

been made at different times, and is not all alike in quality.

Clever housekeepers with artistic tendencies are very fond of making butter *look* pretty for the table. One of the methods they employ for this purpose is to "squirt" the butter. This is done by rolling a piece of stiff white paper to the shape of a sugar-bag, and squeezing the butter in strings through a hole at the bottom. Butter thus prepared may be dished, and garnished with small sprigs of parsley, or it may be used to ornament glazed hams, tongues, &c. "Scooped butter" is made by scooping the butter quickly and thinly with a scooper that has been dipped in warm water. "Curled butter" is made by putting the butter into a cloth, two ends of which are fastened to a hook in the wall, and the other two are tied in a knot so that a stick might pass through. The cloth is twisted

tightly so that the butter shall fall in small curly strings through the knot into a dish put under it to receive it. Very pretty moulds are sold and extensively used for shaping butter. They should be kept perfectly clean, and before being used should be wetted with cold spring-water in order to prevent the butter from sticking to them. Scotch hands for moulding butter are very inexpensive and very easily managed. They consist of two plain pieces of wood fluted in the inside. They require to be soaked in cold water before being used, and if used constantly should be kept in a bowl of water to be ready when wanted. The butter should be taken up between them in small portions, and rolled either into balls or small rolls, and if these are put on a butter dish and garnished with parsley they may be made to look very pretty.

PHILLIS BROWNE.

ON HEARING JENNY LIND'S "GOOD NIGHT" SUNG IN THE STREET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE CROSS AND DOVE OF PEARLS."

SWEET, songful sister! my full heart
Is borne upon thy strain,
And in its sadness bears a part
And answers to its pain;
Yet, while the sunset sky is bright,
We will be strong and say, "Good night!"

Good night! good night! to those who weep
Such tears as we have wept;
Sweet peace to those who dread the sleep
That all before have slept;
Bright dreams to maidens worn with care,
And brave youths struggling with despair.

Good night! good night! to rich and poor,
To prisoner and to free;
To children playing at the door
And laughing merrily;
Good night to mothers fond and proud,
And fathers bearing through the cloud.

Child of Cecilia! why has fate
Been so unkind to thee?
Thou wert not born to this estate,

Nor nursed in misery.
"Good night!" it echoes down the street:
Thy mien is proud, thy song is sweet.

What hast thou done to vex the world?
And what the world to thee?
Oh, heavens! Who shall say? our life
Is full of mystery;
Yet angels leaning from the height
May hear thee wish the world "Good night!"

Nor let the scattered pence it flings
Be painful to thy touch;
The bard who for its guerdon sings
Is equal, and has much
To break his heart-strings ere his lyre
Fail 'neath unsatisfied desire.

Good night! good night! The eyelids ache
With tears too long unshed;
We weep ourselves to sleep, and wake
With heavy heart and head;
But when we say our last "Good night,"
God grant the waking may be bright!

FIREPLACES IN SUMMER.

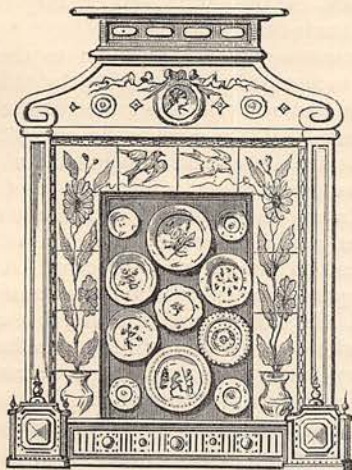
WHEN the increasing warmth of the spring weather forces us to extinguish our blazing and cheerful winter companion, the fire, nothing, I think, can surpass the melancholy blackness, the utter unsightliness of the vacant grate. Even the bright associations of the past winter—the friendly chat and pleasant laughter over afternoon teas innumerable, taken in the warmth of its cosy light—fail to redeem its mournful ugliness. Modern fashion has introduced many much-needed improvements, which, after all, are only revivals of the taste of

our ancestors, who certainly knew how to design delightful fireplaces; and we cannot do better now than carefully to copy their oak over-mantels, and shelves for china, and their Dutch tiles of every design and colour.

Of course those who are happy enough to own a fireplace beautified and adorned in the modern style will not be very anxious to hide it. Those who happen, however, to live in houses (and their name is Legion) which they do not own and cannot improve, will feel the wish, with each returning summer, to "do something" with the unsightly hearth. For their benefit I

intend to gather, from all sources, suggestions, plans, and instructions how to beautify the fireplace in summer.

A very usual plan is to utilise a looking-glass for the purpose, made to fit the empty space, with or without a row of flowering plants in a box before it. This,



however, is expensive, and is open to objection on that score alone. For bed-rooms, fire-boards have long been considered the right thing, but as our knowledge of hygiene advances we shall find them seriously objectionable on account of their checking the ventilation which the chimney affords. This should be always a consideration in any room used for sleeping purposes. As this, nevertheless, is really one of the most natural forms, and the difficulties of ventilation can be overcome by using merely a frame of wood, and not a solid board, I have several suggestions to offer as to the embellishment of the so-called "fire-board."

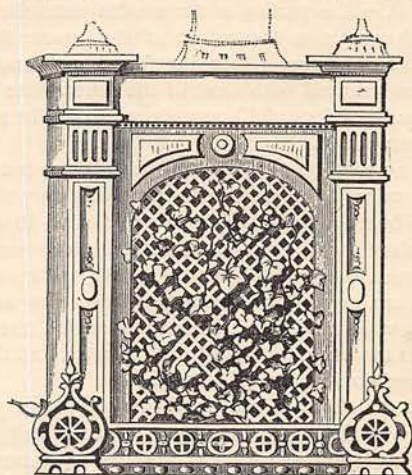
The wooden frame (being made, of course, to fit the opening for which it is intended) should be covered with coarse canvas, well stretched and nailed on. Upon this the back-ground is pasted, if of paper; but if of linen, cotton, or cloth it can also be stretched and nailed on. There is nothing to prevent the economically inclined from doing this at home. A ground of plain black or coloured paper may have flower designs arranged upon it, and a landscape in the centre. I have also seen an attempt to represent water-lilies floating on a pond, with over-hanging branches and reeds, and birds and butterflies hovering above. All these designs were cut from chintz, cretonne, and paper, and simply pasted on the back, which was chosen of some shade of colour likely to suit the room and its prevailing tint. Any one a little skilled in oil-painting could fill the fireplace very effectively with some roughly-drawn sketch, such as I have described.

It must be remembered that very much depends upon the style of our chimney-piece and other surroundings; so before deciding upon any suggestion which has pleased us, we must consider its appropriateness to the fixed objects of our fireside. For

instance, if the mantel-piece be of white or coloured marble, nothing I have yet described, except looking-glass, is suitable. The American plan, now so fashionable, for window decoration, of dried ferns and leaves arranged between glass, is remarkably effective with marble mantels. A back of black paper should be pasted behind the inside glass, to do away with the transparency, which, of course, is not necessary as it has not to be seen through.

Wicker-work baskets, the length of the chimney and slightly bowed in the centre in front, are sold in many shops, in which to plant natural flowers. There is a tin box of the same size inside. Where expense is no object, or where you are living in the country, and can collect mosses and ferns without trouble, this is an excellent plan; but in London it is not attainable by people of small means. Where natural flowers are used, they must be protected from the draught of the chimney by a close fire-board, or they will wither within an hour or so.

Our last idea upon the decoration of the fire-board, is to cover it with green or scarlet cloth, for the reception of china plaques, or plates. These are let into circles cut for the purpose, and slightly sunk below the level of the board. A large round plate for the centre might have smaller sizes arranged round it. Antique china is not needful, and now that china-painting is so fashionable, this may be a new idea for the disposal of some of our own home-work. We have suffered so long from tissue-paper horrors of all sorts, and every colour, which are represented as falling out of the fireplace much like a stream of water from a pitcher; we have also been deluged with cascades of shavings, for the same purpose—both of which, as decorations, are in the last degree inartistic and vulgar. So I do not intend to advise either of them as methods of beautifying our ideal summer-hearth. It is plea-



santer to try "fields and pastures new." In these a novel and pretty ornament to fill up a grate is one of the large-sized Japanese parasols, opened wide, the gay colouring forming a bright spot in the dark surroundings of the fireplace. The stick of the parasol will generally require shortening a little. A young

friend of ours has ornamented a fire-board lately with the small parasols from the same Eastern region, which are now sold in London, we believe, for a penny apiece. She either cuts off the sticks closely or makes a hole to receive them, and in both cases they need strong glue to make them adhere tightly. The tiny parasols are put on the board as a pattern, and have a pretty effect on a black ground. Another pretty fire-board decoration is to insert wire rings at suitable distances in the board, for the reception of flower-pots, holding creepers and hanging plants of various sorts, such as are used for hanging-baskets.

In America, as in Germany, constant use is made of the ivy for in-door decoration of all kinds. It is trained round doors and windows, as well as the pictures, bookcases, and alcoves. A little care in watering it, and sponging the leaves, enables it to resist even an atmosphere heated with stoves. It forms a particularly pretty decoration for the mantel-piece and fire-place, wreathed round and drooping from the former, and trained over a trellis-work for the latter. This trellis must be protected, by a close fire-board at the back, from the draught of the chimney, and frequent sponging of the leaves will not be forgotten by those who remember that plants breathe through their leaves, and cannot remain healthy if their pores be closed with dust.

A pyramidal flower-stand for pots, covered with virgin cork, is one of the latest suggestions made in a fashionable journal, to fill the vacant space in front of the fire-place, standing on the hearth. A wire-stand can be used, however old and worn, and there are clever people in every household, I think, equal to the task of arranging the cork over it, so as to hide the wire, and make it "beautiful for ever." Ferns in pots are used for this stand, and the common kinds, which can be gathered in any country walk, are quite suitable. A white parian or terra-cotta statuette looks very charming in the midst of the green, feathery fronds of the ferns. Both the fender and hearth-rug must be removed with most of the decorations I have mentioned, and careful housewives will not be sorry to give them a rest.

But no method of filling up the fireplace is so nice, to my mind, as a set of shelves fitting in under the mantel-board, and reaching to the floor. In a small house they afford great comfort, and give extra room for china or books. These cupboard, as they may be called, are especially charming if there be an over-mantel with niches and shelves for china, the whole effect is then that of a handsome cabinet, and the idea of a fireplace is quite obliterated.

I have left until the very last the most popular addition of the day to the fittings of the drawing-room, as well as the other rooms of the house; these are the mantel-curtains, which have become quite the rage. Perhaps they are really the most artistic as well as the most natural way to fill up the ugly void left by the banished fire. They do not interfere with the ventilation, and they keep out the draught. The only care must be to see that they are properly dusted and shaken. The length and breadth must depend of course

on the size of the fireplace, but they should just touch, not drag on the ground. There should always be two curtains, opening in the middle, in front. They are usually attached to the wooden mantel-board, to which a shaped rod of stout iron wire is attached, rounded at the corners of the board; the curtains can then be pulled back, out of harm's way, if they remain up when the fire is lit.

Small curtain-rings are sewn on to the curtains about six inches apart, respectively, by which to suspend them, and over this hangs the valance from the mantel-board. If the curtains be embroidered, the valance is quite a plain and straight band of the same material as the curtains, with a design of the same nature. In any case, it should be borne in mind that the plainer and simpler the folds of a valance, the better from an artistic point of view. A five-inch border is quite deep enough, and care must be taken to regard the valance and the curtains as a harmonious whole, so that the former be neither oppressively conspicuous, nor so small as to be insignificant, when viewed from the opposite side of the room.

The materials used for these curtains are many—velvet, embossed velveteen, refuse-silk materials, hop-sacking, crash, linen twill, Java canvas, diagonal cloths, and serges. Embroidery in crewel has been applied to them with the happiest effect. The designs used may be either bands of embroidery as a border round the curtains, horizontal stripes of alternate embroidery and material, or an up-growing design, from the lower edge of the curtain. The latter idea is a very pretty one, and not difficult to carry out, as the suggestion for the design can be discovered in many a sketch and picture. Nor must I forget that style of ornament called, by the celebrated Owen Jones I believe, "powderings," which are small patterns scattered at equal distances over a given surface. It is admirably suited for the ornamentation of small curtains, such as those of which we are speaking, and those used for bookcases and side-boards. A piece of tapestry would look well for such a purpose.

Hitherto I have spoken exclusively of curtains which entirely hide the chimney-piece, but if it be a handsome one, and a decoration of itself, and the grate be the only part which it is needful to hide, another method of decoration must be practised. This is by the means of a single short curtain, covering up the grate.

A proper workman must be employed to put up a small rod under the marble, or wooden beam of the mantel, between the side pillars, for the curtain to hang upon. There need be no fulness in the curtain if it be handsomely embroidered, but if not, the folds must be small, and regular in their arrangement; and the rod and rings should be of polished brass, and kept bright and in good order. Of course, if tapestry, it must have no folds.

These small curtains are very appropriate with the new-fashioned tiled hearths and marble fenders, as they brighten up a dark place, and hide nothing which should be shown. It is hardly needful to say that the colours chosen should harmonise, not contrast, with

the surroundings in which they are to be seen. Large china jars are usually placed inside the marble fenders, during the summer, and can be kept filled with flowers, if they are to be had. In conclusion, I may be permitted to express the hope that now I have shown how

really artistic and suitable decorations may be arranged at a small cost, my readers will emancipate themselves from the yoke of tissue-paper and artificial flowers, and consider the adoption of new ideas for beautifying the fireplace in summer. DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.

A RUN THROUGH SOUTH SNOWDONIA.



FALLS OF BENGLOG.

rising. This fact is the only hope to which I cling, for no place is more wretched than North Wales in wet weather, and no place more enjoyable in fine.

I could utter a loud "hurrah" as I catch a glimpse of some blue sky over the hills above Abergele, but the rigid conventionalities of a well-filled railway carriage restrain me, so I merely remark to my *vis-à-vis* that it seems as if it were going to be fine after all.

There is no mistake about this clearance. It is a real healthy "take-up" of the weather. We all know how one's spirits rise with the rising barometer when one is "touring," or rather I should say how they jump up with ten times the rapidity of the sluggish mercury. The wing-footed god himself would far better represent one's inner spirit on these occasions. Mine was up to "set fair" in five minutes, revelling in anticipations of unknown scenes of surpassing beauty, for *South Snowdonia* was as yet to me a *terra incognita*.

Would that it were so still, for I have had but few keener enjoyments than that which I experienced on becoming acquainted with it on this occasion, and I should like to have that enjoyment over again.

I myself had never even heard a remark about the beauty of the river between Barmouth and Dolgelly, and yet I have never seen, either at home or abroad, anything more absolutely perfect in the way of river scenery. Why is this? Is it that we do not thoroughly appreciate the beauties of our own land? or that the

I AM in the 12.35 train from Chester, on my way to Beddgelert, *via* Carnarvon and Avon-wen.

The weather has been bad for weeks, and the clouds still hang low over the estuary of the Dee. A few drops of rain patter against the window-pane, but the barometer is, I know, slowly

mass of people who hurry by do not take in the beauty of the colour, the luminous aerial effects, or the majesty of the mountain forms?

I need not linger over the splendours of old Conway Castle, the beauties of Penmaenmawr, or the familiar sights of the Menai Straits. They are known to most people, but when we get away from Carnarvon and work southward the aspect of things changes. We pass station after station of unfamiliar names. The population grows more sparse, the villages are few and far between, and more primitive in character. We feel that we are getting to unfrequented regions, and there are some mountains far away to our right (big fellows, too, rising some 1,800 feet straight out of the sea) whose names we do not even know, but which our "Gossiping Guide" tells us are "Yr Eifl," or the Rivals. By-and-by we come to a solitary little station close to a bleak shingly shore. Here the line runs right and left. That to the right leads to Pwllheli, which name no prudent stranger would venture to pronounce, for he would be sure to be wrong, but which to the initiated bears a sound something resembling Perthelli.

The line to the left, however, is my route, and I wait for the train from Pwllheli on a platform facing the sea. The sun is just dipping behind Yr Eifl, the air is filled with watery vapour which gives a peculiarly transparent look to the mountains, and this is caused by the stiffest sou'-wester which it was ever my lot to experience. It literally blew the crests from the waves, and sent the huge billows on to the rocks with a roar and a rattle which rendered it impossible to hear oneself speak. When the train came it seemed almost to stagger in the fierce gusts which swept across the line. As for the steam it was nowhere, for each puff suffered instant decapitation as it reached the mouth of the funnel.

All this time the higher summits of Snowdonia to my left have been lost in envious clouds, but there has been enough and to spare in the way of interest in the lesser mountains, and the fine heather-clad rocks that here and there border the railway. We pass Criccieth, with its fine old castle on the sea-beat rock, and then we come to more heather-clad heights and rocky bluffs, and just as the sun dips behind Yr Eifl we run into Portmadoc, and I take up my quarters at the Sportsman Hotel on the outskirts of the town, with a fine hill right in front, and a delicious view of the mountains at the back of Tremadoc away to the right.

There is just time for a stroll down to the bridge and harbour before dinner, and beyond the bridge I