



## ART FURNITURE AND DECORATIONS FOR HOME USE.

NE of the salient features of the nineteenth century is the Renaissance (if it may be so called) of art, which has taken place within the last five-and-twenty years. Opinions differ in this, as in most other things; and some people pronounce this same Renaissance a false and not a true one. It is certainly not a creative movement, for it aims at nothing but imitation—and an imitation which requires what the Irish would call a “power of learning” to carry out. The prevailing key-note is sadness and regret—sadness for the present commonplace and grime, regret for the past ages of mysticism, mediævalism, and paganism. The great writers and teachers of the school are Pugin, Ruskin, and, I think, Pater. The ancient masters they most admire are Botticelli and Leonardo da Vinci; and the modern exponents are Alma Tadema, Rossetti, Burne Jones, and Morris, for both painting and decorative work. The atmosphere they most affect is of a grey-green. Nature, say they, all Nature; but Nature in her autumn—faded, sad, and wasting away into the approaching winter: the death of life, not the life which will live again in the tender greens of the spring. The strong influence which this “new departure” has exercised on everything, even the common surroundings of our daily life, has made the foregoing lines of explanation necessary. I think we all like to know a little of the principles which govern us, and why fashion and custom dictate this or that. For instance, a few years ago we all rejoiced in the charming fresh tints of the newly-discovered aniline dyes. For the first time we had violets and blues which did not fade. To some eyes the blues were a trifle garish, perhaps; but it was nevertheless a vast stride in the advance toward perfection. Now the taste is entirely changed. Under the new art teachers, every advance in the nineteenth century is to be rejected, as contrary to the principles of High Art. Only deep reds, pale yellows, grey-greens, blue-greens, and rose-ambers in colouring are allowable: in short, the faded Mediæval and Oriental shades of the early ages of decoration. I cannot deny that the new shades are charming; and speaking as a practical housekeeper, I should say too that they will stand wear-and-tear, and look better a few years hence than they do now, judging from the examples of the same colouring in the brocades and hangings in the South Kensington Museum. In the same way, in furniture the taste of the present day chooses the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for its models. It is not difficult to find the reason for this, as the manufacturers of that date carried out exactly the two rules which Eastlake gives us as guides in the art of decoration:—1st, That whatever is made should, above all things, fulfil the purpose for which it is destined;

and 2ndly, That the nature of the material of which an object is composed should be well considered and suitably treated. A careful consideration of these two simple rules will throw light on many questions which have doubtless perplexed my readers, and will also answer the query which a puzzled friend of mine propounded the other day:—“What can high art have to do with tables and chairs?”

Now art as applied to household furniture seems simply a question of good taste, guided by certain rules, and taught by the study of certain authors, whose books have become text-books and authorities on the subject. The various courts in the Crystal Palace are a study in colouring, and the refreshment rooms at the South Kensington Museum are wonderful specimens of decorative art. But, alas! I hear my reader exclaim, “All that is beyond my reach; I must be contented with my house very much as it stands.” So you must, I answer; but there is a right and a wrong taste in everything, apart from any very great connoisseurship or knowledge of art; and your eye once educated by good models, you will not be satisfied until you apply your knowledge to the beautifying of your own immediate surroundings.

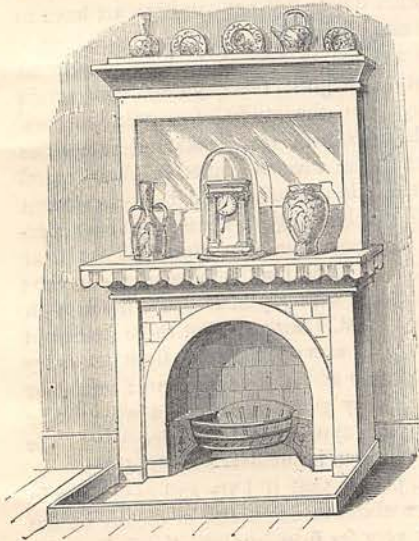
Do not think, please, that if I try and assist you in your efforts I am about to dogmatise or dictate on the subject: that is very far from my intention. But if I show you how to make your home the reflection of yourself—as it ought to be, in a measure—with the pleasure that is gained by picking up here a little and there a little, to add to its beauty, I shall only be giving you (what you may acquire for yourself) the results of what I have gained by my own reading and experience.

The hall is the place that suffers least from the absurd conventionalism which obtains in the furnishing of our houses. The table and chairs which grace it are usually well suited to the place they occupy; and if the floor be paved with encaustic tiles, very little can be added to a town entrance. If, however, the tiles be absent, I infinitely prefer a stained and polished floor, partly covered with Indian matting, to the prettiest oilcloth ever made. Nothing can be cheaper than the staining fluid, which any oilman can supply by the quart: and you can then choose between varnishing your floor and wax-polishing it. I prefer the latter myself, in spite of the difficulties with servants at first. It only requires to be done once a month or so; and after a few times it repays the labour bestowed on it, with such a brilliant polish that the servants are soon quite as prejudiced in its favour as yourself. If you are rich enough you have no trouble in making a choice, for the charming parquetted floors are within your reach, at a very moderate price for anything so pretty. Before I conclude the subject of waxed floors, I ought to mention that the wax and turpentine should be mixed, by the fire, to about the consistency of thick cream, and look a little like honey. It is then applied with a brush. The polishing

brush should be very stiff. In France they use two, one on each foot, and skate round the rooms easily enough.

As carpets are the foundations, so to say, of our houses, I must begin with them, and briefly make my profession of faith regarding them—which is, that I consider it a mistake in every way to cover the whole of the room. Apart from the question of health, the waste of money in covering the sides of the room, which really are better uncovered, is great and unnecessary.

Where the large pieces of furniture stand against the wall the floor is best bare, as they are rarely moved, and of course collect dust in large quantities. The saving in cost is very great, as many yards of carpet are quite wasted in this way. If we could



A NEW DRAWING-ROOM FIREPLACE.

get over the idea of comfort as connected with covering the whole of our floors, I feel sure that the extra cleanliness and economy—to say nothing of the beauty—would commend themselves to us. I feel inclined to wax enthusiastic on the question of Persian and Turkey rugs. How charming they are! what infinite rest and contentment are expressed in their rich and sombre colouring! Even their irregularities in weaving are pleasing to a connoisseur, as showing the individuality of the worker. I cannot agree in the opinion that nothing but the red and blue rugs are successful, for I admire the admixture of mustard-yellow excessively; but the less white in them, I think, the better. There is no occasion to buy the large square rugs which are so expensive, now that smaller sizes, of about eight feet long and four feet wide, can be obtained. Two of these answer very well indeed for the centre of the room. Some patience will be required in looking over a large quantity of rugs, to find two sufficiently alike to go together. There are also the carpets with borders to match to choose from; but the Eastern rugs will out-wear any other kind of carpet, and will probably last a second lifetime.

For myself, I like a handsome bear or wolf-skin for a hearth-rug; but as that is an expensive purchase, a bright-coloured Persian rug, or one to match the carpet you have chosen, must suffice.

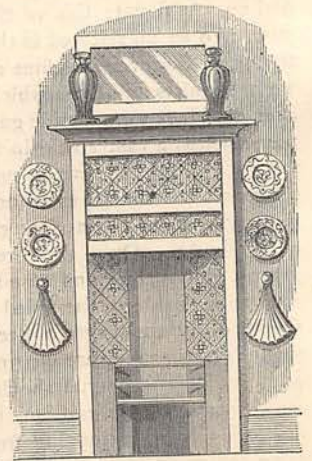
We must next consider the fireplace and mantelpiece, and their various equipments. A brass fender and fire-irons, and the coal-scuttle to match them, are the best substitutes for the ugly cast-iron accompaniments

of our common grates, and the japanned "coal-vases," as they are called, which are sold in the shops. A handsome copper scuttle can sometimes be picked up second-hand, at a very moderate price, and is a bright object on the dark floor. Tile-decorated grates and hearths are seen in most of the newly-built houses, and are a great saving of labour to the servants. If the scarcity of good and skilled labour continues, we shall be obliged to adopt all the labour-saving appliances possible; and the polishing and black-leading of the grates, &c., is the longest and most wearisome portion of the housemaid's morning labour.

On the mantelshelf is usually laid a board, covered with velvet or plush, with a narrow valance or a fringe. The embroidering of these valances in crewel-work, on velvet and satin, and also on linen, is a favourite occupation at present. Good patterns for doing them, and curtain borders to match, are easily obtainable. The fashion of putting curtains in front of the grates during the summer is a plan I like very much; the next best thing to them is a looking-glass front. Anything is better than a cascade of artificial flowers on a ground of crimped-up shavings of white tissue-paper! Flowering-plants in pots are pretty, but they require changing very often, and are too expensive for moderate incomes.

Our first illustration represents one of the long, narrow looking-glasses which have lately returned to fashion. They are from a foot and a half to two feet high, and are sometimes divided into three compartments. At the top is a shelf for china, glass vases, &c.

The second illustration is a fireplace, decorated in coloured tiles, for a bed-room or boudoir, with a small glass. The other day, when visiting at the house of a friend of much artistic taste, I saw one of the mantel-glasses so fashionable in the days of our great-grandmothers, evidently rescued from the garret and set up in the morning-room. The heavy rose-wood cornice at the top, and the pilasters which divided the glass into three compartments, had been freshly polished, and slightly regilt. The centre mirror had been broken, and red velvet had been introduced in its place. On this background were mounted the small portraits on ivory of several of the ancestors of mine host and hostess.



A NEW BED-ROOM FIREPLACE.

The effect was charming; and I commend the idea as a most useful one for small mantelpieces like the illustration.

The rage for china at present is so great that no house is considered decorated without it. I have not seen plates fastened all over the ceilings, as Victor Hugo has them in his house in Guernsey; but the

walls certainly would groan under the burden of the crockery laid upon them if they were able to express their feelings!

The small old-fashioned circular mirrors, with candle branches, are very charming for the sides of the mantelpiece, or indeed anywhere on the walls. The demand for them has revived their manufacture, but the newly-made frames are always too ornate. I like to avoid the carver and gilder, and plaster imitations of solid wood frames, as much as possible, for I think it is the continual sight of imitations, got up in a cheap fashion, which has caused the present vitiated state of the public taste. I wish I could persuade my readers to avoid, when furnishing, veneer, painted wood, and glued abominations of all sorts. Capital solid old furniture can be picked up second-hand, in almost any street in London; and a few good things are better than a houseful of cheap articles, which will break and come to pieces after a few months' wear-and-tear, and make your house into an asylum for broken-down furniture.

In hanging ordinary-sized pictures, five feet six inches from the floor to the centre of the picture is a good rule. The nails for holding them should be driven in close under the cornice (if there is one), or close to the ceiling—never lower. Do not hang them from one nail alone; the triangular space is ugly. It is best to have two cords and two nails, that the lines which are in the room may be straight. Copper wire is better than cord, as it does not get dusty. Water-colours should be hung together, and look best in rather narrow gilt frames; while photographs and engravings are better in black frames, and a slight gilt moulding for relief. To my mind, Oxford frames are not pretty; they have a spiky appearance, and look uncomfortable. Many people, however, consider them

the proper thing for religious subjects; and it is, after all, a question of individual taste. The last-named pictures, as well as framed photographs of relatives and friends, are more in their places in the sleeping apartments of the family, I think. It is very trying to be obliged to admire photographs of unknown people, even to please your friends.

The improvement in the manufacture of materials for curtains has been very marked within the last few years. Those with horizontal bands are particularly pretty; but in choosing them it must always be remembered that they decrease the height of the room they are hung in, and if your rooms are low you will do well to avoid them. There is no need for curtains to drag on the floor; they should be cut the exact length, and no more, and should be simply drawn back with a band, without draping in any way.

Ruskin gives us the warrant of the Ark of the Tabernacle for hanging our curtains with rings and poles; and cornices are so vulgar, we may be thankful to dismiss them on the fiat of so good an authority. Brass rods may be purchased by the foot, and the rings to match by the dozen; and with the new curtain-hooks, attached to safety-pins, we are independent of the assistance of the upholsterer at all times. Curtains should be made to *draw*, not to be looked at, as the comfort of them consists in being able to have all the light and all the darkness we choose. The room "curtained, and closed, and warm" is very attractive.

I had intended to have finished the subject of curtains and picture-hanging here; but I find I must say something more when I enter on the question of wall-colouring in my next article. I shall then give illustrations of furniture, with a view to help my readers to choose for themselves what is in good taste.

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 IN THE GARDEN.

IT was evening, and we wandered  
 Slowly to the river-side,  
 Stood there dreamily and pondered  
 Gazing on the rushing tide.

Little said we: but the river  
 Babbled saucily to me,  
 "Courage, faint heart; faint heart never  
 Won the love of fair ladye."

Then we turned and paced together  
 Up and down the gravelled way;  
 Spake one word about the weather,  
 Neither knowing what to say.

Then deep silence: for I could not  
 Break it with the word I would;  
 And it was so sweet I would not  
 Break it in the way I could—

Till the passion-storm of feeling  
 Could no longer be controlled,  
 And in halting, but appealing  
 Words, to her my love I told.

But she spake not, and half dreading,  
 Half in hope, I spoke again;  
 Turned and saw a smile o'erspreading  
 All her countenance, and then

Casting forth all fear, and taking  
 In my own her yielded hand,  
 Felt that she was shyly making  
 Answer to my love's demand;

And in trembling gladness, drew her  
 Blushing to my heart, and pressed  
 Her sweet lips. Oh! happy wooer,  
 Who in wooing, thus is blest.



mental music, and foreign and English songs should come in with the rest.

For village musical entertainments, remember that songs in a foreign language are a mistake. Nothing takes so well as old ballads and melodies (the words clearly enunciated) from the ladies, and patriotic and naval ditties from the gentlemen.

A great deal of tact is always required in the arrangement of a musical programme. There seems to be more jealousy among musical performers—both amateur and professional—than in any other art, and feelings are more easily hurt. All the personal wishes and idiosyncrasies must be studied, and the talents of each shown to the best advantage.

I have found the giving of musical parties an excuse for a great many sociable gatherings during the dull time of the year, by organising a number of previous meetings for the practice of part-singing.

In the country this is an admirable plan. In our village, we always have an annual concert for a local charity, in the early spring, in which the villagers as well as the gentry take part; and for this we have practising every Wednesday night during the winter.

There are always two performances: the first at the rectory, the second at the schoolroom, which is gaily decorated with evergreens; semicircles of wood being hung up against the wall and covered with scarlet cloth, these holding any number of candles, and producing a brilliant illumination.

Many of the failings of the poor arise from a want of healthy relaxation; and the rustic mind, however untrained, seldom tires of sweet sounds. So music does them a great deal more good than we are, perhaps, able to see and understand at a cursory glance.

In music, as in most things, what is worth doing at all is worth doing well; and I would remind amateurs that, in selecting songs, they should be careful to choose those which fall within the compass of their voices, and to articulate every word clearly. A simple ballad sung in tune and with feeling is better, a thousand times, than any operatic *morceau* only tolerably well sung. Many of the audience—in London, at all events—have an opportunity of hearing such ambitious performances much better rendered by professionals.

ARDERN HOLT.

## ART FURNITURE AND DECORATIONS FOR HOME USE.

### PART THE SECOND.



WEN JONES, in his "Grammar of Ornament," gives us to understand that Art in its early and more perfect days made use only of the primary colours—red, yellow, and blue—and that the secondaries—purple, green, and orange—in decoration mark decadence of style and treatment.

We of a later day are descending in the scale; and, if we follow the dictates of our modern Renaissance, must use only the russets, olives, and browns of the tertiary series. Certainly the new wall-papers, especially those designed by Mr. Cutler and Dr. Dresser, are unique, and charming in their restful hues. Happy indeed is the tenant to whom his landlord now gives *carte blanche* to re-paper his domicile. No more impossible roses of variegated tints meandering over the wall! *Nous avons change tout cela*. In place of them we have apples and pomegranates, in unripe greens; or the "green diaper," and an artistic dado and frieze. Without drawing any "odious comparison" between the roses and the apples, or their respective merits, we know the dado and frieze are a return to right principles of decoration. I have always considered the walls of Pompeian rooms perfection. Fig. I. illustrates the divisions and style: *a*, the frieze; *b*, the panels; *c*, the dado.

The dado is one-sixth the height of the wall; upon this stand broad pilasters half the width of the dado, dividing the wall into three or more panels. The pilasters are united by a frieze of varying width, about

one-fourth the height of the wall, from the top. In an example in the "House of the Faun," I think, the dado is black; pilasters, red; the frieze, yellow; the panels, blue or white. The gay colouring is open to objection, but the style of decoration is undoubtedly good. The dado should be dark—one of the secondary

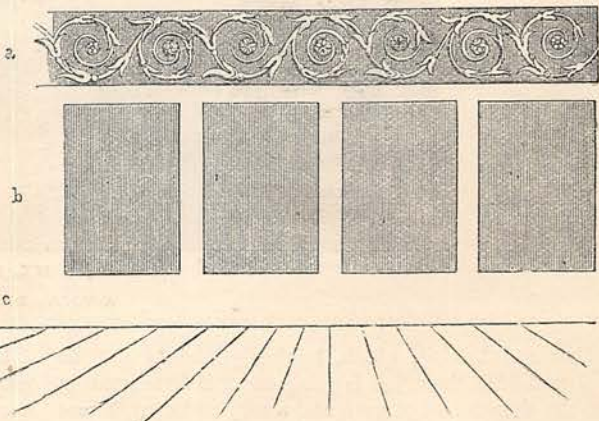


Fig. I.

colours—and the frieze invariably light, representing the sky. The ceilings in Pompeii were sometimes painted in imitation of the firmament, with the moon and stars on a blue ground.

Designs for wall-decoration could always be carried out in stencil, which is cheaper than wall-paper and can be made extremely pretty.

We have been used to white ceilings so long, that it seems as if they ought to be white. In reality, the ceiling should carry out the general tone of the room, and a white one can only look well when the room is white. There is no reason why the top of a room should not be papered as the walls are. It will be found a saving of expense, and a great comfort to those who suffer continually from the glare of our tasteless houses. One of the most charming sugges-

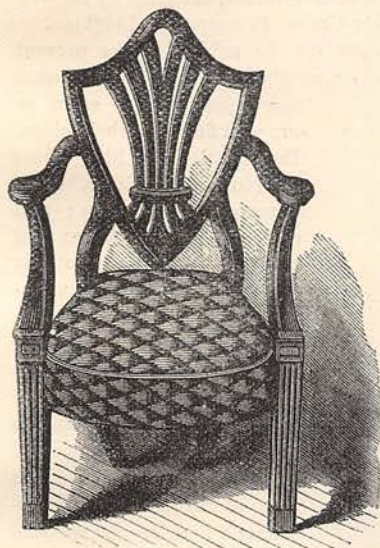


Fig. II.

tions I have seen was made the other day by a weekly journal, and was intended to aid those who were at a loss how to obtain the difficult colour called "Pompeian red" for covering the walls of a small room. The suggestion was, to use the material known in the shops as "Turkey red," which can be bought by the yard at a moderate price, and washes beautifully. It could be taken down and put up many times. The surface texture would be simply perfect, without either shine or gloss.

In concluding this part of my subject I must advise my readers to avoid, as far as possible, hanging a quantity of small brackets, pictures, photos, and other articles on the wall. It gives a spotty appearance, and tries and confuses the eye. Repose and dignity are the objects we must aim at in the decoration of our homes; and one or two good pictures are better than any amount of minor rubbish.

If you have any voice in the painting of the doors and windows of your house, choose a good flat tint—such as dark green—instead of graining in imitation of oak; varnish over staining fluid would be the best, if you cannot have real oak; but at any rate set your face against the falsehood of imitations in your surroundings.

Before beginning the subject of furniture, it is as well I should say that the practice of buying chairs and sofas, &c., *en suite* is one I cannot advise. The floor, the walls, and the ceiling of each room should be brought into harmony by a good arrangement of colour; and they are the background for the furniture, pictures, and the people who are dwellers therein. If you are in doubt as to your own opinion as regards colour, take the advice of one of the many artists and decorators in London, either by letter or *viva voce*. I consider we have two reliable instructors on whom

we may absolutely depend, viz., Nature, and Japanese decoration. The first never makes two sides of a leaf or flower alike; and the second imitates her so closely, and in so true a spirit of love and admiration for her various beauties, that we cannot do better than study every example on which we can lay our hands. In doing this we shall disabuse our minds of the upholsterer's idea, that one side of everything must be like the other—both sides of our mantelpiece arranged exactly alike, and so on in every part of the house.

I did not propose, in entering on my discussion about furniture, to take the rooms separately and describe them, but to speak of each article as it occurred to me, whatever its place in the establishment. I find, however, that this method would be somewhat disorderly, and that I shall do better to go regularly from the hall-door upwards. Before leaving this portion of the house, I would advise my readers to choose an invisible-green for the colour of the door, and to avoid a grinning lion for a knocker.

I have spoken of the hall in my previous article, the usual contents of which are well suited to their place. By a natural transition we will begin with the dining-room, which is really the general sitting-room of most families; particularly during the winter months, when it is the warmest and cosiest room in the house.

The ordinary side-board is by no means an artistic article. It is solid, and perhaps a trifle heavy-looking; but the usual internal arrangements are convenient and useful. I should like to see a change made in the back, however, which I think should be prettily shelved, with a back-ground of looking-glass, to hold china or plate.

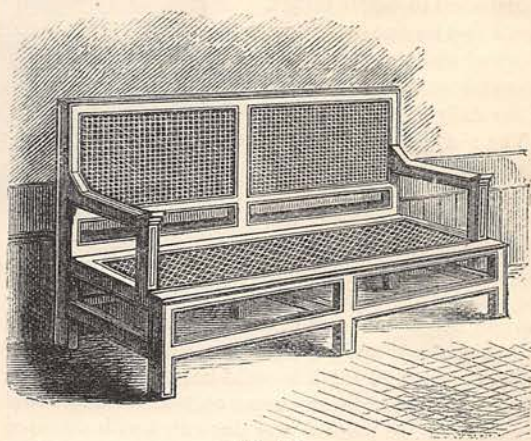


Fig. III.

Some of my friends stigmatise this as the "Kitchen Dresser" style; but, in spite of the intended sarcasm, I accept the idea as a good one. I do not see why our pretty silver and electro-plate, glass or china table decorations, should be hidden away in a closed cupboard, when they might beautify our rooms with their bright colours or shining light.

I hope to see a revival some day of that useful, old-fashioned "institution," the corner cupboard with glass

doors. We know the difficulty of keeping the floors and tables clear in our family sitting-room but too well. The litter of every-day life, "of books and work and healthful play," becomes in time quite unbearable to a tidy woman; and in the corner cupboard a place would be found for all. It should be properly, I think, part of the construction of the room, not a movable piece of furniture. At present our corners are generally wasted, unless occupied with some wretched little *étagère*, or "what-not," too shaky to hold anything but some tiny imitation of a Dresden pug, or some other useless bits of glass and china.

The book-case is, to my mind, one of the really important articles in the house. We want our books close to us, in loving companionship, "all through the live-long day." A house without books, or what is nearly as bad, a book-case with the doors locked and the key lost, is always a sure criterion to me of the mental status of the inmates. Few people ever realise, I think, the good which results from bringing up children in an atmosphere of literature, and from the early formation of a habit of reading, consulting, and taking refuge in books. A child imbued from infancy with the high thoughts of great minds, and accustomed to better things, would find no pleasure in the poor and sordid gossip which too often is the amusement of our daily life.

The shape of book-case at present in favour with most book-lovers is low and long—a little over three feet high, and twelve to fourteen feet in length, according to the space it has to fill. The top and bottom are each in one piece, and it is divided by two or three upright partitions, with three or four shelves in each. I think it could be manufactured by a country carpenter in any common wood, which could be varnished, or painted and decorated with coloured designs, after the Algerian and Moorish fashion. The shelf at the top is a great comfort, where plenty of room for ornaments and nick-nacks may always be found, and where large vases and busts may abide in peace. I have taken the dimensions from a book-case in use in the house of a friend. In this case the books are protected by curtains, embroidered in crewels, with a design of bees and humming-birds, and with wall-flowers—the last a graceful compliment to the books within, and the first symbolical of industry and sweetness.

The most charming applications of needlework are now made to furniture, and a good worker can make her surroundings a bower of beauty. The revival of embroidery has been of much service in encouraging artistic ideas in all kinds of work; and too much praise cannot be awarded to the efforts made by the School of Art Needlework at South Kensington. The specimens sent to the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia were lessons in themselves; particularly the work intended for wall-decoration, designed by Messrs. Burne Jones, Walter Crane, Prinsep, and Leighton.

I have little to say on the subject of the present telescope dining-tables, as they (the oval-shaped ones more particularly) seem to me well fitted for their place. But Eastlake, in his "Hints on Household Taste," quite disapproves of them; and suggests several tables put together, of more artistic shape. He also, if I remember rightly, gives an illustration of what he recommends for adoption, to which I refer my readers. The rule for dining-rooms in England is leather-covered chairs and sofa; now this is entirely an idea of the fashionable furnisher's; there is no real reason for our using leather any more than any other material. According to the aforesaid F. F., "the drawing-room must be something light and airy, and the dining-room heavy and dark, and 'comfortable.'" And we are led in bondage "all the day long." Conventionality is so strong among us, that we should feel wretched if our house were different from Mrs. A's, or Mrs. B's, even though we knew our own taste was right.

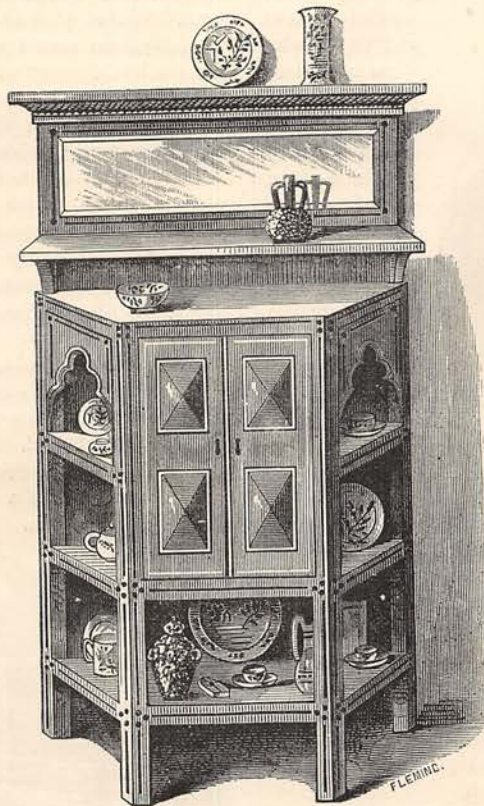


Fig. IV

Illustration No. II. is said to be a Chippendale arm-chair, one of a set of five; the others have the shield-shaped back and no arms. To me this is a very poem of a chair; the wide seat, the restful back, all invite us to repose ourselves therein. It is said to be of Chippendale's own manufacture, but I do not feel sure of many so-called articles, even though some of my friends say they "could swear to a Chippendale; the style is unmistakable." At any rate, this chair—whoever was the maker of it—is charming, and a good study on which to form our taste. Some of the dining-room chairs, however, made lately are very good in style; and the question of covering must always be one of individual taste. If the dining-room is to be used as a general sitting-room, it should be as little conventional as possible. Pompeian red for the

walls, and the woodwork black and gold, is a good arrangement. The position of the room, as to the points of the compass, must also be considered in the choice of colouring, no grey nor dull shades being fit for a north aspect. A coloured ceiling is also to be advised, excepting with very light walls: it costs no more than white, and is more pleasing to the eye.

The next article of dining-room furniture is the

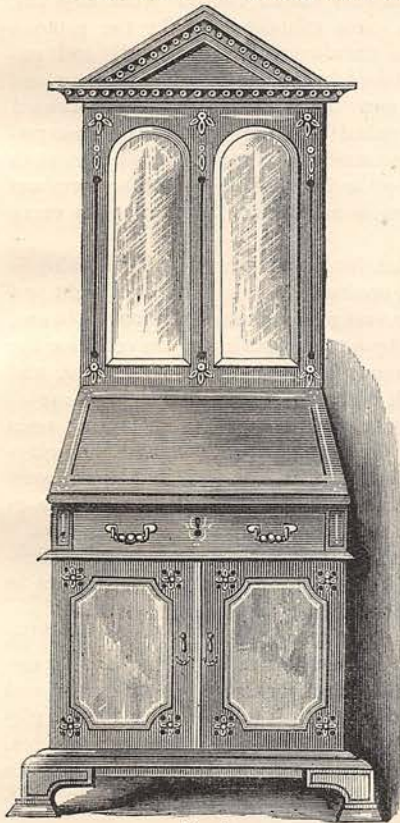


Fig. V.

sofa; and I begin by expressing the opinion that the present way of making it will bear off the palm unquestionably for utter inelegance and discomfort. The same may be said of those intended for the drawing-room, which are still more elaborately contorted. There is no easy corner on them for a tired back and feet, and any invalid would have a relapse if they made use of so dreary and unsatisfactory an attempt at restfulness.

There is no doubt that the most useful shape, as well as the most comfortable, is that which is represented by Fig. III. The drawing is that of a wood and cane sofa, of old-fashioned make. We have omitted the cushions, in order to show the actual frame. I wish I could tell my readers where such a thing can be found to-day for sale, but I cannot. I can only offer the idea as a suggestion for the comfort and pleasure of home. The arms are a little too low, as I think they ought to be as high as the back to insure complete ease.

Before I leave the dining-room, I must warn my reader to use great care, when selecting furniture, as to the relative height of the dining-table and chairs. Nothing is so trying as a high chair and a low table; it is really worse than a high table and a low chair, for the first fairly dislocates your neck, in addition to breaking your back.

A very old house in London has no greater charm than the handsome staircase of polished oak which generally adorns the hall. The modern representative, when space is of more value, is the greatest eyesore

in the house. We have not quite arrived at the "Nowel stairs" yet, but they are cramped into a corner of the hall, and two persons can never descend to dinner arm-in-arm, so there is really no difference in fact. The carpet should be carefully chosen to match or harmonise with the dining-room colouring; nothing mean or narrow should be allowed if possible, and the few inches of margin should be stained and varnished or painted, except in the case of stone. If there be a window at the head of the stairs to the front, it should be handsomely fitted up with curtains to draw, and not to look at. A back window, or a borrowed light, is a good opportunity for introducing stained glass. If the house be not your own the glass can be put into a separate frame, so as to be moved at any time you may change your abode.

The drawing-room of houses in town is generally two rooms, separated by double-doors, on the first floor. Sometimes there is a bow-window, but more usually two windows in the front and one in the back room. There are always two fire-places and two mantel-pieces to be considered, and the treatment of these is commonly in the twin-brother style, "everything alike, even to their noses, marm," as the old nurse says in Beaumont and Fletcher's play. The ordinary British matron chooses her furniture *en suite*, at the bidding of the cabinet-makers and upholsterers she employs. A round or oval table for the middle of the room (if

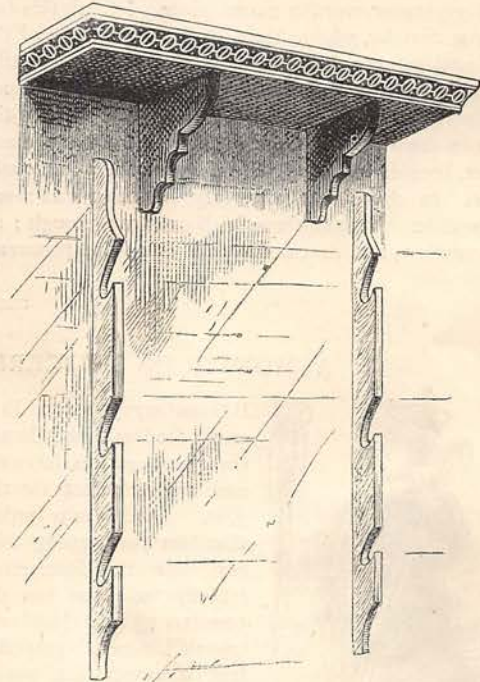


Fig. VI.

she be a little enlightened, she will put it at the side or in a corner); a "cheffoneer," as the salesman has probably called it, with a marble top, and looking-glass, two or three cupboards below with doors that stick, and quantities of little scraps of carving glued on "promiscus" all over, ready to come off directly they

become dry enough. Then a sofa, of a shape and construction peculiarly unfitted for lying down upon and still more uncomfortable to sit on, and six or eight ordinary chairs to match. These, with two easy chairs, comprise the usual drawing-room suite, sold at from "eight to twenty guineas." I have described the ordinary furnishing of nineteen rooms out of every twenty in town or country.

But, you say very naturally, I find fault with everything that is within your means to purchase. So I do, because everybody will insist on spreading over a whole house the money they should have expended on two or three rooms of it. If my advice be taken, you will just furnish what you actually need, and wait for time and opportunity, or increased means, to finish the rest. To my taste, the best-furnished drawing-rooms are those with the least in them, but everything the best of its kind.

Fig. IV. is a cabinet in ebonised wood, either with or without gold mouldings. The looking-glass at the top has a shelf underneath it for china, &c., and the closed doors might be decorated with needlework panels. The introduction of ebonised wood was an era in furnishing, and very handsome and well designed articles of furniture may be obtained in it at any good shop. Fig. V. is a high *escritoire*, with mirrors at the back. The ordinary furniture of our rooms is wanting in height; the only tall things being the looking-glasses over the mantelpiece. I think this has been a mistake, which I am glad to see some of the leading designers of the day are endeavouring to rectify.

Wall-ottomans and divans are very good additions to the room, and have the advantage of leaving the floor in the middle of the room free from too many chairs, besides breaking the monotony of a long wall-space. In choosing chairs, vary the shapes as much as possible. Two or three high ones are enough; all the rest low, and as comfortable as can be procured.

Avoid having anything in the centre of the room; even the usual ottoman spoils the broad effects at which you should aim. In selecting tables be very careful that they are solid, and so firm that none of your family or friends need fear breaking them. A good-sized writing-table, with an ink-stand, pens, and paper-case—for use, and not for beauty—is a necessity, as well as an occasional table; but do avoid anything flimsy. It is a great mistake to make the piano a feature in your drawing-room; it is ugly and ungraceful, and should be placed in some obscure and unobtrusive corner. I am always suspicious when I see the piano poked into the most conspicuous position, that some member of the family will attempt to warble to me by the hour, while the other members range themselves in attitudes of admiration on every side.

The usual idea for drawing-room wall-colouring is white and gold, producing a painful effect of light and glitter, without a vestige of repose or shadow. No one, unless they try by actual experience, can conceive the enormous difference between a house all glare, and paper-patterned, and one in which the walls are of sage or olive-green, and when all the colouring rests the tired eyes. Gilding, white marble, and plate-glass are all at present perfect eyesores in almost every house; and white marble-topped tables are undesirable in every way, except as washstands, perhaps.

One or two small low tables are needful for afternoon tea; and if you have a bow window be sure to leave it comfortably free of furniture.

Avoid a curved sofa, or indeed curves in anything made of wood. My last illustration, Fig. VI., is for use anywhere as a bracket for large china bowls and vases. The rack beneath is taken from a French picture, and is of Moorish design. It is a capital idea, and might answer for walking-sticks, whips, &c., in the hall.

## A MONTH IN SWITZERLAND FOR TWENTY POUNDS.



DO not say you can do it easily for less, but I do say that you can do it easily and with comfort for the £20. And I say further that last year, going with my wife to Switzerland (chiefly to show her the country, which I had seen myself before), I stayed a few days over four weeks, and brought back golden change out of £40. I speak, therefore, from experience, when I say that Switzerland can be very fairly gone over from England for £20. It is not the

sights which this little country has to show; I will assume that the desire to see these already exists, and requires no stimulant. Were it otherwise, I should fill an introductory column with glowing descriptions and earnest adjurations to any one who has not seen Switzerland to go and see it. What I wish to impress is that the project is by no means so formidable a matter as it appears to the ordinary untravelled Englishman from a distance. Nowhere in the world, I should say, is travelling so well-ordered, so comfortable, and so cheap as in "the playground of Europe." Entire ignorance of French or German need not stand much in your way: if you know either language it will add to your comfort, save you some expense occasionally, and enable you to penetrate farther into native life; but English is now known and spoken at nearly all the stopping-points of Swiss tourists, and by some one or other attached to nearly all Swiss vehicles. On the great lines of railway the guards, and on the main

place in this short paper to dwell upon the glorious



trremely advisable, and probably conducive of great advantage to this country, and more advantage to Egypt herself. It is one which no nation in Europe could object to being carried out, except perhaps France, from some sentimental idea that Egypt is under the protection of France, since the descent upon the Nile by the first Napoleon. Russia too might possibly object, yet not from any sense of damage to her own interest, but purely out of jealousy of British advancement. It must, however, be remembered that it is by no means necessary that Egypt should always be the highway between Europe and the East. At present, indeed, that commerce and traffic passes along the Suez Canal, and the valley of the Nile is the great highway between Egypt and Hindostan. Such, however, is not likely long to continue. The valley of the Euphrates is naturally a much shorter line than by the valley of the Nile. By this route, railway communication would be available nearly the entire way from London to Calcutta, and a period of time would be gained in the journey, which may be variously estimated from five to even ten days. It must be evident that, as in any case of a struggle by force of arms for supremacy in India, such as occurred on a limited scale between France and England, before Clive at Plassey gained for the crown of Britain its fairest gem, the power of sending troops and supplies rapidly to India would be of primary, nay, of vital importance. In ten days such a battle might be won or lost, as would decide the fate of Hindostan for ages to come; and from want of supplies and reinforcements, such a battle might be very easily lost. Now Constantinople is absolutely, geographically, and of necessity the gate of Europe towards the valley of the Euphrates; and we should remember that it is advisable, not only that this gate should be in the hands of a Power which would be incompetent to hurt English interests, but it would be extremely advisable that the gate should be held in the hands of England herself. The occupation of Constantinople would

be as justifiable, and much more beneficial to the inhabitants of Constantinople, as has proved the occupation of Gibraltar and Malta to native interests. There would be no practical difficulty in carrying out such a measure, for by the topographical conformation of the ground around Constantinople, the fortification of the city at a sufficient distance from its ancient walls as to prevent any danger from the heaviest artillery fire would be easy, and comparatively inexpensive. Such a solution of the difficulty of Constantinople would probably secure peace for many ages to come. As Russia would then have no uncertainty as to what an advance on the Dardanelles meant, she would not again venture to stir up European war, as was the case at the beginning of the Crimean conflict, under the mistaken impression that England would not fight for the East. If the British standard once floated on the towers of Stamboul, peace would be more secure than it ever can be as long as a feeble, despotic, and unpopular government rules on the shores of the Bosphorus.

Nor is this question of little importance. History has shown, with a regular and systematic course, step by step, how the prosperity of any country has followed its immediate connection with the East. Whenever any particular land has possessed the mastery of India sufficiently to have commanded the great bulk of the trade with Hindostan, that country has been one of the leaders of the world; and as soon as the trade of India, which now depends upon the mastery of India, has passed away from the hands of any country, so surely has that country fallen from the first rank among nations. We see it from the earliest times. When the trade of the Indies passed away from Tyre, her gorgeous palaces crumbled into waste; and it is only want of space that prevents our tracing this constant rise and decay of States, such as Portugal and Venice, and again of our own country, in exact harmony with their control and power over the trade of India.

H. HOZIER.

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## ART FURNITURE AND DECORATIONS FOR HOME USE.

**T**HE characteristics of our bed-rooms should certainly be "sweetness and light;" but even as I write these opening lines, I feel I must qualify them, if only for the sake of those who take everything *au pied de la lettre*. By "light" I must not be understood to mean "glare;" repose to the weary eyes and tired brain being a chief essential of the sleeping-room. It is sad to think how often invalids are perfect martyrs to the wall-paper of their room. Indeed, I have known instances in which the continual counting of a diamond-patterned paper became so maddening, that the patient had to be removed to another chamber. If obliged to choose a new bed-room paper, it is perfectly astonishing to see the amount of ugliness which is placed before you in an ordinary shop, from which to make your selection. Diamond-shapes with sprigs in the

middle, and diamond-shapes without sprigs in the middle; weak-minded little sprigs, without roots or visible supports, and a background of dots; upright lines with sprigs in the middle of them, and meandering sprigs on each side—these form the majority of patterns, in every colour and tint except the right one, through which you sadly thread your way; and if gifted with a small amount of taste and a sense of the "fitness of things," you wonder helplessly at the want of original invention displayed. I should avoid entirely any *countable* pattern—but would prefer something so rambling in design that it has no apparent beginning, nor ending, and so faintly traced that the effect is only that of light clouds in a summer sky. Pale shades of green, blue, or pink are very pretty, and wear well. If the room be a low one, avoid a border at the top, as it will lower it still more. For

my own part, however, where there is a possibility of choosing, I should prefer stencilled walls to papered; and I have been sustained in my opinion lately by a very eminent decorative artist, who informed me he invariably used a stencil border for the dado in the bed-rooms he decorated. For instance: for yellow walls, the dado and wood-work of doors, &c., will look well in chocolate-brown, or even a dark blue; the stencil bordering of running flower, or geometrical pattern in dark and light shades of blue, or else in natural or gay colours; or the border may be omitted entirely.

I noticed the other day, in the house of one of the most charming female writers of the day, that the walls throughout were of plain colour—generally a Pompeian red—and the dado was one of the pomegranate: wall-papers in dark green shades. A plain moulding of wood divided the dado from the upper paper, and there was no frieze. The ceilings of this house were almost all domed, and were divided into squares by bands of wood painted green. These spaces were papered with a running-patterned paper of green leaves on a white ground.

A dreadfully cold, flat effect is in vogue in some houses, produced by white or grey walls, and white bed and window curtains for bed-rooms. The white muslin flouncings over pink calico for the decoration of dressing-tables, is an application of millinery to furniture utterly out of place and inappropriate. Even the idea of its being a "bower fit for a maiden beauty" is no excuse for the want of artistic taste and judgment.

The floor should never be carpeted to the walls. In hot climates matting is the best, of course; and even in England I have seen bed-rooms covered with it. If there be a centre carpet, the margin can be covered with matting; but, for my own use, I like the treatment of the floors to be the same throughout the house, viz., inlaid parqueterie if it can be afforded, or stain and polish in imitation of old oak. I have given directions in previous articles for polishing; and I may assure my readers that I have always found visitors admire my floors excessively.

The use of carpet underneath the beds is very unadvisable as regards both health and cleanliness; and scrubbed floors entail a certain amount of danger from damp, as in this climate they do not dry quickly after washing; indeed, in any case, I think the smell of scrubbing most objectionable.

Brass or iron bedsteads are now very generally used; and as far as cleanliness is concerned, they are a great advantage. But, alas! their ugliness is quite unquestionable; and even the best feel ricketty, in comparison to the solid and more expensive wooden ones. Except in old-fashioned houses, we rarely see canopies and four-posters now; and many people never use curtains at all. In case of draughts, and when there are several doors leading into the bed-room, curtains at the head of the bed are very useful; but at the foot they are useless, and prevent a free access of pure air.

There is now such an abundance of choice in crêtonnes and chintzes, that every one must be able to find something to please them; but I do not like the

fashion of having the wall-paper to match the flowers and birds of the chintz. The effect produced is spotty, and there is an utter want of the shade so needful for a bed-room. The new woollen materials for furnishing are very nice for bed-room use, particularly those in duck's-egg green, buff, and amber. In choosing bed-room furniture I should always give the preference to straight-legged chairs, wash-stands, and dressing-tables. A certain sensible amount of turned work may be allowed, but curves of all kinds should be avoided. I think it is Eastlake who is so "down upon" curves in furniture, and I need not explain to any thoughtful person that the reason is this, that wood cannot be moulded like plaster, but has fibres, and is more or less closely "grained," as it is called; and its formation and growth must be respected, if our furniture is to be strong and tough. The present demand for over-ornamented furniture is the cause of the continual breakages and its unsatisfactory wear.

Wooden and glass door-handles and plates should by all means be avoided, and the same rule will apply to drawer-handles in the bed-rooms, where they are much in the way, and have a special capability for getting entangled and caught in everything. Flat bronze or brass fittings, in *cinque cento* style, which can be obtained now at any good ironmonger's, are less in the way, and look both pretty and antique. Painted furniture represents a particularly low style of art, and is one of those transparent deceptions which never deceive anybody; so there can be no use in continuing them, except to hide the bad joiner's-work, which is sometimes sold under the convenient veil of the ugly paint. Pine slightly stained and varnished is itself, at any rate, and no imitation nor cheat.

The wash-stands with coloured tiles let-in at the back are very pretty, and look fresh and clean. But the application of white marble slabs to dressing-tables is a horrible idea, which should at once be discouraged. In fact, I cannot see that marble is a suitable adjunct to household furniture at all; my sense of "the fitness of things" from an artistic point of view would forbid it entirely, except as a very excellent paste-board in hot weather. Even in the case of chimney-pieces I should infinitely prefer wood as a material. I can imagine, however, my ideas might be modified if I lived in a palace, instead of an ordinary every-day dwelling. An "over-mantel," or superstructure of wood, with small shelves; having an over-hanging top, shaped like an arch; and a background of figured panels, in embroidery or leather, is a capital addition to a bed-room. If ingeniously designed, it will afford shelter to the numberless houseless vagrants, in the shape of ornaments, which are the litter of every home, the presents of generous but inartistic and thoughtless friends.

The revived fashion of coloured counterpanes, sometimes of the same material as the curtains of the bed-room, is not an idea that I like. For London, it has the advantage of not showing the dirt as soon as the white ones; but nothing makes up, to my mind, for the dingy appearance in the room. The striped counterpanes, however, in red and white, or with a

little blue, are less objectionable; but they must reflect the general tone of the room.

I have already spoken of devotional pictures and family photographs being most suitable for the decoration of the bed-rooms. The same rules obtain for hanging them here, as in the dining and drawing-rooms; and no terrifying subjects should be allowed, particularly where there are children.

In an artist's house in town I saw the other day a dado of blue and white tiles, about four feet high, in the hall. This treatment was carried through the house, for wall decoration, from basement to attic. It happened to be a very hot day, and the effect was most cool and charming. It has the advantage, too, of perfect cleanliness. If the tiles should prove too expensive for general use, I should recommend a painted dado, of a dark brown or green, with a darker line on top; or, better still, a wooden moulding. This can be washed and kept clean also, and avoids the necessity for continual white-washing. For the bath-room walls, if tiles themselves be too expensive, we have varnished "tile-papers," which are made in great variety, and resist the action of water for some time.

I have not as yet mentioned the important subject of window-blinds. First and foremost we have the Venetian blind, which I like best of all, I think, if I can have it painted of a colour to harmonise with the rest of the room. The general colour is a violent green: this, and the different hues of the apartment it shades, all "swear at each other," as the French say! The next thing to Venetians are the silk blinds gathered on cords, and drawn up in festoons. In blue silk they are most effective. The red blinds—a fashion imported from Belgium, I fancy—have a most comfortable appearance from outside, but have a drawback in their fading so soon to an ugly brick hue. For half-blinds I cannot at all admire dried ferns and leaves set between two panes of glass. They are not in their proper place as a window decoration. The lower window-sash is very pretty when made with small panes irregularly set in leaden frames, the glass of a greenish hue, and small figures or flowers of a conventional pattern upon it. For bed-room windows this is very nice, and is a change from the everlasting drawn-muslin blind with the gilt rod.

D. DE B.

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



**H**OME-STAYING youths," we are told, "have ever homely wits," so possibly it is the dread of these same "homely wits" which makes people at this season beat so precipitate a retreat to the Continent. Belgium, the Rhine, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, and far less accessible spots are invaded by English, who, according to the showing of other nations, are distinguishable at a glance by the inappropriateness of their attire; and we are ourselves bound to own that our countrypeople rarely show to so great a disadvantage as *en voyage*. They seem to consider that anything will do, treasuring up for travelling a store of old clothes which they would not dream of wearing at home. There can be no greater mistake; indeed few things are absolutely necessary as far as comfort is concerned. "New and few" are rhymes which the traveller would do well to remember. Hardly any half-worn dress will stand a month or six weeks of hard wear and be fit to be seen at the end.

We would almost wish some of the ladies who show so little respect for their nation, and so little self-respect, by thus making guys of themselves from motives of ill-timed economy, could overhear a few of the remarks which have fallen on our ears in Paris during this same September season, when so many of our compatriots flock over to the French capital. These remarks accompanied, as they usually are, by such an expressive shrug of the shoulders as only a Frenchman can give—conveying even more than the words—

might possibly open the listeners' minds to the real impression they make.

The Parisian dressmakers have had some very pretty travelling costumes made this season of black and white check, or thick *écru foulard*; but they are apt to trim them with silver braid, which is scarcely suited to hard wear-and-tear, sea-air, and dusty railway carriages. *Polonaises* are the usual form in which they are made, with two square ends at the back, and as these are easily raised they need not, with a little care, be very much creased, the skirts being in many cases short. Gingham for travelling dresses, Parisians much affect, especially blue with light red lines. We think our readers would do well to adopt this mode, for such dresses rarely require washing, are cool, and at the same time, if made as long *polonaises*, they can, should the skirt become soiled first, be worn over black silk. English embroidery and Russian lace are the best trimmings.

Annual trips to the Continent impress us each season the more with the comfort of but little luggage. A mohair for a travelling-dress, provided it is a good one, and so will not cockle with damp, is a most serviceable material. Grey is among the best colours, and next to it dust-hue. The skirts are best trimmed with bias bands of the same, as also the *polonaise*, which can be further improved by bows down the front. Two outside ornamental pockets will be found a comfort, as well as pockets on either side of the skirt, such as tailors invariably place on the dresses they make; you can scarcely have too many *en voyage*. The addition of some bright-coloured muslin bows or a muslin *fichu* would make such a dress as this fit for a