

therapeutics, the principles and practice of shoeing, and the examination of horses.

At twenty-one there was a new sign-board put up over the village forge ; an additional name was added to that of Sims, and on the door of a neat cottage,

with a pretty and well laid-out garden, might have been seen a brass plate, bearing the inscription, "John Marshfield, M.R.C.V.S." For the country all round was an agricultural one, and there was room and work enough for two veterinary surgeons.

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CHARMING ROOMS.

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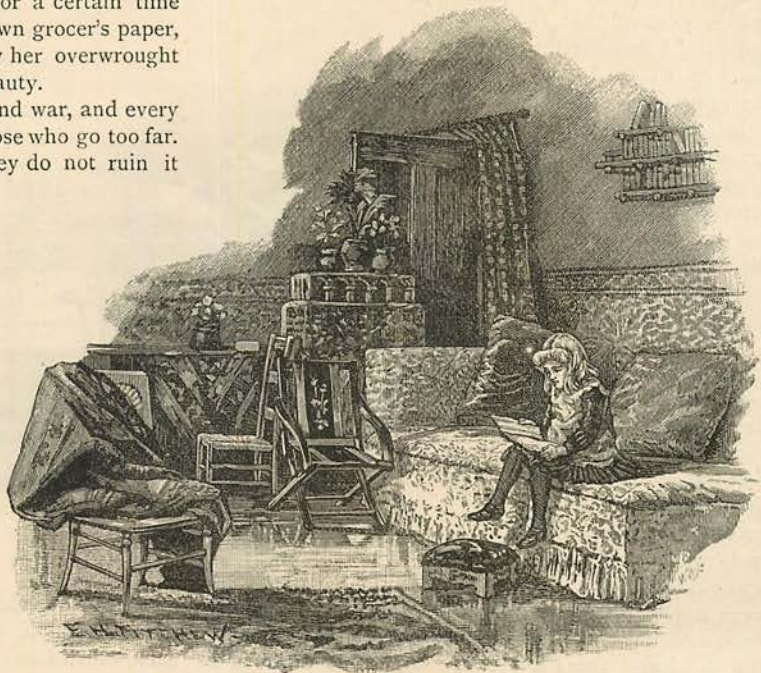
GREAT deal has been written about the unconscious influence which objects are supposed to exercise over human beings. In many cases the subject has been decidedly strained, and I must confess that as a commonplace, unromantic woman, I have found its votaries rather a trial. For instance, when one gentleman visitor, after a single horror-struck glance at my Philistine drawing-room, pulled out a piece of cretonne (blue lilies upon a yellow ground) which he carried about to comfort his soul with, I, in my ignorance, thought he had escaped from a neighbouring asylum, and rang the bell violently for assistance. I also found it difficult not to shake the young lady who, coming to dine at our house with the trimmings of her dress torn and dirty, and her gloves buttonless, remarked that the love of beautiful scenery was quite played out ; for her part, she had never seen anything in it in comparison to the old Chippendale furniture and art papers, objects that so excite her imagination that she is obliged to retire for a certain time every day into a room hung with brown grocer's paper, and under its quiet influence steady her overwrought nerves, and muse in silence upon beauty.

Of course we know that in love and war, and every other campaign, there are always those who go too far. They hurt the cause a little, but they do not ruin it unless it has no good in it at all. It is certainly true that over many people a beautiful harmonious room has a most soothing influence. They may not be able to give you its prevailing colour, or describe any article of furniture, but unconsciously they are at their best when in it. Women who have much more to think of than art pots and cretonnes, know this well.

Some of the most charming rooms in Europe are those of certain lady diplomatists. There are fire-sides before which more plans have been over-ruled, more promises given, than men care to think of ; out in the

November fog, restored to their sober senses, they wonder how they came to be so foolish, and do not realise that their rashness was as much due to the delightful fire, the shaded light, the atmosphere of roses and violets, and the *tout ensemble* of rest and repose, as to the clever wiles of the woman who out-witted them.

We all stamp our image on our rooms, more or less. While we live in them they are part of ourselves, but how soon they change ! To enter a room whose occupant has gone is almost as sad as to gaze at a dead face. The features are all the same, but we look in vain for the old expression. Stand in the study of a busy man one day after his death. There is a bright fire on the hearth. Here is the chair where he sat, his writing-table, with the letters and telegrams of yesterday unopened. There is a book he was reading. His favourite photographs stand in a row, his stick in a corner, his guns, his pipes, even his dog ; all is exactly the same, and yet how different ! Did the



OUR COUCH.

chairs ever stand primly like that? Was the table ever so tidy? It is hard to say where the change is, but somehow the personality has gone. There is an air of desolation over everything—a desolation which will continue till a new master comes, or till a woman brings her work-basket and rocking-chair, and croons her baby to sleep before the fire.

In a short time many of the inhabitants of charming rooms will be busy packing. They will be putting away treasures and covering their furniture with dust-cloths, for they must leave all their household idols, and take wing, to seek for health and life in more genial lands.

Many who are going for months, and who still want to have something they can call home, avoid hotels, and go to large and airy apartments which have been "highly recommended." Ten years ago there were a certain number of foreign health-resorts to which every one went; now each doctor has a place of his own to recommend. The invalid may be hurried to all parts of the world, the most obscure and un-get-atable places being apparently the most salubrious.

Many little trials await these invalids, and one of which I would warn them will be from their apartments. The rooms described as "large and airy" will be found bare and ugly, devoid of almost everything in the way of furniture; of course I am speaking of rooms in new places, winter places especially. Now, a dreary room has a very depressing effect, be its occupant in good health or bad; and so a few stores taken from England, the slightest increase in our luggage, will make just the difference between a dreary room and a charming one.

I should like to give intending travellers a few words of advice. Perhaps it will be more easy to realise exactly what is wanted if I describe the room in which I pass the summer.

In a little village among the Vosges Mountains, in a health-resort far from anything but the necessaries of life, we found our apartments. They were large and airy and as bare as a barn. One large table stood against the wall, two chairs on each side, the earthenware stove filled up the middle, and that was all. The sitting-room boasted of nothing else, though the bed-rooms were not uncomfortable. We were not in prison, and fortunately were not penniless; we knew the London shops pretty well, and did not know the Paris ones: so we sat down and thought, and then sent a very moderate order to England. I will try and draw you a picture of our

room as it is. The floor, which is plain unstained wood, is always kept highly polished, and for a summer room I like the light boards much better than the dark staining. It is often cold up among our mountains, and we have two Deccan rugs for the sake of warmth. They are in two shades of blue, with a white and blue border, and are six feet long by four feet wide, and cost eight and ninepence each. Our two windows are hung with Indian Dhurrie curtains; they are not made from ordinary Indian Dhurries, but are made in the curtain with a dado; ours are yellow and dark blue, in stripes half-way down, when they break into broad bands of white, blue, yellow, peacock-green, and red. They are very pretty, and look just the thing for a foreign room. They are four yards long, and are seven and elevenpence each. I give the price for a guide.

Our little chairs ought to be admired. We bought them at a fair three miles away. Never in England have I seen anything so cheap or so pretty. They are common wooden chairs with rush seats, but their backs are well cut, and they are stained terra-cotta colour. They cost me exactly one franc and a half, fifteenpence in English money. There is a pretty occasional chair with a cane seat which I bought at the same place for two and a half francs. Certainly, my slight experience of French furniture has been that it is wonderfully cheap.

My couch and settee are what I am naturally most proud of. Did you ever see such a comfortable and pretty couch? Our landlady lent us a small iron bedstead, the kind often used for servants, without a high back. We made a cover to fit the mattress and pillows, of plain white calico, using it simply because we happened to have some with us. This cover was, in

its turn, covered with a very pretty muslin of blue and terra-cotta colour. It is fifty inches wide, and sixpence three-farthings a yard. The cover fits all over the bed, and comes down at the end and at each side, where it is finished all the way round with a wide frill of the lined muslin. These muslin covers are very pretty, and if lined will wear well all through a season. For pillows, we used our down cushions, which we never travel without, and in their satin covers of blue and terra-cotta,

they seemed made for their place. The settee was still more a triumph. It is a long low seat with cushioned back, which leans against the wall. It is covered with terra-cotta serge fifty-two inches wide. Its foundation was one of our largest boxes. We happened



THE SETTEE.

to possess a long wooden one, so we set it in its place, and opened it, and nailed the open cover to the wall. We got a piece of board cut exactly the same size as the top of the box, and nailed this on for a seat. We had two large pillows, and by means of long pieces of tape nailed to the box and tied across, fastened these to the seat and back of the box. We then made a loose cover of the serge for the back of the box, pillow and all; and another cover for the seat, which being tight, fitted neatly into the back, and then with tiny tacks we nailed the serge in thick folds all round the box. The result has been a strong, soft, and very pretty seat, and one which it will be perfectly easy to unpack and take away. We are well off for tables, for we had found a very large one in the room; and as we were sending to England, sent for a pretty little folding tea-table enamelled in white paint. It only cost five and ninepence, so we can afford, when we go, to leave it as a present for our landlady.

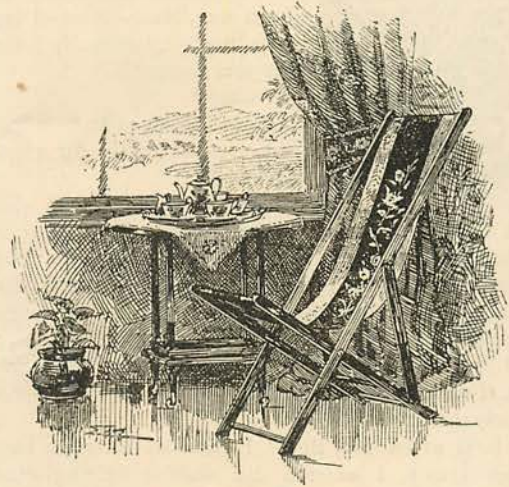
Among the small things in our room we have some pretty oak footstools carved by the people here. I have often seen them in England. We rather like our set of shelves. When we first came we missed our mantel-shelves. The walls looked so bare with no fireplace to break them; so, having with us one of the expanding hanging rails at sixpence-halfpenny each, we converted it into a set of very pretty shelves. When these rails are open there are three rows of pegs; we had three shelves of wood cut the right length. We fastened the pegs on the wall, and laid the shelves upon the three rows of pegs. There is no need to fasten them on, as they are perfectly safe and never fall off. We gave pegs, shelves, &c., a coat of white enamel, and were very pleased with the result.

The china stove makes a good stand for plants when the days are too hot for a fire.

You will see by this little description that our room is bare enough now, though it is greatly improved. There are many things which we might have taken had we only known. However, we have now to be contented with what we have, and all our friends say that our room is "charming." It certainly feels more like home than it did.

We could have been more economical and have made it nearly as pretty by substituting straw mats for the Deccan rugs, and muslin curtains for our thicker ones. It would then have cost about a quarter of the price; but in the case of invalids, comfort must be the first consideration. As it is, we have not spent much money. Had we sent our orders to several shops we should of course have had to pay more for the transit; but as I got everything from one firm, I had only one package to pay for. I strongly recommend all travellers to do the same. Go to a large furniture shop and have a parcel made up. Be sure to take at least two down cushions, a thick rug or some red blankets, a folding bath of wood or india-rubber, a stock of towels, a little table-linen, a dozen yards of India muslin in plain colours: there are beautiful shades of orange, just the thing for foreign rooms;

some cretonne or serge; either some thick curtains, which are now very cheap, or some pretty muslin to make thin ones. Whether to take floor-covering or not depends a great deal upon your destination. Straw mats are cheap and very useful, especially if



OUR HAMMOCK CHAIR.

some shot is sown at the edges to keep them from turning up. If you are going to a cold place it would be wise to take a Windsor carpet. The smallest measures eight feet by seven, and costs about eighteen shillings, and they can be bought at all prices and sizes upwards. The Windsor carpets are the best to take, as they are not so heavy as many others. A folding camp bedstead at thirty shillings makes a delightful couch with pillows and a pretty rug. If you are going to Italy, don't buy your rugs till you get there, for the Italian rugs are most beautiful, and last for ever.

The American hammock chair, which can be adjusted to every incline and folded perfectly flat, should certainly not be left behind, especially when its price is only two and sixpence. I have seen these chairs made most ornamental by a covering of serge or velvet, put on after the wood back has been painted to match or contrast.

May I as a last piece of advice beg that some interesting work be put in the parcel? Buy a quarter of a yard of serge in every bright colour sold. Join these strips together so as to form a curtain in diagonal stripes; work on the join a pattern in light silks. The patterns should be as different as possible, to add to the effect. For instance, after a row of daisies have a row of stars and moons, then have some sunflowers, and a flight of moths or butterflies, or a row of mice. While away you will probably see some foreign flower or seed which you can introduce. See that every stripe is different, and then if it is well worked and lined with silk or satin, a most handsome and rare curtain will be the result.

