

"Indeed they have," he said very earnestly—"Nancy, tell me, would you rather I stayed?"

"If I said 'Yes,' *would* you stay?" she asked, quietly.

"Only if you loved me," he said. "I cannot stay on and see you day after day, and feel that you will never care for me. May I stay, Nancy?"

"If you like," she answered shyly.

Jim took her into his arms, and kissed her very tenderly. "There is one thing I want to know," he said presently, looking down into her eyes: "when did you begin to love me, dear?"

"When did *you* begin to love *me*?" she replied, blushing under his gaze.

"I don't know; I have loved you all my life," he answered.

"I don't know, either," she said: "when I was about four or five, I think."

"But, my darling, you broke off our engagement," he said wonderingly.

"Yes; from your letters I thought I did not love you. They were so stupid—I—I mean——"

"Yes, they were stupid, but yours were silly too, and I thought that was the kind of thing you liked," he said, a ray of intelligence dawning in his eyes.

"I thought you were terribly boyish, so wrote very 'young' letters, thinking they would interest you," she said, beginning to laugh.

"We both fell into the same mistake, then," he said, laughing too, though a little regretfully. "Oh, Nancy! we might have had such a good time! How I wish I had the letters that you *might* have written!"

"Yes, it is a pity," she said. "But it is all right now, and I will write the *sweetest* letters to you in future."

"Indeed you will not," he replied, in a calmly masterful tone. "I never mean to leave you again. We must look upon those letters as a part of the vast 'It-might-have-been.'"

ANNE KEA.

ON THE DECORATION OF A BED-ROOM.

WOMEN were designed by their nature, elegance, and softness, to endear domestic life to man, to make virtue lovely to children, to spread around them order and grace, and to give to society its highest polish. No attainment can be above beings whose end and aim is to accomplish purposes at once so elegant and salutary: every means should be used to invigorate, by principle and culture, such native excellence and grace.

The vision that these words call up is one that never wearies or becomes commonplace. We may know hundreds of women to whom they may fitly be applied, hundreds who by virtue of their "elegance and softness" make the hours spent in the home incomparably superior in their pleasures to any that are passed outside its happy precincts, but we can never think of them as commonplace; they are types of true womanhood.

A woman maintaining, by her example and her precepts, order in her queen-dom, and who, with thoughtful care, utilises the talents given to her by adding touches of grace and beauty to the home-life, thus increasing her good influence over her husband and her children, is carrying out one of the highest missions ever entrusted to human creatures. The task of making our homes pretty is a pleasant one, and yet it is an imperative duty with many of

us. We would not have an air of neglect circulate about our rooms, and decorators' bills make our purses terribly light, so we must just "turn to" and see how we can outwit the professionals by using our own brains and fingers.



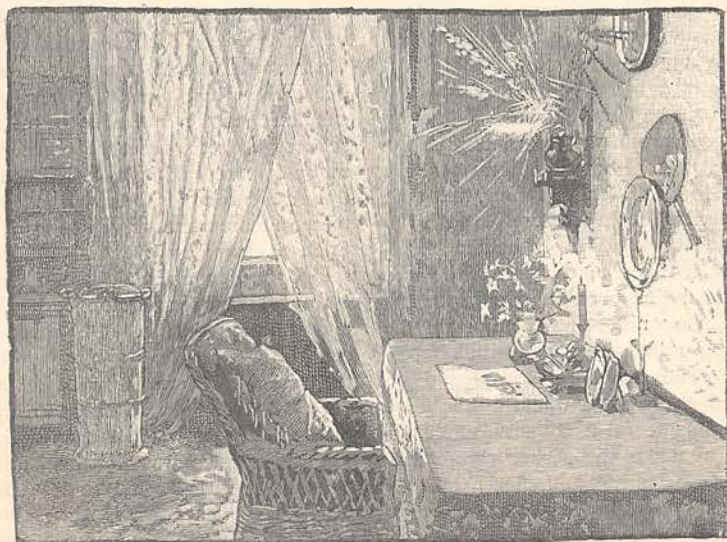
AS THE BED SHOULD BE.

Originality compensates for a vast amount of trouble ; there is an untold delight in looking round a room and knowing that the pleasant effect is due to one's own imagination and skill. We feel then, in a superior sort of way, that upholsterers and decorators are a useful class of beings to assist those poor atoms of humanity to whom has been allotted but a meagre allowance of brains, and who consequently must depend upon others even for the furnishing and decoration of their houses ; but for us they are but nonentities, and when employed are regarded merely as machines to carry out our tastes and ideas. Still, if the truth must be owned, there are some amateurs who feel a little *quaverish* now and then when choosing the tint of the wood-work, and we have even known them to spend the best part of an evening in turning over the pattern book before they could decide on a paper for the walls. A word of advice came to them as a shower of rain on a parched-up field, and they welcomed it as eagerly. As to the choice of papers, we allow that there is a difficulty in selection. Our tendency is to choose the best, and if the landlord has agreed to put one up at his own cost, his tendency is to choose the cheapest ; in fact, he binds his tenant down to a fixed price, which puts most of the prettiest patterns at once out of the question.

But the best and handsomest wall hangings are not always the most suitable. One that would serve well for a hall or dining-room will be quite out of place in a bed-room. Then the aspect of the room has to be considered ; a sunny room will bear a cool-tinted paper, whilst one facing north will need a hanging somewhat warm in tint. So, too, a room in a country house should be treated differently from a corresponding one in a town house. We cannot banish from our minds the fact that in town such things as smuts and dusts and fogs do congregate, and being unable to do away with them, we must make the best of our surroundings, and choose our papers accordingly ; but in

the bright fresh atmosphere of the open country we feel no compunction in indulging our fancy for creamy ground tints powdered over with light tracery, wrought out in delicate shades of colour. The ubiquitous dado has seen its day in certain apartments ; in halls and dining-rooms it still holds its own, but fashion has decreed that in drawing-rooms and bed-rooms it is to be known no more for the present. We cannot regret its absence, at least in small rooms, for it certainly possessed the property of apparently diminishing the size. In the same way a dark paper makes a room look several inches smaller than it is in reality, whilst a light paper has the contrary effect.

White wood-work, with a highly polished surface, is gaining in public favour ; so much is it admired, that it is not uncommon now to find it in the drawing-rooms and in all the rooms in the upper storeys of a house. As we intend this month to speak more particularly of the bed-rooms, we will mention one or two novelties that have lately come under our notice. So much has been spoken and written concerning the exceeding sinfulness and foolishness of allowing "dust-traps" to figure in the rooms where we sleep, that it would be wasting our space to enlarge upon the subject here. One of the worst of these "traps," if neglected, is the head of the bedstead. It is necessary to mount on a pair of high steps to gain an adequate idea of the housemaid's understanding of the verb "to clean." If the tops of the half-testers and of the wardrobes are clean, we may congratulate ourselves on having secured a high-principled domestic ; the temptation is strong to overlook such out-of-the-way nooks as these. To obviate this trouble, some housekeepers banish the tops of bedsteads entirely, but not liking to dispense with curtains, they have recourse to a simple and ingenious plan. At the top of the two poles that hitherto supported the head-piece a couple of rods or brackets are fixed, on which the



A CORNER FOR CORRESPONDENCE.

curtain-rings run ; these brackets are made to swing forwards, so that during the day the curtains, which are short, may be arranged over the pillows. The poles are finished off with brass knobs.

The curtains are pretty when made of cream oatmeal cloth, ornamented with crewel work. The design may be a border of poppies, in which case this should descend to the front of the curtain, and continue round the bottom. A powdering of small sprays of flowers on the same material may be preferred by some. When this style is adopted the quilt can be easily made to correspond. The cloth is cut in squares, on each of which a spray of flowers is worked ; the squares are afterwards joined together with lace insertion, and a lace edging is added. The back of the bedstead is sometimes covered with soft silk, slightly padded, so that it can be caught down at intervals with rosettes of the same ; to finish off the top a frill of the silk is left standing up. When Madras curtains and quilts are used, the strip, that now takes the place of the obsolete toilet-cover, is also of Madras muslin ; this is invariably lined with colour.

Those abominations known as splashers are to be seen no longer in well-furnished houses ; it is a matter of marvel that they were ever tolerated for a moment. Four upright rods are fixed in the marble of the wash-stand, one at each corner ; these support a rod, from which hangs a short lace or muslin curtain, headed with a frill. There is a new kind of lace for curtains, that is much like the ordinary Nottingham lace, but the holes are not woven in the same manner ; they are more ornamental, and seem to form part of the design, giving a handsome appearance, and yet preserving the necessary clearness.

Bed-rooms are not, to our fancy, perfectly furnished unless they contain some articles that in past times were deemed superfluous. An arm-chair or sofa must be found room for if possible without overcrowding. The small occasional table we have already noticed. It is undeniable that a good firm writing-table is a most pleasant feature in a bed-room ; especially in a guest's room space should be found for one. Whilst on a visit we do not always care to write our letters in the general sitting-room ; if there be not a library we are sometimes compelled to do so, for we cannot well take possession of our hostess's boudoir for the purpose. In that hour after breakfast when visitors betake themselves to their rooms, that the housewife may be free to go about her usual duties unencumbered with the presence of outsiders, many notes may comfortably be despatched if a writing-table, with the needful implements, is at hand. The appointments should be scrupulously neat and clean. We would rather have no pretence of such a luxury if it is not serviceable.

It is not difficult to make the wicker chairs that are in such general use very pretty and effective pieces of furniture. By spending a little labour on them, we can rig them up so tastily that they will afford a charming bit of colouring to brighten up the corner



HOW TO TREAT THE WASH-STAND.

by the hearth. We must get a cushion made to fit the seat, another for the back, and two pads for the arms. Suppose we choose a piece of Turkey red twill to cover the cushion with. Over this we shall place, cornerwise, a coloured cotton handkerchief, bearing a bold pattern on it, and being edged with a narrow fringe. The back cushion will be covered in the same style, and the arm-pads of Turkey red twill will be gracefully draped with smaller handkerchiefs or strips of the large one, finished off with fringe. Round the thick supports the fringe may be twined ; and, indeed, however fantastic the upholstery, it can scarcely be too much so to be successful. The wicker table should be trimmed after the same fashion. This work can, of course, be carried out more expensively, when plush will form the covering of the cushions, and silken squares of brilliant designs, or squares of rich Oriental embroidery, edged with a many-coloured silk fringe, will be laid across, allowing only the corners of the plush to be visible. When silk materials are used the wicker-work should be ebonised. Such a chair, however, is only suitable for a handsomely furnished room ; in one where the curtains and bed furniture are of cretonne, the Turkey red twill and cotton handkerchiefs will be more in accordance than the plush and silk. Charming sets of furniture are made now that answer well for young ladies' rooms. One we have seen that specially attracted us was painted entirely with an exquisitely delicate turquoise tint, the surface] was polished, and the finish of the whole was all that could be desired. Placed in a room where the wood-work is white, the curtains and bed furniture of Madras muslin, we cannot well imagine a more charming interior.