

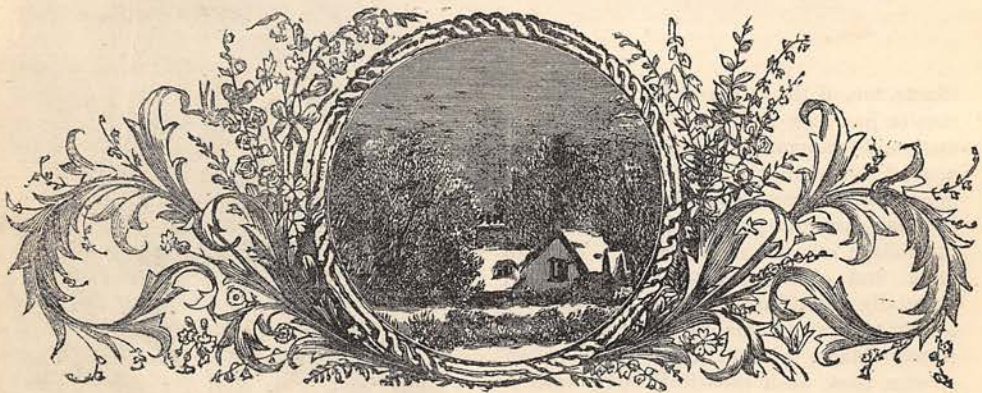
It is a tedious process, but it will repay you for the labour you bestow.

In the open garden go over your rose-trees, and see to all the stakes and fastenings; carelessness in this respect will, when the next severe gale comes, probably involve the injury if not the total destruction of your standards. Indeed, anything which presents itself as a sort of sail to the wind—overgrown ivy, for example, which is too often allowed to flap about—should be curtailed or secured. Bulbs of any and all kinds should have been got in long before this, and yet it may not be too late if they are got in at once; but delay is as fatal in a garden as that premature impatience which some, on the other hand, show in their endeavours to anticipate the seasons. In fairly open weather such operations as box-edging or shrub-moving can be carried on; but take advantage of the hard frosty weather for all heavy wheeling of manure, &c., as this sort of thing done over your beds or across your lawn, immediately after a thaw, will get your land into a state very much resembling a country lane down which heavy carts and teams are constantly passing.

In the kitchen garden give some protection to your rhubarb and sea-kale. If you are not rich in many garden luxuries and appliances, mix up a few leaves with your small stock of manure, and scatter it lightly over the bed. Both your kale and rhubarb will be helped on by this; but for actual forcing, of course, you must use the usual large pots, and surround them with hot manure. Earth up what remains of your celery, and

in very severe weather give protection by some litter. If you have any cauliflowers in frames, or under any kind of shelter, give them rarely any water, keep clear of dead leaves—at all times the most offensive things in a kitchen garden—and let them have air at every possible opportunity. From your winter spinach, if you are fortunate enough to have preserved any, pick for use only the largest and outside leaves.

In the fruit garden finish off at once the nailing, pruning, and securing of all your wall-trees, whenever, that is, the weather is sufficiently mild, damp, and open for the operation, for on no account must all this be done during a frost. We are often annoyed about this time of the year by the ravages of the small birds among the buds of our gooseberries and currants, which, as the gardener says, with some disgust, "they've been and gone and picked clean out." But never mind, we will not therefore prune these trees for the present; the trees, however, can be manured, and a little quick-lime thrown now around their stems may perhaps help us to ward off that provoking enemy the caterpillar, for inexorable time will soon be bidding us prepare for the spring, and the motto for all gardeners is "Look ahead." Just now, however, we are in the full tide of the Christmas holidays—the juveniles irrepressible with plans for future mirth; others, who have seen more of the graver side of life, wisely suggesting moderation in all things; one and all of us, let us hope, sternly resolved to do our duty in the new year, whether in the old garden or out of it.



ART-FURNISHING FOR THE DINING-ROOM.



THE general expression of an English dining-room should undoubtedly be comfort. Unlike the French, who give little heed to the surroundings of the meal, their whole attention being absorbed by the meal itself, we, not being nationally *gourmands*, demand something more. Our

appreciation of a good dinner is not to be disputed, but we cannot enjoy it to the full unless our other

senses are gratified. We demand not only that our food be good, but that we be able to sit comfortably at it, and that our eye shall rest upon agreeable forms and colours. Also, inasmuch as dinner takes place in nine months out of the twelve in our climate after dark, a sensation of enclosure, snugness, and warmth is desirable. Hence it is that dark-coloured walls, solid and easy chairs, pictures and draperies of comparatively heavy and warm colour have become, by a long-standing convention, *de rigueur* in the room devoted to the family meals. Even in the

days most benighted (æsthetically considered) we did not dine in a white and gold decorated apartment, or sit at table upon chairs covered with sky-blue satin.

For the wall-covering, crimson flock paper was for many years usually adopted. There are two reasons why this fashion may be advantageously superseded. In the first place, the colour is positive, stimulating to the eye, and therefore unsuitable for a background; secondly, the granular absorbent texture of the flock itself catches and holds a great accumulation of dust. Wherever flock paper is used it should always be painted, so as to stop the absorption, and to render it washable. Even then the horizontal surfaces formed by the top edges of the raised pattern will always be found to collect a considerable amount of dust. Painted flock, however, for some purposes, is most valuable. It is perhaps the cheapest and most effective way by which we can get a surface sufficiently varied to take off the monotony of a plain painted wall in cases where polychromatic flat decoration is not desired. For ceilings it is admirable, and although for large rooms the cost will be an obstacle to its use, for small rooms, recesses, and nooks we may frequently find it just the one thing wanted.

Supposing it to be decided to use for the walls of the dining-room some ordinary wall-paper, the question arises whether any particular class of colours or patterns are more especially suitable than others for this room. With very little qualification this may be at once answered in the negative. The act of choosing patterns and colours in wall-papers is, however, one which is so often rendered a merely irksome and bewildering task, the effect of the papers when hung is often so different from that which was anticipated, or is marred by some unforeseen defect, that a few words of suggestion on the general principles which should govern the selection of papers, not only for the dining-room, but throughout the house, may save some disappointment in the future, and some fatigue in the present.

In order to clear the ground, we may as well mention a few of the kinds of papers which need not be looked over at all, being unhesitatingly to be rejected.

1st. All papers containing any considerable portion of positive colours—untoned red, yellow, blue, green, purple, or orange—these colours wanting the retiring and subdued character necessary for the harmonious effect of a background.

2nd. All papers containing representations of objects, whether the human figure, birds, animals, flowers, fruit, and what not, treated in a pictorial or naturalistic manner. The objections to these are too obvious to need enumeration.

3rd. All papers purporting to represent, by means of shading, relief of surface, whether panelling, mouldings, shaded groups, in fact anything which suggests other than a flat surface. Beyond the obvious artistic reason for tabooing such patterns, there is a practical objection to them, which is that as the light must, from the nature of the production of the patterns by printing, be represented as falling on one particular side, the shadows will be cast in the most unnatural

manner in the room, what would be right on one side of the room must necessarily be wholly wrong for the remaining three sides.

4th. All papers having large repeating patterns of any sort arranged geometrically over the surface. This is objectionable for many reasons, amongst which may be mentioned the enormous difficulty and waste in hanging them symmetrically on the walls, and the impossibility of arranging furniture and pictures against such patterns.

5th. All papers imitating materials other than paper, such as wood, marble, granite, lace, tapestry, tiles, and so forth.

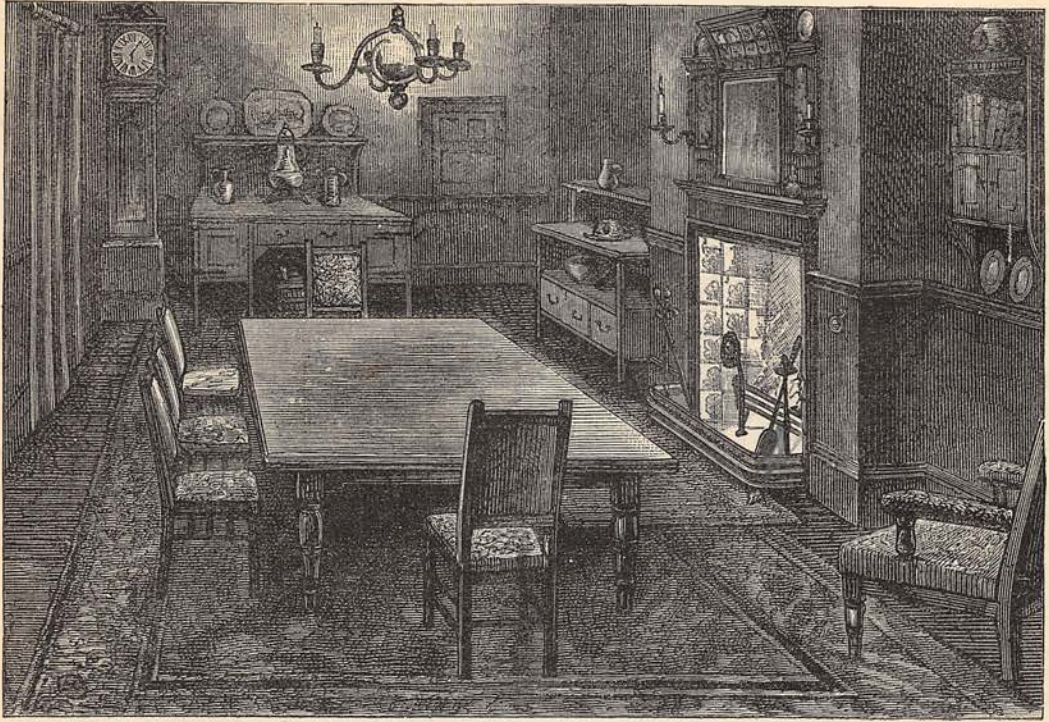
6th. All papers with pronounced vertical, horizontal, or diagonal disposition of the lines. Such papers invariably alter the apparent proportions of the walls on which they are hung, and should only be adopted where, from some cause or other, it is desirable to modify an apparent excess in height or width. For instance, vertical stripes tend to make a room appear higher than it really is; a horizontal treatment, on the other hand, gives an appearance of greater length. See page 113.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of what to avoid, but it will materially help to reduce the number of patterns which must perforce be turned over. It must not be thought that after the rejection of the different varieties of papers enumerated above, one is restricted to a very limited number of patterns, as there are at the best paper manufactories certainly a large majority of papers which will not fall under any of the heads of our *Index Expurgatorius*, among which the variations of individual taste will have ample scope for selection.

There is one point, however, which is well worth looking strictly after; a point the neglect of which has often been the cause of disappointment after the paper is hung. It is a fault that frequently appears even in the best-designed papers, and consists in some feature of the pattern being more strongly marked than the remainder, and which will therefore stare out on the finished wall at regular intervals, forming a sort of large secondary pattern. In the pattern piece it may be only slightly, if at all observable. Possibly it may be only a slightly increased surface of undecorated background, or a couple of leaves or flowers placed too near each other. It is, indeed, very rarely that a trained eye fails to detect some taint of this defect, as it is exceedingly difficult in irregular, *all-over* patterns, entirely to avoid it; but it should always be borne in mind, and, other things being equal, the paper with the least appearance of it should be selected.

If the paper is to be varnished, it is well to ask if it is one that will admit of it, as some heavily-coloured papers can scarcely be sized without rubbing off the colour. The depth of colour is so materially intensified by the application of varnish, that it is safest to make an experiment before finally deciding. The usual rough means of ascertaining the effect of the paper when varnished is to wet a small portion of it.

As a rule, papers containing two, or at most three



THE DINING-ROOM.

tints of colour, or better still, two shades of one colour, are better in effect than the more expensive patterns with a great variety of colours. It will also generally be found that a quieter and more subdued effect is obtained in papers in which the background is *darker* than the pattern. The effect of a dark pattern on a light ground, especially if the difference is considerable, is less suggestive of enclosure, and gives somewhat the appearance of looking beyond the pattern into space. There may, however, very well be markings, outlines, or what not on the pattern darker than the ground; it is sufficient if the general average of the pattern be lighter. One very satisfactory arrangement is to have the pattern but very little lighter than the ground, and outlined with a tint still lighter than the pattern.

Concerning the use of gilding on papers, or *metals*, as they are called, it is safest as a rule to avoid them altogether. Much gilding in a room is vulgar, and moreover the Dutch metal used by the paper-makers is certain in a very little while to blacken, and thus entirely alter the effect of the wall. Even, however, supposing the gold to last bright, its sheen, like that of any other polished surface, is apt to look different in different lights, to borrow the hue of the objects it reflects, and by its variety and glitter is irritating in effect, and contrary to the retiring and subdued character required in a background.

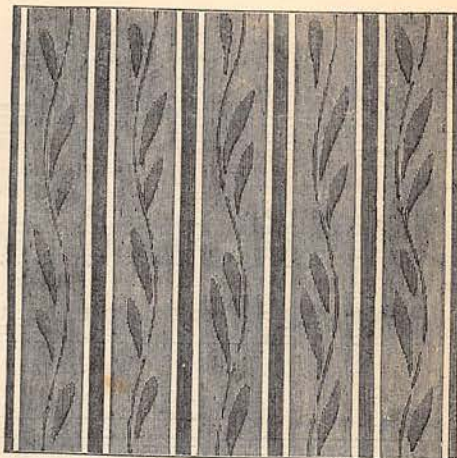
I have carried the suggestions on the choice of wall-papers thus far so as to exhaust at once as much as seems necessary to be said on the subject in these

papers. Any division of the classes of papers into those especially suitable for particular rooms is purely arbitrary, and the choice must ultimately depend much upon accidental circumstances, aspect, and so forth, as well as individual feeling for fitness and propriety.

Supposing, then, our dining-room papers satisfactorily selected, we must now fix upon the height of the surbase or chair-rail. As the latter name implies, this feature of a room was ordinarily fixed at the height of the backs of the chairs, for the obvious purpose of keeping the latter from the wall against which they were ranged. Our modern chairs are, however, as a rule, lower than the old ones, while our rooms are more lofty in pitch. It has thus come to pass that a dado of the height of the chair-backs is disproportionately low, and it will generally be found better to raise it to about four feet, or rather higher. The chief thing to avoid is cutting the wall exactly in halves; so that in cases where a high dado is required it is better to boldly carry it up to a height of six or seven feet, treating the upper part of the wall as a frieze. Wherever it is possible I would certainly recommend the dining-room dado to be panelled in wood, which, if in deal, and with flat panels, and square (*i.e.*, not moulded) framing, need not be very costly. Even varnished paper is liable to be knocked about, and if actually torn or broken cannot easily be patched, whereas well-painted or stained wood will stand a great deal of wear, and at the worst a coat of paint will set all right again.

The ceiling is best coloured in distemper in some light tint of the ruling colour of the walls, and the cornice may be coloured in a deeper tint of the same, approximating more nearly to the wall-colour. Papered or otherwise decorated ceilings are more interesting and effective, but for cleanliness and health's sake it is better in a dining-room to have an easily renewable surface on the ceiling. If the room be very lofty a frieze will add much to the general effect, and give an appearance of increased lateral spaciousness. This should be separated from the room below by a simple wood moulding, and may be distempered in flat colour, or an appropriate paper hung thereon. The plaster cornice round the room we must perforce leave. If it happen to be one consisting of simple mouldings, without the so-called "enrichments," we are so much the more fortunate; if not, we can at any rate avoid accentuating the ugliness of the ornaments by "picking them out" in various tints. This trick, a favourite one with the commonplace decorator, is never commendable; for if the mouldings be refined, and the ornaments carefully designed and well modelled, the various forms will naturally fall into their proper places, and can be properly appreciated only when of one uniform dead colour. On the other hand, if they are ugly their ugliness will generally be only brought more prominently out by polychromatic decoration. The centre-flower may usually, however, be taken away with advantage; a simple moulded boss of circular or octagonal form, and about six inches in diameter, will be sufficient to make the chandelier hook grow without abruptness out of the ceiling, which latter will gain in size and lightness by the alteration.

The woodwork of the room—architraves, doors, windows, shutters, and so forth—we must, of course, leave as it is found, excepting as to its decoration. This should be confined to painting, and wherever funds will allow, it should be finished with a flatted surface. The colour should be one which *melodises* with the colours in the papers, and not, unless in special cases, one which contrasts with them. It need not be as dark as the dado if the latter is hung with varnished

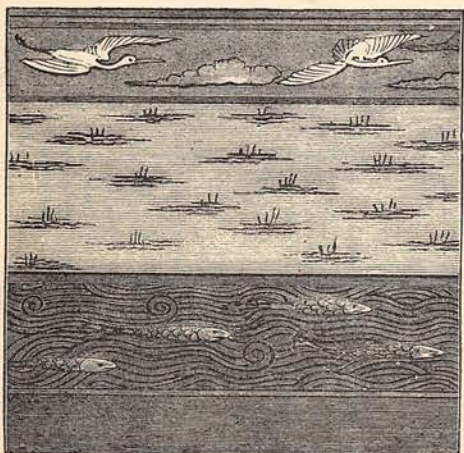


WALL-PAPER—VERTICAL TREATMENT.

paper, but should usually be a little darker in tone than the general tint of paper on the upper part of the walls. The panels of the doors and shutters may be a little darker than the rest. Picking out the mouldings in different tints is not to be recommended, as it emphasises the fact of the mouldings being merely stuck on instead of being, as they ought to be, worked on the edges of the framing.

Coming now to the floor, we have, as usual, the choice of several modes of treatment, depending partly on the condition of the flooring-boards, and partly on the expenditure available. As the carpet will cover a large part of the floor, we may confine our attention to the margins. The simplest and cheapest treatment is to stain them dark oak, and varnish. If the boards are in very good condition and of tolerable grain, it will be better not to stain them at all, or at most very slightly, and wax-polish them. This, however, forms a surface that requires frequent labour to keep in condition; and varnish, although inferior in effect, will usually be found most satisfactory. A more expensive but entirely unobjectionable plan is to lay the margins with the recently-introduced thin parquet. This is scarcely an eighth of an inch thick, and if thinned off at the edges the difference of level is scarcely felt under the carpet. It is very durable, improves in appearance with age, is very cleanly and wholesome in wear, as it presents no holes or cracks for dirt to accumulate in. The first cost, too, is not very great. In the cheapest and plainest patterns it can be supplied, the floor prepared, and the parquet glued down and polished, from about eighteenpence the square foot. With a width of two feet six inches a moderate-sized dining-room could be done for about £15. If elaborate border patterns, however, be selected, the cost is quickly doubled and trebled.

In the next paper the question of furniture will be briefly discussed, first generally, and then with particular application to the dining-room. The illustration on the opposite page gives a general view of a moderate-sized dining-room, with the usually required articles of furniture.



WALL-PAPER—HORIZONTAL TREATMENT.

all off short, and level them all with the earth. Pansy-beds are always gay. They, when some little pains are bestowed upon them, repay us by their prolonged display, and are really as inexpensive as most things; whereas the hyacinth and the tulip soon fall away after being a short time in flower. Pansy-beds, then, may be formed by planting out the struck cuttings every fortnight. In our greenhouse this is the last month before our bedding-out operations are begun, and consequently a month as difficult as any in the year, in one sense, for us to contrive to get through, for we feel ourselves more than ever cramped for room. Give them all the air you can, for should we not feel compelled to do the same in a crowded ball or assembly-room? And in the kitchen garden perhaps, fearful of frost, we have delayed putting in

our potatoes until quite the end of March. Perhaps this is an error on the right side, for of late years our seasons are certainly later than they used to be. We are paying, too, the usual attention to our hotbeds. If they were put up in the middle of March, which is quite soon enough, a sudden return of the cold will make them decline in heat, and we may have to go to the expense of lining them with fresh manure.

Fairly embarked, however, as we now once again are in the spring, let us not anticipate disaster, saving only by being prepared against sudden changes of temperature. The cuckoo is busy only in voice, but the bees are more practical in their work. Let us take example from them, rather than from the idle bird who takes a house ready furnished by some other of the feathered tribe.

ARTISTIC FURNISHING FOR MODERN HOUSES.

FURNITURE.



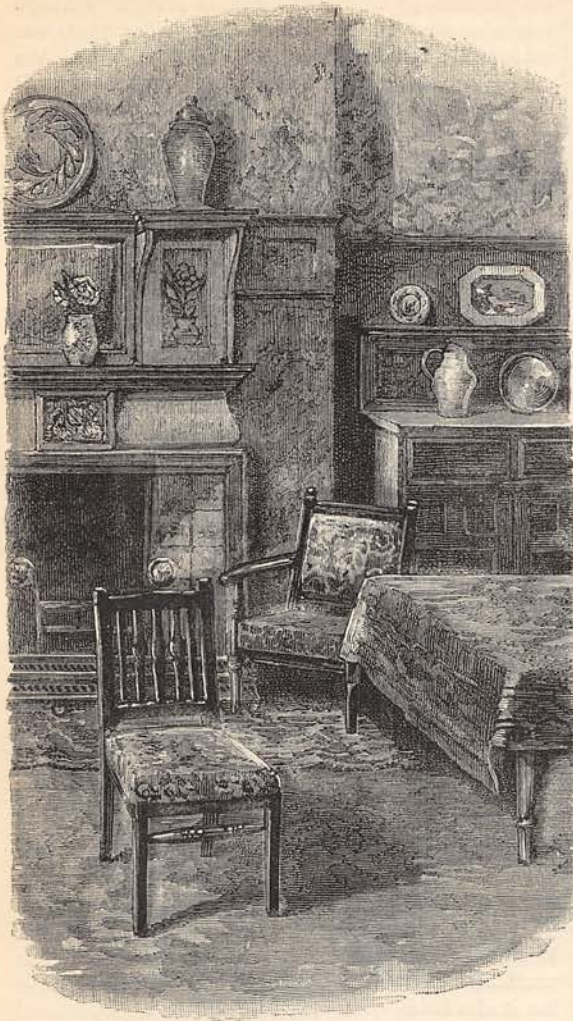
IN our last paper on the subject of art furnishing we left our dining-room complete as to walls, ceiling, and floor, and we must now proceed to furnish it. In selecting the furniture there are one or two elementary principles which, applying to furniture generally, will come in as well here as later on; thus carrying out the same system as with

the wall decoration, *i.e.*, discussing the general principles first, and afterwards applying them to the particular cases in question. In the first place, all thoroughly artistic furniture must be *constructively true*. This is a point which, curiously enough, seems to have been very generally lost sight of for nearly two centuries. Although some of the furniture designed and constructed during the lapse of this long period has been magnificent, picturesque, richly carved, refined in line and proportion, and so forth, very little indeed of it has possessed the one cardinal excellence of constructive truth. It will take

us too far from our immediate subject to attempt to analyse and illustrate this quality thoroughly, but we may shortly explain that it is exigent of the use of each material in its own natural and legitimate manner, and that the construction, *i.e.*, the way the article is made and put together, shall be expressed, or at least not disguised.

Ever since "design," by persons other than the actual artificers, has been intentionally devoted to objects of utility with the view of making them beautiful, it appears as if the material of which they were to be composed has been almost universally lost sight of. This is true not only of work arising out of the Rococo and cognate styles—nothing better could be predicated from the offshoots of such extravagance—but it also holds good with many of the most admired pieces of what are generally considered to be the purest styles. Hidden or disguised construction is a common fault even in these. Take for example many of the fine old chests of drawers and cabinets, whether Dutch or English, going generally under the name of Jacobean. It will be often found that the fronts are apparently divided into three divisions by upright styles or pilasters, thus suggesting that the drawers or doors are short, and extend only between the uprights. On opening them, however, it is found that they extend the full width of the chest, the apparently dividing style being merely planted on the front.

It may be objected that this severe exaction of constructive truth is the cry of the purist alone, and that if practically enforced it would lead to a dead level of monotonous forms. This is not the fact, as innumerable instances which might be adduced to the contrary would amply prove; at the same time, it is fair to allow, that like other good principles, it may be pushed too far. Room must always be left for the play of individual fancy, if not for caprice, but it is at all events safest to commence, in art as in morals, with the highest and most perfect aspirations, even if



practical requirements compel us to be satisfied with something short of the ultimate perfection aimed at.

For illustrations of the meaning of constructive truth we need not go far. For examples of the positive side of the question in modern houses we shall generally have to go down into the kitchen. There in the plain deal table, the dresser, with its shelves above, and its slab, and drawers, and pot-board below, and in the Windsor chairs, we shall see wood used in its legitimate manner, and the mode of construction apparent and undisguised. Add a little refinement of detail, and let the proportions be carefully studied, and furniture on the same lines would be suitable anywhere. Added luxury in materials and finish, it must be remembered, is apart from all questions of art. It is not suggested that they are not desirable qualities in themselves when well applied, but the increased value they give to the original article is entirely separate and extrinsic from its artistic value.

In illustration of the negative aspect of our position we have but to go up into the ordinary drawing-room fashionable a score of years back. Here, in the wood-

work, the designer's ruling idea seems to have been that his material was especially fitted for curved forms, and in few of the pieces of furniture shall we find a straight line or, excepting in the tabletop, a level surface. As to the mode of construction, it goes without saying that true wood construction in such forms is impossible. Iron knees, screws, dowels, and glue are the aids by which the material is tortured into the "elegance" of its finished perfection. It is a healthy symptom that comparatively few drawing-rooms are as bad nowadays as they were; but even now it is sometimes difficult to convince people that straight lines are not ugly *per se*. Nature is always quoted, and certainly much of the beauty of form in natural objects consists in the delicacy and subtlety of their curves; but nature has no abhorrence of straight lines. Take a fir-tree for example; its natural growth is undoubtedly upwards in a vertical, straight line. It is but the accidents of soil, of light, or wind that bend it into curvatures this way and that. In fact, a misplaced curve, however beautiful it may be, is more offensive to a trained eye than the apparent monotony of appropriately straight lines. There is, however, danger lest we rush to the opposite extreme, and exclude curved lines altogether. This would be also wrong. The use of straight, or nearly straight, lines for the constructive parts of furniture does not at all preclude curved forms in positions and in materials suitable for them. In wood construction there is abundant scope for curves, especially in turned work. The reason why wood construction should generally be based upon rectilinear forms is obvious when we consider that wood is a material which may be described as consisting of bundles of fibres, generally straight, of considerable strength in the direction of their length, but depending for the lateral resistance of the mass upon the cohesion between the separate fibres. This cohesion of course varies greatly in value in different kinds of wood.

In pottery, on the other hand, excepting in tiles, squareness and straightness are generally offensive; the material lends itself in process of working so much more readily to curved forms, and is when baked a rigid, inflexible, and grainless mass, equally strong in all directions. So, too, in wrought metal work, the rods or plates of which it is composed can be readily and naturally bent or beaten into curved forms without impairing their strength.

A good many of us, nowadays, pin our faith upon *old* furniture as being artistically better than modern. This is only true in a limited sense, and has been so generally accepted only because the style of furniture now happily going out was so bad in every way that it happened that most of the old pieces that could be raked out were in some respects better than the new. But it is not going too far to say that now, with our present lights, we of the present day are capable of making, and do sometimes make, furniture better in design, and equal in workmanship to anything that

has been made for centuries. It is therefore, I think, to be regretted that some of our high-class cabinet-makers are devoting themselves to reproductions or imitations of Chippendale and Sheraton furniture, as well as furniture designed by the brothers Adam; which latter, though possessing what Ruskin called, in criticising Claude's landscapes, a certain "foolish elegance," is quite without constructive truth.

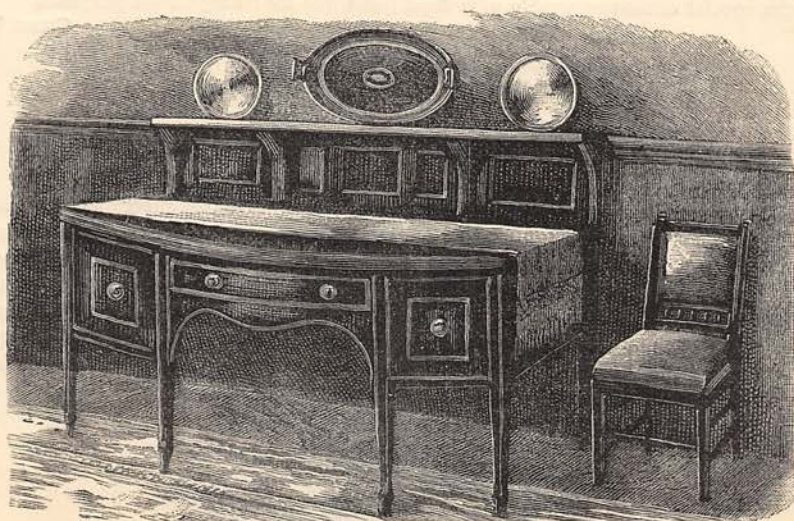
Of course all old furniture—such, for instance, as any of the pieces of the celebrated makers of the eighteenth century—is interesting and valuable. But its interest and its value belong to antiquity, and not to its own intrinsic art-merit. It is delightful and interesting, no doubt, to use a chair dating from say 1754, to linger over the wonderful finish and thoroughness of its old-world make, and to call up the associations connected with the times during which it has been in existence; but these are the pleasures of the antiquary, not of the art-lover; and it is, perhaps, largely owing to the fact that artists are nearly always antiquaries too, that the confusion has arisen. As Mr. E. W. Godwin has pointed out, it is no true way of encouraging the growth of a pure style in modern work, to fill our houses with old stuff raked out from the stores of the curiosity-monger. Therefore to those who can afford it I would say, have your furniture made to order by some cabinet-maker of intelligence from your own designs, or from designs made by an expert who has made furniture designing a special study. In London too, there are a few makers of artistic furniture solely, where one can be tolerably sure of finding nothing offensive. The cost of the furniture is, however, generally in excess of that of ordinary furniture dealer's articles of the stereotyped forms; and, while the demand remains limited, it must necessarily continue to be so. Attempts have, however, lately been made to produce soundly-made and truthfully-designed furniture at lower prices by means of economy in elaboration and finish. Whether these undertakings will be ultimately successful

depends upon the extent of the spread of pure taste among the middle classes.

It is scarcely necessary to warn people against the black and gold abominations displayed by most of the ordinary cheap furniture dealers as a tribute to the growing appreciation of artistic (?) work. These, because some of the earliest examples of the revival of good furniture happened to be in the style called—I know not why—Early English, are always so dubbed at the shops. They are almost always bad in design, flimsy in construction, and vile in decoration, and, though nominally cheap, would be dear at any price.

What then is left for unfortunate art-lovers who are not rich enough to bespeak or to buy good artistic furniture, and who are warned against the purchase of cheap imitations of it? On the principle that all things come to them who know how to wait, I would counsel them to restrict the number of their purchases, buying but little at a time, but seeing that that little be good. If you have a thing made, get it done at a carpenter's shop. Do not expect expensive woods. Birch and beech are good enough for all ordinary purposes. They can be stained black, dark oak colour, or green, and if well rubbed with linseed oil, not only when new but every week, the furniture will at last take that soft, dull polish which is so agreeable to look at, and to feel, and is also very durable. Carving, too, is better avoided. If well-done it is expensive, if ill-done offensive. Turning, on the other hand, is cheap, and if well-designed adds lightness, and is a valuable and legitimate decoration.

Moreover the furniture-broker is another occasionally very useful resource. I do not mean the professed antique furniture dealer. *He* has customers able and willing to give much higher prices than we can afford, and without special knowledge one cannot be sure that what we buy is exactly the thing it looks like. I mean the genuine old and poor furniture broker, who often has an old chair, chest of drawers, card table, or what not, out of repair, and



perhaps not over-clean, which he will sell you at a small advance upon his own expenditure on it. The purchase made, a few shillings expended on it (if home talent is not available) in the way of reparation, cleaning, and repolishing, and you will probably have secured what is so dear to every one, namely, a bargain. Every day, however, those bargains become harder to procure. The principal dealers in antique furniture have emissaries continually going the rounds of the old shops, ready to buy up all the really old furniture the broker can collect; and thus the latter, in his turn, becomes aware that there exists a market whereat fancy prices may be secured for such things.

Some of the old things thus picked up will be interesting and valuable as old furniture, while for usefulness and artistic merit many of them will be, although seldom theoretically perfect, yet a great advance upon the ordinary forms of modern furniture.

Leaving these general considerations we must hasten to return to our special task, that of furnishing the dining-room. A difficulty confronts us here on the very threshold. We *must* have a table; we want one that will serve us without inconvenience when we are alone, or with the normal family circle around us, and at other times will accommodate an additional number of sitters. The ordinary telescope table is very unsatisfactory; when closed it is clumsy and heavy; when opened out, weak and disproportioned. Its mouldings are generally coarse, and the turning of the legs gouty and preposterous. Is there any real necessity for such a pantomimic piece of furniture? I think not, and for this reason, that even those who use such tables seldom make use of the power of varying their length. They somehow get settled down into an ordinarily convenient length, which is enlarged only upon such special occasions as weddings or other exceptional gatherings. A table which will comfortably accommodate eight or ten persons is most generally useful, and is not too large for a smaller number; upon the special occasions a table with flaps

may be added at one end, with one or both flaps extended, according to the number of additional sitters. This flapped table will usually stand in one of the recesses, and when not in use for dining purposes will be useful for an additional sideboard. For the model of the permanent table the ordinary kitchen table will serve, with a little refinement in the legs and framing, and the drawer, of course, omitted. With our present custom of keeping the cloth on throughout the meal, it would be extravagant and unnecessary to have elaborately-moulded edges or carved framing. In view, however, of a change in fashion in this respect, while the skeleton remains the same, suitable decoration in the way of moulding and carving may be adopted, where means, and the degree of sumptuousness in the style of furniture otherwise prevailing, will render such richness appropriate. For the style of this decoration, if the table be in oak, nothing can be better than an adaptation from the Jacobean furniture. The corners of the top should be well rounded, and the surface, of course, simply rubbed with oil, not polished.

The cut on page 305 is an example of a very common type of eighteenth-century sideboard. This kind is still sometimes to be met with at the old shops. When with square, tapering legs, they are generally older than with turned and fluted legs. Very little inlay was originally used; what there is consists usually of bands and lines only. These modest and refined pieces of furniture are now often caught up, and the surfaces almost covered with loud and common marqueterie, greatly to their detriment. Originally there was no back, but only a brass rail supported on four brass upright rods. This arrangement was probably meant to hold a curtain so as to save the wall behind from the contact of dishes and so forth. The brass columns sometimes also supported candle-sconces. In our cut a light framing, with narrow shelf at top, has been suggested as a convenient addition, serving to display a few plates or salvers, and an old wooden tea-tray, at the same time leaving the top of the sideboard clear and free for its legitimate purposes.

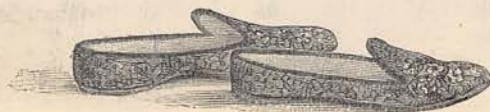
CHAS. W. DEMPSEY.

THE LIGHT OF HOME.

WITHIN the home she rules with quiet might,
By virtue of her perfect womanhood:
A child in years, but with all grace and good
Enshrined in her truth-flashing orbs of light:
A woman strong and firm to do the right,
Who with the old-time martyrs might have stood,
Yet full of sympathy with ev'ry mood,

In time of trouble cheery still and bright.
O precious, whom to love is but to see!
O queen of maidens! it must surely be,
If aught that to perfection cometh near
Can e'er be found in this imperfect life,
You, perfect daughter, will but disappear
To shine as perfect mother, perfect wife.

G. WEATHERLY.



glad to see me, and insisted on my going straight to the Rectory, to be introduced to her father and aunt. We passed across a green lawn surrounded by some fine old lime-trees, through a glass door into a matted hall, and thence into a pretty drawing-room, cool, shady, and flower-scented.

"Here is Dr. Ellison, Aunt Susan," called out Violet as we entered.

I looked across the room, expecting to see my ideal old lady, but the person who came forward to meet me, uttering some cordial words of welcome, was quite young, almost a girl in fact, being certainly under five-and-twenty; tall, slender, and dark-haired, and bearing a curious resemblance to my mental picture of Aunt Susan in her youth.

She paused suddenly on coming near me, half withdrawing her outstretched hand.

"I thought you said Dr. Ellison, Violet."

"So I did," said Violet. "This is Dr. Ellison."

"I beg your pardon," said the girl, recovering herself, "I was under a wrong impression with regard to you. I am very glad to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance," and she motioned me to a seat opposite to the low wicker chair from which she herself had risen.

"Will you look for your father, Violet?" she said, after a few minutes. "He will be delighted to see Dr. Ellison."

"And Miss Ferrars—am I not to have the pleasure of seeing her?" I asked.

"I am Miss Ferrars," said the girl, laughing.

"I mean the elder Miss Ferrars—Violet's Aunt Susan."

"But this is Aunt Susan," said Violet.

"This Aunt Susan! But your Aunt Susan is an old lady!"

"Is she? I wasn't aware of that."

"But you gave me her photograph," I persisted.

"I have it still—a charming old lady in a mob-cap."

"I remember," said Violet suddenly, "I did go in

for a bit of mystification. You said in your letter to me, Aunt Susan, that you had often heard your mother speak of Dr. Ellison, who was such a kind, courteous old gentleman, and such a clever doctor. While I was reading the letter, in came Dr. Ellison, looking about as venerable as he does at present. In speaking of you, he said something which showed me that he on his part imagined you to be on the other side of ninety; so, just for fun, I showed him that photograph of you, dressed for the acting charades at the Manor. I did not intend to carry the thing far, but I forgot all about it; and Dr. Ellison appears to have recognised in you his ideal great-grandmother, and revered you accordingly."

"That explains," said Miss Ferrars, laughing, "the deferential tone of Dr. Ellison's letters. I thought it proceeded from the chivalrous courtesy of a gentleman of the old school, whereas it seems merely to have been respect for grey hairs."

"But," said I, still bewildered, "you told me that your aunt was twenty-five years older than your father."

"I beg your pardon; I may perhaps have told you that there was twenty-five years' difference between them, as there is, my father being the elder. By the way, I suppose you also, Aunt Susan, continued all this time under a similar delusion?"

"I did," said Aunt Susan, laughing and blushing. "As I told you, I often heard my mother speak of Dr. Ellison of Caletorpe, and it never occurred to me that your friend could be other than the same. You know, you never gave any more definite description of him than that he was a 'regular brick.' It seems to have been a game at cross-purposes altogether."

The consequences of this game at cross-purposes, with regard to my feelings, may easily be guessed. But that those feelings, true and deep though they were, should have been returned by Susan Ferrars, is a mystery at which I can only marvel in heart-felt gratitude to the Providence which thus blessed me so far beyond my deserts.



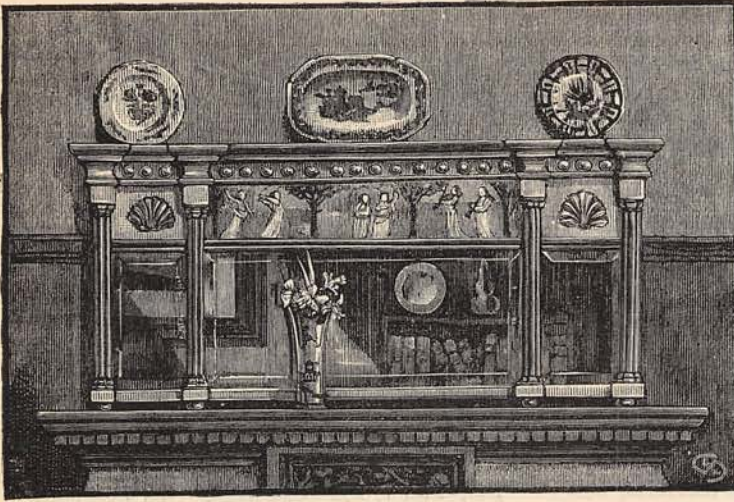
ARTISTIC FURNISHING FOR MODERN HOUSES.

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

THIS, the room of all others upon which the best available taste of the household is commonly lavished, has been, singularly enough, that in which the most signal offences against æsthetic propriety have been usually committed. In other sections of the house, utility and convenience have to some extent dictated the forms and materials of the furniture and accessories, and the absence of any overwhelming

inducement to display has very often resulted in an effect, if not positively admirable, yet not intrusively vicious.

It is far otherwise with the drawing-room; here, where the afternoon callers are received in state, and friends and acquaintances are gathered together in the evenings—here, at all events, if nowhere else in the house, the visitor *must* be impressed with the taste or the wealth of the hostess. Hence the drawing-room has, perhaps, been decorated, furnished, and tricked out with the sole motive of display. What matter if the chairs were too fragile to sit upon with a sense of security, or the sofa impossible to lounge on at ease? so that the woodwork was rich with carving and



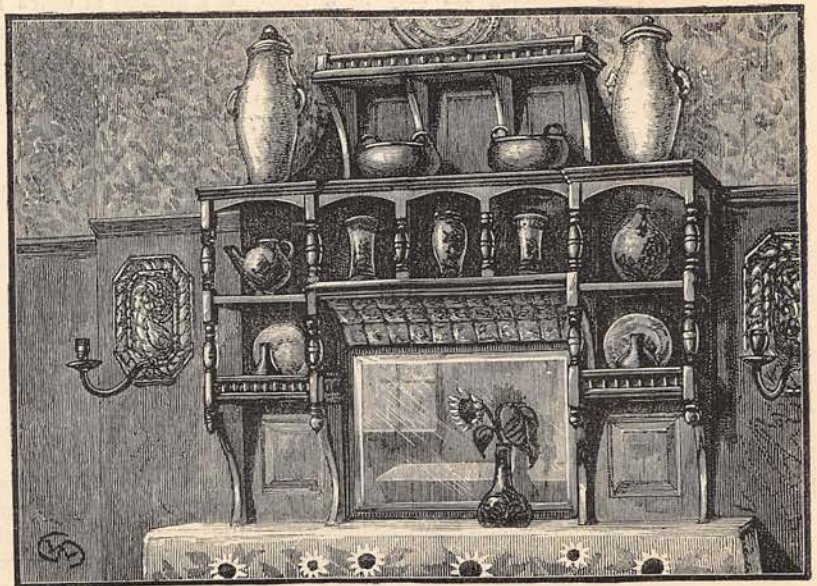
AN OLD-FASHIONED CHIMNEY-GLASS.

lustrous with polish, and the coverings were blue satin, all was well. What matter that the room was blazing with light from three or four large plate-glass windows? the paper must still be white and gold, or another of the special drawing-room papers. If we happened to be the fortunate possessors of a few good oil paintings, they must be relegated either to the staircase or the dining-room, oil paintings in a drawing-room being ridiculous; washy chromos, or at best an Art Union engraving, being the only works of art allowable for the adornment of the walls. While in the dining-room a Turkey carpet, if sufficiently new and bright in colour, was permitted, up-stairs the best Brussels, Axminster, or velvet-pile, according to the means at command, and of the newest procurable pattern, were our only floor coverings. In short, it may be safely asserted that such rooms as we are now referring to would have been impossible if they had been designed for real occupation, and were not merely show-rooms by which we, perhaps unconsciously, hoped to impress an occasional visitor with an adequate idea of our wealth or exalted position.

It may be said that now, so many of these faults having been amended, it is but stabbing a dying enemy to ungraciously recapitulate them. But although it is true that the most glaring of these sins against taste have been or are being amended, so long as the underlying principle (*i.e.*, the bedecking of the draw-

ing-room solely with the view of display) against which we are contending remains in force, the improvement is but superficial. Granted that Oriental carpets, well-designed furniture, quiet and harmonious wall decoration and draperies have taken the place of the monstrosities of the immediate past, so long as the dominant motive of the appointments of the drawing-room remains *display* we are certain only to exchange one evil for another. The particular evil at present observable will be referred to farther on, in the meanwhile we have to consider the rational treatment of the drawing-room considered from an artistic point of view.

In the first place, while, as in a previous paper, we have submitted that the effect of the dining-room should be expressive of *comfort*, undoubtedly for the drawing-room the corresponding influence should be *cheerfulness*. A gloomy, or even a grand drawing-room, I hold to be a social mistake. But cheerfulness is not synonymous with glitter and sparkle, nor is it to be secured by the free use of light and untuned colours. On the contrary, gradation and repose are more than elsewhere necessary in a room devoted to conversation, music, and other relaxations. At the same time, a somewhat sumptuous character naturally and properly belongs to the room above all others in the house devoted to the amenities of social life. Work-rooms, eating-rooms, and sleeping-rooms have all more or less distinctive characters determined



DRAWING-ROOM OVER-MANTEL.

by their several uses. Rooms devoted to social recreation, such as is the drawing-room *par excellence*, to be occupied when, our minds freed from the anxieties of daily business, and our bodies restored by necessary food, we are at leisure to enjoy the hours yet intervening before bed-time, should have no less than others an *ensemble* appropriate to them alone.

As some general hints have been given in the previous papers on this subject on the treatment of ceilings, walls, and furniture, we need here only glance cursorily through these items with a special reference to the drawing-room. Commencing with the ceiling,

this position, but boldly decorative plates or dishes will look well arranged on a shelf over the architrave of the doors. For the lower part of the walls silken hangings, woollens, or even cretonnes may be used with fine effect, but will scarcely be often conveniently within the means, or very appropriate for the ordinary middle-class homes we are now considering.

On the walls, about the level of the eye, a few pictures will form welcome points of interest. These should be dependent for their support upon stout cords, thick enough to be quite conspicuously visible, and secured to hooks or nails in the surbase mould-



DRAWING-ROOM—TREATMENT OF WINDOWS.

we will suppose the centre flower, if there be one hacked off, and the flat surface of the ceiling papered with a small-patterned paper of light drab, buff, or duck's-egg green tint. The walls are, perhaps, best divided, horizontally, by a moulding ranging about the height of the architraves of the doors. The upper part of the wall thus forms a sort of frieze about three feet deep, and may be hung with a paper of rather "busy" pattern, not obtrusive in colour, but well covered, and containing several shades of various colours. Below the moulding a much quieter paper of darker tone is most appropriate, as its function is to play the part of a background to furniture and pictures. On the frieze part no pictures should of course be hung, but the unbroken surface above the line of moulding may be varied with a few choice Japanese fans. China, a fragile ware, is scarcely suitable for

ing. These pictures may be oil or water, etchings, or photographs; but it is as well, if possible, not to mingle them on one wall, as they are apt to mutually impair their effect. The great thing is to avoid giving a crowded or picture-gallery-like appearance to the walls, so that they should not be too numerous. One or two at most should be hung on each wall, and ample intermediate wall-space should be left between them.

It requires the nicest eye to hang pictures really well, so to arrange the interspaces that each picture shall be thoroughly isolated, and yet no undue space of blank wall surface obtrude itself. It is a good plan to have the surbase moulding grooved on its top surface, so that the picture-cords may be hung upon hooks which, resting in the groove, can slide freely along and permit of easy re-adjustment.

Over the mantel-shelf in place of the now, happily, nearly obsolete vacuous sheet of plate-glass in gilt frame, an over-mantel, such as is shown in our first illustration, will be a useful and appropriate piece of furniture, more especially convenient for those who have a great deal of china to display. A quieter effect would be produced by one of the old-fashioned glasses shown in the second cut. These are very suitable for small and low rooms, especially if a considerable part of the other furniture consists of old-fashioned mahogany. The top cornice may be utilised to stand a dish or plate upon, and the frieze part painted with a decorative subject, such as appears suggested in the wood-cut.

Concerning the windows, there is little that can be done to improve them without structural alterations, which it is beyond our present province to enter upon. If, however, as is not unfrequently the case, the room is over-lighted, a suggestion may be offered of an inexpensive and effective improvement. This is to have a frame made exactly the size of the window between the beads, cover it with holland, and after screwing up the window-sashes, and papering over the cracks, so as to thoroughly exclude all dirt and dust, fix the frame so that from the outside it looks like a white blind drawn down. On the inside stout canvas must be stretched, and the papering of the lower part of the wall carried round over the shutters, if any, and the surbase moulding should also be carried round. Above the surbase fix in a black frame a decorative subject painted as a transparency. This may be copied from one of the Japanese silk pictures or embroideries. In the recess thus formed an old cabinet may stand, and the effect of the whole will be quaint and pleasing. The rays of the sun coming softly through the double thickness will shed a "dim religious light," very grateful to the artistic eye. Our third illustration shows somewhat the sort of arrangement suggested. If there be an otherwise insuperable objection to this idea, only on the score of the impossibility of cleaning the windows, washing the blind, and so forth, the frame may be fastened to the bead on one side by hinges, and a button or catch on the other, so that it can be periodically opened.

In the illustration it will be noticed that the next window is also treated somewhat unusually. For summer time no large or heavy curtains are necessary, and to obviate the draught which pours down on our heads when the window is open at the top, a frame with transparency is proposed, similar to that used for the blocked-up window, but fitted on pins which enter the beads at the sides, so that it can be opened inwards as shown. By this means sufficient air will be admitted, but the draught will be directed upwards to the ceiling and there dispersed. Below the frame small soft curtains of yellowish colour are hung from a slight brass rod. With these curtains, which can be wholly or partially drawn at will, no roller or Venetian blinds are necessary. If the window faces the south we suppose that outside blinds or jalousies are used. In winter, soft warm curtains of one or other of the

many excellent figured or plain materials now purchasable will be hung in the usual way above the architrave of the windows. A thin pole, either of brass or black wood, with small turned ends, is the best supporting apparatus. The poles usually employed are generally far too thick and clumsy, and any sort of hanging ends of stamped brass, representing leaves, bunches of grapes, or what not, are unmeaning and offensive. Against the whilom universal muslin or lace curtains, stiffened with starch, and of a dead white, it is scarcely necessary to declaim now-a-days.

Respecting the style of the furniture proper, it may be sufficient to remark that provided comfort, utility, and a certain suggestion of sumptuousness are secured, we cannot go far wrong. For the chairs and small tables it is as well to choose examples light enough to be easily movable, but not so light as to be readily knocked over. The piano is usually a sore subject with artistic furnishers. Unless specially made to design, a condition usually wholly unattainable with people of moderate incomes, the form of it, whether grand or cottage, is very unsatisfactory. If it be a cottage, something may be done by removing the elaborate fret-work in front, and fixing in its place a fine piece of needlework, or a decorative painting in silk. It is sometimes convenient to arrange the piano out in the room, so that its back is exposed to view. In this case this unsightly part can be concealed by a piece of the newly-introduced painted tapestry, or by needlework, if the latter be more accessible; or, failing either, a piece of patterned stuff may be stretched over the surface.

Screens are very valuable in some rooms, whether they be the dwarf fire-screens or the tall folding ones, and may be made really decorative objects. Some of the Japanese examples sold at the Oriental warehouses are very good and not prohibitive in price. A cheaper substitute may be produced by getting an old screen, such as may often be bought for a few shillings, and pasting on the right side of the leaves some Japanese paper pictures of birds and flowers, which are cheap, and, as far as they are carried, good art. It may seem curious to some to note how often, for purely decorative purposes, we have to fall back on the Oriental work; but the truth is, there is very little European work of low price at all satisfactory in the purely decorative sense. The back and margins of our screen may be covered with cretonne, or even wall-paper. Everything depends upon the selection of the colours and patterns.

The particular evil to which we adverted in the opening of this paper, as being rife even now, consists in the too common practice of over-crowding our drawing-room with objects, unexceptionable it may be in themselves, such as china, glass, pictures, and furniture. Probably from pure want of considering the matter, many people in furnishing their drawing-rooms appear to have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to have too much of a good thing. Whenever the room begins to present any approach to a museum-like appearance, whenever the walls are

becoming covered with pictures, or pieces of china meet our gaze at every turn, it is quite time to make a clearance. The room may be an excellent show-room, or museum, but as a room dedicated to the uses for which a drawing-room is pre-eminently required, it is a failure.

The doctrine of value, as applied to decoration, is simple enough. In order to appreciate properly any given object, it must be separated from others by what may be termed a neutral zone. For instance, we all know the charming effect of a single old Nankin vase, if it be deftly placed on a shelf or table, in a position wherein the eye is not distracted by other objects, whether similar or competing with it in vividness or force of effect. But fill a whole shelf with such objects in close array, as in a china shop, and it will be found impossible to realise the actual decorative and artistic value of any one of them without removing it, and thereby artificially isolating it from its rivals in attractiveness. Of course it is to be understood that a *pair*, or a group of even three or five pieces intended to form a set, count only as one in this proposition, as they have been specially designed with the view of their combined effect. A piece of jade, brasswork, Satsuma, soapstone, bronze, or any other object differing largely in colour and texture will not, however, injuriously affect the proper appreciation of the Nankin. So much for the effect of over-crowding on the objects shown. In considering its effect on the *ensemble* of the room it is

still more to be deprecated. A well-furnished and decorated room should present on all sides such an harmonious arrangement of colours and lines as would be pleasing and delightful in a picture. Now any artist will tell us that it is impossible to obtain that repose and harmony without a quality which is called breadth; the eye must not be distracted by a multiplicity of objects of nearly equal intensity in various parts of the picture, but should be led gradually on from one beautiful detail to another in easy succession; and especially that repose—that most valuable quality in art—is to be obtained only by broad and simple lines and masses.

Those, therefore, who are the happy possessors of a large collection of any sort of objects of *vertu* will do well, if they wish their treasures to receive their due meed of appreciation, to exhibit them somewhat sparsely, distributing them cunningly in little groups in different parts of the room. The surplus articles would then be kept in store-rooms or closed cabinets, and the exhibited collection varied from time to time with selections from the reserve, so that something fresh is always on view. So with engravings; the bulk of them might be well kept in portfolios, and a few only framed and hung on the walls. There is room for contrivance in designing a frame so as to avoid the necessity of pasting the backs over with strips of brown paper; one frame would then serve for several prints of the same size, and a fresh interest given to the walls at each re-arrangement.

C. W. DEMPSEY.



OUR COTTAGE GARDENING SOCIETY.



THE village was astir at an early hour on Tuesday, July 27th, for it was the day of the Flower Show, and the members of the Cottage Gardening Society had to get their flowers, fruit, and vegetables ready for exhibition. The previous day had been cloudy, and the night very wet, and many a girl looked out anxiously that morning, to see whether it would be fine enough for her to wear her new dress or hat. The sky was clear, and as the sun rose higher in the heavens,

the steaming earth began to dry. The flowers that had made the cottage windows so gay for a month past, were being removed by eager hands, and carried out to the street, where here and there donkey-carts stood ready to receive them.

Mary Jamison had been up at three o'clock, while it was still raining heavily, to make some pea-soup, for the Secretary of the Society offered prizes to any member who should make soup and bring it to the show to be judged. Mary had attended the cooking-lesson three weeks before, had watched every step of the process, and had since then made the soup for her family, so she hoped to succeed in winning a good prize. But the pea-soup required three hours to make, and therefore she had had to take time by the forelock and get up early, as she wished to be present in the tent at the placing of her flowers. Eight o'clock was approaching, and her double scarlet geraniums, the delight of her eyes, must be carried out to the cart, and put beside her rival's dark pelargonium.

Annie Kearney was her rival and next-door neighbour, who had gained first prize for clean house and well-stocked garden on two former occasions. Mary feared she would do so this year also; but surely, she

miniature ivory. If approaching gold, a very slight thin touch of cadmium may be used. I am rather afraid of recommending this colour as it is so very intense, but it is a beautiful tint for golden hair when carefully used. Brown hair may be very well described with vandyke brown and sepia, shadows very often of a purple-brown; red hair, of burnt sienna with a touch of lake or ochre according to its hue, shadows very often purple.

These are for the first washes of the hair; for finishing, no doubt, other tints may be introduced; every person's hair has its individual character.

Some miniature painters often introduce objects into the background; I do not like the plan, as a rule, myself; I like all the interest and work to be centred in the face, and the background to be merely that tone of colour and of that degree of finish which will best throw up the face. For a fair person a greyish-blue background suits very well, for a dark person a greenish-grey one.

I will not hamper my readers with minute directions. They must make experiments for themselves, following as much as possible the broad rules I lay down.

It is difficult to paint the face of an old person. It is not possible to put in all the wrinkles which, of course, help to a great extent to show age. The small size of the miniature would prohibit such detail; you must choose a few of them and be careful not to put them in too strongly. Shadows in an old person's face often incline to purple. Grey hair is very well composed of Payne's grey; and white hair is often streaked with a soft yellowish hue. Hands and arms ought to be paler than the complexion of the face and more inclining to yellow, the nails of a pinky tint.

With a few more remarks I will end my paper, hoping that in a small way I may have helped to hinder the gradual decadence of miniature painting. Always leave the lights in the eyes, and then put a slight touch of Chinese white on the blank spaces left. In choosing the frame for your miniature be careful that the glass is clear and white, without flaw. Do not remove the white paper from the back of the ivory, but cut it with the ivory to the shape and size required, or the back of the frame will show duskily through. A little gum mixed with the dark colours and put in the shadows is a great improvement.

ARTISTIC FURNISHING FOR MODERN HOUSES.

MORE ABOUT THE DRAWING-ROOM.



HERE are still a few points about the drawing-room remaining to be considered, and one of the most important of them is that of lighting by artificial means. Some forty years ago, Edgar Allan Poe wrote a paper on the philosophy of furniture, in which he describes a room furnished in such a manner as to satisfy his ideal of perfection. Making allowance for the absence of mere technical knowledge,

and also for a little exaggeration in the direction of richness and magnificence, natural to his almost Oriental imagination, it is wonderful how he has by the sheer force of his artistic instinct, without (be it remembered) any sort of training in æstheticism, put his finger so unerringly on the principal blots in the style of decoration and furnishing then in vogue in New York, and without much difference on this side of the Atlantic. Thus, speaking of curtains, he says, "An extensive volume of drapery is under any circumstances irreconcilable with good taste;" of carpets, "The abomination of flowers or representations of well-known objects of any kind should not be endured within the limits of Christendom; of hanging pictures, "The tone of each picture is warm but dark. There are no 'brilliant effects.' *Repose* speaks in all. Not one is of small size. Diminutive paintings give that *spotty*

look to a room which is the blemish of so many a fine work of art overtouched." But it is upon the question of lighting the drawing-room that I especially wish to draw the reader's attention to a few sentences of his, which seem to me as applicable now, and to us on this side the Atlantic, as when he addressed them, so long ago, to American readers.

"Glare is a leading error in the philosophy of American household decoration, an error easily recognised as deduced from the perversion of taste just specified. We are violently enamoured of gas and of glass. The former is totally inadmissible within-doors. Its harsh and unsteady light offends; no one having both brains and eyes will use it. A mild or what artists term a cool light, with its consequent warm shadows, will do wonders for even an ill-furnished apartment. Never was a more lovely thought than that of the astral lamp. We mean, of course, the astral lamp proper, the lamp of Argand, with its original plain ground-glass shade, and its tempered and uniform moonlight rays. The cut-glass shade is a weak invention of the enemy. The eagerness with which we have adopted it, partly on account of its *flashiness*, but principally on account of its *greater cost*, is a good commentary on the proposition with which we began. It is not too much to say that the deliberate employer of a cut-glass shade is either radically deficient in taste, or blindly subservient to the caprices of fashion. The light proceeding from one of these gaudy abominations is unequal, broken, and painful. It alone is sufficient to mar a world of good effect in the furniture subject to its influence. Female loveliness, in especial, is more than one half disenchanted beneath its evil eye.

"In the matter of glass generally, we proceed upon false principles. Its leading feature is *glitter*—and in that one word how much of all that is detestable do we express! Flickering, unquiet lights are *sometimes* pleasing—to children and idiots always so—but in the embellishment of a room they should be scrupulously avoided. In truth, even strong *steady* lights are inadmissible. The huge and unmeaning glass chandeliers, prism-cut, gas-lighted, and without shade, which dangle in our most fashionable drawing-rooms, may be cited as the quintessence of all that is false in taste or preposterous in folly."

There can, I think, be little doubt that in homes of modest pretensions a good moderator lamp is the

most satisfactory and convenient illuminator which we possess at present. The soft light of candles, in brass chandeliers, or scattered about in sconces fixed against the walls, or in separate candlesticks, affords perhaps the pleasantest and most diffused light of any; but candles, if constantly used, are more expensive than

largest-sized candles are used, they look unwieldy and out of proportion to the sconces or sticks in which they are set. As adjuncts to the lamp they are, however, indispensable.

There are a few good patterns of oil lamps now to be had at the better shops, but, as a rule, the more

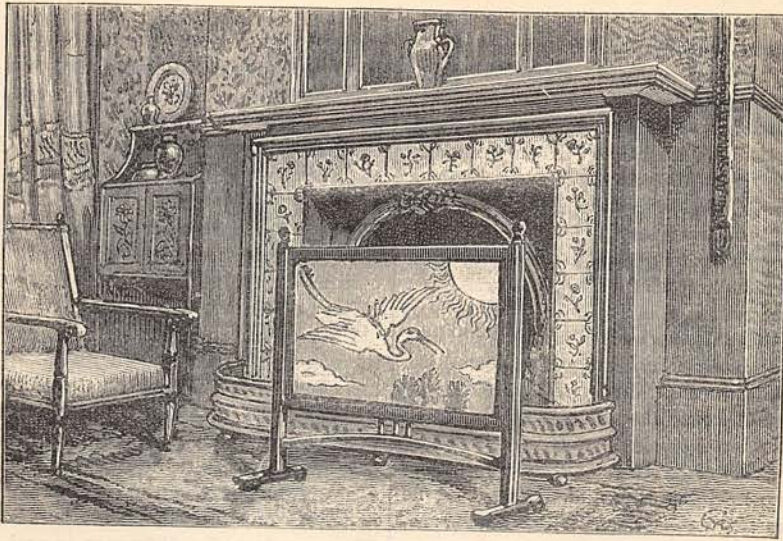


FRAMEWORK PARTITION.

oil, and entail besides extra trouble in cleaning. Candles in a drawing-room, too, present a practical inconvenience in the difficulty of getting, even in these days of improvement, a good slow-burning material. The candles commonly to be had are pretty to look at, and well finished and waxy in surface; but they burn away so fast, especially in hot rooms, that unless they are used of very large size they do not last the evening out; and it is especially disagreeable to see them burning low, and to have to replace them during the course of the evening. If, on the other hand, the

expensive lamps are too ornate and pretentious, while the lower-priced ones are very "Brummagem" indeed. Some of the old Delft or Nankin vases make good stands, and if the plainest possible type of burner be chosen, and fitted thereto with a clear glass reservoir, the result is a much better-looking and not more costly lamp than the gimcrack things usually seen.

Between gas, oil, and candles, our choice lies at present, but what the future may have in store for us in the way of electric lighting it is impossible to foresee. Electricity as a light-giver has two very important



F. REPLACE, WITH DUTCH TILES.

merits. It affords light without sensible heat, and is practically free from injurious emanations in the way of smoke or other products of combustion. On the other hand, the colour of the light is ghastly in its whiteness, singularly harsh and cutting in its want of diffusion and consequent black shadow, and, at all events up to the present time, uncertain in steadiness. At the best it must be very much improved in these essentials before it can be at all endurable as a domestic illuminant.

Of all the features in the drawing-room, the one pre-eminently intractable to management or modification in the artistic direction is the fireplace. It is undoubtedly the *bête noire* of the decorator of moderate means. In cases where a little expansion in the way of cost is possible—and surely the drawing-room of all others is the one most deserving of the exception—the treatment is simple enough: marble chimney-piece and cast-iron firegrate removed bodily; a tiled hearth, common red tiles will do very well, and a lining to back and sides of opening with the same or common Dutch tiles, with a simple basket-grate, a margin of stone or dove marble, and a wooden chimney-piece painted to match the other woodwork in the room. But in nine cases out of ten these are unattainable luxuries. The white marble chimney-piece and the bright steel or black drawing-room stove—very ornamental, very curly, and very ugly—must both remain, for they are the landlord's property, and our tenure of the house is not secure enough to make it prudent to expend the pounds necessary to remove them and put something better. The grate, then, must perforce be left as it is. The marble chimney-piece may, however, be cased over wholly or partly with wood, which casing may be taken away at the expiration of the lease. There are now plenty of good designs for such casings to select from, ranging from four or five pounds upwards. I have given a sketch of one of the simplest

forms, which might be made by any carpenter. It is shown set round with tiles—Dutch, blue and white, or plain glazed tiles of buff or greenish tint. The inside faces of the casing, extending between the grate and the tiles, should be made of thin sheet-iron or stout zinc. Failing this, there is still the resource of mantel-board and valance, either with or without curtains of serge, plain or embroidered, drawn back in winter, and across in summer; by which the white marble is veiled and the fireplace brought more nearly into accord with the other features of the room.

Most of our London drawing-rooms consist really of two rooms, back and front, thrown into one by means of widely extending folding-doors, or, more commonly now, by an arched or flat-topped opening only. As a pleasant variation from these arrangements, it is sometimes convenient to adopt a sort of compromise between a solid wall dividing the two rooms, and a wide opening. A suggested arrangement of this sort is figured in our opposite illustration. It consists of a framework fitting into the existing wide opening, reducing its width to, say, three feet six inches or four feet, and filling up the remaining space with a partition, which may be panelled or papered to match the wall-paper of the room, four feet or so high, with a couple of arched openings over it. Curtains may be hung on one side of this arrangement, and the whole framework may easily be constructed so as to be quickly removable in case the two rooms were wanted for a special occasion. For most of the time this alteration will be found convenient, as affording increased wall-space, and decidedly more picturesque inasmuch as it takes off from that undeviating squareness and obviousness of plan which are so uncompromising in their monotony in London rooms.

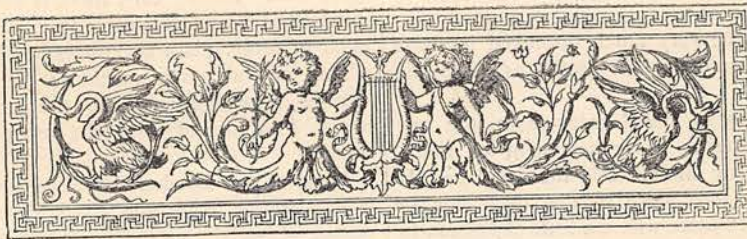
It is not necessary to insist upon the fact that not even the best decoration and furniture will insure a

satisfactory effect in a room if the furniture be ill-arranged; in truth, our drawing-rooms are, as a rule, if anything too much arranged. Either the chairs, ottomans, and tables are set with such scrupulous nicety, not one an inch awry, that one is afraid to move a chair into a more convenient position, from the feeling that such a departure would ruin the mechanical symmetry of the arrangement; or, with a view to an informal effect, the floor is covered with furniture standing at all angles, with such carefully studied informality that the key to the disposition is not to be fathomed, and not picturesqueness, but bewilderment and confusion is the result. The best arrangement possible is, indeed, not often obvious without much careful consideration and repeated experiment. No uniform rule can be formulated in this case, for rooms of various shapes, and especially of various dimensions, require different treatment. For instance, in very small rooms a much greater formality is not only permissible, but essential, than would be suitable for rooms of greater size. In the latter, provision should always be made for separating the occupants into groups, each with its convenient table and chairs, and means of amusement or suggestions for conversation, such as books, prints, flowers, and so forth. Yet this isolation should be so managed as not

to interfere with the general sociableness of the whole gathering. It should be possible to converse with one's neighbour without attracting the enforced attention of all present, and not impossible to form one of a collective audience to an individual speaker or performer at the piano. The thoroughfares also require some care in arrangement. There should be room to move about from group to group without disturbing others, and the passages should be as straight as possible, for nothing can be more awkward than to have to make one's way, say to the hostess, by a devious course of perpetual twists and twirls round tables and chairs.

I hope I have not convinced any of my readers that it is impossible to arrange a drawing-room properly. A little tact and independent thought will do wonders. I say *independent* thought, for it will nearly always be better rather to study the peculiar capabilities of our own room than to try to imitate that of some one else. However satisfactory the effect of the other may be, it is ten to one that the conditions are not the same. The mere fact of a difference in scale in the furniture, or in quantity, shape of room, relative position of doors, windows, and fireplace, are all elements that will to some extent affect, if not dictate, the disposition of the contents of the rooms.

CHARLES W. DEMPSEY.



“WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY.”

WHERE there's a will there's a way,
To seek it never give over;
If you fail to find it to-day,
To-morrow you may discover.

For the man of determined will
There is nothing too hard to do;
With patience, and labour, and skill,
Earth, ocean, and air he'll subdue.

Through the rock the miner will bore
To find out the diamond or spring,
From the depths of the sea to the shore
The pearl the diver will bring.

The seaman with compass to guide
At lands he ne'er saw will arrive,
And right 'gainst the wind and the tide
His steam-impelled ship he will drive.

With the eagle the aeronaut vies
In the sky his dominion to share;
On gas-borne pinions he flies
O'er ocean and earth through the air.

Though an Alp block the way 'gainst his will,
That will it opposes in vain:
The engineer pierces the hill,
And drives through the tunnel his train.

Through the earth, and the sea, and the air
He sends the electrical stream,
His words through all regions to bear,
To illumine the night with its beam.

There is nothing that man cannot do
If with courage he works night and day;
The knot you can't open, cut through,
For where there's a will there's a way.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.