

butter, and bread or biscuits. The cheese should be cut into small pieces, and the butter moulded in tiny shapes, as varied as possible. Antique glass and silver, and when these are unobtainable, imitations of the antique are becoming general.

Most delicate in design and workmanship are the small lamps so much used for dinner-tables, and, although very pretty shades may be bought, many ladies find pleasant occupation in making some tiny original ones. Perforated cardboard, gold, silver, or white, is a good foundation; it may be lined with a contrasting colour, and worked with a monogram to match. Some of the Japanese designs, too, are striking, and may be worked very quickly with crewel wools. Many satteens and muslins (Oriental) would make novel and pretty shades. Or here, again, the gold paper referred to would be useful; it should, to be effective, be lined with some bright colour, and may be turned to account by artistic fingers in any

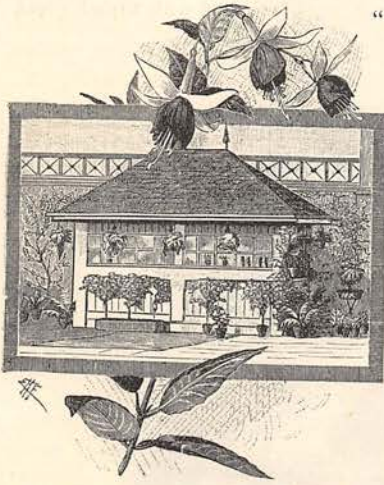
way which is suitable, at a nominal cost. Tiny stew-pans of silver, in which to serve *ramakins* and *soufflés*, are another innovation; their price, necessarily, restricts their adoption, but ere long we shall probably see the same shape in a cheaper material.

We hope that these slight suggestions may prove of such use to our readers that they will, at least, be able to adapt them to suit their own needs, as there are so many little ways by which a dinner-table may be lifted from the commonplace, and made fit to rank among really artistic objects.

At the moment of going to press we saw a plush centre-piece, made to order, as much in design and colouring like a Turkey carpet as it well could be; and although more uncommon and expensive than the self-colours we have referred to, we liked it far less; the general appearance, as it was fringed at the ends, being suggestive of a hearth-rug.

BEAUTY IN UNLIKELY PLACES.

PRETTY RAILWAY-STATIONS.



SIGNAL-BOX, LANSDOWN STATION, NEAR CHELTENHAM.

“THERE never was more flagrant nor impertinent folly than the smallest portion of ornament in anything concerned with railways or near them.” Such is the explicit conviction of that arch-enemy of steam, Mr. John Ruskin.

The Brantwood philosopher, in his

fervently illuminated “Seven Lamps of Architecture,” decries the decoration of railway-stations as one of the most strange and evil tendencies of the present day. He conscientiously contends that if there be any place in the world in which people are deprived of the disposition necessary to the contemplation of beauty, it is there. Mr. Ruskin says that he would as soon “put rings on the fingers of a smith at his anvil,” as make a railway-station pleasing to the eye. The railway-station, by the way, may be compared to the home of the smith—would he deny him Longfellow’s “spreading chestnut-tree”? “It is,” he continues, “the very temple of discomfort, and the only charity that the builder can extend to us is to show us, plainly as may be, how soonest to escape from it. . . . The

whole system of railway travelling is addressed to people who, being in a hurry, are therefore, for the time being, miserable. . . . The railroad is in all its relations a matter of earnest business, to be got through as soon as possible. It transmutes a man from a traveller into a living parcel. For the time he has parted with the nobler characteristics of humanity for the sake of a planetary power of locomotion.”

After these vehement remarks it would, perhaps, be idle to reason with Professor Ruskin. He can find no romance on the railroad. The carriage-windows of the train that conveys him from London to Coniston frame no pictures that come and go with ever-changing flight, relieved from monotony by comparison and kaleidoscopic contrast. Even the gigantic engineering works that excite the average mind by their sublime domination over the forces of nature; the lofty bridges where the traveller is

“Borne, like Loretto’s chapel, through the air;

the romance of river and rock made more ravishing by engineering realism; the graceful viaducts whose curving arches span rainbow-like deep and devious valleys, with wood and water far away below, and which are quite as engaging as the ruined Italian viaducts that Turner idealised, convey no more intelligent expression than that of grovelling commercial greed to the supersensitive soul of the author of “Modern Painters.” I quite agree with my friend Mr. M. J. Baddeley in his protest in this connection. He says: “Railways, in regard to their effect on natural scenery, have been abused wholesale. Poets have led the way, and everybody with a ‘soul for the beautiful’ has followed. They are straight and square, and altogether out of harmony with the flowing lines of nature; yet Turner’s pictures abound in

straight or square palaces, and level-topped bridges in the mid-distance. The churches of a rugged region, says the canon of taste, should have square towers, and not tapering spires. Why, then, should the regular lines of a railway be regarded as fatal to the natural beauty of the country through which it passes, or the express locomotive, stronger than Samson, swift and smooth as the swallow in its flight, be æsthetically regarded as a 'shrieking monster'? . . . To a great extent railways are bound to accommodate themselves to nature. They traverse a picturesque country in a succession of graceful curves, with here and there a lofty viaduct, and to the credit of our railway poténtates be it said, they have shown more regard for the claims of Nature, while encroaching on her domains, than any other class of men engaged in mercantile enterprise. No unprejudiced man can assert that the pass of Killiecrankie has been spoilt by the Highland railway, or that the beautiful valleys of North Yorkshire have suffered from the splendid viaducts by which the Settle and Carlisle line spans them. If there be any genuineness in the outcry against railways, it is the genuineness of a selfish, niggardly spirit, which wishes to shut out the beauty-spots of the earth from ninety-nine hundredths of its inhabitants."

This is a long quotation, but it is to the point. The

"Is this the power that has transformed the world?
This fainting thing the tenderest glassy blade
Can pierce, torn by each bramble in the glade;
Or as it floats in thinnest wreaths uncurled,
Caught in the little ashen palms empearled,
That chafe and fret it in their babbling shade
To nothing; this that is and is not, swayed
Lighter than thistle-down by light airs whirled;
A momentary breath that scarce in May
The bedded gold can tarnish by the brook;
That yet bound in by strong necessities,
Nor at its wayward will left free to stray,
The earth beneath its flying thunder shook,
And poured behind it streaming vales and skies."

Then there is certainly something more bracing in the swift, straightforward, energising action of the rapid express than there was in the lumbering, jerking, and jolting progress of the old stage-coach with its benumbed and petulant passengers, its heavy charges, and the dangerous vicissitudes of the road that caused the traveller to make his will before he started from London to Exeter, or Carlisle to York.

Slow trains even have their compensations, especially when they traverse a picturesque country, such — for example — as the hop-fields of Kent, or run through the pleasant Devonshire district, or skirt the Llandudno coast, or follow the Dove from Uttoxeter to Ashbourne, or the Eden from Kirkby Stephen and Appleby to the sea—the railway following the river-course where the channel is belted with broad green



ALTON TOWERS (NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY).

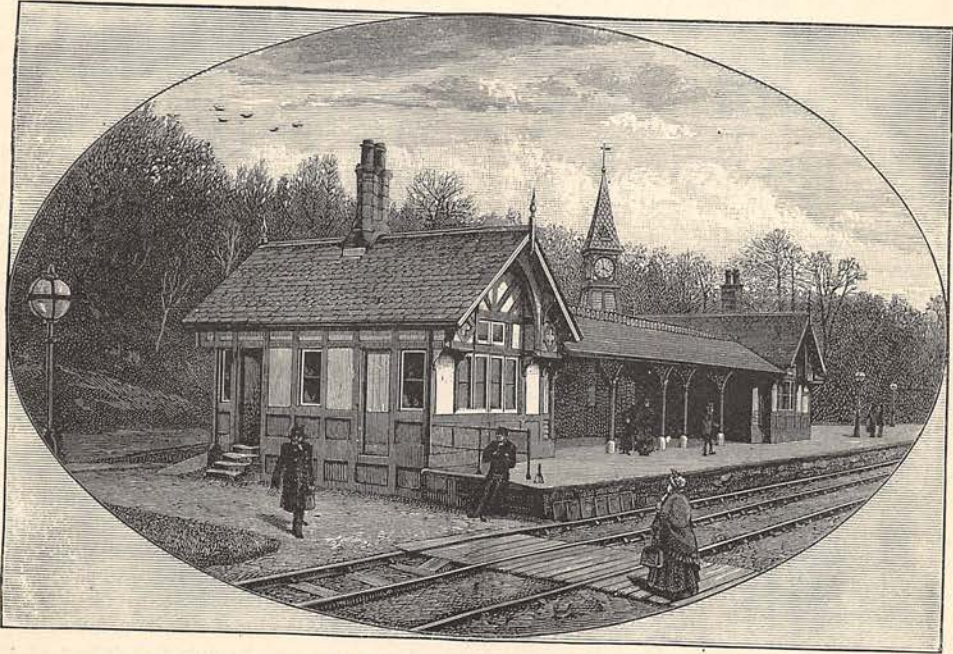
railway is not the contemptible and prosaic affair that Mr. Ruskin would have us believe it to be. There is poetry in railways. Let no one, pleads Goethe, say that reality lacks poetical interest. There is sentiment in steam.

spaces of lush meadow and flanked with picturesque heights.

The train pauses at wayside stations that are pastoral poems and pictures of happy indolence—"the negation of work in its greatest energy." The booking-office

and waiting-rooms are embowered in flowers. Trim and fragrant hedges serve for fences. The guard stops to gossip with the station-master. Fresh-faced farmer-folk idle about the platform. The driver is evidently waiting for the squire's carriage that is being

the great railways have grown more impressive since the days when he sketched our scenery and society. To the modern American tourist, however, nothing is more pleasing than travelling by train through the English counties. The railway route seems to be a



FURNESS ABBEY STATION (FURNESS RAILWAY).

driven over the bridge, with two pretty girls, a large trunk, and a collie dog. The fast train flashes by these idyllic country-side stations, and the scream of the engine-whistle does not even waken their somnolent echoes; but the town-tired traveller catches "hurrygraphs" of them sufficiently tempting for him to wish that the "limited mail" were a City omnibus, so that he could order it to stop just where he pleased.

But it is of pretty railway-stations that I am bidden to discourse. Mr. Ruskin and his school would, perhaps, deny the possibility of such utilitarian institutions existing in artistic shape, despite the convincing evidence afforded by the grand Gothic pile at St. Pancras, one of the noblest architectural ornaments of the metropolis, whose booking-hall, by the genius of Sir Gilbert Scott, has a cathedral-like appearance. A vivacious American writer (Mr. N. P. Willis), speaking of the railway palaces of England, says that when London shall have become the Rome or Athens of a fallen empire, the termini of the railways will be amongst its finest ruins. The arches, gateways, and pillars of Euston remind him of "that flower of sumptuousness, the Royal Palace of Caserta, near Naples." Mr. Willis wrote his diverting "Loiterings of Travel" forty years or more ago, and the termini of

ribbon of gleaming steel wandering through a prolonged garden of green mixed up with old-world villages, ivied manor-houses, ancient churches, and russet farmsteads. The wayside stations with their healthy country life, trellised with flowers, and half-smothered with trees, the gentle civilities on the platforms, the milk-cans and barrows laden with the produce of field and garden, present to him so many fleeting pictures to be recalled when far away from their surroundings.

Pretty railway-stations! I mind me of Matlock Bath, with its chalet-like appearance among Swiss-like surroundings—the Willersley cutting behind you to the south, in summer the walls of the ravine a grotto of ferns, in winter an alley of icicles hanging, apparently from the sky, in pendants of crystal and diamond; the Masson heights to the left; limestone "scars" to the right; in front the tunnel burrowing its way under the majestic High Tor, like a pin-point perforating a huge sheet of grey paper. I think of the picturesque station at Furness mixed up with the ruins of the grand old abbey, uniting the Victorian Era with the monastic life of the Middle Ages. I recall the quaint little station at Alton Towers, with its rose-garden and tree-shaded nooks, in the romantic Churnet Valley, a station that supplies the artist with

a picture at every point, whether from bridge or platform, riverside or adjoining heights. I try to remember the names of some delightful Yorkshire stations which have no ambition to be thought æsthetic, or "early English before it is too late," but are, notwithstanding, most charming revelations in the swift landscape of the line. I have most agreeable recollections of the stations between Oban and Callander (Professor Blackie out of the question!), the chalet-like stations at Loch Awe, and other calling-places on the Oban line, such as Ach-na-Cloich, Connel Ferry, and Dalmally—not to forget Oban station itself, with its wonder of nasturtiums climbing pillar and girder, and hanging ferns under a cheerful expanse of glass, that suggests a conservatory rather than a railway terminus.

I know of one or two tunnels that are externally positively picturesque. Travellers from the North to London, *viâ* Trent, must have noticed when entering Redhill tunnel the wealth of woodland at the portals, with grey baronial battlements at either side, and the telegraph masts with their web of wires carried far away up among the trees. Pointsmen's boxes even can, with their "levers" and "repeaters," and tinkling bells, eloquent of the "block system" of signalling, be made "things of beauty," if not "a joy for ever." How many passengers each summer, for instance, admire the handsome station signal-box at Cheltenham! It is during the summer months a perfect "basket of flowers," and more resembles a radiant greenhouse than a prosaic receptacle for "switches" and "three-throws." Creeping plants climb up the sides of this cabin. Ornamental baskets are suspended from the eaves, from which droop festoons of flowers. The signalmen look out of windows bright with fuchsias and geraniums. Wire-stands filled with flowers are placed on either side the box, while behind is a fernery, where bright flowering plants mingle their colours with the cool greys and greens. Wild birds build in the station-roof, and become almost tame despite the rush and roar of the passing trains with their vibration and smoke.

On the lines of the West of England pretty railway-stations are numerous. In the opening summer time, when the orchards of the beloved Western country are in flower, the stations appear to nestle amid the red and white blossom of apple and pear trees. I do not intend to convey that these stations are models of ornate architecture. Railway shareholders, eager for their dividends, would scarcely approve of that. But still there are quaint designs of gable, delicate suggestions of pretty windows, and artistic points about many of these wayside stations, picturesque enough for all painting purposes.

The cultivation of flowers is a pleasing characteristic of English railway-stations. There are some stations—such as Dumfries, on the Glasgow and South-Western main line, and Didsbury, on the Manchester South District—that owe their prodigal show of shrubs and flowers on the platforms to the professional nurseryman displaying his horticulture as an advertisement. It is not to these elaborate instances

that allusion is here made so much as to the country-side stations, where the station-master and his man and lad spend their spare time, from the booking-office and the lamp-room, in beautifying their platforms with borderings, and plants, and flowers.

And how charming is the result of their recreative efforts to travellers in passing trains—what visions of beauty alternate between bridge and tunnel and cutting—what pleasant glimpses of colour! "The speech of flowers excels all flowers of speech," and it is heard above the screech of the engine-whistle and the noisy rattle of wheels.

Railway directors, supposed by most people to be the most case-hardened of men, are even guilty of cherishing this taste for floral cultivation among the workers on the line. They not only give their *employés* garden allotments to cultivate peas and beans, cabbages and potatoes, fruit and flowers, but one Board of Directors (that of the Midland Railway) votes an annual sum of £100 to be distributed in prizes over the line for the most neatly-kept platform gardens at the passenger stations. Last year (1885) as many as seventy-six stations competed, and the prizes were graduated from £10 to 5s. The result was very gratifying.

Even stations such as Armley, at Leeds, and Brightside, at Sheffield, which are enveloped in foundry smoke and vitriolic vapours, despite their antagonistic surroundings, succeeded in producing pretty floral effects. At other stations, where the vegetation was in a less degree liable to be parched on the railway slopes, and suffered in a minor degree from engine sparks and "smuts," the effect of the efforts put forth was most encouraging. At Kinnorsley, a station on the South Wales section, clay banks were converted into terraces of flowers, and "the desert was made to smile." At Bakewell, banks before rough and unsightly, were planted with carpet-like turf, and diversified with flower designs and devices in shining Derbyshire spar. In the spring they were gay with tulips and hyacinths. People came from a distance to see them. In the summer bedding-plants were substituted; while rustic baskets with ferns and trailing flora were suspended from the roof of each platform.

It is eminently satisfactory to learn that at the stations where the borders are kept the best, the public have most assisted in preserving the plants. Where the flowers have been most profuse, the customers of the line have been their most zealous custodians. The much-maligned "cheap-tripper" has refrained from plucking them; and even on thronged excursion platforms, during the busy summer months, not a single bloom has been missed. This encouragement gives hope of even better results in future years.

Of course there are ugly railway-stations that admirably answer all Mr. Ruskin's requirements of uncomeliness. Even those at "show-places" are not in the best of taste. That at Stratford-on-Avon is the apotheosis of the common-place. It seems to act as a foil upon the old-world charm of the classic streets

of Shakespeare's town. But, as Mr. Ruskin *might* possibly urge, with his sweeping method of generalisation, if you make Stratford station a half-timbered edifice with quaint gables, the traveller will only care less for the house in which Shakespeare was born; and if you plant the platform with old-fashioned flowers, he will only have less pleasure in the green and bowery wilderness surrounding Anne Hathaway's cottage at Shottery. Still, the world cannot be made too beau-

tiful; but while appreciating the beautiful we must not forget the practical. Even Mr. Ruskin's ardent arguments are not strong enough to make a "permanent way"; and his most fervid utterances are not sufficient to drive the Scotch express; although he may with Tennyson find—

"— enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake
mankind."

EDWARD BRADBURY.



RED HILL TUNNEL, TRENT.

HARLOWE'S HELPMATE.

By FRANK BARRETT, Author of "John Ford," "Hidden Gold," "Honest Davie," &c.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.



ONE of my girls wants to learn the violin, Mr. Holderness; do you know any one who gives lessons?—not a big swell, you know—can't afford that, but a decent musician who can give two or three lessons a week for moderate payment."

"Yes," said I, "I know several musicians who give lessons."

"Well, I shall be much obliged if you will send one of them to my place. Begin at once—Monday, say, I'll tell Madge—that's where we live." Saying this, Mr. Goddard gave me a card on which was his address—"Sunnyside Cottage, Highgate."

A friend at the other side of the room nodded to him, and he left me with a shake of the hand and

thanks for the trouble I was about to give myself on his account. It was odd, this careless manner of settling a serious matter. But then Mr. Goddard himself was odd and affected oddness.

To me it seemed that if he combed his long hair at all, it was to make it lie more ragged and untidy than if he had left it uncombed. He wore an old velvet jacket that one would have been ashamed to offer to a beggar—the buttons gone and the sleeves daubed with colour. He was not particular about the shade of his shirt-collar, but he prided himself on neck-handkerchiefs of the most violent colours, which were tied with scrupulous carelessness in a half-bow.

He was an artist; and at that time not a successful one, to judge by his eccentricity and Bohemian tastes. Men correct all that when they rise above mediocrity and their talents are recognised. I have seen sketches of his, oils and water-colours, on the morning-room chimney-piece, that might be bought for ten shillings each—but they rarely were.

Men talked about him and were witty at his expense. He was continually "going in" for something; but he