

in a concentrated form under the heading of this paper.

Permit me, as modestly as I may, to string together one or two of these exceedingly precious pearls. The period is 1772. Doctor Johnson is in his sixty-third year. The scene is the "Crown and Anchor" tavern, in the Strand. The company consists of Lord Elibank, Mr. Langton, and Dr. Vansittart of Oxford. Of course, the faithful Boswell is present, as he will be in all the following conversations. "A gentleman having to some of the usual arguments for drink added this: 'You know, sir, drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would you not allow a man to drink for that reason?'—Johnson: 'Yes, sir, if he sat next *you*.'" A *jeu-d'esprit* this, I take it, that is scarcely in accordance with what the dogmatic doctor's critics delight to describe as his "elephantine wit." It must be remembered that Johnson in his earlier years drank wine and other liquors; but, as he told Miss Macleod, when in the Hebrides, "I took the opportunity of a long illness to leave it off. It was then prescribed to me not to drink wine; and having broken off the habit, I have never returned to it." And, speaking of this Scotch tour, Boswell remarks that when Johnson was staying with Sir Allan M'Lean, "we only regretted that he could not be prevailed upon to partake of the social glass. He urged that 'in proportion as drinking makes a man different from what he is before he has drunk, it is bad, because it has so far affected his reason.'"

Johnson is supping at the "Crown and Anchor" tavern. Sir Joshua Reynolds is one of the company, as also is Lord Dunsinan. Boswell reports: "We discussed the question whether drinking improved conversation and benevolence. Johnson: 'No, sir; before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding, and those who are conscious of their inferiority have the modesty not to talk. When they have drunk wine every man feels himself happy, and loses the modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous, but he is not improved: he is only *not* sensible of his defects. . . . I admit that the spirits are raised by drinking as by the common participation of any pleasure; cock-fighting or bear-baiting will raise the spirits of a company as drinking does, though surely they will not improve conversation. . . . After a

ten years' forbearance of every fluid except tea and sherbet, I drank one glass to the health of Sir Joshua Reynolds on the evening of the day on which he was knighted. I never swallowed another drop till old Madeira was prescribed to me as a cordial during my present indisposition; but this liquor did not relish as formerly, and I therefore discontinued it."

Following Boswell's honest register, we find Johnson at General Paoli's. The company numbers Sir Joshua Langton, Marchese Gheradi of Lombardy, and Mr. John Spottiswoode. "Wine," says Johnson, "makes a man better pleased with himself. I do not say it makes him more pleasing to others. The danger is that while a man grows better pleased with himself he may be growing less pleasing to others. Wine gives a man nothing. It neither gives him knowledge nor wit. It only animates a man, and enables him to bring out what a dread of the company has repressed. It only puts in motion what has been locked up in frost." Spottiswoode remarks, "So, sir, wine is a key which opens a box; but this box may be either full or empty?" The Doctor replies, "Nay, sir; conversation is the key; wine is a pick-lock, which forces open the box and injures it." When Boswell had some intention of representing his native county in Parliament, Johnson, in a letter pregnant with other sage counsels, remarked, "One thing I must enjoin of you, which is seldom observed in the conduct of elections; I must entreat you to be scrupulous in the use of strong liquors. One night's drunkenness may defeat the labours of forty days well employed." Boswell seems to have been the recipient of much advice of this description. Here is a further sample:—"As we drove back to Ashbourne, Dr. Johnson recommended to me, as he had often done, to drink water only; 'for,' said he, 'you are then sure not to get drunk, whereas if you drink wine you are never sure.'"

Boswell proceeds to cite, as an instance of drink not shortening life, the case of a certain Scotch lord. Johnson, with his usual intelligence and accuracy of inquiry, asks, "Does it take much wine to render him intoxicated?" Boswell answers, "A great deal either of wine or strong punch." "Then," says Johnson, "that is worse; a fortress which soon surrenders has its walls less shattered than when a long obstinate resistance is made."

EDWARD BRADBURY.

HOW I FURNISHED.



O two people ever furnished exactly alike, hence I suppose it is that no golden rule is offered by their elders to innocent young householders when they set about feathering their first nest. So much depends upon the ways and means that perhaps it is unnecessary to lay down any hard and fast line to be generally followed, for what is within the reach of one is out of the range of another.

In brief, circumstances alter cases, and as a result the inexperienced find themselves driven upon their own resources, which means that in despair they take advantage of the convenience of the "through-out" furnishing firms. But with regard to myself I determined that I would not pursue this ready-made mode of making my house habitable. Its rooms, argued I, need as much consideration in respect to colour and cut as I exercise when giving my tailor an order. A very laudable determination,

no doubt; but few of my friends could help me with their advice; at least, it was so inapplicable as to be useless, for one said, "Young people should be modest; go to second-hand dealers, and attend auction sales." Another observed, "Don't get too much furniture. I did, and now find I don't use one-half of it." A third advised me to go in for comfort and eschew elegance; whilst a fourth, newly married, informed me that his wedding presents had been so numerous that he did not think he should have to trouble about ordering furniture at all.

Friends proving of no service, I next looked up the literature on the subject, but found nothing to guide me, the same reticence distinguishing every writer. Pots, kettles, and pans were perhaps, I began to think, too commonplace to be written about. The only light which illuminated my darkness was that proceeding from furnishing catalogues and radiating from shop-windows. Finally, after much consideration, I determined to follow my own plan, and take no one into confidence, consult no one except my wife, and ask no one's opinion until all was complete. Now I will proceed to give a general outline of my operations.

First I chose my house. It needed thoroughly doing up. The wall-papers, moreover, were most Philistine, and the painting of the woodwork on a par. By an arrangement with the landlord I secured the selection of every paper to be used, and the choice of every paint-colour. We decided first upon the tone of the dining and drawing-rooms, which opened into one. We hit upon sage-green. It was a most important point, and made the rest of our labours easy. In preference to a set pattern a small running design was picked out, and in the end it proved a cheaper paper than that fixed upon by the landlord. So at the outset we learned that the exercise of one's own taste did not mean necessarily increased expense. This was satisfactory; for I feel sure that many people swallow down their own tastes when an outrageously ugly thing is submitted to them as desirable on the score of economy. I do not believe in such economy.

All through the house we gave the decorator this or that instruction, and at the end of the business were told that the gratification of our own desires had cost us a very small sum indeed.

In the meantime I had made up my mind to expend so much and no more upon furnishing. Accordingly, in a manuscript book, each room having a separate page or pages, I prepared an estimate, putting down every necessary that I could think of. Totalling up the entire book I satisfied myself that the aggregate sum was well within the mark. Then I set a cross against such of the items representing goods that I should wish to last for years, and, if possible, to improve with age. These were the dining-room and bed-room suites. Duly armed with my prices I went to a reliable manufacturer, and said, "Can you supply me with these goods at my figures? I wish for the best material and workmanship rather than ornament, and the furniture must be all in a certain style." The manufacturer met me fairly, and I have no reason to think this mode of ordering was more expensive than

buying second-hand goods, although one individual damped me by saying that it would be impossible for me to get the things I wanted at my estimate. However, I convinced him to the contrary, for style does not of necessity consist in ornament; and it is possible to obtain a really good piece of furniture, made to order to, say, a simple Early English pattern, at the same cost as a more elaborate but less pleasing article, turned out by the gross and adorned with carving and mouldings to catch the taste of the many.

The outlines of the interior of the house having been thus arranged for, it was my next care to provide for every detail that might afterwards present itself, and it was astonishing to find how many and various these odds and ends were, and what a respectable sum they cost me: curtain-hooks, clothes-hooks, kitchen-hooks, brass-headed nails, tin tacks, and a thousand and one little things which every house requires, and which I should ask pardon for mentioning but for the fact that in laying out money these trifling items are apt to be forgotten, or taken into no account as of small consequence. I dare say it is because these etceteras are not unfrequently left unprovided until their need is felt, that gives rise to the lugubrious cry which more than one individual has raised in my hearing—"Furnishing! Ah, you never know when you have finished," and from the sigh which accompanies the exclamation I take it that the oddments make rather vexing demands upon a housekeeping purse not intended to defray such expenses. For my own part I intended that my agreed upon sum should cover everything, and if anything had to be excluded it should not be necessities, but luxuries. There was one great item in the estimate upon which, like a Chancellor of the Exchequer, I played—viz., the piano. This instrument was the last article of furniture to be ordered, and the price of it was determined by the unexpended balance at our command. At times the piano loomed very largely upon us, and seemed quite within our grasp; at others it receded into dim distance, and became almost illusionary. Just accordingly as our estimate was exceeded or economised upon so the piano ran up and down the scale, from the impossibility of procuring it to the certainty of its actual possession.

Putting the estimate to the test we learned that it could be depended upon in respect to the drawing, dining, and bed-rooms. Where it was all at fault was in what I may call the Commissariat Department. Kitchen utensils and table furniture are of themselves so familiar that of course they could not be forgotten; yet, as a matter of fact, most of them were. And on this point I advise "those about to marry" to view the furnishing lists, wherein pretty little estimates may be found ready prepared, with considerable care, for they are by no means exhaustive, and it is most annoying to encounter deficiencies when all one's money is gone. If you want to avoid such vain regrets as that an ornamental article of furniture has been purchased in place of forgotten essentials, you must look things boldly in the face and see that *everything*—even to skewers—goes down in the estimate.

In the ordering of our furniture from makers recommended to us, two things were most helpful: first, the estimate, in keeping well within our means; and secondly, the style we had resolved upon. With a sage-green back-ground to consider, we were not perplexed when plunged into the wealth of warehouses displayed in numberless textures, colours, and shades. It was not a matter of choosing between this and that, but of finding the actual thing for which we were in search. We had what we wanted in our mind's eye, and in most cases we found it. Then, again, having gone in for Early English, we were spared the envy that we might have felt upon inspecting Persian saddle-bag-covered couches and chairs, which may have been beyond our pocket; for Persian saddle-bag velvet would not harmonise, and therefore to us it was of no value. Throughout the main idea kept in view was that of harmony—*i.e.*, that each article should contribute its appropriate quota to the general effect, and that none be allowed arrogantly to claim more than its fair share of attention.

In the arrangement of our rooms I designed that each should have its distinctive character. Hence, the dining-room was quiet and more formal than the drawing-room; the latter, however, in opposition to popular custom, I did not make light, yet sought to impart to it a comfortable appearance by varying the shapes of the chairs and the design of their cretonne coverings. For the rest the carpet and the wall-papers were the same as those in the dining-room. The reason for this identity was that on opening the two rooms into one, and slightly shifting the furniture in the dining-room, there should not be too great a dissimilarity in the styles. I dare say by this time it will have been perceived I am writing for people of moderate means and unambitious aims.

We were careful not to allow green to run through the whole house, and some rooms were accordingly allowed other dominant colours—the bed-rooms

having the more delicate shades, and the sitting-rooms the warmer tints. It is not my intention to catalogue the several apartments and their contents, for what has pleased me may not please others. One or two suggestions, however, perhaps I may offer. For instance, the hall being narrow, I revolted at the thought of a hat-stand with which my furnishing friend would have supplied me. In substitution I placed a small umbrella-rack and hat-pegs out of sight of the

door, and a curtain running on a brass rod lent an artistic effect to the foot of the stairs. On the staircase a small bracket with a flower-pot occupied a corner, and on the first landing was a hanging book-case, with blue china on the top shelf. Now, I name these things for the reason that they were the most noticed by visitors, who seemed struck with the notion of meeting with books on a staircase, &c., and I have also to remark that the effect produced was at a most inexpensive outlay. Thus I claim that one's house may be rendered artistic and attractive without lavishing on it an abundance of gilt and a profusion of primary colours.

There was another delusion I set my face against—*viz.*, the "spare room." A spare room I could not afford, but a visitors' room I admitted

was necessary. Visitors, however, were not likely to be frequent, and I was not disposed to maintain a room in solemn state for use three or four times only in a year. Therefore the visitors' room was so arranged as to be convertible from a sitting into a bed-room whenever necessary. The dressing-chest was placed unobtrusively in a corner, and the marble-topped wash-stand, deprived of its ware, was made to resemble, by the addition of flower-glasses, a console table.

It was in this way that I made my capital at command sufficient for every purpose, and, as the result, my home is quite as attractive and as rest-giving to me as the richly upholstered retiring-rooms of ducal mansions, no doubt, are to the favoured possessors of unlimited wealth.

