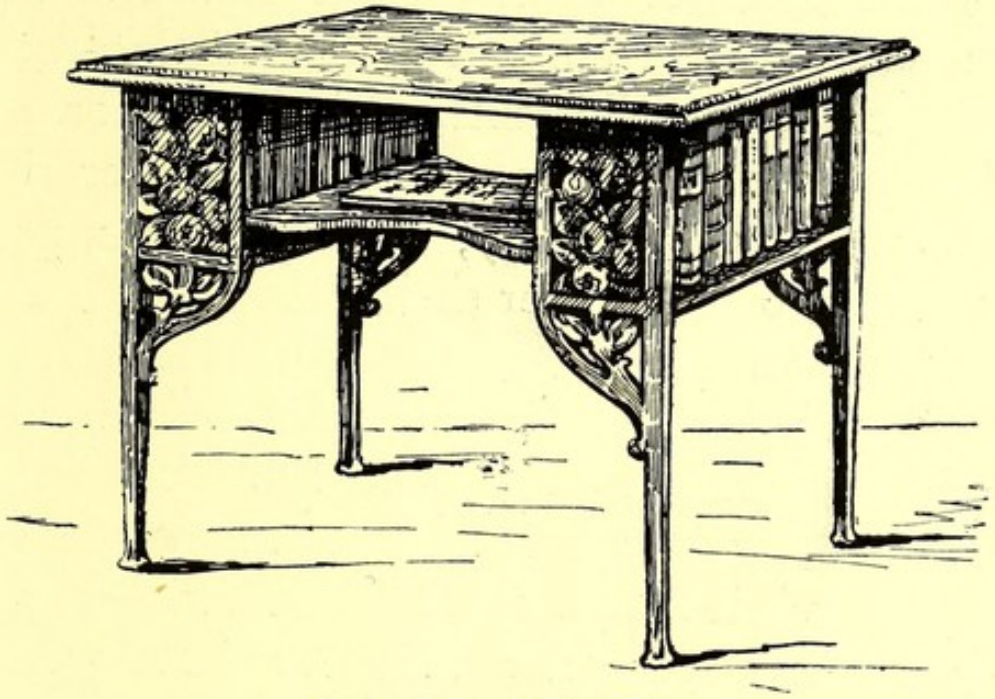
I may modestly introduce the Berwyn fitment in Touchstone's words as "an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own." It is intended either for



The Berwyn Fitment Sideboard.

very small dining-rooms or for those wise young people who, when they start a home of their own on limited means, determine to make one sitting-

room suffice until they can better afford to furnish two. The chairs and the table are equally appropriate to a library as to a dining-room, but the orthodox sideboard tells an unmistakable tale. When the front flap is closed up the Berwyn might be a bookcase or a bureau, but when let down it discloses compartments behind, which contain the various things generally



An original Book Table.

kept in a sideboard, with a shelf at the top for tablecloths and serviettes. When the flap is open it forms a good sized serving table. In oak the Berwyn costs £6 17*s.* 6*d.*, or in hardwood stained oak or mahogany it is £5 15*s.*, and really makes quite an ornamental piece of furniture, with its handsome copper hinges. For those who only want it as a temporary measure, Messrs. W. S. Brown & Sons, of 65, George Street,

Edinburgh, who are the makers, can produce it in deal, to be stained any colour, for £3 15*s*.

The booktable on page 103 is one of Mrs. Herbert Davis's original designs. It is equally in keeping with a drawing-room and with a study, and, besides having one's pet volumes just to hand in the side partitions, there is plenty of space on the under shelf either for papers and magazines or for a writing equipment. This would be an ideal table in the hall sitting-room, with Bradshaw, Whittaker, and all the books of reference one is always wanting on either side, and a supply of stationery, telegraph forms, post-cards, etc., on the under shelf.

CHAPTER XIII

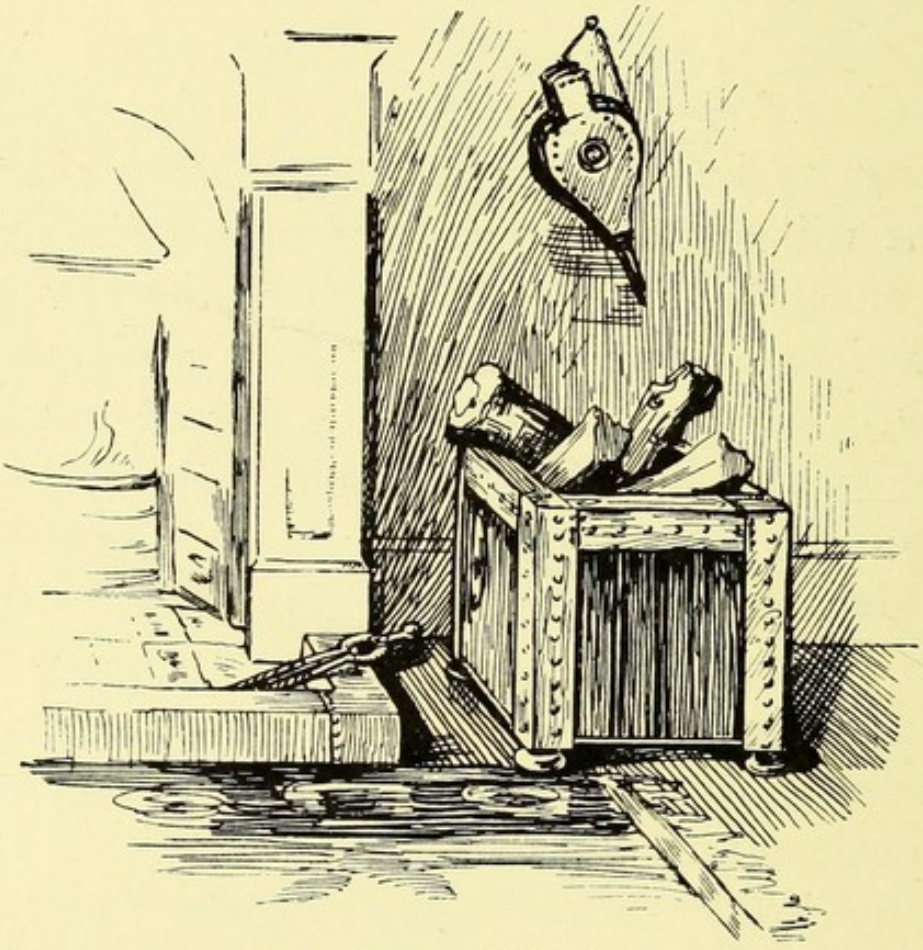
Odds and Ends

THIS is to be a somewhat fragmentary chapter, for it will contain suggestions how various odds and ends, which will add much to the prettiness of the home at a small cost, can be made, with a little ingenuity and a fair amount of patience. I am not going to write about glorified egg-boxes—too much has been said on the subject already—though even egg-boxes are not without their practical uses; neither shall I suggest such things as can only be made by skilled craftsmen in wood carving, metal work, and so on; these are dealt with in another chapter.

When young people marry they often find they have to exercise their judgment, not in what they can buy for the beautification of their homes, but in what they can do without. Some of the rooms may look bare (and better that than to be filled with cheap rubbish), therefore the long winter evenings and the dreary wet afternoons can well be spent in making odds and ends which will add not only to the appearance but to the

comfort of the house. Most men are able to do a little rough carpentry, and that which I am about to describe is of the simplest description.

A log box is an attractive feature by a fireside. The illustration on this page shows one which can be most easily made. A stout, square, wooden



Log Box and Fender.

box of any kind will answer the purpose, and, to begin with, it should be rubbed smooth with sandpaper, sized, and then stained the colour of dark oak or of any wood corresponding with the furniture of the room in which it is to reside. The ornamental bands round it are made of sheet

copper attached with copper headed nails. This sheet copper is easily cut with a pair of big scissors, to be procured from any tinsmith, and holes for the nails should be made at regular intervals with a punch and hammer. The nails ought not to be long enough to penetrate right through the box, but, if they do, they should be nipped off on the inside. Four round, flat feet screwed on underneath will complete the box.

The fender kerb, also seen in the sketch, is another piece of cheap ingenuity, and will be welcomed by those who cannot afford expensive copper or brass fenders. It consists of three pieces of thick, square wood, a long one for the front and a short one at each side. These are firmly glued and screwed together, and can then be covered with sheet copper, like the bands on the box. It would look handsomer, though it would be somewhat more expensive, to have the front of the kerb twice or three times as broad, though no higher. This would make a capital resting-place for plates of hot cakes during tea time. Sheet brass can be obtained and applied in the same way as the copper if it is preferred.

In my descriptions of how to furnish houses on various sums, I have not been able to indulge in the luxury of many pictures. Now, it is not the absolute pictures which cost the money. Engravings, etchings, and autotypes are cheap enough nowadays, and I have often picked up

an excellent specimen in a small size for 1*s.*, or a large one for 2*s.* 6*d.* Glass, too, is very inexpensive, but a nice frame costs money. For large, red autotypes especially, the following home-made frame is most artistic; it is made of ordinary flat deal three to four inches wide, according to the size of the picture, and must be stained a dull black, which can easily be done with a decoction of log wood. A groove must be made all round the inside of the frame on which to lodge the glass and picture, and this is done with a plane sold for the purpose. Take eight short strips of sheet copper about half an inch narrower than the frame, mitre them at one end so that each pair fits at right angles, and cut the other end to a point. Nail these on as corner pieces, and the frame is finished. When the picture is in position, brown paper pasted over the back will keep it in place.

A very presentable jardinière of the severe type can be made at home for a small outlay. The materials required will be a "milking stool" in white wood, price about 1*s.*, an empty lard pail, which one's grocer will usually supply for 6*d.*, and some sheet copper. The stool and pail should both be stained oak, or, if the room in which it is to stand is of suitable colouring, green; the pail should be adorned with three bands of copper, simply nailed on, and the jardinière is ready to hold any big, spreading

fern or some boughs of tinted foliage, the ends of which can be put into a deep jar of water inside the pail. I can picture a most tasteful arrangement of white maple and copper beech, or even of the ordinary aucuba and dark bluish-green fir.

Novel Washstand.

The novel washstand illustrated on this page is really designed to hide a large plate chest. This, probably, will not be amongst the belongings of the young married people, though one never knows what legacies may fall to their share ; but where such a thing is amongst the household gods, it is just as well to disguise its identity as

much as possible. It also is an excellent way of making a washstand out of an empty box; in fact, the idea was given to me by a soldier's wife, who, as they seemed to be always on the move, was very clever in devising makeshift furniture. She had three large wooden boxes which contained blankets, cushions, and various other things on their travels, and, when established for a time in a house, these did duty as washstands. The mode of manufacture is extremely simple. Cut a piece of unbleached calico a little larger than the top of the box and gather on to the front and sides of this a valance of cretonne or embroidered linen. This cover is kept firm by a few tintacks on the top. To fit the lid a cloth of white linen should be made, edged on three sides with coarse lace. About 2 feet above the box fix a firm shelf to the wall, and from beneath this hang a second valance, suspended by rings from a narrow brass rod.

The small safe for papers and jewelry which is found amongst most people's possessions is likewise a thing that one wishes to conceal, but draperies are hardly sufficient for this purpose. A small cupboard with the bottom knocked out can be fitted over the safe, and this can be stained oak and ornamented with large copper or brass corner pieces and a handsome handle. Standing in a dining-room recess with a lamp or copper bowl on the top it looks innocent enough of its

contents. If the safe is to be in a bedroom, the cupboard should be painted white, with a panel of anaglypta on the door.

Years ago there was a craze for making scrap screens; these were ingenious, certainly, but could never be artistic. Light wooden frames for screens are quite inexpensive to buy, and the panels can be made at home with a little taste and skill. Roman satin, or even art linen in a pretty soft colour—some of the pastel blues or greens, for example—make an excellent foundation. In the upper half of the centre of each panel there must be some sort of ornamentation, and a round or oval autotype carefully pasted on is perhaps better than any other. To outline the panel draw a band about half an inch wide, culminating in a true lover's knot at the top, and work this solidly with black filo-floss. A clever embroideress would be able to work a picture with her needle for each of these panels. Designs for these can be obtained from the best art-needlework shops, and if the silks employed are of soft, faded colours, the result is eminently beautiful. Imagine a screen of deep cream satin with a needlework picture at the top of each panel in imitation of some of Angelica Kauffman's work! When each panel is finished it must be nailed very firmly to the frame and the edges made tidy by a narrow gimp of the same colour as the satin.

One very seldom sees footstools in a drawing-room nowadays, but I must confess to a sneaking regard for them; moreover, when an aged relative or an invalid is staying in the house, she will certainly appreciate the comfort of one. It is a mistake to have a dark footstool or one much the same colour as the carpet; these are traps for the unwary, and will trip you up in a most inconvenient and ignominious manner. To make something quite dainty get an ordinary carpet hassock, the price of which is about 1*s.* 6*d.*, some thick white cloth and some narrow white ball fringe. Cut a square of cloth somewhat larger than the top of the hassock, and upon this embroider a design of flowers or arabesques in pale, old-fashioned colours (old rose and puce are charming). Sew this firmly to the hassock, put a band of white cloth all round, and hide the join with narrow white ball fringe. Though this colouring is somewhat delicate, it can always be rejuvenated by a visit to the cleaners.

CHAPTER XIV

The Hire Purchase System

AMONGST the people who are about to set up a home of their own, there is an enormous preponderance of those who, with the best will in the world, lack the capital wherewith to do it. Take for example the young folk. "She" may be the daughter of poor gentlepeople who can give her no better start in life than a trousseau and a small cheque, whilst "he" is in some government office, drawing his salary every month, but having no large balance at his bank. The same applies to middle-aged people, the retired officer, for instance, who can easily afford a certain monthly sum out of his pension for a year or so, but would be sorely puzzled to find what he would term "a lump sum down." To these and to many others the Hire Purchase System is a veritable godsend.

The point is to choose an absolutely reliable firm who not only offer fair and advantageous terms, but whose goods are of sound workmanship and artistic design. Happily many of the well-known furniture dealers of established fame are

quite willing to meet customers on this point, and as an example I may quote Messrs. Maple & Co. of Tottenham Court Road. I believe I am right in saying that their principle is that a quarter of the sum to be eventually expended should be paid down at once, and that the remainder should be spread out in monthly instalments for a period to be decided between the seller and the buyer. For example, if £200 worth of furniture is required, £50 is paid down and the other £150 is paid off in monthly instalments,with a certain percentage (quite a moderate one) charged, in addition, for the loan. Other firms, equally well known, work on a somewhat different principle: they allow customers to purchase—or arrange to purchase—goods at cash prices which are marked at as moderate a figure as possible, and if these are to be paid for by monthly instalments extending over three years, they charge 20 per cent. for the accommodation. These terms are quite fair if one comes to consider them: the rate of interest is under 7 per cent. per year, but in face of this it must be remembered that the goods are deteriorating during that time, and a considerable margin must be allowed for wear and tear.

Everybody recognizes the fact that one pays more for things if bought on credit than if cash down is given for them. It applies to the butcher and grocer, the dressmaker and the

tailor equally, and many of the latter have a notice printed on their bills that so much per cent. is charged for "credit," which means, if the account is not settled within one month. The great advantage of dealing with a large firm in this manner is that in the first instance the goods are bought at the marked or catalogue price, and one knows that the extra money is simply a fair charge for credit.

I have always tried to dissuade people from taking furnished houses or going into lodgings on the plea that they could not afford to buy furniture. A furnished house would cost 2½ guineas a week at the lowest computation, and an unfurnished house, together with rates and taxes, would possibly come to £75 a year; the difference between £136 10*s*. for the first and £75 for the second is £61 10*s*., which, spread over three years on the Hire Purchase System, would buy more than £150 worth of furniture. Judging by my opening chapters, in which I gave estimates for house furnishing, this should be sufficient to supply all the necessaries for a small abode. At the end of three years the tenant would find himself possessed of a houseful of furniture, all of which would then have been paid for, whereas in the case of taking a furnished house, the probable finish of a three years' tenure would be a long bill for damages.

Lodgings are, to my mind, the acme of dis-

comfort. Unless a very high price is paid for them, there is seldom more than one sitting-room in which to live all day long and have one's meals, and there is considerable difficulty about finding an extra bedroom for visitors when required. Surely £100 spent on furnishing a little cottage or flat on the hire system would be infinitely preferable in every way. The small model flat shown in Messrs. Maple & Co's. fitted showrooms is an example of my theory. This is completely equipped for 95 guineas, including not only the furniture, floor coverings and curtains for hall, dining-room, drawing-room, best bedroom, servant's bedroom, bath room and kitchen, but also all the requisite linen, blankets, kitchen utensils, glass, china, plate and cutlery. By paying a quarter of this sum down, roughly speaking £25, and extending the remainder, with reasonable percentage, over three years, or less as the case might be, one could obtain the nucleus of a goodly array of household gods without any great strain on one's income Imagine the difference to the mind and self-respect of a house-proud woman between having dainty little belongings of her own, however simple, and the perpetual annoyance of such as appertain to the average landlady or those who let their houses furnished, in which case all the nice things are stowed away in an empty attic and the "odd-come-shorts" left for the tenants.

CHAPTER XV

Floral Decorations

THE woman who does not care about flowers is an extraordinary being : I am glad to say I have never met her. But she who loves flowers for themselves, and she who thinks they ought to be put about the rooms for smartness' sake are two totally different individuals. The fashion of flowers for dinner-table decoration alters with the times, almost as often as dress, and certainly as often as furniture, therefore to give schemes for pretty table arrangements would be mere folly, as they would assuredly be out of date long, I hope, before this book is out of print. But whatever the style of the moment may be, there are a few hard and fast maxims which nothing can alter.

People say that no mixture of colours in flowers can ever be ugly, because Nature never makes a mistake. Quite true—but man does, and he (or she) is responsible for the grouping. Try putting violet asters and scarlet geraniums into a copper bowl and see the result ! but put the scarlet geraniums into a blue and white bowl and the asters

into a brass jar, and they will both be gladsome to look upon. Flowers of certain colours want particular sorts of china or metal receptacles; scarlet or yellow flowers look their best in blue or in rough brown ware, white blossoms should be put either into brass, copper or green glass bowls, the same applies to blue; all shades of mauve and violet should rest in white, green or brass; pink will go in almost anything, and some sorts of old-world blossoms absolutely cry aloud for bowls of old-fashioned china. A few examples will soon prove my theory; in a bowl of old blue and white Delft plant the bulbs of scarlet tulips, in a round brown "crock" arrange, loosely, a group of golden kingcups, fill a copper bowl with white autumn anemones, put a straggling bunch of blue forget-me-nots into a green glass vase, and some Neapolitan violets into a white china basket. As for the old china bowls I am particularly fond of sweet peas or columbines in these, whilst for Indian pinks nothing is so effective as an old blue and white ginger jar.

Bowls are decidedly the fashion of the present day, from the handsome rose bowl of silver to its humble companion of clear glass; but though these may lose their popularity for dinner-table decoration, our china bowls will remain as favourite flower-holders for many years to come: they look equally in place on the satin-wood table of the elegant drawing-room, or on the wide window

sill of the cottage parlour. But beware of attempting to arrange flowers in these unless there is a wire netting over the top : they will inevitably flop down all round the sides, leaving a gaping void in the middle. Some people use the " leads " instead, but I have never found them so successful unless I wish to produce the Japanese effect of about three tall blossoms, such as jonquils, with three spikes of leaves, emerging from a large bowl of water, and nothing else. This might be a novel idea in the middle of a bowl of gold fish—the leads being hidden by pebbles—but the question is, would the fish die of lead poisoning ?

For luncheon parties, I must say, that whatever the fashion of the day may be, I like the flowers arranged either in baskets or in the rough brown, cream and green Flemish earthenware, which is greatly in vogue. The baskets, which should be brown or green and very coarsely woven, must be fitted with a jar or tin in which to put the water or damp sand. They lend themselves especially well to wild flowers, and I can picture charming tables with groups of irises, kingcups, forget-me-nots, oxeye-daisies, and, when summer is waning, tinted bramble leaves, with fluffy masses of " old man's beard." (And, thinking of the last-named, I must hint how charming it looks with black briony berries in copper bowls or jars !) The Flemish " crocks," a large one for the centre, with four or six smaller ones around, seem to

require tall, straggling blossoms. Shirley poppies of every hue suit them admirably, also coreopsis and gaudy tulips. Where these "ornaments" are used, the viands should be served in the similar ware—a *pot-au-feu* for the soup, a gourmêt pot for anything *en casserole*, game or poultry in a brown fireproof dish, and little brown pipkins or tubs for sweet or savoury.

Those who live in towns find that cut flowers, in winter especially, are an expensive luxury for the everyday dinner-table, as they seldom last fresh more than two or three days. The most economical plan is to get a centre bowl and four small side bowls, either of metal or china, and to put hardy ferns in pots inside them. The small kind are 2*d*. each, and a large one can be bought for 4*d*. The centre bowl will hold one large and three small ferns, the interstices being filled up with moss, therefore, seven small ferns and one large one, at a cost of 1*s*. 6*d*., will form a complete equipment which, with ordinary care, will last for three months. Besides the usual watering, the ferns should sometimes be taken out and dipped head downwards in a bowl of water to thoroughly free the leaves from dust ; they are also very grateful for a little cold, weak tea occasionally.

A decoration for a dinner table, which can be used all through the winter with the addition of a very few flowers, is an assortment of autumn leaves, in tints of red and russet, which have been

carefully preserved. To do this they should be painted over with clear varnish. The leaves of the Virginia creeper and the bramble are most decorative, also the leaves of the Spanish chestnut when they have turned to a pale fawn colour. Scarlet berries can be preserved in the same way. Red berries and pale brown leaves are delightful in a silver bowl placed in the centre of a black oak table, which in lieu of the usual white cloth, has only side slips of linen.

For drawing-room decoration, massive arrangements of flowers are far more effective than small ones, in fact, save for one or two slender glass vases on the mantelpiece or writing table, I must say I do not care for the " Specimen " effect at all. In another chapter I have descanted upon the transformation of lard tubs into jardinières, and when a big fern or palm is not available, these make excellent receptacles for boughs of big flowers. A jar or bowl of water must be placed inside the tub, and then it can be filled with towering foxgloves, sweet-scented Mary-lilies, purple irises, with their spiky leaves, branches of lilac, or such scarlet glories as " red-hot pokers," or winter cherries (sometimes called Cape gooseberries, though this is a misnomer, as the real Cape gooseberry has a small yellow flower).

A most decorative corner in a drawing-room or hall can be obtained by one of those giant flower tubes of bamboo, the price of which is, I think,

4*s.* 6*d.* These stand about 5 ft. high, and the various openings can be filled with branches of foliage, and just a few large blossoms. Golden bracken, or chestnut leaves, with white chrysanthemums are lovely in the autumn, and in the summer there are always the dear old Gloire de Dijon roses, with boughs of red leaves. Another good decoration on broad lines is a wooden pedestal with a china jar on the top, which can be filled with any kind of flowers.

My last hint is on the best method of keeping cut flowers. If they have been sent by post, put all the stems into a jug of water, and let them remain thus in the dark for some hours. If flowers are taken out of the vases and bowls every night, the ends of the stalks cut in a slanting direction, and put in a jug of water, in some cool place until the morning, it will greatly prolong their existence.

CHAPTER XVI

The Country Vicarage

THE days when the village clergyman considered himself "passing rich on £40 a year" have long since gone by: this would now be but poor wage for a humble working-man. Yet the stipends of many of the clergy nowadays are terribly inadequate to their wants, and I could quote several cases where £200 a year and a vicarage is all they have on which to keep up appearances, and to meet the unceasing demands upon them for subscriptions to various charities. My sympathies are greatly with the vicar's wife, and the best gifts one can wish for her is that she has a contented spirit and a managing mind.

The most trying cases are where the Vicarage is really a large house, requiring not only a great deal of furniture, but a considerable amount of keeping up. Were I the vicar's wife under these circumstances, I should simply shut up the rooms which were not absolutely required, trusting to open windows in summer and a portable oil-stove in winter to keep them aired and free from damp.

One can imagine the mixed joy of the curate's wife, who has been living in a six-roomed house in London, when her husband is given the living of Slocombe-in-the-Mud, where the vicarage is a rambling old house, and the garden wants "a lot of seeing to." The small squares of carpet which have been sufficiently large for the London rooms, look like pocket-handkerchiefs spread on sheets and the narrow curtains seem to be but wisps on either side of the big windows. All their possessions in the way of furniture will possibly consist of a small dining-room suite, four easy chairs, a couch, a piano, a bureau and two little tables for the drawing-room, two good bedroom suites and one for the servants' room : this, with a hall stand, a small amount of stair carpet and mats, and a somewhat sparse collection of cooking utensils, linen, glass, china and plate, will constitute the sum total of their household gods, with perhaps a present of £10 or £20 from some kind friend with which to buy the new things that will be so imperatively required. Let us hope that the presentation to the curate on leaving will take the form of "a purse well lined!"

To begin with the dining-room. In the vicarage this should be the largest of the reception rooms, as it will doubtless be wanted for meetings and work parties. The minute square of carpet can be enlarged by a broad border of Abingdon cord carpet in some harmonious shade, and the

narrow art serge curtains may be enlarged by having a very wide band of linen plush on either side. The chairs must be augmented, and the present ones matched as closely as possible. The table must be enlarged by a big additional leaf of stained deal, which, if a long table cloth of art serge is used, will not be unsightly.

The same principle with regard to the carpet can be applied to the drawing-room, but in view of the size of the room and the scarcity of furniture, cretonne curtains of a large floral pattern should be bought, the old drawing-room ones being transferred to the vicar's study. Here will be an occasion for buying furniture second-hand, and two or three large easy chairs, which are to be sold a bargain because of their shabbiness, will do exceedingly well here if equipped with loose cretonne covers like the curtains. A pretty bamboo tea-table, with flaps at the sides, will not be ruinous, and a long photograph table will do nicely against a blank piece of wall. This can be made of deal, by the local carpenter, and enamelled ivory white, with a rather large cloth of furniture silk edged with ball fringe laid over the top. For the further adornment of the room, the vicar's wife must trust to bowls and jars of flowers, artistically and loosely arranged.

Nothing will be forthcoming with which to furnish the study, save a collection of books, papers and periodicals, appertaining to the work of a

parish priest. The sum of money which can be expended here will be very limited, yet it is essential to the vicar's dignity that the room in which he does the greater part of his work and in which he will have to receive his parishioners and his fellow clergymen should, at least, have a workmanlike air. Bookshelves fixed to the wall and made of deal stained the colour of dark oak, will be quite inexpenisve. A cupboard, fitted inside with shelves (a second-hand one will answer the purpose admirably), can be placed in one of the fireplace recesses, and when this is stained oak and fitted with big ring handles of metal it will be quite sufficiently imposing, It is an absolute necessity, for the simple reason, that a proper library table, with pedestal drawers, would be far too expensive a luxury and the various papers, etc., must have some definite resting-place. In the centre of the room there should be a large kitchen table with dark stained legs, substantial, but certainly not elegant. A cloth of art serge, which hangs well down over the sides, will, however, conceal many shortcomings, and a goodly array of writing impedimenta on the top will complete the desired effect. There can be a large blotter, a stationery case, an open tray for MSS., and cases for telegraph forms and post cards, all of which may be home-made at a small cost, and if these are kept in countenance by an inkstand, a calendar, a reading lamp, and various odds and

ends, no one will suspect the presence of the kitchen table beneath. One comfortable easy chair will be a necessity, but this, if made of wicker and upholstered with cretonne, can be bought for 30*s.* or less. The other chairs can be of polished hard wood with round backs and arms, price 8*s.* 6*d.* each. With an Abingdon cord carpet on the floor and a few old (or apparently old !) prints, in plain wooden frames, on the light coloured walls, the vicar need not be ashamed of his sanctum, although it has cost so little to fit up.

It will be impossible to lay out much upon the bedrooms. The suites of furniture used in the London house will have to do duty again, the small carpets being enlarged by broad borders of cream coloured matting. Window curtains and bedspreads of reversible cretonne will give a certain tone of fresh daintiness to these rooms, and therewith the inmates must rest content.

The question of how to live on the small stipend will be a very weighty one. £200 a year, even when there is no rent to pay, is not a gold mine by any means. I always like to quote cases of good management with which I am personally acquainted, because it gives my readers the satisfaction of knowing it has been done once, and therefore can be done again. The vicar's wife, whose methods I will expound, had served an excellent apprenticeship in the school of domestic economy, having been the eldest of a large family of

daughters, whose mother was an invalid and whose father, a poor, country parson. The vicarage, of which she became mistress, was one in a rural district, a considerable distance from a station, and her greatest help was that it possessed a very large garden, her husband being an extraordinarily good gardener. In addition to this, there was a field of considerable extent which was put up for hay every year, an arrangement being made with a local farmer that he should take the entire crop on the condition that he made it, and that he supplied the vicar all the year round with sufficient fodder for a fat pony, who ambled along in a somewhat ancient governess cart whenever journeys had to be made to distant parts of the parish, or to the station. A village lad, for the wage of 5*s*. a week, did what small amount of rough stable work was required, helped in the garden, cleaned knives and boots, and filled coal scuttles and log boxes. He used to arrive at seven in the morning, left again at twelve, and came in for an hour or so in the evening. Two maid servants were employed in the Vicarage, a cook, at £18 a year, and a young housemaid, at £8. The latter would seem to be a marvel, according to our present-day ideas of servants' wages, but the vicaress would take a girl from the village who had never been out to service before, train her thoroughly, and, at the end of a year, get her a good situation. She was always careful

to take a girl from a clean and tidy home, simply making the proviso that she had proper clothing, and many mothers were only too thankful to get their daughters so well started in life. This was the division of income :

	£	s.	d.
Lad's wages . . .	13	0	0
Maids' wages . . .	26	0	0
Household bills . .	78	0	0
Clothing for both . .	32	0	0
Rates, taxes and charities .	30	0	0
Personal expenses . .	21	0	0
	£200	0	0

The vicaress never spent more than 30*s.* a week on food, cleaning materials, washing, and fuel, which seemed to me, for a long while, to be a wholly inadequate sum, until she explained that the poultry she kept literally cost nothing for their food, as the farmer invariably sent more forage in the shape of corn and oats than the pony could possibly eat, and there was always a quantity of vegetable refuse from the garden. The absolute food came to about £1 a week, nearly all the washing was done at home, the cost for soap, soda, starch, and other cleaning materials being reckoned at 3*s.* a week, the remaining 7*s.* a week (about £18 a year) being sufficient for coal and oil. "In addition to my housekeeping allowance I have a few extras," said my friend. "We

take a month's holiday, during which I save the 30*s.* a week, as we always stay with friends. During this time (as it is always in the summer) we let the vicarage for about £4 a week. So many people from London are glad to take it for the summer holidays, as we let them have all the garden produce and the use of the pony. Generally some of the neighbouring clergy are kind enough to take the Sunday duties between them, but even if we have to pay for this to be done, we are usually about £10 to the good. Then I make a good bit by the sale of the surplus fruit we can neither eat nor preserve, so I always have something to fall back upon for unforeseen expenses, such as illness or repairs."

The problem of how to feed four persons and an occasional visitor on £1 a week was solved in this way. "Eggs for breakfast cost us nothing when the hens are laying well, and I generally allow two pounds of bacon per week besides. We bake our own bread and make our own jam and marmalade. I take care that the maids always have a good mid-day meal, consisting of meat, with at least two vegetables, and either a fruit pudding or some stewed fruit and rice. We have a plain luncheon in the dining-room, consisting of cold meat and salad, varied sometimes by sardines, cold fish (if any is in the larder) or vegetable curry, fruit, either fresh or cooked, cheese and biscuits. For late dinner we begin as a rule with

vegetable soup, (unless we have driven to the town and are able to get some cheap fish,) meat or poultry, with vegetables, a sweet and a savoury. We are not by any means vegetarians, we generally have one and sometimes two joints a week, besides either a couple of rabbits (when in season) or a couple of chickens. In the winter we often get a present of a hare from the farmers, and the squire usually sends the vicar a brace of pheasants when he has a big shoot."

Being overburdened with curiosity, I asked for a sample mènu. My friend laughed: "Well," she said, "I will give you two specimens, one for summer and one for winter: the first cost us nothing beyond the usual cooking condiments, the second cost us 1*s.* for a rabbit, of which we only ate half, the remainder making an excellent curry for the following day. The summer one consisted of green pea-soup, roast chicken, French beans and potatoes, fruit salad and grilled tomatoes on toast. The second mènu is celery soup, casserole of rabbit, stewed pears and Paysandu eggs."

Altogether, I must hold this housemistress up as an example of what marvels may be accomplished by good management. But I could not let the subject drop without asking just a few more questions. She was such a cheery, good-tempered little lady that I had no fear of encroaching on her kindness, albeit one of my queries

would have given offence to a good many women. It was, "How in the world do you and your husband manage to dress on £32 a year?"

She laughed. "£16 a year each isn't much, is it? But the vicar is very good, and I believe I get more than my share. You see he does not want any variety of clothes, and when he is working in the garden he is simply a scarecrow, though he looks smart enough when he goes out. I never have more than two best dresses a year, one for summer and one for winter. I buy the material which costs about £1 (I don't go in for trimmings), and I pay about 30*s*. for making and linings. I buy an evening dress and a new coat alternate years. My hats never cost more than £1 10*s*., as I trim them myself, my shoes are also £1 10*s*. I allow myself £3 a year for underlinen, 15*s*. for gloves, and 25*s*. for my 'scrub' costume, which I make myself. The 'scrub' consists of a plain serge skirt and a blouse, cotton in summer, and Viyella in winter. It may surprise you to know that by dint of making them myself, I get a serge skirt, four cotton blouses and two Viyella ones for 25*s*. I never put on my second-best dress till all my household and parish work is done, and I reserve my very best for afternoon parties and fine Sundays. The 'scrub' outfit often lasts two years, and then I spend the 25*s*. on some bit of extra finery: I am now thinking about a marabout stole."

My other query was concerning the heavy demands on the purse of a vicar's wife for charities. "I really have so little money that I can only give my time and my work," she said, rather sadly, "but I certainly do not grudge those. I manage to make a Christmas gift every year for each of our poor people who are over sixty; the vicar gives them a meat tea, and we have a sort of concert afterwards. Then in the summer we always have a sale of work and concert in our garden; the ladies of the village are very good in taking and furnishing stalls; we never clear less than £12, which goes to the blanket and coal fund. In the winter we have entertainments in the schoolroom, one for the Cottage Hospital, another for the Sick and Needy Fund, so we are always busy."

"And happy," I added to myself.

CHAPTER XVII

Our Homes in Distant Lands

I SUPPOSE I may safely say that the pride and strength of England is in her colonies. If we look at a map of the world, England—that "tight little, right little Island"—is so small compared to the vast tracts of country she owns over the seas! yet, in these far distant lands, the homes are inhabited by Englishwomen, who, for the most part have but one object in view—that of striving to make them, as far as possible, similar to those they have left behind in the dear old mother-country. This has to be done in the face of terrible drawbacks as a rule, yet that it is accomplished, by hook or by crook, is proved by the photographs so proudly sent home to their friends.

India hardly comes under the category of the homes to which I allude. There are native draperies and furniture of all kinds to be obtained in the bazaars, and though one may sigh over the gorgeousness of Oriental colouring and design, yet the rooms are certainly not rough and bare. It is of still more distant lands that I would prate.

I am thinking, for example, of the young wife who has to accompany her husband far into the wilds of the Antipodes. She will want to know what to take out with her so that their primitive dwelling may be redeemed from some of its native crudeness. The reply to this is cretonne, art muslin (good) and coloured linen. Glass and china may be added to this—if it is thoroughly well packed for export—and I would further advise a goodly quantity of photographs in linen mounts and some pretty prints or autotypes, in artistic frames, with which to adorn the walls. Furniture must be bought out there—the cost of carriage from England would be prohibitive in most cases, but trunks and boxes of all kinds should be bought with a view to utilization as ottomans and so forth.

The walls of a primitive homestead are usually whitewashed, or—at the best—colour-washed. To embellish these a rather high dado of printed art muslin can be arranged. A couple of strong tapes, rather longer than each piece of wall, should be run through slots at top and bottom of the muslin, which ought to be just a little full. A few tin tacks will keep the dado in position, and it can easily be taken down and washed whenever required. On the barest of whitewashed walls a dado of red and white, yellow and white or turquoise blue and white muslin will make a vast difference. Quite rough shelves and brackets,

when painted white, will be pretty resting-places for books or china, and the lady-emigrant will do wisely to take out bowls and tall jars of copper or brass, as being less fragile and quite as effective as pottery.

Wicker or cane chairs are more frequently found than any others : these can be made more attractive—and more comfortable—by having cushions for seats and backs covered with pretty cretonne, and the same material can be used for loose covers for a couple of big boxes, which will do duty as ottomans. Quite an attractive little room could be achieved with a blue and white dado, window curtains of pale blue linen and cretonne covers in a deep pink and white pattern. For a dining-room there could be a red and white dado, curtains of cretonne in two tones of red and cushions for the hard-wood chairs, made of flamingo red linen.

In the bedrooms large flat topped boxes can be utilized as washstands and dressing-tables where the ordinary bedroom suite is unobtainable, but this is not advisable in countries where cock-roaches and other creepy horrors abound. The boxes must be concealed by cretonne petticoats, up which the insects would crawl with acrobatic vigour. The wisest plan will be to have broad wooden shelves fixed to the wall and supported by strong iron brackets. Both washstand and dressing table of this kind can have a frill of cre-

tonne all round, about twelve to eighteen inches deep, and with a white linen slip over the top they will look quite nice.

An Englishwoman, bound for the wilds, should provide herself before leaving the old country with plenty of art linen, principally in cream or palest tones of greyish blues and greens, with a store of flax threads and silks for embroidery, and with a goodly collection of artistic designs of all kinds. She will probably have many lonely hours, when dainty needlework will be the greatest joy to her, and she will revel in beautifying the house with the triumphs of her stitchery. A needlework picture will take the place of an overmantel in any of the rooms, and most beautiful results can be obtained with these, especially if the background is closely darned with silk. No framing is required if the picture is glued to a broad strip of stained wood, top and bottom. Two eyelets screwed into the back of the top strip will hold the cord by which it is suspended. Screens, workbags, blotters, photograph frames, and many other pretty things can be evolved with patience and industry.

CHAPTER XVIII

Household Expenses

THE great secret of living comfortably on one's income is to portion it out most carefully, considering exactly how much can be spent on each item and then keeping religiously within these sums. I think I could write a volume—and it would be a sad one—on the experiences of young and foolish wives who, partly through shyness and partly through a kind of false pride, do not like to ask the husband leading questions as to his income. The result of this often is that bills are allowed to run on for three or six months; when they come in it is impossible to check what may seem to be gross extravagance, and when a cheque is asked for it may result in a stormy scene, in retaliation, and in tears. I wonder whether young folk will ever fully realize the fact that a ready money system is the only really economical one? If ready money is paid for everything, the housewife can, more or less, make her own terms with the tradesman; she is free to transfer her custom from one shop to another whenever she finds it expedient, and she can put a stop to all extravagance on the part of her servants. Bills must be paid *some day*, and

when they are allowed to run on for any length of time the tradesman may well be excused if he adds a little—somewhat dishonestly, maybe—for credit.

I once had a long talk to a leading grocer in a big provincial town. I paid for things as I bought them, and had no complaint to make as to his prices, but friends told me his goods were very dear. I think his reason was satisfactory, and it conveyed a wholesome lesson to housekeepers. "You see, madam," he said, "ready money to me is twenty-five per cent. more valuable than money paid once a quarter or half-yearly. When I have a considerable sum at the end of the week I can buy weekly consignments at cash prices in the market, or I can wait till certain commodities are cheap and buy at the lowest prices." (I am not quite sure that this will appeal to young wives, but it will to their husbands if they are business men.)

It is impossible for provision tradesmen to publish a double list, one for cash and one for credit, like a tailor; it would offend the big customers, or their cooks, which would be worse; but there is no reason why a lady when she comes to a new neighbourhood should not interview the tradesmen personally, and ask what their terms would be for ready money; they will usually listen to reason.

With regard to portioning out the income, I

think the fault very often lies with the parents of a girl about to be married. A *fiancé* is more pliable than a son-in-law, and will heed words of wisdom from the mother of his bride-elect. At all events, she can approach the subject tactfully, and if she finds the young man *difficile*, it only remains for her to give her daughter the best advice in her power. This, mind you, is *before* the marriage—afterwards it is wisest and kindest never to give an opinion save in cases of the most urgent necessity, when husband and wife unanimously ask for counsel.

Now, as to portioning out the income—(and I am only going to touch upon small ones)—first, an income of £250 for two persons; secondly, an income of £350 for two persons; and, thirdly, an income of £350 for two adults and two children.

First, Income £250, for husband, wife and one servant :—

	£	s.	d.
Rent and taxes . .	45	0	0
Wages . .	16	0	0
Household bills . .	90	0	0
Coal and wood . .	14	0	0
Dress	40	0	0
Personal Expenses . .	35	0	0
Extras	10	0	0
	£250	0	0

Out of this, £90 for house bills, £16 for wages, £14 for coal and wood, £20 for dress, and £15 for personal expenses and extras should be handed over to the wife. It amounts to £155 per annum, and the easiest plan will be for the husband to draw a cheque for about £13 on the first of every month, and this can be kept in a small despatch box and taken out when required. The servant's wages should be paid immediately, a sufficient amount of coal and wood purchased to last the month (this will be a lighter item in the summer than the winter, and a reserve fund can be laid up for the cold weather, when it will be more expensive and more of it will be wanted), the £1 13*s.* 4*d.* for dress allowance put aside, as it is better to lay this out twice a year only, and the household and personal fund put into the housekeeping purse. With care and forethought 10*s.* per head per week ought to be sufficient for food and cleaning materials, and 4*s.* to 5*s.* per week should pay the laundry bill, provided some of the things are washed at home. The 25*s.* a month for personal expenses and small extras must sometimes be drawn upon for the extra week which will come once a quarter, and then there are the aggravating little breakages and dilapidations to be paid for, the cost of chimney cleaning, and perhaps some occasional help.

The husband will have £85 with which to pay rent, taxes, dress and personal expenses. Such

items as life insurance and railway fares must come out of this, the "extra" fund being religiously kept intact in case of illness. The rent question is a most important one. I do not know a greater mistake when a small income has to be considered than to over-rent oneself. In some of the suburbs of London and in the suburbs of most big towns little houses can be found at from £32 to £36 a year rental. The average accommodation is two reception rooms, three bedrooms, bathroom, and kitchen, and sometimes there is a dressing-room as well. Rates and taxes are usually about one-third of the rent. A flat for £45 would have less accommodation, but it might effect a saving of £5 a year or so in railway fares, and £12 a year should be sufficient for coal and wood here. A point in favour of a flat is that it is easier to obtain a servant for it than for a house; moreover, at holiday times it can be shut up and left in charge of the caretaker, which is certainly an economy.

£20 a year is enough for a man's clothes if—and it is a gigantic "if"—he pays ready money. West End tailors who give three years' credit charge very high prices, but West End tailors who have to be paid when the goods are delivered make clothes at most reasonable sums, and—so I am told by very smart men—their "cut" is equally good.

For a woman to dress well on £20 a year means

that she must have her wits about her and be endowed with good taste. The young married woman will start—let us hope—with a sensible trousseau, and this will speed her well on her way, but I would enjoin two axioms—never to buy cheap, tawdry things, and never to let her stock of underlinen run down. Two good dresses at £4 each will be much cheaper in the end than four at £2 each. Blouses can be made at home for a few shillings, and for these washing silk or viyella is cheaper than cotton or fancy silk in the long run. This is the sort of estimate I would give for one year's clothes :—

	£	s.	d.
Winter dress	4	0	0
Summer dress	4	0	0
Serge skirts and blouses (alternate years)	1	0	0
Evening dress and winter coat (alternate years)	3	0	0
Hats	2	0	0
Boots and shoes	1	10	0
Gloves	1	0	0
Linen	2	0	0
Cleaning and extras	1	10	0
	£20	0	0

This is a sliding scale depending on circumstances. A new evening dress may be required every year, in which case the winter and summer

gowns should not cost more than £3 a piece, and the evening frock can be alternately 2 or 3 guineas. A winter dress can be obtained for £3 certainly; i.e., eight yards material at 3*s.* 6*d.* is £1 8*s.* Making, with linings, will be about 25*s.*, and this leaves a few shillings for trimmings. A summer dress will cost the same.

The next estimate of £350 a year for two persons means a much more comfortable mode of living :—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Rent and taxes . . .	65	0	0
Wages	34	0	0
Household bills . .	130	0	0
Coal and wood. . .	16	0	0
Dress	45	0	0
Extras and repairs . .	15	0	0
Personal expenses . .	45	0	0
	£350	0	0

This could easily be alternated to a flat at £80 where only one good servant was kept and a certain amount of help given. According to my estimate two maid-servants can be kept : a cook-general at £18 a year, and a housemaid at £16. I have allowed £2 a week for food and cleaning materials, and £26 a year, or 10*s.* a week, for laundry and wine. With only the master and mistress in a very moderate-sized house, the two maids ought to be able to do a good deal of

washing at home without much inconvenience. Kitchen cloths, dusters, d'oyleys, handkerchiefs, hosiery and woollens can well be managed, also various other odds and ends which do not want starching and getting up. Washing at home will be treated of in another chapter. If the laundry bill is kept down to 5*s*. weekly, the other 5*s*. will provide wine and beer.

The third estimate of £350 a year for husband and wife, two children, and two servants needs much more careful management. This is how it can be divided :—

	£	*s*.	*d*.
Rent and taxes	50	0	0
Wages	34	0	0
Household bills	150	0	0
Coal and wood	16	0	0
Dress (for all)	55	0	0
Extras	10	0	0
Personal expenses	35	0	0
	£350	0	0

It will be best to give a general servant £18 a year, and a nurse or nurse-housemaid (according to the ages of the children) £16. When the children are of an age to go to day school, one servant must be dispensed with, and a certain amount taken out of the personal expenses fund. In these days of cheap education, when there are such excellent high schools for girls and grammar

schools for boys, the cost of education is not nearly as overburdening as it used to be.

I have in this estimate allowed 8*s*. per head per week for food and cleaning materials, and £22 a year for laundry and drinkables. Where there are two young children there will of necessity be a great deal of washing, taking into consideration the amount of white pinafores, overalls, etc., required. It will be expedient to secure the services of a washerwoman once a week to do the bulk of the things. She will require 2*s*. to 2*s*. 6*d*. a day, her food, and a fair allowance of soap, soda, etc. This can be put down at £8 to £10 a year, and the clothes sent to the laundry must be at the rate of 2*s*. 6*d*. a week, or £6 10*s*. a year. This will leave a surplus of about £6 a year for wine, etc.

The "extras" is always an item which must be provided for, as such emergencies as doctors and dentists have to be considered. Then the housewife should lay aside a certain sum every year for renovations and replacements. I think 30*s*. a year ought to be enough with which to replace broken glass and china and to buy new turnery and hardware, and a like sum spent judiciously on household linen at sale times should keep the linen press quite up to the mark. When the year has been a good one, by which I mean when there have been no heavy doctor's, dentist's or chemist's bills to pay, something new

in the way of carpet, curtains or cushion squares should be thought of. Every housewife's glore cupboard should contain a supply of nails, glue, seccotine, enamel, staining, and furniture polish, and the "stitch in time saves nine" principle rigorously adhered to.

How to keep accounts in the simplest way possible is a matter which ought to interest most housewives. I must say that I do not incline towards the housekeepers' diaries, of which so many are published. In them there is a great deal which is unnecessary and a great deal which is missing. The simplest method is to buy two ordinary manuscript books ruled for cash : one of fair size, and the other small enough to be carried in the pocket. In the large ledger put down at the end of each week every item of expense such as butcher, fishmonger, baker, dairyman, greengrocer, grocer and laundry. The small ledger is just a scribbling diary in which to enter (in pencil) amounts paid when out marketing, or the small daily bills presented by the cook.

When the daily visit is paid to the larder, the great point for the economical housewife to keep in her mind is to use everything up. Odds and ends of meat, poultry, and fish can be *réchauffé* without much difficulty, and the same applies to most sweets, but remnants of bread, vegetables, and cheese must not be neglected. Bits of

bread, however stale, can be utilized for puddings, stuffing, sauce and crôutons, and all the odd scraps ought to be grated and put into jars, one labelled "white crumbs" and the other "brown crumbs," thus using up crumb and crust to the last morsel. Vegetables which have already been cooked may be made into a vegetable curry, and such ones as potatoes, peas, French beans, beet-root and carrot may be used in salads. The last bits of cheese which have got dry can be grated and used for savouries and flavourings.

With an inexperienced cook the mistress should write down every morning the exact amount of things to be ordered from each tradesman. She will be able to calculate how much milk, bread, flour, potatoes, etc., will be wanted, besides the orders given to fishmonger and poulterer, should she not be able to go to market herself. A list ought also to be given to the grocer, and to facilitate matters, a "Household Wants" card ought to be suspended in the kitchen. This is a thick blue card with almost every possible requirement printed on it in white. Opposite each item there is a perforated hole, and the cook is provided with a dozen or more cribbage pegs. As she finds that any article has come to an end she puts a peg opposite its name on the board, and from this the mistress makes out the grocery list. A board with a dozen pegs costs 1*s.* 6*d.*, and is supplied by Letts & Co., of diary fame.

CHAPTER XIX

The Servant Problem

EVERY day the cry grows louder and longer and more pitiable, " What are we to do for servants ? " Apparently the race has degenerated—at least, so the mistresses affirm—but I think it would be more just to say it has marched with the times. The maid-servant of to-day rides a bicycle, plays some musical instrument, requires a considerable amount of liberty, and has very decided opinions as to her " rights." But what about the modern mistress ? Does she rise early, instruct the young cook in the art of making dainty dishes, prepare her own jams, pickles and cordials, dust and wash the best glass and china, and generally supervise the working of the household wheels, as her grandmothers did in their day ? You can't expect to get old-fashioned servants where there are new-fashioned mistresses, therefore the wisest plan is to accept servants as they are and to make the best of them.

The great fault to my mind lies in the way servants are engaged. Mistresses are so apt to paint everything *couleur de rose* when it would be far wiser to err on the other side. The most

satisfactory plan is to have a very exhaustive description of each maid's work clearly written out, together with the rules of the house as to times for rising, for meals, for outings, and so on. Let the servant you think of engaging have a copy of this to read over at home before you send or go for her character, with instructions to post it back in the stamped, addressed envelope within a few hours, together with a note stating whether she feels competent to undertake the duties, and would like to do so. Then, if the references are satisfactory, she should be interviewed again and engaged on these lines : "I undertake to pay you a certain sum of money for doing a certain amount of work ; if you neglect to do this or do it indifferently you will not be earning your wages honestly."

I individually would rather have a written character than a personal one : it is more binding on the lady who gives it. The most satisfactory method of obtaining a reference of this kind is to write a list of questions on a sheet of foolscap paper with a broad margin at the side, and enclose it to the lady with a polite note asking her to write a brief reply—"yes" or "no"—when possible, opposite each query. This prevents what is the great drawback to a written testimonial, i.e., that where a mistress does not wish to answer a certain question in a note asking for a maid's character, she can conveniently

forget it. This is the outcome of mistaken generosity on her part. For the benefit of young and inexperienced mistresses, I may say that the chief points in writing for any maid's testimonials are the following: Is she steady, honest, sober, trustworthy, good-tempered, clean, tidy, obliging and an early riser? Of course, if she were all these she would resemble perfection, and one cannot expect it of any human being. One must be quite prepared to find one or more of these qualities missing, but "forewarned is forearmed," and the knowledge of a special fault will enable one to combat it.

Then come the special qualifications for the various branches of service. With regard to the cook the chief questions are: "Is she economical and punctual? Can she make soups of all kinds? Does she understand frying and broiling, entrées, pretty sweets and small savouries?" The reply may possibly be as follows: "She cooks game to perfection, fries fish well, and makes excellent pastry." The result is obvious, i.e. that she must be taught how to make soups, entrées, savouries and pretty sweets. This may be done by the mistress herself or by a course of lessons at a School of Cookery.

The special requirements of a house-parlour-maid beyond the usual housework are that she understands waiting at table, cleaning silver (and lamps if need be), and can mend and do plain

needlework. I am only treating with small households in this book, therefore the duties of kitchenmaids and under-housemaids are not dealt with. The duties of the nurse are quite separate, and have been considered in the chapter on the Nursery.

A large percentage of households keep two maids, to whom they either give the designation of cook-general and house-parlourmaid or of cook and housemaid. The latter is more prevalent in the country, for there the cook does not object to doing a certain amount of housework, and the housemaid expects to have to wait at table. But it is wiser in looking out for a couple of servants to designate them "cook-general" and "house-parlourmaid." The cook-general cannot be expected to know all about high-class cooking; if she is clean and economical, and if she can cook plain food nicely, the household must be therewith content, and the art of the mistress must step in. This lady (or one of her daughters) should know how to make fancy sweets, tempting entrées, and, above all, a good curry. Perhaps the easiest way of explaining how to divide the work will be by giving a set of rules for each maid. Before doing this it may be as well to transcribe the home rules, which should be written on small, white, ornamental slates, and placed on the hall table and in the guest chambers. They would be as follows:—

Breakfast	9 a.m.
Luncheon	1 p.m.
Tea	4.30 p.m.
Dinner	7.30 p.m.

The hours for kitchen meals would be :—

Breakfast	8 a.m.
Dinner	1.15 p.m.
Tea	4.45 p.m.
Supper	9 p.m.

These would be the rules I should write out for the cook-general : Rise at 6.30. Light kitchen fire, shake hall mats, clean front door steps and brasses on door, sweep dining-room, clean grate and lay fire. Get kitchen breakfast at 8. After breakfast dust dining-room and hall, and prepare breakfast for 9 a.m. Clean boots. During dining-room breakfast tidy the kitchen. Clear away breakfast things and wash them up at 9.30. The mistress visits the kitchen at 10. At 10.30 assist in making beds ; do special work of the day till 12. Then prepare luncheon and kitchen dinner ; lay kitchen dinner for 1.15. At 2.15 commence washing up. At 5.30 or 6 begin to prepare the late dinner. By 8.45 this should have been washed up and kitchen supper laid. Make kitchen quite tidy at 9.30. Lock up and go to bed at 10. Special work for the week : Monday morning, turn out dining-room ; Tuesday, do any washing that may be required ;

Wednesday, turn out the hall; Thursday, turn out and clean scullery and larder; Friday, clean all pots and pans and polish copper and brass ware; Saturday, clean kitchen.

The house-parlourmaid's duties would be as follows: Rise at 6.30. Sweep study and drawing-room, sweep down the staircase, clean grates in either study or drawing-room as required. At 7.45 take tea and hot water to bed-rooms, and take out any clothes which require brushing. At 8.30 brush clothes and take them back to bedrooms. Lay dining-room breakfast and take it in by 9. Clean ladies' boots and take them to bedrooms; open beds to air and tidy rooms. Dust drawing-room and study. Make beds at 10.30. Dust bedrooms. Change dress at 12.30, and take hot water to bedrooms. Lay luncheon for 1 p.m. At 2.15 clear away luncheon and wash up glass and silver. At 7 o'clock take hot water to bedrooms and lay dinner-table. Wait at late dinner. Wash up all silver and glass. Take hot water to bedrooms at 9.30, and prepare them for the night. Take up silver basket. Bed at 10 p.m. Special work for the week: On Monday turn out drawing-room; Tuesday, do washing; Wednesday, turn out study; Thursday, mistress's bedroom; Friday spare rooms and servants' room; Saturday, staircase and bathroom. One afternoon a week should be devoted to silver cleaning and one to ironing

On Sundays dinner will be at 1 o'clock and supper at 8 o'clock.

I have purposely omitted any reference to afternoon tea, as I am a great believer in allowing the maids to go out in the afternoon, whenever it is practicable, for a couple of hours. The one who is in must be dressed in the orthodox black frock with white apron, collar, cuffs and cap, in readiness to answer bells and to take tea to the drawing-room. I do not think servants would grumble much if they could each have three afternoons a week and on alternate Sundays from 11 till 12.30 (for church) and from 3 till 9.

The régime for the single-handed general servant is far more difficult to arrange, and it is imperative that a certain amount of help is given to her by her mistress in the way of dusting, tidying up, and so forth. The most awkward part is the way to arrange when she is out; in a flat this is comparatively simple, for the "Out" card is either left on the door or registered in the entrance hall by the porter, which makes the mistress secure from visitors. Failing this, she must open the door herself or engage a temporary help to do it for her. In London there is the Boys' Brigade (31, Elizabeth Street, S.W.) to fall back upon, where very handy lads can be hired for 6*d*. an hour.

The general servant must be an early riser.

The kitchen fire should be alight by 6.45, the front steps cleaned, hall mats shaken and dining-room swept by 7.30. She should then get her own breakfast and take up tea and hot water to the bedrooms, together with the boots she has cleaned, by 8. The dining-room must then be dusted and fire laid, also the drawing-room gone over with a carpet sweeper by 8.45, when she must lay the table and prepare dining-room breakfast. Whilst this is in progress she will strip the beds and tidy the bedrooms. At 9.30 she will clear away breakfast, and after the orders for the day have been given, I do not think it will hurt the mistress to wash up the breakfast things and dust the drawing-room. One room should be turned out every day, and the luncheon for the mistress and dinner for the maid can be ready by 1 o'clock. By 2.30 all should be cleared away and washed up, which will enable the maid to change her dress before 3 o'clock.

A single-handed maid ought to have her afternoons to herself with the exception of getting tea. Her work during the morning has been fairly arduous, and she will want a rest ; if possible, an hour or so in the open air would do her all the good in the world, and in a flat this would be easily managed, as I have said before. If she commences her preparations for dinner at 6, it ought to be ready—in the ordinary way—by 7.30. After she has washed up she must get

her own supper, prepare the bedrooms for the night, and be in bed herself by 10 o'clock.

If it is found impossible to arrange otherwise than to give her one evening a week and every Sunday evening, the meals on these occasions should be principally cold. There are any amount of cold dishes, both meats, sweets and savouries, which are most appetising, and I am quite sure that no reasonable husband will object to them. Soup can be left by the side of the fire ready to be heated up, and potatoes can be prepared up to the point when they want boiling. If the maid returns by 9.30, she can clear away and wash up before bedtime. With only one maid, absolute tidiness on the part of the mistress is imperative. She cannot expect the dress left on the bed, the hat on the table, the shoes on the floor, and the gloves and veil on the chair, to be put away for her.

The question of lady-servants is a predominant one at the present time. Whether the movement will succeed in the end I cannot possibly say, but on one point I am quite convinced, which is, that it is impossible to mix ladies with domestics of the ordinary servant class, except in the case of nurses, who have their own apartments and whose duties are quite separate from those of the rest of the household. Where the household consists only of husband and wife or of a widow lady and her daughters I am sure

lady-servants would answer, but I am very dubious on the subject where there is a mixed household with young men and grown-up girls. Lady-servants, or, as they are sometimes called, household dames, would be quite happy if two or three were together, providing they had a fresh, pleasant bedroom and another room, however tiny, which they could call their sitting-room ; but the most fatal mistake possible would be to treat them as members of the family : it is no pleasure to them and a great tie to the lady of the house, not to mention her visitors. I have a vivid recollection of dining with a dear, philanthropic soul who, when the lady-parlour-maid had handed the vegetables, insisted upon her sitting down with the rest of us at table. When she jumped up to change the plates we all felt that we ought to offer to help her.

When maid-servants are put upon board wages, such as the times when the family is away from home and the domestics have to remain behind, the usual sum allowed is 10*s.* 6*d.* per head per week. Food allowances in those households where the kitchen food is kept entirely separate from that used in the dining-room are as follows per head :—

Tea, ¼ lb. per week.
Cocoa (where beer is not given), ¼ lb. per week.
Sugar, 1 lb. per week.

Butter, ½ lb. per week.
Bacon, 1 lb. per week.
Jam, 1 lb. per week.
Cheese, 1 lb. per week.
Milk, ½ pint per day.
Meat, ½ lb. (without bones) per day.

This is by no means a hard and fast rule ; some servants prefer fish to meat, and then only a small quantity is consumed in the kitchen, their favourite dinners being herrings, haddock, mackerel and, when in season, sprats. When this is the case, it is wise to have a *2s.* or *2s. 6d.* basket of fresh and dried fish from Grimsby once a week. In other establishments the maids may have a strong partiality for both meat and fruit puddings, in which case the bill for suet will go up and the bill for meat and milk come down.

CHAPTER XX

Washing at Home

Of course, there is "no possible manner of doubt" about washing at home, especially where there are several children, being a great economy; but in most cases it is an economy which is most unpleasant in practice. Can anything be more objectionable than the smell of hot soapsuds and the "moist, unpleasant" atmosphere of steam which pervades a small house on these occasions? The mistress thereof devoutly hopes that no visitors will call on washing days, for, even if the hall door is opened for two minutes, the unmistakable odour asserts itself and the lady of the house feels that her prestige in the neighbourhood is considerably lessened. Moreover, there is the dreadful business of hanging things out to dry in the back garden within full view of the neighbours' windows.

In a country house it is a different matter. If there is not a laundry proper there is usually some outhouse which was originally intended for a knife house, or an apple room, or a second

larder (builders of old country houses were lavish with their outbuildings), which could easily be turned into a wash-house when occasion required. And then there will be a paddock or some open space, far from the view of the general public, where clothes lines can be put up with impunity. With such facilities I should urge the expediency of employing a laundress for two or three days every week or fortnight, not only on account of the great saving of expense, but because neither chemicals nor machinery will be used, and the life of the linen will therefore be doubly prolonged.

But necessity knows no law, and where the weekly laundry bill would be a matter of the gravest importance the greater part, if not all, of the washing must be done at home. The exception will be the white shirts of the men-folk of the household, for no maids could be expected to get these up properly. Collars, cuffs, dainty blouses and the pretty little white frocks and pinafores worn by the children can be ironed by the house-mistress if she has a little practice. It is not hard work, like washing, and only requires patience and great care. I know several girls who always get up their own blouses and white, lace-trimmed petticoats. They not only like to wear these, but they like plenty of clean ones, and their mothers would grumble sadly if they were sent to the laundry. I learnt a lesson once

from a young mother whose baby boy seemed to be dressed like a young prince, always in spotless white, as far as pelisse, sun-hat, pram-cover, etc., were concerned, when out for his daily airing. I knew that her husband was only earning a very small salary, therefore I wondered at what I fancied was her extravagance; but I found out that master baby only possessed "two of everything," and that immediately the slightest symptom of soil appeared upon pelisse or any of his outdoor gear it was taken off, washed, starched and ironed by his mother, and in this way a fresh and spotless set was always ready at a moment's notice.

When washing has to be done by the two maids, a certain day, or, rather, morning, must be set apart for the purpose and rigidly adhered to. I will give the plan of action which, if accurately carried out, will ensure satisfactory results. I know households in which it is done, but I must acknowledge that these are where excellent mistresses reign, who not only can organize the work but who see that it is carried out. Monday is the usual day for sorting out the linen for the wash, and this should be as carefully done as if it were to be sent to a laundry. The articles should be divided into four lots: the white things, the coloured things, the flannels and woollens, and the dusters, kitchen cloths, etc. Two tubs or zinc baths will be required, one to

hold the white things and the other the household cloths. These on the evening of Monday should be soaped and rolled up separately and put into the tubs with cold water and a goodly proportion of ammonia. There they will remain until the following morning, when a great deal of the dirt will have come out of them without any washing whatever.

Tuesday must be a day of early rising, for the copper should be alight by 6 o'clock, and the first batch of things boiling by 6.30. To every gallon of water in the copper add a wineglassful of paraffin, a teaspoonful of borax, and a tablespoonful of soap powder or soap jelly. When thoroughly boiled in this preparation little, if any, rubbing will be required; and whilst the second batch is boiling, the first can be thoroughly rinsed in cold water, passed through the wringer and hung out to dry. Coloured things where the colours are absolutely fast can be treated in the same way, but delicate cotton blouses and skirts must, like the flannels and hosiery, be washed separately. Blue is a terribly difficult colour to wash, as it has a knack of disappearing either in patches or *in toto*. To prevent this put half a gill of vinegar to every gallon of water. Flannels must be washed carefully and quickly, and they should be squeezed and kneaded rather than rubbed. Prepare a good tub of soapsuds with a tablespoonful of ammonia to every gallon

of water. This should be used warm but not hot, and the two rinsing waters should be just tepid. First wring them, then shake them vigorously, and finally hang out to dry; they should be shaken from time to time, as this will raise the nap. When washing black stockings put a little blue in the water, as this will help to preserve the colour.

If the two maids work well, all the washing and most of the drying should be done by 10 o'clock, even allowing an hour for breakfast and washing up. The plain things can be mangled and the others starched and rolled up ready for ironing. Tuesday afternoon can be devoted to this business, and by the evening the laundry work for the week will be finished and done with, at least as far as the maids are concerned. The mistress has her part to do on both days, and that must be conscientiouly carried out, or she cannot expect her servants to be punctilious as to time.

When sorting out the linen on Monday morning there may be some mending which should be seen to, and any stains of ink, fruit, or the like must be taken out at once. Both these duties should fall to the lot of the *haus-frau*. Thin places in table linen, pillow slips, towels, etc., should always be darned before they are washed, otherwise the thin place will speedily become a hole. If possible patching should be avoided; however neatly done it is always far more in

evidence than a fine darn, which, when starched and well ironed, will be almost imperceptible. Various stains can be removed as follows: For tea, rub the mark with borax and steep in boiling water; for wine, rub with salt and pour boiling water through the linen; for fruit, rub with freshly cut tomato or with Sanitas; for ink, dip in buttermilk and then rub with hot water and soda; for ironmould, use salts of lemon and boiling water; for scorch, make a paste of chloride of lime and water, with which to rub the stain.

On Tuesday morning collars, cuffs and blouses may be ironed, as these are treated with cold-water starch, and need not remain for more than two hours before ironing. A blanket, a cloth, and some scrupulously clean irons will be required. The starch should consist of a tablespoonful to half a pint of water, a teaspoonful of dissolved borax, and a few drops of turpentine. When this is thoroughly mixed it should be strained through muslin. The collar should be ironed first on one side and then on the other until it is perfectly dry. To polish it use a board of very hard wood covered with a cloth, lay the collar on it, damp it slightly with a clean rag and use a very hot iron. For ironing blouses a long, narrow board to place inside the sleeve will be found most convenient, in the same way that a much bigger board should be used for skirts or petticoats, one end resting on the table and the

other on a chair or ledge of some kind. The skirt, which is slipped over the board, can then be turned round and ironed in comfort.

Washing lace curtains is not a part of the usual weekly work, but in London or in smoky towns this often has to be done once a month or so. Muslin curtains should be washed, lightly starched and ironed in the usual way, but lace ones, especially if they are at all costly, require much more delicate handling. Prepare a large tub of hot water and dissolve in it about half a packet of Sapon. Immerse the curtains in this, one at a time, and knead them gently with the hands. The dirt will all come out very quickly. They must be well rinsed in two clear waters, squeezed, but not wrung, dry, and then pinned out on the floor, a sheet having been previously spread over the carpet. Having pulled them into shape the pinning must be very thorough, to ensure the lace being kept in position until it is perfectly dry. No starch is required; in fact, this kind of curtain is far better without it.

Blanket washing is not such an onerous task as may be imagined. First have a large tub holding two gallons of boiling water, half a pint of ammonia, and a packet of Hudson's soap powder. Take a second tub of warm water and add half the mixture from the first tub. Soak one or two blankets at a time in this for a few minutes, and then rinse them in clear warm water. Pass them

through the wringer, shake well and hang out to dry. Whilst the rinsing and mangling is going on two more blankets can be put to soak in tub number one, more of the hot mixture being added.

Cleaning is akin to washing, so I may with impunity suggest one or two methods for cleaning furs and woollen fabrics. White furs, chinchilla and sable can be cleaned with hot bran, rubbing it well in with the hand and then brushing it off with a clean hat brush. Astrachan and black furs may be cleaned with a piece of linen dipped in eau-de-Cologne. White furs which are unlined can be washed in a lather of soap and bran-water, rinsed in clear water, and hung in a warm place to dry. Shake the fur frequently during the drying process to make it fluffy.

Black skirts have a way of getting brown and rusty. To clean one in this condition first brush it thoroughly and take out all grease spots with blotting paper and a hot iron. Make a decoction of young ivy leaves and boiling water —about twenty leaves to half a pint of water. Strain the mixture, sponge the skirt with it, and press with a hot iron.

CHAPTER XXI

Spring Cleaning

THERE is one individual to whom the Spring Cleaning era is a time of terror, and he is the master of the house; if there are grown up sons they hate it equally, but they generally find kind friends who are willing to welcome them for dinners, suppers, and, if necessary, breakfasts. This is one of the advantages of bachelorhood. The poor married man either groans and submits, or grumbles and interferes. Perhaps the former type has the best of it. If the house-mistress organizes her plan of cleaning campaign carefully almost all inconvenience to the male members of the household can be avoided. The women to whom money is not a very potent consideration leave the house cleaning to servants and char-women, going away for a holiday or a visit whilst it is being done. It is not uncommon to hear a lady say, "I never have the odious spring cleaning until some friends have invited us to stay with them for a fortnight." It is somewhat dubious whether

the cleaning is thorough. Personally I should not believe in it. But I am now dealing with those who cannot afford such luxuries as extraneous holidays.

There must always be a preparatory time to spring cleaning in which the housewife (I am simply dealing now with those ladies who cannot afford to leave this matter in the hands of hirelings, and prefer to see it done properly themselves) takes the leading part. First of all she must determine which rooms, if any, want repapering, and in what parts of the house painting and whitewashing have to be done. The next thing is what will be wanted in the way of new curtains, cretonne covers and cushion squares, and finally what will be the repairs, renovations and replacements. Of all these she should make a list.

The next point is to start a " workshop," which may be instituted in an empty bedroom, a disused attic, or *faut-du-mieux*, a box-room. The first piece of work will be to prepare the summer curtains and short blinds for each room. These being of muslin, lace or net, will have been sent to the cleaners, or if they were rough dried in the autumn and then put away, will demand a visit to the laundress to be got up. How to wash curtains at home will be found in the Washing at Home chapter. The thin curtains should be gathered up ready to hang on the poles or to put on to the rods, and for these the Spydre tapes

should be used. These are infinitely preferable to the slip-shod method of patent safety hooks and rings, which have an unpleasant habit of getting out of order.

Many renovations can be accomplished with Aspinall's enamel and Jackson's wood stains, and all articles that require this treatment should be taken at once to the "workshop." Baths and cans come first, the baths in bathrooms being done, so to speak, on the premises. The surface to be enamelled must be made perfectly smooth by rubbing down with sand-paper, and then three coats of enamel should be applied. The secret of success lies in each coat being very thin and allowed to get quite hard before the next is applied. When the outsides of baths and cans require renovating white enamel produces the best results : any bright colours such as turquoise blue or scarlet look common.

All the repairs having been done the cleaning can be commenced in earnest, beginning at the top of the house and ending in the basement, the staircase and hall being left till the last. Wall papers can be cleaned by wiping them down with bread. Take a fairly new loaf, cut it into convenient chunks and clean the paper with the crumb, cutting off the surface as it becomes dirty. To clean white paint cut about two ounces of soap into shreds, add half a gallon of boiling water, a pinch of borax and two tablespoonfuls of paraffin.

This, when applied cold to the paint with a piece of flannel, will make it look like new. Coloured paint can easily be cleaned with paraffin only.

When heavy carpets have to be cleaned it is usually the wisest plan to send them to a cleaner. In country places where there is plenty of open space they can be thoroughly beaten out of doors, and after they have been re-laid they can be washed over with oxgall and warm water in the proportion of one pint of the former to three gallons of the latter. This mixture should be poured, a little at a time, into a pail, and as soon as it becomes dirty, it can be thrown away. When carpets have not been taken up they should first be thoroughly swept with a hard broom and then scrubbed with ammonia and water, doing only a small piece at a time and drying it quickly with a clean cloth. This is an excellent plan for thick pile carpets when the colours look dull and faded, but I cannot recommend it for cheap art carpets : these should just be well swept or beaten. Carpets, table-covers, and other woollen materials are often disfigured by stains of various kinds, therefore a few hints on the methods of removing them may be useful. Paint stains can be taken out with turpentine, but tar stains should be well rubbed with lard, which loosens and dissolves the tar, after which scrubbing with hot soap and water will quite disperse them. A very common

accident where oil lamps are used is the upsetting of paraffin on the carpet. This really ought to be taken out at once, as the longer the stain remains the harder it gets. White blotting paper and a hot iron will usually remove the marks, but if they are very stubborn it may be better to make a paste of Fuller's earth and water, lay it on thickly and let it remain for twelve hours, after which it can be brushed off and the carpet washed with hot water. Ink stains can be removed with strong vinegar.

When the thick winter curtains have been taken down they should be cleaned before being put away for their summer rest. If they are to be done at home they should be hung over a clothes line in the open air and well beaten with sticks to get the dust out. After this they can be thoroughly brushed, and should finally be rubbed with bread. Many kinds of woollen fabrics, such as damask or good art serge, will stand washing. Rain water is the best, and the material should be put to soak for half an hour in clean cold water ; the amount of dirt which comes out always amazes me, and I think of the number of microbes which may have lurked therein for the past six months. After this the curtains should be washed in cold water without either soap or washing powder till they are quite clean. Several waters will be wanted, and if the charwoman and a maid are both employed on this job the quickest

method will be to have two large tubs and to keep on refilling first one and then the other with clean water.

Of course all pictures and ornaments must be cleaned. The house mistress will probably wash all her dainty china and pretty glass vases herself. If the latter have become cloudy and discoloured through allowing flowers to remain too long in the water which they have contained, they can be made quite bright and beautiful by using vinegar and salt. A long, thin paint brush of hog's hair is the most convenient implement with which to poke into the crevices of slender and oddly-shaped vases. Broken china ornaments can be mended with seccotine, but this is a work of infinite patience as the only successful method is, when a bad smash is concerned, to join one piece at a time and leave it for twelve hours to set. This setting cannot possibly take place if there is the slightest strain on the join, to avoid which cunning supports must be made of crumpled paper or, in the case of large ornaments, of books and bits of stick. This is a phase of the mending which many people ignore. They wish to restore an amputated, outstretched arm to a china figure and are surprised when they find the arm again on the floor, albeit they dabbed on plenty of seccotine and left it!

Pictures should be taken down in every room before the walls are cleaned; the mistress should

see to this herself, as maids have a way of dusting under and over them which is eminently superficial. Prints and engravings in wooden frames with glass over the front are quite simple to clean, and it is advisable, as a finishing touch, to wipe the glass over with a rag damped with paraffin. It will polish beautifully afterwards, and the smell, though too faint for "humans" to perceive it, will effectually keep flies away. Oil paintings should first be cleaned with bacon rind and then polished with an old silk handkerchief. Gilt frames want most careful handling. If washing is absolutely necessary use water in which an onion has been boiled, and even with this precaution some of the gilding may disappear if it is made too wet. Another plan is to cut a potato in half and rub the gilding very lightly and carefully.

When so many excellent furniture polishes are on the market it seems invidious to recommend one more than another, and nearly every housewife has her own particular polishes for furniture and for metal. The only remark I have to make about polishing is that it is folly to polish dirt—a favourite custom amongst inexperienced servants. All wood must first be washed to remove dust and grease, and when the polish is applied to a clean surface it will take effect much more quickly and require less elbow grease. Stained floors which are beginning to look white and worn

in places where there is much traffic can be touched up with Jackson's varnish stain, and finally well rubbed with Jackson's Camphorated Wax Polish.

When the last stage is reached, by which I mean the hall staircase and bathroom, there will probably be linoleum, cork carpet or tiles to be cleaned. Linoleum must be washed and dried very quickly, just a small piece being done at a time, and it must then be polished with beeswax and turpentine, as this acts as a preservative. Cork carpet simply requires washing just in the way in which a floor is washed. Tiles should first be washed and then rubbed over with a paraffin rag. If there is any Indian matting either on the floor or used as a dado, it should be washed with salt and water, which will prevent its turning yellow.

I suppose I can safely say that the most important part of all the spring cleaning lies in the kitchen premises. I think the ceilings of both kitchen and scullery should be whitewashed every year. If the kitchen walls are covered with a highly glazed "tile" paper, some soap and water will make them absolutely clean, and in washing the walls, the cupboards, the shelves, and the floor Izal should be plentifully used. The walls of the scullery will probably be colour or whitewashed, and this should be re-done every year. The larder should be whitewashed through-

out every spring. Of course all the pots and pans must be polished till you can see your face in those made of tin or copper. When a brass or copper kettle has been allowed to get thoroughly black by standing it right on the fire it may be made quite bright by using spirits of salt (which, by the way, is deadly poison). Spring cleaning times show up the shortcomings of one's maids, and things which have been put away uncleaned are ruthlessly brought to light.

A final hint which may be of service to those who live on the sunny side of the road is that if the front door is well rubbed with furniture polish the paint will not blister.

The autumn cleaning is carried out much in the same way as that of the spring. There is no papering, painting or whitewashing to be done at this season, but the thorough cleaning of every nook and corner is most important. The summer dust and flies bring all kinds of germs, added to which the moths have been busy laying eggs which ought to be exterminated. Before putting away the thin summer curtains of muslin and lace they should be washed and rough dried, and airy elegance must give place to warmth and comfort. Some people play general post with their furniture at these two seasons, as they have one arrangement of it for the hot weather and one for the cold. There is a great deal to be said in favour of this argument, as, for instance, during

the summer we like the big drawing-room sofa as near to the window as possible, whereas in the winter we should feel aggrieved if it were not drawn up close to the fire.

CHAPTER XXII

Renovations and Sales

It is quite extraordinary what renovations can be effected by a clever woman. The chief seasons for these are spring and autumn, the former being the universally accepted period for furbishing up and cleaning, whilst when autumn arrives we think about winter curtains, draught-proof portières, eiderdown bed-quilts and so forth. Of course we are then brimful of energy as the result of our annual holiday, during which time we have been meditating great household reforms and planning new and artistic arrangements of furniture. But the renovations are not always at these seasons, for we may at odd times have had to move into a new house, or perhaps have acquired a legacy of furniture or draperies from some kind relative. And as a last reason for renovations we may possess a husband who has a hobby for picking up bargains at sales, and who has a habit of arriving in a cab laden with chairs or tables which at first sight seem only fit for firewood. It would be a pity to dispel the radiant smile from his face, therefore the art of

the renovator must be called into request. Tables and cabinets usually present a most woeful appearance when they have been sold "for a song" by a second-hand furniture dealer, and the first process is to remove the dirt. They should be thoroughly washed with warm (not hot) water and vinegar, and if there is any carving in which the dust of ages has accumulated until it has become quite hard a stiff tooth-brush and a little soap will be required. The wood should not be allowed to remain wet any longer than is absolutely necessary, a small portion being washed and dried at a time. If dirt seems to be fixed in carvings or the thin reeded mouldings, cut a piece of stick to a point, cover it with soft rag, dip it into methylated spirit and with this probe into the apparently ungetatable parts. When the piece of furniture is quite clean it should be repaired : table legs may want new castors and the drawers of cabinets or bureaus may require new handles, in fact the latter are usually an immense improvement, as, if the original ones remain they will in all probability be quite devoid of lacquer. The final renovation will be the polishing, and an excellent preparation for this is Renovene, which revives the grain and colour of the wood, and is used by most furniture dealers. A china cabinet or a bookcase with clear glass doors, which will do duty as a cabinet, will be greatly improved if the shelves are neatly covered with

linen plush in some pretty, pale colour which will tone with the room in which it is to be placed. Line the back and sides of the interior with plain Silk Fibre paper, at about *2s. 6d.* the piece, which has almost the effect of silk. Of course plush would be preferable, but paper is far cheaper and really looks exceedingly well if the colour is precisely the same as that upon the shelves.

The wooden frames of chairs and sofas should be treated in the same way as the tables, but the seats will have to be re-covered. There are so many pretty and inexpensive brocades and tapestries nowadays that this will probably only cost a few shillings. Remove the shabby covering and thoroughly beat and bang the stuffing to get out as much of the dust as possible. A little fresh horsehair will be wanted if the stuffing has greatly deteriorated. Upholstering is not a difficult operation: it wants patience and care, an upholsterer's hammer and some little furniture brads. The fault of the amateur usually lies in the edges, which are not always as even and smooth as they should be, but to remedy this cover them with a narrow gimp or ball fringe instead of using brass or copper studs.

A very ordinary renovation, and one which is often indulged in at the spring cleaning period, is the making of loose cretonne covers for chairs and sofas. These are perfectly easy if the shape of seats and backs are first cut out in newspaper

and fitted. The cretonne must be cut an inch larger every way to allow for turnings, and each cover finished off with a frill. I quite fell in love once with a charming little country drawing-room in the house of a lady who was endowed with but very little money but a great deal of skill in clever stitchery. The delightful effect was the result of her winter pastime, and she assured me that she had thoroughly enjoyed it. Each chair seat and back (where backs existed) was covered plainly with deep cream linen, on which a bunch or trail of pink flowers and green leaves had been worked with washing silks. Each design was different—tulips on one chair, convolvuli on another, Indian pinks on a third, a loose bunch of pink honeysuckle on the music-stool and some big Shirley poppies meandering over the sofa. In place of the usual frill the covers were kept in place by a broad band of pale green linen plush. The work of attachment had been done by a chain-stitch machine, which could be undone in a few minutes when the linen parts had to be sent to the cleaner or laundress. Window curtains of pale green damask with under ones of ivory net completed the room.

I furthermore learnt that the winter evenings' amusement of the previous year had been a "blue bedroom," which I immediately wished to inspect. It was about as simple as a room could be, but was exceedingly quaint. The walls were

white (or rather cream), and I believe they had only been distempered ; however, they formed a good background to some simple oak furniture. The window curtains, to the sill only, were of butcher blue linen, on which a very deep dado of conventional daisies was worked in white flourishing thread. The toilet slip matched the curtains, as did the portière, save that, in this case, the daisies were almost as big as sunflowers. The bedspread consisted of alternate strips of the blue embroidered linen and of coarse lace insertion.

Where economy has to be studied it is best to have the same sort of thin curtains all over the house, and these should be either of Madras or spotted muslin. When it is time to have new ones in the reception rooms the old ones can usually be cut down and used in the bedrooms where the windows are not so lofty ; or, if they are too far gone for this, the best parts of them will make short blinds, which, if trimmed with ball fringe or frills, are always pretty.

The question of buying furniture at sales is one on which I could write long dissertations. To those who are not very good judges I should emphatically give the time-honoured advice of Punch "Don't." After much consideration I really think that those who wish to furnish their houses by picking up bargains ought to own a motor-car or a devoted friend who will always put one at your disposal. You want to be able to

get to remote country villages without having to expend large sums on train and cab fares, with perhaps no bargain to be picked up at the end. Yet I know of such instances of rare luck happening to friends, that I often feel sorely tempted to indulge, myself, in the recreation. Imagine an old and rare Indian cabinet being bought at a forced sale in some unheard of country house for £12, for which the lucky purchaser was afterwards offered £300 by an expert! It is like picking up an old picture for 10*s*. and selling it for a fabulous sum to a collector. I am afraid the days when real antiques were to be discovered in cottages and farmhouses are now no more, yet it is only a few years ago that a friend of mine made me frightfully covetous by introducing me to a bedroom furnished with old oak, the whole of which had only cost her a little over £2. The washstand and the dressing-table were two small oak dowry chests, mounted on stout square legs to bring them to the required height. The hinges were removed from the lids and fastened to the front carved panels, which, being made to open outwards and being supplied with a middle shelf within, answered the purpose of the ordinary chest of drawers. A tall cupboard, which had been bought for £1, did duty for a wardrobe, and a carved picture frame filled with looking-glass, to the back of which a firm "Strut" had been attached, made an admirable toilet mirror.

The bedstead was an ordinary iron one (an old oak bedstead possessing disadvantages), but the ugly head and foot rails were concealed by casings of antiquated chintz. A bedroom furnsihed with real old Sheraton is an everlasting joy, but, though it is fairly easy to find a table, chest of drawers, wardrobe and mirror, the washstands of that period were infinitesimal and intensely inconvenient. A small sideboard makes an excellent substitute as a marble or tiled top can easily be fitted to it.

With some women the sales are an absolute mania, and they dream of the happy days when they can pass hours in the shops literally fighting for bargains. There are great advantages if the purchaser knows exactly what she wants to get, and refuses to be tempted with anything for which she has no use, on the ground of its being "absolutely given away." It is quite true that many firms find it expedient to clear out their stock at the end of a season to make room for the goods they have bought for the ensuing season; or, again, some firms occasionally buy bankrupt stocks or take advantage of a salvage sale after a big fire, and give their customers the opportunity of being able to purchase the goods at very low prices. I think it very advisable for housewives to replenish their linen press every year from the sales which take place at the reliable linen houses. However limited the income, it is best to lay

aside a certain sum once in every twelve months to be spent on household linen, and then to wait until a really good and genuine sale is advertised. The sum may be small, but if it is only £2 it should always be spent. For example, one year it might (at a sale) purchase a dozen fine damask towels for 15*s.*, one dozen huckaback towels for 10*s.*, a dozen serviettes 8*s.* 9*d.*, and one damask tablecloth 6*s.*; another year it could be spent on two pairs of sheets and some pillow slips, and so on.

Another good thing to buy at a sale is a carpet. At the end of the summer most of the big firms make up their remnants of carpet into squares and sell them at very reduced prices. If they have not many yards left of one pattern it is wise to do this rather than keep it on the chance of this short length only being required. The same principle applies to remnants of chintz and cretonne, which are often sold at 6*d.* or 8*d.* a yard when the original price has been about a shilling, and generally sufficient of one kind can be procured to make a bedspread, a pair of curtains, or the covering for an ottoman. The house mistress, having determined that she wants one of these things, should wait until she sees what she requires, very much marked down, and then pounce upon it without delay.

CHAPTER XXIII

Home Education

The advisability of home education is a matter on which there is a great diversity of opinion. I think every one is agreed that it never answers for boys, save in their very earliest youth. The lad who has been tied to his mother's apron-strings up to the time when he has to face the world on his own account finds the battle of life too strong for him. He is utterly unprepared for roughing it, both mentally and physically, and the parents who adopt this plan from a superabundance of kindness (which verges on selfishness) simply court disaster. It cannot be from motives of economy in these days of cheap education, for, surely, a good grammar school is no more expensive than a private tutor.

With girls it is different. Where there are three or four daughters, or even if there be only one, and the children of friends or neighbours can be found to share her studies, these may satisfactorily be pursued at home till she is fourteen or fifteen, after which a couple of years at school will broaden

her ideas and—a point which is all-important—teach her to find her own level. The girl who has had nothing but home education usually has an overwhelming opinion of her own talents, and it will be bitter indeed to her in after life when she finds that, at all events, *some* of her accomplishments are decidedly below the average. The reason is not far to seek : is it possible for any one governess to be able to teach English thoroughly and to be proficient in music, languages, painting, drawing, dancing, and, in short, *everything* which a young lady is supposed to learn ? Of course there are masters or mistresses to be had for all these branches, but private lessons are expensive (and I am not writing for wealthy people !), and, again, there is the lack of competition and example.

The education of girls may be divided into three eras : the first in the nursery, the second in the schoolroom, and the third in the home. The first can be undertaken by the nurse and the mother combined, the second by the governess, and the last, which in my opinion is the most important of all, by the mother alone. With the education of boys beyond the nursery stage I have nothing to do, as this is, or should be, their life at school and college.

In houses where only a young nurse, or perhaps a nurse-housemaid is kept, the good mother will make up her mind to devote two or three

hours every morning to the education of the little ones. I have no faith in forcing a young child to learn lessons, but a great deal may be picked up by kindergarten games without injuring the most delicate brains, and still more by " object lessons," which take the form of "lovely talks with mother." I once heard a learned lady say to a friend who had a delicate little girl, " Do you mean to tell me that Dorothy cannot read a word ? All my boys could say their church catechism perfectly as soon as they were five years old : I made a point of it ! " All those boys turned out to be dolts, but little Dorothy was most brilliant in after life.

Some years ago I happened to be staying in the house of a lady who had three young children. She had lost nearly all her income and could only afford to keep one servant. She told me that she would have to leave me to my own devices during the morning, but that the children would not bother me in the least, as they would be with her. It was a well-regulated household : at eight o'clock a tidy little maid brought up my early tea, and at nine o'clock the breakfast-bell rang. The children breakfasted with us, and were " as good as gold." After this my hostess said that early dinner was at half past one, and she should be busy till then, but I had the free use of the dining-room and drawing-room, with plenty of books, writing materials and so forth. During the afternoons and evenings my friend was always

with me, though I noticed that she was never idle, but always had some pieces of stitchery in hand. In a little while I learnt the mystery of her disappearance during the morning. She was always downstairs by seven o'clock : she then assisted in dusting and putting the rooms tidy. Soon after eight the children were washed and dressed. At 9.30 she went to the kitchen and arranged the meals for the day. Punctually at ten o'clock her little flock assembled in the nursery schoolroom and she gave them simple, interesting lessons till twelve. She then took them for a walk, if it were fine, and during this time they had their " talks." The amount those little people knew about Natural History, English History (in the form of thrilling stories), and common things in general absolutely amazed me. And then lessons were over, and they played in the garden or the nursery for the remainder of the day.

When children are old enough to have a governess considerable preparation must be made by the mother to ensure this system of education being successful. The nursery must be turned into a schoolroom, properly fitted up with every requirement. Amongst the first of them will be a piano : it is most inconvenient for both governess and pupil to have to come down to the drawing-room for every lesson, moreover the other girls will possibly get into mischief during their teacher's absence. Neither do the first efforts of

a pianist improve the instrument! Of course there will be a substantial table in the room, and also a second table near the window which can be used for drawing or painting lessons, or for some task which one of the pupils may have to do by herself. Bookshelves can occupy one of the fireplace recesses, and it is an advantage to have a cupboard on the other side in which to put desks, copy books, music, drawing implements, work-boxes and such like. Let the governess have a really comfortable chair. One of the high-backed type with arms and a couple of cushions will be the best, as she can then sit upright at the table without undue weariness.

The hours of a daily governess vary considerably, but I think from half past nine till five seems the most convenient arrangement. Lessons should go on without interruption from half past nine till twelve, then a walk or recreation till the dinner hour of half past one, both pupils and teacher dining with the mother downstairs. From half past two till half past four lessons again, and then the delightful schoolroom tea, to which mother is sometimes invited as a great treat, *but only as a visitor*. I know more than one family in which schoolroom tea is still an institution, albeit schoolroom days are long past. The grown-up girls and the big brothers revel in it, and would not allow thin bread and butter or delicate sandwiches on any consideration!

It is an excellent plan for the governess to draw up a scheme of the daily routine, dividing the times for various subjects into half hours. This should be written out plainly on a large piece of cardboard and fixed above the chimney-piece. It is absolutely impossible to carry on home education properly unless routine is adhered to just as vigorously as in a school.

When a resident governess is employed she ought to have her own private room into which she can retreat when work is over whenever she likes. Big girls do not go to bed early, and on occasions when they are not wanted in the drawing-room or when their parents are out they pass the whole evening in the schoolroom. It is bad both for them and for their teacher to be always together. In houses where it is impossible to give the governess a sitting-room to herself, her bedroom should be fitted up with a good-sized table, a comfortable chair and a bookshelf. A gas stove would be a convenience here, as she could set light to it whenever she wished, whereas she might hesitate about calling up a servant to light a fire.

The home education of the girls when school-days are done and they have been brought out is a very responsible one for their mother. How many girls do we find who completely drop their music, painting and serious reading to give themselves up entirely either to tennis, cycling and

dancing, or to laziness and novels? Unfortunately the daughters do not all leave the schoolroom at the same time, therefore the eldest one will probably find the discipline of advanced home education somewhat irksome until one of her sisters can join her.

A wise mother once said to me, "I never allow my daughters to receive visits from girl friends, or, except for some special reason, go out on pleasure expeditions, in the mornings. They have all the afternoons and evenings for their own amusement." The hour's practice on the piano or violin, the duties of arranging flowers, mending garments, dusting china, and making their own bedrooms tidy should be the first consideration.

It is unwise to put a girl into harness too vigorously to begin with, and the first step should be one which will give her infinite pleasure—namely, the bestowal of a dress allowance. Thoughtful parents will make this as moderate as possible: they can always supplement it, if necessary, by the present of a dress or hat for some special function, but a limited allowance means the exercise of economy and also the desire of being able to make one's own clothes. A short course of lessons and a sewing machine will work wonders. A girl ought to be able to dress well on £20 a year if she has not to provide any expensive evening frocks or fur-trimmed coats. Dainty blouses depend more upon the amount of stitchery

put into them than upon the cost of material, and I have seen many the silk for making which may have been bought for about 6*s*., but which could not have been purchased in a West End shop under two guineas. Where there are two or three grown-up girls it is an economy to employ a good working dressmaker in the house occasionally who will undertake the difficult part of the work whilst the girls do all the mechanical stitching. Meanwhile they will learn a great deal from her methods.

Every woman ought to know how to cook, and in these days when there are so many cookery classes there should be no difficulty in getting lessons. A good "bribe"—if one is needed—will be the promise of an evening party or small dance if the girls will undertake the making of all the sweets and dainty dishes. But cookery alone does not teach the art of compiling menus nor of understanding the domestic economy of the household, and this is an all-important branch of a girl's education, if she is to be a good and thrifty wife in the future. A great many house mistresses object to giving up the reins of government, so to speak, but it is for the good of their children, neither need the reins go entirely. Mother would still be the supreme authority in the house, any difficulty would be referred to her, and she would keep a watchful though unobtrusive guard over everything.

Where there are two or three daughters it is a mistake to give each one her own particular province, in which case one will be a cook, another a housekeeper, and a third a needlewoman. Should one of the trio be absent on a visit her special department will be sadly neglected. Where there are two daughters, for example, it would be better to let them take alternate weeks at cooking and housekeeping, and as neither of these duties would employ anything like all their time, they could do the dressmaking between them.

Above all things let the girls have a sanctum of their own, if it be only a disused attic. In this they can dressmake, paint, carve wood, or do whatever they like without the perpetual, galling necessity of having to put away and make tidy whenever the room is wanted. A carpet, a table, and a few plain chairs are all that need be supplied : the decorations would be the result of their own handiwork.

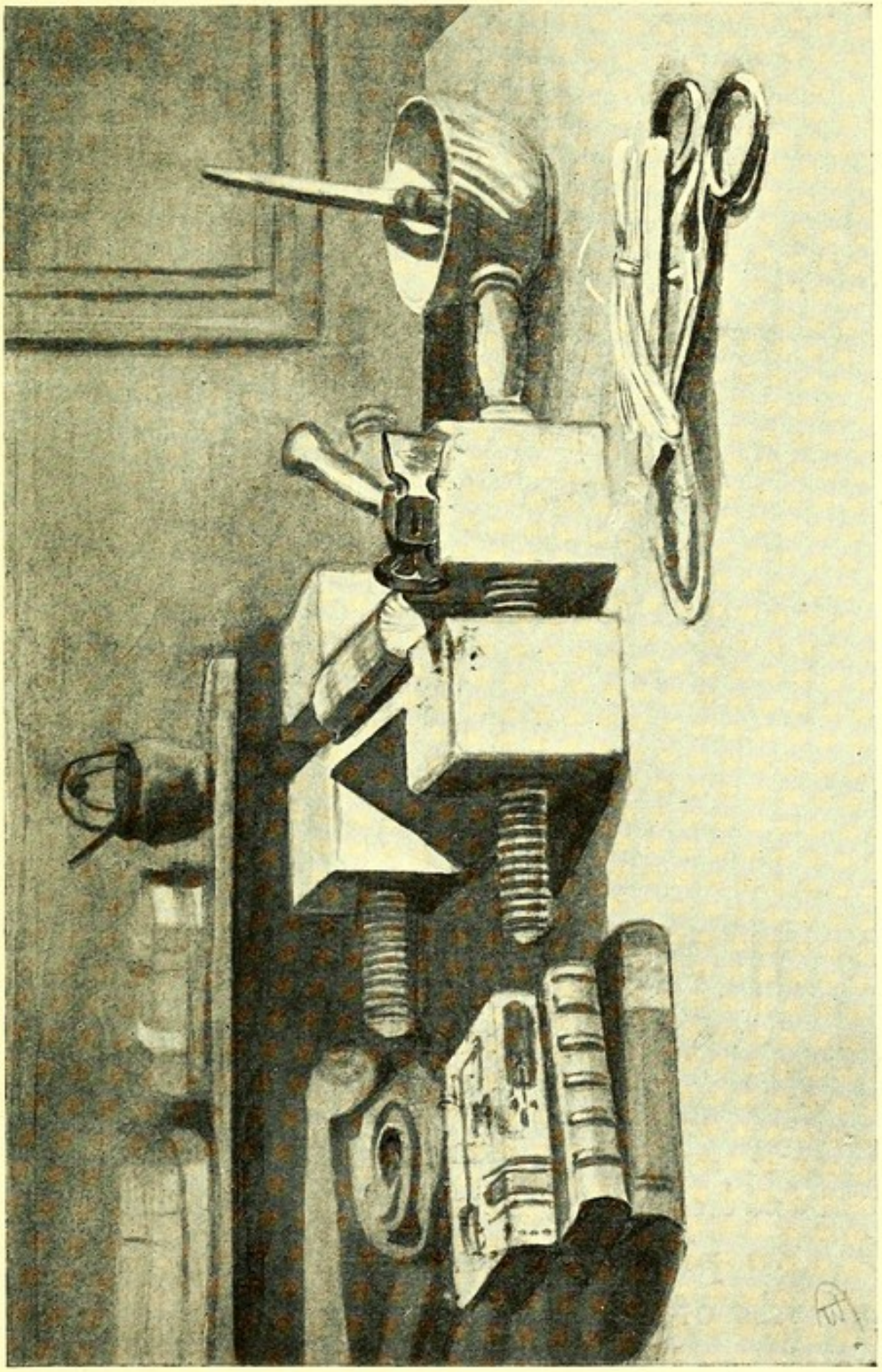
CHAPTER XXIV

Home Employment

HOBBIES—provided they are not expensive ones—are most desirable things, but home employment of some kind or another is absolutely essential for the well-being of our sons and daughters, and even their parents pass their spare time (and especially the long winter evenings) much more pleasantly if they have their definite occupations. During the summer holidays the young folk will find great interest and amusement in making a collection of butterflies, or, if they are near a river, they could start a freshwater aquarium, which is always a pretty thing to look at if the water is kept clear, and there is a good supply of pebbles and fresh weed. I have seen the most fascinating "water-houses" of this description, in which little caves were constructed with small clinkers, hollow underneath, and large sea-shells. If the sticklebacks and minnows do not survive their journey back to London when the holiday is over their place can be supplied with gold and silver fish.

For a winter occupation stamp collecting is always popular, and where several households, with children at home, are fairly near each other, a small stamp club could be started, with meetings for "tea and stamps" held at the different houses in rotation.

But I want more particularly to deal with the grown up children whose home interests ought to be intensified as much as possible. With the exception of needlework, all that I am about to suggest can be entered into by brothers and sisters equally well, though certainly the girls have more time at their disposal than the young men who are at work all the day. But I am sure all mothers will agree with me that it is of vital importance to provide ample home amusements for their sons during the evenings. In the summer there is cycling, tennis, cricket and outdoor occupations which will keep them happy and contented, and here I must just throw out a hint that the evening meal in summer should be more or less a movable feast. It is most irksome to a young fellow to be obliged to forsake some pastime before it is over, or give up some charming expedition on road or river because he must, perforce, be at home for half-past seven dinner, or encounter the black looks of his father and the sighs of his mother. A cold repast which can remain on the table from eight till half-past nine, if necessary, is quite easily arranged, and, if it is



Bookbinding Implements

appetising and carefully thought out, paterfamilias will not (or should not) object.

But the winter evenings are the difficulty, and I think this can best be met by amateur theatricals or music. How to manage the former I will deal with in another chapter, as there is so much to be said on the subject.

A very popular occupation is bookbinding, though it is not so generally known as it ought to be. Old books, magazines, and the cheap editions of good novels, come to woeful grief in the matter of covers, but they present quite a new appearance and take a fresh lease of life when they have passed through the hands of the amateur bookbinder. On page 197, there is a sketch of the various implements required for simple bookbinding. I believe the cost of all these will not amount to more than 30*s*., the most expensive being the press (which costs 15*s*.). There is the suitable hammer, and the other objects are familiar, such as paste, glue, scissors, tape, and so forth. An expert in the art has very kindly explained the method to me, and if more minute directions are required, they can be supplied by a short course of lessons. The old book should be carefully taken to pieces and sewn in sections over tape; the backs of these sections should then be glued together and narrow strips of strong paper glued across the back, the ends being afterwards pasted to the inside of the cover. The cover, or case,

can be made of printers' cloth or linen, neatly fixed over two straw boards, cut a little larger than the front page. The back of the cover should be stiffened with a slip of paper. The case must then be carefully fitted to the book, which is then put squarely into the press and left for twenty-four hours. The cover can be ornamented with gold lettering (also the back), with some delicate little bit of embroidery, if it is of linen, or with painting. I have at present a copy of Gray's *Elegy*, bound in white linen, with a little trail of forget-me-nots on the cover. This might be a happy notion for a dainty and inexpensive birthday or Christmas present.

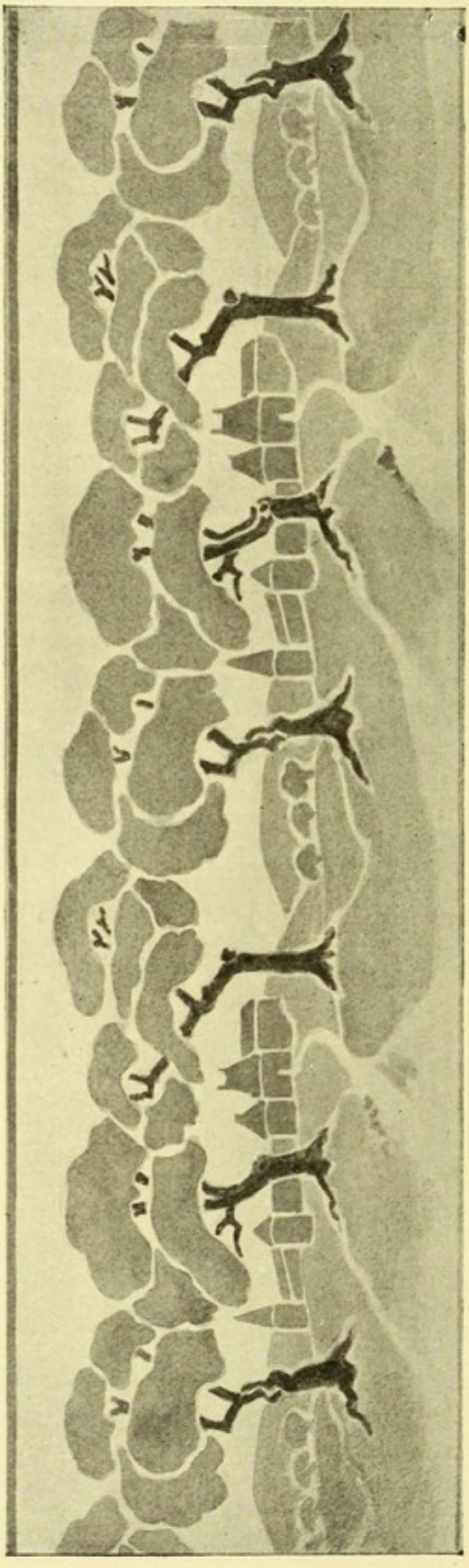
Marquetry is not only a most interesting employment, but a very useful one. It can be employed on the smallest articles, such as photograph frames, tea caddies, clock cases and trays, or upon tables, cabinets, chairs and bedsteads. There is a rage at present for reproductions of the style of Sheraton and Chippendale, and these can be cleverly imitated in marquetry. The work is absolutely mechanical and requires no artistic talent whatever. The materials required are Stephen's wood stains, which can be obtained in satinwood, rosewood, oak and others (these are 9*d*. the bottle), and the colour stains, green, blue, red, rose, mahogany and yellow, 5½*d*. the bottle, a large, soft brush for the big surfaces, a camel's hair brush for the outlines, some size in powder,

French polish, and a book of designs. The articles to be stained can be obtained in white wood, and are quite cheap; a circular table is 2*s.* 11*d.*, a tray (with handles), 3*s.* 2*d.*, a photograph frame, from 1*s.*; a clock case (a Bee clock being afterwards suspended inside), 1*s.* 3*d.*; a hall seat, 4*s.* 7*d.* A tray will be about the simplest thing to begin with as it will only require a design in the centre. First trace the design carefully upon the wood, and then size the tray all over. Two coats of size may be required, as it is important that the stain when applied should not run in the least. Suppose satinwood to be the stain desired, it should be evenly applied all over the tray, with the exception of on the design, which should be left clean. Keep the bottle well shaken or the stain may be thicker (and consequently darker) in some places than in others. When this is perfectly dry the design must be stained, commencing with the lightest colours and working up to the darkest. Leave the tray a few days to harden and then polish. As you can buy the designs already coloured there is no reason for giving suggestions on this subject.

French polishing is always satisfactory, though it requires to be carefully done. Make a small pad of rag and put a very little linseed oil on it, and rub lightly all over the surface. Then repeat the process, using the French polish, and rub round and round, instead of backwards and for-

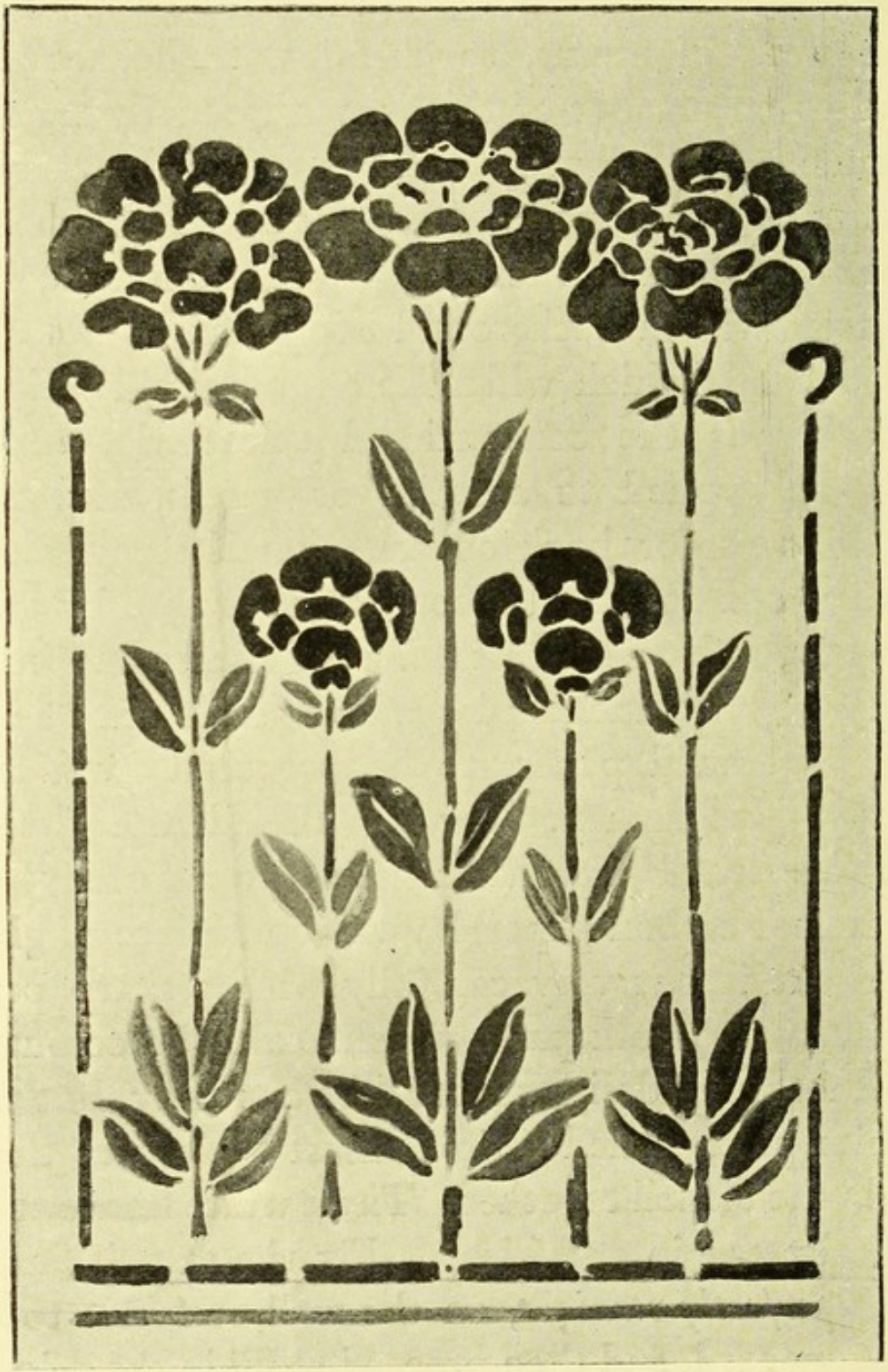
wards. If the polish gets sticky use a little more oil. A most beautiful drawing-room table can be produced in exact imitation of Dutch marquetry, if some considerable amount of time and trouble is expended on it. Pokerwork can be applied to all whitewood articles after the fashion of marquetry, but I am not so fond of it : for one thing, it certainly can never look antique, and for another, the smoke arising from the burning wood is harmful to the eyes. At the same time, I have seen a most quaint suite of bedroom furniture, painted—*not enamelled*—dark blue, with a conventional design of the river crowsfoot flower slightly outlined with poker work, the blossoms stained pale red and the leaves and straggling stalks faint green.

The art of hammering metals, such as copper or brass, produces excellent results, but has the great drawback of being very noisy : the perpetual tap-tap of the hammer gets on the nerves of every one except the individual who is tapping, therefore I can hardly recommend it for a home occupation, unless the workroom is far away from the rest of the house, and this is hardly a sociable arrangement. I once took it up most enthusiastically, and produced something quite commendable in the way of tea trays, but when one of my relations informed me that he would as soon live next door to a boiler maker, I thought it was time to give it up.



Stencilled Frieze

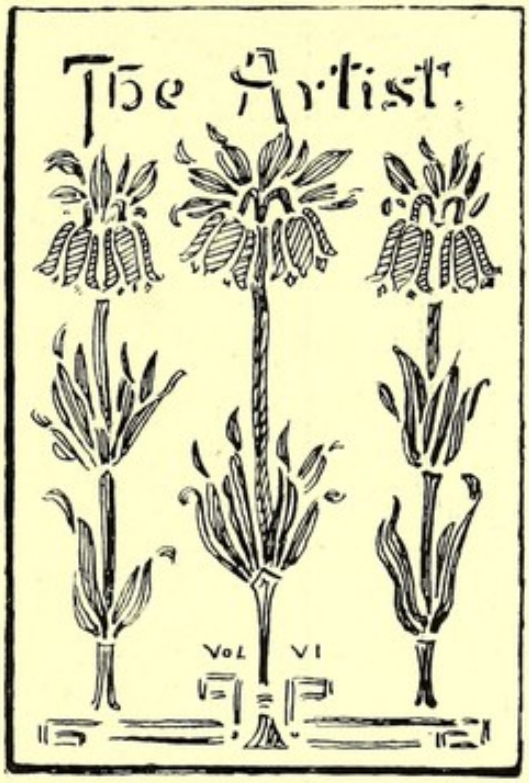
This objection, however, does not in the least apply to stencilling, which is not only very fashionable, but exceedingly useful : it can be applied to the walls of rooms, to curtains, to bookcovers, and to all manner of things, with equally artistic results. With a proper design it is quite easy to cut one's own stencils. On pages 202, 204 and 205, various original stencil designs will be found ; one of trees with a background of quaint houses and mountains, which will make an admirable frieze, another of the conventional calceolaria, which can be applied to curtains or panels, and two small ones for book covers. Small stencils can be cut out of the oil sheets of paper used by type writers, and which cost ½*d.* each, measuring nine inches by ten inches ; large stencils should be cut out of stencil paper, to be procured from any artists' colourman. Having traced the design on the stencil paper (it can be " transferred " by means of carbon paper) lay this on a piece of glass and cut it out very carefully with a sharp penknife. The dark parts which are to be coloured and form the design must all be cut away, but the white parts, called " ties," must be left, as these hold the stencil together. These white lines can be clearly seen in the frieze. Fix the stencil firmly and *perfectly straight*, on the wall or fabric to be ornamented, and then proceed to fill in the colour. As one piece is done the stencil can be removed and passed along, great care being taken to make



The Calceolaria Stencil.

the design fit. On a painted ground ordinary oil paints, mixed with turpentine, can be used, but for paper grounds, or any fabric on which oil paints would run at all, it is better to use powdered colours ground up with a little gum water and glycerine. In large pieces of work the paint can be applied with a small sponge and dabbed,

Stencilled Book Cover.



Stencilled Book Cover.

or smeared, on. As a matter of fact, the effect is far better if the colour is not too even. For small work use a "Poonah" brush, which is a small, round brush of camel's hair, in a wooden handle. Very few shops keep these, but they are always to be obtained, price 1*s.*, from Brodie & Middleton 79, Long Acre.

Wood-carving is a craft which commends itself

greatly to home workers, because, as is the case with marquetry, it transforms the plainest of wooden articles into things of beauty. In its

Carved Panel in Wood.

simpler forms it is not at all a difficult art, but some amount of talent is required, when one carves elaborate animals or flowers, remembering

that a single stroke of the chisel will give a different expression to a dragon's eye or a flower's petal. I have already mentioned that the price of a small hall seat in white wood is 4*s*. 7*d*. : if the top and legs of this were adorned with some simple carving and the whole then stained dark oak, it would be an excellent piece of furniture for a small entrance hall. The design on page 206 would make a handsome panel for the door of a plain cupboard (of course it can be enlarged to any size) or for the centre panel of an oak overmantel, with plain panels on either side, in the middle of which oblong engravings in plain oak frames are hung. A simple and most effective overmantel for a hall or severe room would be a long, low panel of oak, across the top of which some quaint motto is carved in old English letters, with a design of cross-swords beneath. Many people are the possessors of a large, old-fashioned chimney-glass, the gilt frame of which is absolutely beyond renovation : if the mirror is put into a carved wooden frame and nailed to the wall of a small hall opposite a window, it will have the effect of doubling the size of the entrance. I so often notice in these passage-halls that there is a window between the front door and the staircase, and if this is draped with curtains the reflection in the glass opposite will look like the entrance to some corridor.

Needlework is such an enormous subject that

I can but touch upon it in the most sketchy manner. I will only give a few hints as to how the art of stitchery can best be turned to account. First of all comes embroidery in silks, wools or threads, and this is a gift which only a few women possess in perfection. When they do there is hardly any portion of their home which may not be made beautiful, added to which it is a most fascinating employment. The materials are not costly to the clever worker who can trace (or transfer) her own designs, as the favourite fabrics on which to produce the patterns are cassia cloth (a plain cotton in all art shades), $7\frac{3}{4}d.$ the yard, 31 inches wide; art linen, 1*s.* $11\frac{3}{4}d.$ the yard, 36 inches wide; wool serge, 1*s.* $6\frac{3}{4}d.$ the yard, 52 inches wide, and Sheba cloth (which is a Roman satin), 3*s.* 11*d.* the yard, 50 inches wide, all of which are obtainable from Williamson & Cole, Warwick House, Clapham. Tapestry wools, flax threads and filo-floss silks, are the only other materials required. A publication called *Home Art Work*, which comes out once a quarter, gives sheets of full-sized drawings for embroideries, which can easily be transferred to any fabric. I know a very clever worker who takes most of her designs from wall-papers (I believe she borrows the big wall-paper books from a local decorator each season as they come out.) I have seen exquisite groups of flowers, also quaint figure designs which she has adapted in this way. From

Knowle's "Goose-Girl" frieze, for instance, she made the most original panel, which was framed as an overmantel, and she adapted some of his landscapes in such a way that they made charming pictures. These were worked on linen, and, for the most part, this was of cream colour, the sky at the top being first washed in with paint. There are some beautiful designs for needlework pictures of winter scenery, which possess the great advantage of being carried out entirely in black, white and greys, for which reason they can be wrought by gaslight, thus forming a delightful occupation for winter evenings. The covers for the seats of chairs are another useful result of good stitchery. Imagine drawing-room chairs on the seats of which were covers of pale tan satin, embellished with pink and mauve columbines, a strip of vieux rose linen plush forming a band round the sides! or a dining-room, with the chair seats of string-coloured linen worked with some heraldic design, the window curtains being embroidered to match! Cushion covers, bedspreads, toilet slips, tea cloths, and d'oyleys, are all familiar to the embroideress, whilst for white work there are pillow shams and sheet shams. But the daughters of the house will probably like their industry to take a more personal form, so to them I can hint that they can embellish dresses and cloaks by their handiwork and can also make sachets, work bags, blotters, and all kinds of pretty

things, both for themselves and their friends. Lace making produces not only lovely, but valuable results, and I have been lost in admiration of a large Carrick-Macross fichu, made by a girl, which was valued at £10, but the fine stitches are most trying to the eyes!

But there are the simpler forms of needlework which do not require skill, but only patience, and under this category come knitting and crochet. Happily this is work which can be taken up at odd moments, and it is astonishing how much may be accomplished, even whilst one is waiting for the kettle to boil, or an expected visitor to arrive. Socks and stockings are prosaic enough in all conscience, but no woman objects to being found knitting a shawl of the finest white Shetland wool, and even the despised crochet makes excellent trimming for holland dresses if it is broad, whilst for children's collars it will be found to possess that invaluable quality, where little people are concerned—durability.

After this dissertation is there any excuse for the often-heard remark, "What *are* we to do during the long winter evenings?"

CHAPTER XXV

Entertainments and Entertaining

As I am not writing for the benefit of wealthy people, but for those who, with small incomes, want to get the greatest amount of pleasure and profit out of their limited means, I need not deal with balls, dinner parties or elaborate garden fetes. As for the "entertainments" I shall offer suggestions only about theatricals, concerts, and tableaux, which can be got up in the cheapest possible way. In the chapter on "Home Employments" I mentioned theatricals as a most excellent medium for keeping one's sons and daughters happily amused and employed during the winter evenings, and there is the further advantage of knowing that a good amateur club can usually manage to give a fair sum to charities during a winter season.

It will be argued, "But it is not every one who can act!" Perfectly true, but a well managed club ought to have several members who do not act; in fact, it could not get on without them. In the first place, there is the orchestra, which is quite indispensable; then there is the stage manager, the business manager, the stage carpenter, the scene painters, the property man,

the prompter, and the costumiers, the latter being a number of ladies who are skilful at dress-making and who can make most of the garments for costume plays. It is wonderful how cheaply stage dresses can be made at home. I know that in the case of one of our leading actresses, when she first began to try her powers as a member of an amateur dramatic club, her gowns were "dreams," albeit they were the outcome of her own artistic taste, a considerable amount of needlework and painting, and an infinitesimally small sum of money.

In an amateur club half a guinea a year for each member is a subscription which no one will grudge, especially if it not only admits the member to every performance, but also gives a ticket for one friend. During the winter season it is usually quite easy to arrange for four performances. I think it may be taken for granted that the club will start with twenty members, including those that belong to the orchestra and the non-acting community. The subscriptions ought to be paid in advance, therefore ten guineas will be in hand, and a good proportion of these should be spent in making a proscenium, the curtains, the footlights, and some scenery. These can be quite easily accomplished by a rough carpenter and an artist of the impressionist school. In most villages a Board schoolroom or a Reading Room is available, but nothing in the

way of proscenium or scenery, therefore the club will have to provide their own. The local carpenter usually has a platform which he lets out on hire, but as this only consists of loose planks laid across trestles, and is prone to wobble, it will be well for the club to get one of its own as soon as funds permit.

A proscenium is simply a large frame which fits between the ceiling and the platform. The panels at the sides, which are the "wings" behind which prompter and property man take up their positions, can be decorated with painting or filled in with pale coloured art serge or even cretonne in some bold design. The former is the cheaper of the two, and the same should be used for the curtains in front. An art serge at 1*s.* 1*d.* the yard, in pale rose pink or turquoise blue, will be effective with a framework of white wood.

Curtains which drape upwards are far better than those which go on a roller and invariably "stick" at a critical moment. Make the serge curtain the width of the opening, weight it with leads at the hem, sew four vertical rows of large brass rings on the inside, and pass a thin rope through these; when the curtain is down gather the four lines together at one side of the top, knot them securely on to a single rope, and when this is pulled downwards the curtain will go up without a hitch.

Scene painting is not so difficult as one would imagine. Three scenes are sufficient for most plays, an exterior (which may either be a wood or a garden), a cottage interior, and a sort of baronial hall interior, which may be made handsome or ordinary according to the furniture and general decorations. A back cloth and two or more side cloths will be wanted for each set. The scene is painted with coloured distempers on a rough kind of coarse canvas, which has been well sized. Get the paints in powder and mix them with water and size. Use very large brushes, and judge the effect from a far distance. Have a small copy nailed up at the side of the canvas, and first make the sketch in charcoal. The very roughest painting is the most effective. Before beginning, the artist thould have a good look at some real stage scenery to see the method. Saml. French, of 26, Southampton Street, Strand, sells coloured copies at 1*s.* each, which will be most useful as guides to amateurs. From the same firm paper doors can be bought for 5*s.* each, which will only need to be attached to a wooden frame.

Where gas is not available, excellent footlights can be made with carriage candles put into the middle of coffee tins, which have been cut in half and highly polished. The half tins are fixed to a long board by means of big nails hammered in from the under side of the board, up through the

tin, leaving a spike on which to impale the candle.

With amateurs who are inexperienced it is most important to impress upon the property man the necessity of having a pail of water and a bucket of sand at each side of the wings, in case of fire.

A nigger minstrel troupe is a great source of entertainment where there are a number of young men, some who can sing, others who are banjoists, and at least two who can manipulate the tambourine or bones. There is hardly any expense connected with their outfit; for costumes they can wear black trousers, soft white shirts, scarlet cummerbunds and neckties, and enormous collars and cuffs. Nigger wigs can be bought from 3*s*. to 5*s*. each.

A very pretty entertainment can be got up in the way of children's tableaux, each tableau being introduced by a song or reading, and the picture then shown. These are quite inexpensive to arrange, as the costumes can, for the most part, be made of sateen or butter muslin, the only scenery being a background of soft greenish-grey (the wrong side of cheap wall paper pasted on canvas does exceedingly well for this), and a large "frame" of wood or cardboard. The black gauze which is sometimes stretched inside the frame to soften the pictures has a disastrous effect unless there are powerful footlights and sidelights. I saw on one occasion a tableau of

"The Snow Queen" with a black gauze which gave the effect of all the characters having just come down the chimney. It is a great mistake to make little people rehearse often. Just let the director put them in proper position once or twice and make rough sketches of these on paper. When the night of the performance arrives, the groups and attitudes should be arranged just at the last moment, and as the bell rings for the curtain to go up the little ones must be told to "keep quite still for one minute." Children are graceful by nature, and if this "lightning process" is carried out they will not have time to become shy or self-conscious.

But from entertainments I must pass on to entertaining. Every far-seeing housewife acknowledges that it is much less expensive to pay off one's debts of hospitality wholesale than one by one, and the point is how to provide an evening's entertainment for twenty people in a small house at a moderate cost. To dinner or supper, where the size of the dining-room is limited, it would not be possible to invite more than six or eight guests at a time; there would be considerable excitement and nervousness on the part of cook and parlourmaid, with the possibility of having to engage extra help, and a good deal of worry and expense entailed on the hostess if these entertainments are not of frequent occurrence and her maids are unaccustomed to

them. Therefore evening parties for Progressive Games, Progressive Hearts, Progressive Whist and Bridge Tournaments " come as a boon and a blessing to men "—and women. Twenty guests can be invited at a time, as three small tables can be arranged in the drawing-room and two in the dining-room, or vice versa. If there is a third reception room it can be used for refreshments ; if not, the following plan can easily be carried out. Have tea, coffee and small cakes on a side-table in the dining-room for the guests on arrival. This is quite simple, as no progressive game can be started until every one is assembled. The trays can be removed in a few minutes whilst the competitors are drawing lots for partners and so forth. The game, or, rather, the prescribed number of games (usually twenty) are played through without a break. Whilst the numbers are being counted at the end and the prizes given, the maids will bring in the supper trays and put them on the dining-room table, each tray being covered with a white afternoon teacloth. One tray should be for several kinds of dainty sandwiches, another for jellies and creams, and the third for cakes and fruits. Claret cup, lemonade, and other drinkables can be arranged on the sideboard, together with glasses, plates, spoons and forks. The sandwiches should be daintily cut and, as far as possible, uncommon. I would suggest " cheese and walnut," " devilled

shrimp," "kipper pickle," "savoury," and "ham and egg." For the first, grated cheese is mixed with a little cream to form a paste, and chopped walnut added. "Devilled shrimp" is simply pounded shrimp mixed with butter and a little curry powder. "Kipper" is prepared in the same way, without the curry powder. "Pickle" consists of tiny slices of chicken or rabbit with chopped gherkin. "Savoury" can be made with chicken, tongue or ham spread with good mayonnaise sauce, and the last is made of ham and hard boiled egg minced together.

The whole entertainment should not cost more than £1, as 10*s*. will provide sandwiches, jellies, cakes and a fruit salad if all are made at home, 5*s*. will be quite enough for claret cup, lemonade and coffee, and 5*s*. can be spent on the four prizes usually given. As suggestions for these, nothing can be better than cases of brown crash, artistically embroidered either by the lady of the house or some kind girl friend who is willing to help. A Bradshaw case, a telegraph form case, a tie case, and a blotter make an admirable quartette.

Although I commenced this chapter by saying that I would not deal with balls or dinner parties, I must say a few words about the way in which Cinderella dances can be organized for a very small cost provided a certain amount of hostesses join together. To most young people this is the

ideal form of winter entertainment, and one always likes to see one's boys and girls thoroughly happy.

I will suppose that five families wish to club together to give a small dance, and that they are willing to give two guineas each, with the understanding that each house party does not number more than ten, making fifty in all. If any hostess wishes to exceed the limited number, she can do so by paying 3*s.* a head for them, remembering that the initial expenses of hire of room, musicians, and so forth will not be increased by the extra guests. The rule of the committee of management must be that all money is paid by the hostesses beforehand, as it can only be done on such cheap lines by paying cash for everything. I know a case in which a most successful Cinderella was given in this way, and I will quote from the veritable list of expenses which has been sent to me.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Hire of rooms at Institute .	2	2	0
Musicians	2	2	0
Cost of gas . . .	0	10	0
Polishing floor of ballroom .	0	5	0
Programmes . . .	0	10	0
Eatables	3	0	0
Drinkables . . .	1	10	0
Decorations . . .	0	10	0
	£10	9	0

The servants, the plate, glass and china were all lent by the five hostesses, and everything was home made. The decorations of the ballroom and supper-table were entrusted to a committee of girls who, I believe, did wonders with the 10*s*. and what they could beg or borrow from their friends, and it certainly is not difficult to find a trio of musicians who will play the piano, violin and cornet from eight to twelve for 2 guineas. The drinkables were restricted to claret cup, home-made lemonade, and coffee, and the eatables were chicken rolls, rabbit creams, lobster patties, savoury jellies, sandwiches of various kinds, pine-apple jelly, rum jelly, fruit salad, macaroon baskets, orange baskets, and a variety of cakes and biscuits. When the menu had been decided upon, the cost of all the ingredients was made out, and, as far as possible, the onus of preparation divided equally amongst the five families.

CHAPTER XXVI

Some Economical Menus.

I HAVE drawn up these menus presuming the household to be one in which only what is termed "a light luncheon" is required for the mid-day meal. I often hear people say that their luncheon always consists of sandwiches or bread and cheese, and this seems to be terribly monotonous. If, however, one has to cater for a family who dine at one o'clock and want a light supper, what I have suggested for luncheon will answer nicely for the evening meal, with the addition of the soup or fish which was originally intended for the late dinner.

A few explanatory notes at the end will show how I intend one bill of fare to work in with another.

WINTER.

Sunday—

BREAKFAST.

Kidney toast.(*a*) Muffins. Marmalade.

DINNER.

Roast beef. Yorkshire pudding. Browned potatoes. Beetroot. Apricot tartlets. Lemon jelly. Cheese. Biscuits.

SUPPER.

Tomato soup. Steak and kidney pie (cold). Mashed potatoes. Orange baskets. Cheese pastry.

Monday—

BREAKFAST.

Bacon and potatoes. Rolls. Jam.

LUNCHEON.

Egg casserole. Cake. Cheese.

DINNER.

Potato soup. Devilled collops of beef. Potato chips. Cauliflower. Parisian Apples. Pickled sardines.(*b*)

Tuesday—

BREAKFAST.

Sardine omelette. Toast. Marmalade.

LUNCHEON.

Buck rarebit.(*c*) Stewed pears. Cheese.

DINNER.

Herrings, with mustard sauce. Roast rabbit with bacon rolls. Potatoes. Braised onions. Ratafia custard. Celery crab salad.

Wednesday—

BREAKFAST.

Sausages. Toast. Jam.

LUNCHEON.

Little fish pies. Cake. Cheese.

DINNER.

Rice soup. China chillo.(*d*) Artichokes. Chipped potatoes. Banana fritters. Spinach with poached eggs.

Thursday—

BREAKFAST.

Haddock. Hot rolls. Marmalade.

LUNCHEON.

Hashed rabbit.(*e*). Cake. Cheese.

DINNER.

Boiled cod. Egg sauce. Calf's liver and bacon. Mushrooms. Potato cones. Apple Charlotte. Haddock creams.(*f*)

Friday—

BREAKFAST.

Kedgeree. Toast. Jam.

LUNCHEON.

Curried eggs. Baked apples. Cheese.

DINNER.

Mutton broth. Stewed pigeon with orange sauce. Cauliflower. Potatoes. Fruit salad. Artichoke cheese.

Saturday—

BREAKFAST.

Kippers. Scones. Marmalade.

LUNCHEON.

Hot pot of Mutton.(*g*). Cake. Cheese

DINNER.

Broiled sprats. Lemon. Brown bread and butter. Veal and ham pie. (*h*).
Coffee cream. Anchovy toast.

SUMMER.

Sunday—

BREAKFAST.

Bacon. Poached eggs. Toast. Jam.

DINNER.

Roast lamb. Peas. Potatoes. Raspberry and currant tart. Junket Cheese.

Supper.

Cold lamb. Salad. Potatoes. Stewed cherries. Parmesan creams.

Monday—

BREAKFAST.

Cold tongue. Hot rolls. Marmalade.

LUNCHEON.

Œufs a la Toque. Fruit. Cake. Cheese.

DINNER.

Windsor soup. Mayonnaise of lamb.(*i*)
Creamed peas. Rice meringue.
Cheese straws.

Tuesday—

BREAKFAST.

Haddock. Watercress. Toast. Jam.

LUNCHEON.

Sardine omelette. Stewed fruit. Cheese.

DINNER.

Fried whiting. Tartare sauce. Hashed lamb. Chipped potatoes. Lemon jelly. Cheese. Custard.

Wednesday—

BREAKFAST.

Tongue toast.(*j*) Poached eggs. Watercress.

LUNCHEON.

Stuffed potatoes. Cake. Melon.

DINNER.

Green pea soup. Roast chicken. Peas. Potatoes. Golden fritters.
Anchovy toast.

Thursday—

BREAKFAST.

Pickled mackerel. Toast. Marmalade.

LUNCHEON.

Chicken creams.(*k*) Rice pudding. Cheese.

DINNER.

Fillets of plaice a l'Italienne. Irish stew.
French beans. Fruit salad.
Cheese. Custard.

Friday—

BREAKFAST.

Buttered eggs and curry.(*l*) Rolls. Jam

LUNCHEON.

Fish salad.(*m*) Cake. Cheese.

DINNER.

Sardines with radishes. Brown bread and butter. Casserole of steak. New potatoes. Gooseberry fool. Cucumber and egg savoury.

Saturday—

BREAKFAST.

Ham omelettes. Scones. Watercress.

LUNCHEON.

Stuffed vegetable marrow. Black currant pudding. Cheese.

DINNER.

Carrot soup. Durham cutlets.(*n*) Broad beans. Potatoes. French savoury eggs. Strawberries and cream.

NOTES.

(*a*). As a steak and kidney pie has been made for supper, some of the kidney should be saved to cut in dice, stew in good gravy, and put upon toast for breakfast.

(*b*). A few sardines should be taken out of a tin and put for three hours into a pickle made of some of the sardine oil, a tablespoonful of vinegar,

some chopped onion, half a dozen cloves and a few peppercorns. The sardines are taken out of the pickle and served on fingers of hot buttered toast. The remaining sardines in the tin will serve for the omelet for the morrow's breakfast.

(*c*). Buck rarebit is the ordinary Welsh rarebit with poached eggs on the top.

(*d*). China-Chillo (see recipe) can be made from the remains of the beef.

(*e*). Enough rabbit will be left from dinner on the previous evening for this.

(*f*). The remains of the dried haddock which was served at breakfast, flaked up with butter, pepper and salt, made very hot and piled on little rounds of fried bread.

(*g*). The meat which was taken out of the mutton broth before serving it up on the previous evening makes an excellent hot-pot with plenty of vegetables.

(*h*). If a meat pie is usually made for dinner on Saturday evening, it comes in nicely for Sunday's supper either in addition to the cold joint or without it.

(*i*). Slices of cold lamb surrounded by good salad, masked with thick mayonnaise sauce and garnished with slices of cucumber, quarters of tomato and small sprigs of watercress.

(*j*). The remains of the tongue left from Monday's breakfast.

(*k*). The remains of chicken from the previous

night's dinner, or, if preferred, it can be served cold.

(*l*). Any small bits of chicken remaining should be put into a thick curry sauce and poured round the buttered eggs.

(*m*). A little of the plaice—say, one fillet—should have been boiled and put aside the previous day. This is quite sufficient for a small fish salad.

(*n*). Made from the remains of the casserole of steak (see recipe).

These menus are for two people, such as would be used in a household where the family consists of husband and wife and either one or two servants. They are on the 10*s*. per head per week principle.

CHAPTER XXVII

A Few Recipes

BEFORE writing these recipes, which are the outcome of much collecting and testing, as they are culled from many manuscript books, and even odd scraps of paper, I must impress upon the housewife, who, in her turn, should impress it with double force upon her cook, that the secret of success in most dishes lies in flavouring, dishing-up and garnishing. As an example of this I will mention just one savoury, served up at an "emergency" repast, to which some unexpected guests had arrived. It consisted solely of small rounds of fried bread, just the size of the top of a wine-glass, thinly spread with anchovy paste. On the top there was a circle of chopped white of egg (hard-boiled of course), then a circle of chopped parsley, and in the centre a mound of the yolk of the egg lightly sprinkled with coralline pepper. Served in a small silver dish it looked most appetising, though the ingredients were quite simple.

SOUPS.

Windsor Soup.

One pint of milk, ½ pint of water, an onion stuck with cloves, pepper and salt, a blade of mace. Boil the onion in milk and water, with the cloves and mace, till quite tender. Mash it up and pass through a sieve. Return it to the liquor in which it was first boiled; thicken with cornflour to the consistency of cream. Boil up again and serve with fried croûtons.

Rice, Sago or Tapioca Soup.

Take a quart of white stock, or the liquor in which mutton, veal, chicken, or rabbit has been boiled. Add an onion, a stick of celery, and some pepper and salt, and simmer slowly until the vegetables are quite soft, when they should be removed. Let the liquor boil again, with two tablespoonfuls of rice, sago, or tapioca, together with half a teacupful of chopped parsley.

Artichoke, Celery, Potato or Onion Soup.

Any of these soups can be made with milk instead of stock. The vegetables selected should be boiled till quite tender, passed through a sieve and returned to the milk with a flavouring of pepper and salt. It must be boiled again and constantly stirred, a little thickening of cornflour being added if required.

Carrot and Potato Soup.

Three large carrots, 4 large potatoes, 2 onions,

1 small head of celery. Wash and cut up these vegetables and put them into a saucepan with three pints of cold water ; boil for two hours. Season with a teaspoonful of salt, a teaspoonful of moist sugar, and a dash of cayenne pepper. Rub through a sieve, boil again for ten minutes, and serve very hot.

Panado Soup.

Peel and cut up 2 onions, 1 stick of celery, 1 turnip, and 1 carrot, and put them into 3 pints of liquor, in which meat has been boiled. Add 3 ozs. of crusts of bread and boil slowly for 2 hours. Rub through a sieve, season with salt, pepper and a little moist sugar, and boil up once again.

Green Pea Soup.

To 1 quart of stock take 1 pint of green peas. Shell them, break up the shucks *and boil these* with a few leaves of spinach and some green mint until quite tender. Pass them through a sieve and return to the saucepan. Take the peas (which have been previously boiled) add a little butter, pepper and salt, put them into the saucepan with the rest of the soup and boil up. It can be made green by adding some spinach juice.

FISH.

Fish Salad.

Take one deep china dish, or the required number of china shells, and line them with fresh,

green salad. Allow a tablespoonful of white cooked fish (flaked carefully) to each person. Cover the top with thick mayonnaise sauce, sprinkle with chopped gherkin and garnish with little strips of anchovy.

Plaice a l'Italienne.

Cover the bottom of a firepoof dish with some boiled rice well moistened with white sauce. Lay the fillets of plaice on this with a seasoning of pepper and salt. Put another layer of rice on the top with plenty of sauce poured over it. Sprinkle with grated cheese and bake in a moderate oven. Tomato sauce can be used instead of white sauce if preferred.

Fish Pies.

These are best served in little brown pipkins. Any kind of cooked fish will do if it is freed from bones and moistened with plenty of sauce. The pipkins should be filled to within one-third of the top. Then cover with mashed potato, piled up high and put into the oven to brown and get quite hot.

Curried Salmon.

One pound (or 1 tin) of cooked salmon, 1 oz. butter, 1 small onion, 1 teaspoonful of curry powder, 1 teacupful of tomato sauce. Break the fish into flakes ; melt the butter in a saucepan, fry the onion a light brown, add the curry powder and stir well over the fire. Put in the tomato

sauce and let it boil up ; simmer for five minutes, then add the salmon. Cook gently for a few minutes and, if too stiff, add a little stock or water. Serve with a border of boiled rice.

Sole a l'Indienne.

Fry soles in the usual way ; lemon soles or fillets of plaice will answer equally well. The Indienne sauce is made of melted butter mixed with pickles and the liquor of the piccalilli. Pour this round the fish and garnish with chopped gherkins and capers.

Lobster Cutlets.

One small lobster (or 1 tin of lobster), 1 oz. of butter, ¼ pint of milk, 1 oz. of flour, juice of half a lemon, salt, pepper, cayenne, 1 tablespoonful of cream. Chop the lobster very fine. Cook the flour and butter together (without discolouring) in a saucepan, add the milk and stir until it boils. To this add the lobster, lemon juice, cream and seasoning. Mix thoroughly. Spread on a greased plate and cut into eight triangular pieces, forming them into cutlets. Egg and breadcrumb them and fry a light golden brown.

MEAT ENTRÉES.

China Chillo.

Boil a few vegetables ; when soft cut up fine. Mince some meat and put it to warm with half the vegetables in a little gravy. When hot heap

in the middle of a dish with remainder of vegetables on the top and a wall of boiled rice round.

Devilled Collops.

Cut some thin slices of beef or mutton : smear them on both sides with a thin mixture of chutney, mustard, pepper and salt. Make thoroughly hot in the oven for about ten minutes, and serve with a little good gravy, a squeeze of lemon juice and some chipped potatoes.

Durham Cutlets.

Quarter pound of minced meat, 4 tablespoonfuls of breadcrumbs, 1 oz. butter, 1 oz. flour, ¼ pint of stock, pepper, salt, cayenne, and a dessert spoonful of Worcester sauce. Mix the butter and flour with the stock to a smooth paste and boil, stirring all the time : add the seasoning. Put this into a bowl, add the meat and breadcrumbs, mix well and proceed as for "Lobster cutlets," putting an inch of straight maccaroni into the end of each to represent the bone.

Potato Surprises.

One pound cold potatoes, 1 oz. butter, 1 egg, pepper and salt ; 2 ozs. cold, minced meat, a little grated lemon peel, chopped parsley and herbs, 1 teaspoonful anchovy sauce, 1 tablespoonful brown sauce. Put the potato mixture into one basin, the meat mixture into another. Roll the meat into small balls, envelope them in potato,

cover with egg and breadcrumbs, and fry in boiling fat.

Irish Stew.

(*Recipe from the Army and Navy Club*).

Take some cutlets and small chops of mutton season with salt and plenty of black pepper. Add onions cut in four pieces and sliced potatoes, a little celery and some parsley, bay leaves and thyme tied together to flavour. Boil for one hour : finish with some more small potatoes ; cook for another half hour and serve.

Devilled Chicken Creams.

Mix smoothly one teaspoonful of French and one of English mustard, one of chutney and seasoning to taste. Pound in a mortar with any pieces of cold chicken or rabbit, adding a little cream if too hot. Spread on croûtons or brown bread.

Œufs a la Toque.

Make some cases of mashed potato, like those used for oyster patties, and brown them in the oven. Fill them half way up with either fish or meat minced finely, seasoned, and mixed with sauce and fill the remaining half with buttered egg sprinkled with chopped parsley.

VEGETABLE ENTRÉES.

Artichokes and Bacon.

Cut some Jerusalem artichokes into cone shapes

and boil them. Take some rounds of fried bread with a thin rasher of bacon on each and put an artichoke on the top. Pour a thick white sauce round them.

Creamed Peas.

One pint shelled peas, 1 oz. butter, ½ oz. of flour, 1½ gills of liquid, 1 yolk of egg. Boil the peas nicely and drain, melt the butter in a saucepan, stir in the flour, take some of the liquid the peas were boiled in and make it up to the quantity required with milk. Stir this into the flour and butter and let it boil up : season and the yolk of egg. Stir in the peas lightly and serve with shiffets of toast and little rolls of bacon.

Stuffed Potatoes.

Bake some potatoes in the oven till quite done, cut in halves and scoop out a certain amount from each piece. Mash this with either minced meat or minced fish, moisten with butter or milk, season with pepper and salt, replace the mixture in the potato, press the two halves together again, and make quite hot.

SWEETS.

Custard Pudding.

The ordinary baked custard pudding can be made into a pretty sweet in various ways. Mix a handful of ratafias with the custard, and when baked, but not browned, ornament the top with

dried cherries and strips of angelica. A citron custard is made by mixing chips of candied peel with it before baking and ornamenting the top with crescents of citron.

Orange Baskets.

Scoop out the insides of oranges cut in halves, fill them with lemon or orange jelly and make handles of strips of angelica.

Parisian Apples.

Soak some dried pippins for twelve hours, then stew in a strong syrup, coloured with cochineal, until clear. Remove the cores and fill the centres with greengage jam with a cap of whipped cream placed on each. The syrup, which has been reduced and strained, should be poured round the apples.

Golden Fritters.

Cut some stale roll into rounds and soak in a mixture of one beaten egg and a little sweetened milk flavoured with vanille. Dip in thick batter, roll in breadcrumbs and fry in batter. Serve with sifted sugar and quarters of orange.

Rice Méringue.

Place a layer of apricot jam on the bottom of a pie dish; fill up with rice, well boiled in milk and beaten up with the yolk of one egg and an ounce of chopped almonds. Beat up the whites of two eggs to a stiff froth, spread thickly on the top and bake a light brown.

SAVOURIES.

Cheese Custard.

Butter a fireproof dish, lay in it thin slices of bread and butter and still thinner slices of cheese alternately, and season with pepper. Beat up one egg in half pint of milk and pour over. Bake in a moderate oven for fifteen or twenty minutes and serve hot.

Celery Crab Salad.

Cut two sticks of celery into small pieces and mix well in a bowl with two ounces of grated cheese. Make a dressing of oil, vinegar and pepper and garnish with slices of cucumber.

Artichoke Cheese.

This is made in the same way as cheese custard, but small dice of cooked white artichoke are substituted for the slices of bread and butter.

French Savoury Eggs.

Cut 4 hard-boiled eggs lengthwise and pound the yolks of 3 with a little butter, pepper and salt. Fill the whites with this mixture. For the sauce take the remaining yolk, a tablespoonful of French mustard, a teaspoonful of English mustard, and a tablespoonful of cream. Mix well together, pour over the eggs, sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve cold.

Parmesan Creams.

Half oz. gelatine, 3 ozs. cheese, a little cream,

and rather more than half pint of milk, to make 1 pint altogether when ready; pepper, salt, and cayenne to taste. Boil these together until quite dissolved, stirring all the time; strain through muslin, and when a little cool, pour into egg-cups to set. When quite set turn out of the egg-cups into a glass or silver dish and serve with watercress or lettuce.

Chutney Fritters.

Butter some small fine rounds of bread and spread over each a little good chutney. Cut out rounds of cooked ham or tongue the same size as the bread and put a slice of meat between two rounds of bread in sandwich fashion. Press these together, dip in batter and fry a pale golden colour. Drain well and serve at once, each round being sprinkled with chopped gherkin and parsley.

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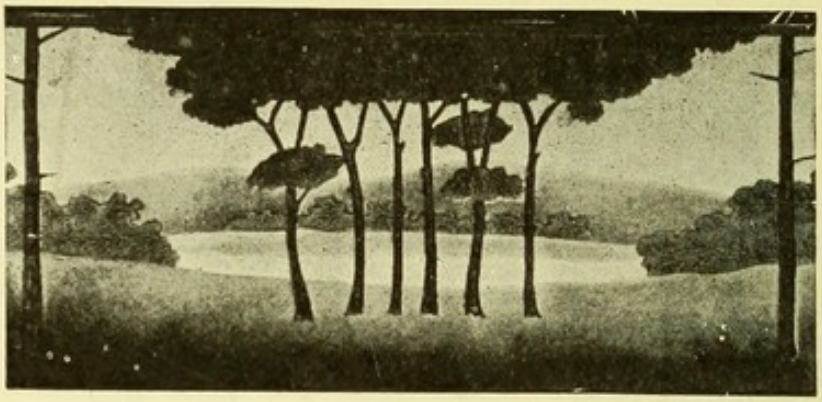

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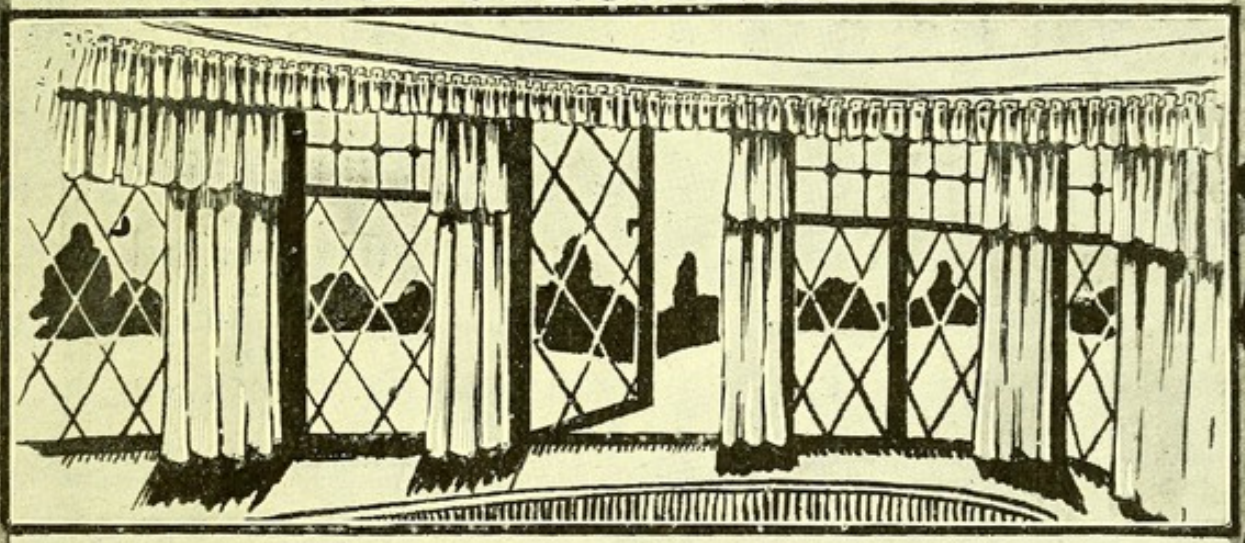

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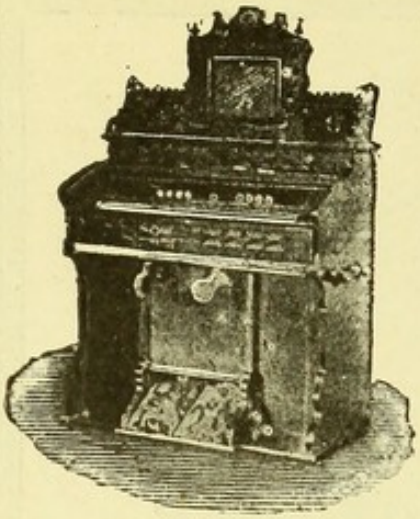

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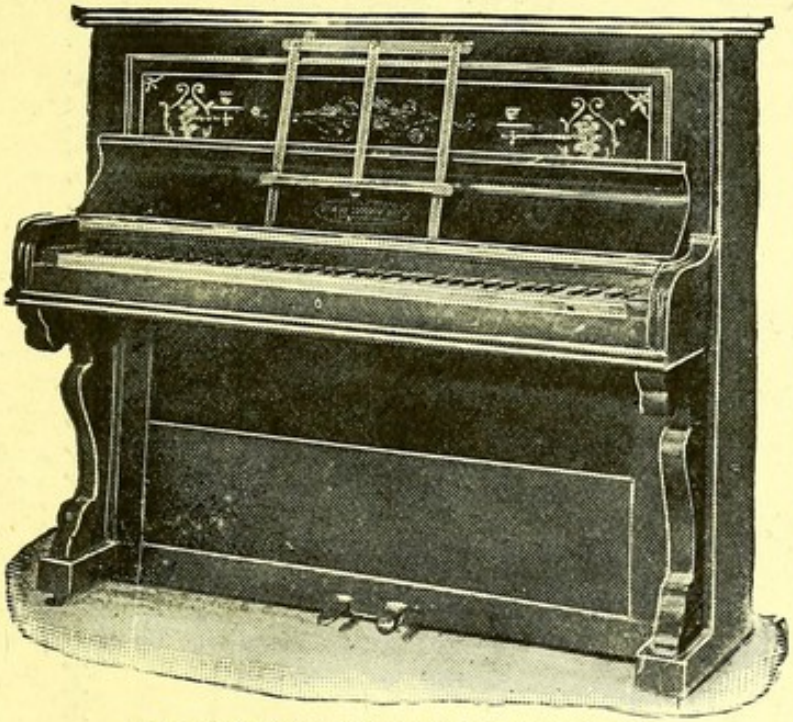

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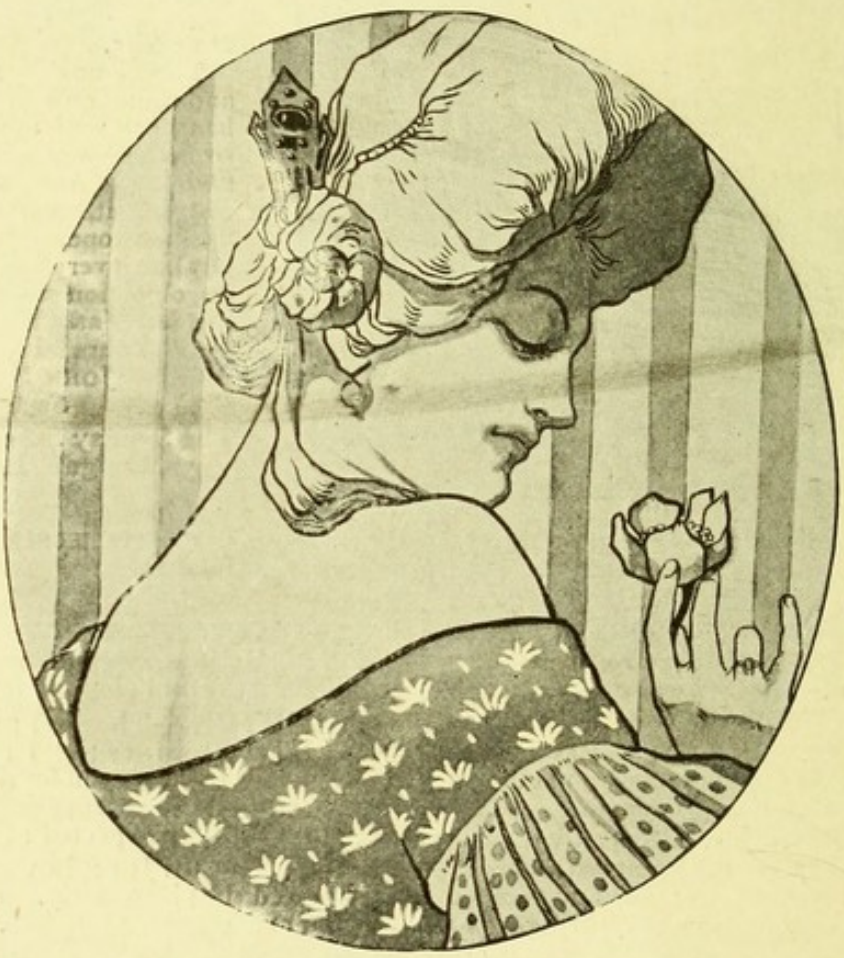

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