

tent upon the treasure so long desired, saw life filled with hope's sweetest fruition; and Myra, with the wisdom the past had taught her, garnered in her heart, with her soul glowing with an affection deeper and stronger than any that had filled the shallower channels of her girlhood's existence, and with trust unflinching in the wisdom of the gracious Eternal Power that had given her freedom at last to accept the heart of him who had loved her so patiently, took upon herself again the solemn marriage vows.

The "House Beautiful."

A STUDY FOR GIRLS.

BY JENNIE JUNE.



In a beautiful city which occupies the border land between the North and the South, and has been famous for generations for its hospitality, its refinement, its beautiful women, and taste for the arts, is a very wonderful house. Exteriorly it looks like others in the neighborhood, which are all handsome, and front upon a park, but the interior is very different, and the difference is felt the moment the door is opened, and one is admitted into the hall; for the whole tone and atmosphere is that of harmonious consecration to the art idea, and it is a temple dedicated to the worship of color, form, expression, and the best work of true workers, rather than a home at the threshold of which we lay care down.

Nevertheless, it is a beautiful house, and one that artists, and students, and men of science are willing to travel many miles to see. Its treasures have been brought from far, and some represent the finest achievements of men who work for the work's sake, and others, the arts that have been lost, and as yet are not found, so that the value of that which remains to show what has been done cannot be told. It is a house where loud talking and free and easy manners seem out of place; where the quiet step and the hushed voice are only a natural, and even unconscious tribute of respect to the illustrious dead, whose labor is inshrined here.

You could not throw your hat carelessly upon a table inlaid with chalcedony and malachite, lapis lazuli and aqua marine. You could not sit, without a certain feeling of awe, upon chairs that had been owned and used for a quarter of a century by Bishop Wilberforce, or put to inferior uses a cabinet of the sixteenth century, in which is a medalion painted by Angelica Kauffmann, who, even in those days, was one of the foundation members of the Royal London Academy, an honor that the greatest women artists find it difficult to achieve nowadays!

Nor are these the only evidences of art occupation: every object that has a place, is

worthy of its surroundings, and assists to make a picture perfect in color, but so little obtrusive, that examination alone reveals its beauty and its rarity.

Against the wall on one side of this rich room are plates, and cups, and vases of the rarest Viennese porcelain, a "bit" of "Henri Deux" ware, glass incrustated with gems from Russia, and glass upon which the decoration is so fine that you have to hold it up in a strong light to see the figures of cherubs or angels floating, and garlanded with delicate flowers. Then there is a lacquered cabinet whose broken lines reveal the artist in the maker, and whose decoration is a poem written in enamel.

Flat against another wall are two cases which contain marvelous collections—old silver caskets of minutest workmanship, with hundreds of figures in relief; spoons, snuff-boxes, Flaxman figures upon wedge-wood: fine white and Rose du Barry cups and saucers; eggshell plates, the exquisite painting upon which can be seen upon the under side, so transparent are they, and old ivories and lacquer—the first wrought in and in, with that patience and skill which seems miraculous to modern American workers, and the latter manipulated until it becomes almost virgin gold, with only a thread of fiber to hold it together.

There is a dining-room in this house, though how people can eat there seems a marvel, for it recalls all the splendor of the palace of St. Cloud, with its solid oak carvings, its old blue and white plaques, its frieze decorations of wild birds, its ornaments of brass, of crystal, and the illuminating touch of red, toned with green from the carpet, and covering of the furniture.

But this *ensemble* is only a glimpse that we obtain through an engraved glass door, as we pass along the extension of the hall to where a warm sunset glow reveals the picture gallery. It is not large, but it is perfectly arranged for light and color, and the circular seats, cushioned with dark green velvet, permit the privileged visitor to examine at his ease the pictures, each one of which is a gem, by a great artist; many of them, the works upon which their reputation will mainly rest. The taste of the owner in the selection of subjects has been subordinated to the indispensable condition of excellence: the *best*—not the prettiest, or most emotional, or sympathetic—was what was wanted; and so the gallery is one which is famous, and consulted by connoisseurs far and wide. Throughout the house the same rigid law of selection is apparent. Everything is the best. The linen of the household won the prize at the Paris Exposition; the family table service is a "crown" set, a kind made for gifts—that is never sold—that was made for and presented to an Austrian ambassador to the Court of France, who disposed of it shortly after on being recalled by his government. The family that occupy this rare and wonderful house is very small, consisting only of a father and son; the mother died long ago, and no other woman has ever filled her place. The rooms are, therefore, not needed for family purposes, and they have been fitted up according to taste, without regard to cost. One

is the "porcelain" room, one the "bronze" room, one the "embroidery" room, one the "Marie Antoinette" room, and one, the greatest of all, the "Nuremberg" room. These different apartments are devoted to the most marvelously beautiful and varied specimens of these diversified arts, yet there is no vulgar parade, no obtrusion of any hobby; masses of rich color are so harmonized, forms are so true, and splendor is so subordinated to human skill and labor, that the sense of enjoyment is perfect, the satisfaction is supreme, and entirely disconnected from any selfish desire, or envy of another's possessions. Work that is so great, beauty so unapproachable, is, one feels, for the universe, not for one alone, and the possession of it, except as a trust, seems like defrauding the rest of mankind.

Here are representatives of arts now lost—the "celestial blue" of China, the exquisite tint of which reproduces the clear sky after a rain, and which has not been approached for perhaps two hundred years.

Here, also, the gold bronzes in which the precious ornamentation goes right through, like the decoration upon the "Henri Deux" ware. Here is the fine white incised pottery of the Corean era, the masses of color and grotesque form of the East Indian and Portuguese faïence; wonderful specimens of art at Satsuma and Kioto, Emri and Owari; down to the triumphs in eggshell and enameled and painted porcelain at Sevres and Dresden, or the English by Minton and Wedgwood.

Seeing these remarkable evidences of man's labor and skill, from Christ down to the present day, the idea which strikes us most forcibly is not of the growth and progress of the world, but of the curious cycles which it forms, and how one carries all the ear, and all the brain-marks of the other, only modified or strengthened by changed or changing conditions and circumstances. It subdues our tone of modern and progressive superiority a great deal to find that all the art decorations, all that we are accustomed to look upon as "new" in form and application, are simply copies, and not the best or most perfect copies at that, of what were turned out from the workshops of skilled artisans centuries and centuries ago. We have a greater variety, but we have not improved upon the forms of common household utensils; and, in fact, where we have adopted changes for the sake of convenience, we retain the original for decoration on account of their superior beauty.

The sixteenth century touched the highest point in what may be called modern decorative art. No period before or since has reached the perfection of beauty which the French nation, under the brilliant auspices of the unfortunate Louis XVI. and the ill-starred Marie Antoinette, attained. For ages to come it will serve as an example of all that cultivation can do to bring art and industry up to the highest elegance and refinement.

Yet it was at the sacrifice of the people that this was achieved, and by the sacrifice of the reigning powers, the nobles, and the *prestige* of the nation, that it was finally paid for.

Looking back, we are able to see, and estimate with some approach to justice, what the power of some and the subjection of

others has done for us. It is from the workers in metal, and the carvers in wood, and the embroiderers upon silk, and the cunning fashioners of clay, from the earliest times down, that the House Beautiful of to-day is made, and we are indebted for the preservation of these evidences of the extent to which these arts and industries were carried, to kings and potentates, whose power enabled them to control large revenues and employ skilled workmen upon grand conceptions, destined to live for all time and add to the wealth of future generations. Had the resources of those days been distributed as they are at the present time, and especially in this country, these works could never have been done; art could not have been developed, because we can only get out of a controlling body an average of its wit, its sense, its intelligence, and its taste. A republic fosters common industries, because these are what the largest number understand, and by which they are benefited; but in art it can do nothing but what is recognized and approved by the ignorant, who have as much, and often more, of a voice than the learned in such matters. Thus it is that with plenty of money, and a willingness to find the best, the worst wins the day, and the art of the chief republic of the world—its statues, its ornamentation of public buildings, its memorials—are characterless, or caricatures. Its only hope lies in general art education, and individual enthusiasm and liberality. It is a grand thing to devote time, labor, and means to the rescue of what is precious, and its preservation as a stimulus and eternal source of interest and pleasure to every beholder. The mere sight of a piece of old Japanese gold bronze gives us a lesson, not only in strength and beauty, but in permanence and thoroughness, and perseverance until the best result is attained.

But I should not choose an historical house, or one made up of rooms furnished according to different periods, or filled with mere collections, no matter how valuable, as my home, or as representative of an ideally beautiful house. A house is a *home*—that is its special function; filled with collections, it becomes a museum, consecrated to a broader, more universal purpose—a temple, but it ceases to be a home. A home is accumulative; but it is of those things, fine or otherwise, which are associated with the interesting events, the life, the growth, the development of the family.

I have in my mind at this moment an ideal home, a true House Beautiful, which has grown up out of small beginnings until it has become the representative of brightness, intelligence, hospitality, refinement, and all the domestic and social graces. It was at first only half a house in a good suburb, or rather on the edge of the best residential part of an inland city. It looked like half a house, and was too narrow for beauty, but it had a garden, and all sorts of pretty possibilities, besides the chance of enlargement in the future. This was twenty-five years ago. During these years, through all the changes and vicissitudes of civil war (this house is situated in a border State), it has prospered, and spread out, and developed new attractions, until it has become, as before remarked, a center of

all that is sweet, and gracious, and helpful, and beneficent in a domestic and social way. It has doubled its boundaries, grown from half into a whole house, broad and ample in its proportions, with marginal space front and back, and all around dowered with trees and shrubs and sweet-smelling vines, which the passers-by stop to look and wonder at; for the house is now upon a populous street, the city in the quarter of a century having grown up to, beyond, and about it, like the honey-suckle, the clematis, the wisteria, the flowering locust, and the branching rose-tree.

Interiorly, as exteriorly, it has changed, yet is still the same. The household spirit is there, but it has wider space, and larger resources for its manifestation. Doors and arches cut through into the other half of the original dwelling, have enlarged the proportions, and opened up charming vistas. The windows look out from every side upon beauty and fragrance, and a modest conservatory, still bright with the blossoms of the scarlet azalea, affords a promise of rest and comfort to the eyes when the roses have ceased to bloom, and the clove pinks to send out their perfume from the garden beds.

The furniture is not all modern, nor is it all artistic; it is a delightful mixture of quaintness and simple comfort, and modern elegance and refinement, without the least particle of display. There is no china cabinet in the parlor, but the table-ware bears the choicest marks, and you or I would use as a decorative piece the antique little jug upon the washstand, or the pretty "bit" of Owari used for a match-holder.

Almost all the ornamentation of the house is home-made, even to the tiled mantel-pieces, the pictures, and the painted plaques, and it seems to belong to different eras. There are burlap rugs, and rugs handsome as any Persian. There are embroidered lambrequins and mantel drapery, chair covers and Turkish cushions, stand covers and chair scarfs; and finally, an era of painting, expressed in some very good tiles and plaques, and lastly in an artistic set of parlor chairs, flower designs—charmingly natural but modest, and mingled with grasses, upon gray satin, and then covered with very sheer gray batiste. The beauty and freshness of these must be seen to be appreciated.

Behind all this, of course, there was a woman, and I said to her—knowing her busy home life, her activity in educational and philanthropic work—How have you found time to fill your house with this immense quantity of beautiful hand-work, and how is it that it shows such a natural and gradual development of ideas?

"Well," she replied, "I always had a taste for ornamental, or what is called decorative work—not the mere filling up of canvass with worsted, but such work as afforded an opportunity for original ideas—and not being able to spare time during nine or ten months in the year, I determined to utilize my summers in the country for the carrying out of my plans for ornamental work, and instead of distributing my time and energies over a number of small and insignificant trifles, to concentrate them each year upon something which I

really wanted, which should have permanent value, and which should be a memorial of my summer holiday, of visits among friends, or a reminiscence of pleasant places.

"The plan has succeeded," she went on to say, "remarkably well—at least I am very well satisfied with it; I feel that it has given more of a purpose to my summer sojourns; it has added another interest to my life, and an attraction to my home, and it has helped me to become acquainted with the difficulties which laborers in severer fields have to encounter."

But it must not be supposed that flowers, and painting, and ornamental needle-work are the sole or even the principal attractions of this ideal home—of this House Beautiful. Occupying a far larger and more important place is the library, a somewhat miscellaneous collection, aside from the antiques and the works of a professional character; but wholly delightful, and containing books that one hears about, but never saw elsewhere. The reason is that they were not bought all together, to fit the shelves, or because it is considered proper and suitable to have such and such "standard" works in a library; but they were bought, one or more at a time, as they could be afforded, and as the desire was felt to purchase from book announcements. You may be sure that the best art authorities are there, and the best novelists, and some famous old and new poets and philosophers, and that these worthies hob-nob very comfortably with the two Rossetti's, and George MacDonald, and William Morris, and Edwin Arnold—for one great beauty of this home is that it is so broadly human, and tolerant, and appreciative, that you can get at the most contrary sides, and read and hear the most diverse opinions, without a ripple being created upon the smooth surface of daily life and conversation. Every way I have looked at it, this house seems to me the real House Beautiful, though it does not contain anything very remarkable in the way of Egyptian relics, or Indian curiosities, for it realizes perfectly Ruskin's conception of beauty, which is felicitous fulfillment of function. The methods, too, have been very simple, merely beginning on the right foundations, and building as they went along—slowly, truthfully, honestly, and cheerfully; enjoying the little as well as the great, finding no fault, and feeling no unhappiness because they could not all at once realize an ideal—having no ideal, in fact, but only a steady purpose to do the best with such means as were placed in their hands. But you must not suppose that the occupants are aware that their house is the famous one which Clarence Cook vainly tried to celebrate. On the contrary, they imagine that their tastes are homely, and have a sincere admiration for much that they have not got, and would not consider suited to themselves. They are almost obliged to those who find rest and comfort within their walls, and consider it a mark of their goodness, rather than of their own excellence.

There is nothing unattainable about such a house; any true-hearted young man and young woman can reach it, and leave it as a legacy to succeeding generations.

young lady on the morning of her conversation with Mrs. Howard.

It would be hardly true to say that Nellie's motive in accepting it was a very lofty one. She was a gay and thoughtless girl, a bit of a flirt, and accustomed to pleasing herself before anybody else. She had been flattered by the attentions of Mr. Clinton, and her vanity had been inflated by his preference for her society; yet she had no thought of usurping his wife's real place in his love, and the idea of being talked about, or made the theme of malicious tongues, was terrible to her. So, from varied reasons she sat down and conveyed her thanks to Mrs. Clinton, and signified her intention to be at her house for luncheon the next day.

Mrs. Clinton had been wise enough to heed her friend's advice in many little particulars. The very day after Miss Maxwell's visit she had surprised her husband by appearing at dinner in a new and most becoming dress, her hair arranged in a satin-smooth coil, and a bit of soft lace, finishing tastefully her neck and wrists. After dinner, instead of hurrying away with Bertie and Florrie, she had allowed them to stay in the dining-room with their toys, while she had gone to the piano, and after striking a few chords, had begun in her clear, sweet contralto, a song which was just coming into popularity. From this, her husband lingering delightedly the while. She had passed to try one or two old favorites, and finally, when John declared he must go, she had accompanied him to the door, and stood a moment looking after him as he walked down the street, her eyes shining with a soft interest, which he remembered. When Nellie came to make her visit, she found herself in an atmosphere of friendliness. The house and table were brightened in her honor, and no pains were spared to make her visit charming. But Mrs. Clinton was wholly the gracious dignified and beautiful lady, queen regent in her home, and without scene or words Nellie felt reproved and rebuked, and went thence, a more thoughtful and a lovelier girl. As for Mr. Clinton, man-like, it never occurred to him that he had been to blame in aught. He had his wife again, and ere long he joined her in fond pride in their children, who were not the less tenderly loved by their mother, since she had resolved to live as well for husband and friends as for them only. What they lost in coddling and exclusive caressing, their home gained, and as they grew up, they reaped the benefit of this, in having a mother who was more than a nurse, viz., a friend, counsellor and guide in life's journey.

“The Lady of the Lake.”

THE following lines from Scott's “Lady of the Lake” describe the exquisite conception from which our picture is derived:

“The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain,
With head upraised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In list'ning mood she seemed to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.”



THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

"The House Beautiful."

BY H. F. R.

MUCH has been said and still more has been written on the subject of home decorations by persons qualified and unqualified for their self-imposed task. This might be construed into an argument against anything more being said; but it is the purpose of this paper to deal with one or two phases of the question that have not been treated, to point out a few modes in which the home may be made the abode of artistic and beautiful creations, and to expose manifest errors into which other expositors of "home decoration" have fallen.

One of the first canons of true art is to avoid all appearance of a sham. "Be what you seem" is a no less desirable aim in your home economies than in your personal behavior and character. Yet many of the directions for beautifying one's surroundings distinctly and flagrantly violate this axiom. To illustrate: A woman is told how she may make a very comfortable arm-chair out of a flour barrel, with the aid of sundry wisps of straw and yards of chintz. That such have been made is doubtless a fact, and that they have, after a fashion, filled the place of an easy-chair, may also be granted. What then? Why, two things. Enough has been probably spent upon the barrel and other materials, counting labor and pains, to have purchased a *bona fide* article of furniture; in the second place, the home-made make-shift is a source of constant mortification and explanation, and is, above all other detestable things, a *sham*. Let us not be misunderstood. Honest, praiseworthy, self-helping efforts to fill a want are always commendable; the pity is that they are so often turned into wrong channels. Then there are the sham tiles, the sham pottery, and the dozen other things that pretend with so much effrontery to be that which they are not—all fair seeming outside, but, like Colonel Sellers's stove with the candle inside, a hollow mockery in reality.

"But," says a reader, "if one cannot afford to purchase the real article, must one be condemned to forego all things of beauty in home decoration?" By no means. The love for the refined and tasteful is too deeply implanted in the nature of most people, and must and should be satisfied. If we cannot buy a Raphael or a Titian or a Turner, let us have the engraving or the chromo; if we cannot have a conservatory, let us have a window garden; if we cannot afford Minton's tiles around our mantel, let us be content with marble, or, if need be, painted wood; if we cannot have pottery and rare china, let us be satisfied with pure cut glass; only let us one and all banish all pretense.

But to say that in order to be true to art, there is no medium between a room arranged in the Queen Anne style and one with cheerless white-washed walls, would be a great error. The limit within which one may gratify one's tastes is only bounded by our ingenuity, as we shall show. Let us take an ordinary room—sitting-room, parlor, or dining-room, whichever you choose—and see what we can do. Perhaps the sitting and dining-room combined will best suit our purpose, because in many homes this is the room where the family may be oftenest found—where the wife and mother spends the greater part of her time, where young and old congregate at meal times, and where the older children spend their evenings.

So we have an ordinary room, say some sixteen feet square, upon which to experiment. It has two windows—one facing the south and the

other the west, and on each of the other sides, facing each of the windows, is a door leading to the kitchen and the hall respectively. If the floor is well laid, so much the better, for that gives us choice of two modes of treating it. If it is laid with those narrow Georgia pine boards which are tongued and grooved so as to fit into one another (as all floors should be laid), we can paint it with some dark brown paint, mixed with varnish, so that it will dry with a gloss. Then in the middle of the room, where the table usually stands, spread a rug, or an eight-foot-square bright-colored ingrain carpet. The effect of the bright colors against the dark floor is very good; but this plan is of very great utility where there are children: the sides of the room are reserved for play, can be readily swept, and the center rug is kept from much wear and tear. Besides, the saving in cost will amount to just one half of an ordinary carpet. If, however, the floor is so poorly laid that it cannot, on account of the roughness of the boards, or the cracks, be treated this way, the time-honored, and to many people the most comfortable, custom must be adhered to—that of covering the entire floor with carpet, or some other material. A capital mode of laying down a carpet in a room much used is to have it cut about two inches smaller than the size of the floor all round; then, at intervals of about six inches, sew on small rings about the size of a silver three-cent piece. These can be hooked on to nails driven in the floor close up to the wainscoting. The first trouble is not excessive, and the facility with which the carpet can be taken up and re-laid is an ample return for the small outlay of time, to say nothing of the absence of torn edges usual when tacks are used.

The walls of our room next demand our attention. If they are to be papered, a small figure is by all odds the best, whether it be light or dark. If they are simply kalsomined, neutral tints should be used. Perhaps the latter method is the more healthy. Substances more or less deleterious to health enter into the manufacture of all wall papers; and that they rapidly absorb moisture and odors only to give them out again, is also a notorious fact. Therefore it would seem better to reserve papered walls for the parlor or drawing-room, and have a tinted wall for the dining and sitting-room. A pearl-gray, or light pea-green will "light up" best at night; a very pale pink tint is the "warmest" by day. Perhaps a marine-blue tint is best for all times and seasons. All of these can be easily renewed when soiled, and can be readily cleansed without damage. But there is an artistic reason in favor of walls of one uniform color. Pictures or other articles suspended against them are not brought into competition with a staring pattern of wall paper, and are shown up for all they are worth. Many of the delicate chromos which are gems of art in their way are completely "killed" against a background of wall paper, but the purity of the tinted wall serves to bring out all their beauty.

Let your pictures, whether chromos, paintings, or engravings, be few and well chosen, and in the hanging have some idea of the "eternal fitness of things." Do not hang an engraving in a plain oak frame in close proximity to a bright chromo. Put the former in your brightest light, and let the latter brighten some dark corner. Your pictures should be hung so that the center of view is about on a level with the eye of a person of average height—say five feet six inches. Whether you use wire or cord to suspend them by, always let it extend to the ceiling, because this tends to increase the apparent height of the room. That there is an art in picture hanging, few are apparently aware. Some have the gift, but the majority have it not. A lady in Washington, of exquisite artistic perceptions, but who was in somewhat strait-

ened circumstances, earned a moderate income by attending to the arrangement of the pictures and articles of vertu of her more wealthy acquaintances. It is the lack of this quick eye for general effect that causes so many finely-furnished apartments to resemble a curiosity shop rather than the abode of taste and wealth.

The advantage of dashes of color here and there in a room is descanted upon by a recent writer. She says, "Bits of color are not only attractive in themselves, but they give to our homes such a cozy brightness that none can afford to miss their cheery presence." And until one has tried, no idea can be had of the many simple, inexpensive things which may be used as effectively as more elegant material. For instance, if the mantel-piece be of that white, florid design which delighted the last generation, nothing could modernize it more artistically than to cover it with a slightly-gathered curtain eighteen inches deep, having near the bottom a vein of embroidery done in long, loose stitches of dull red and blue or old gold. This accomplished, arrange Japanese fans down the sides of the fire-place so closely as to entirely conceal them with patches of brilliant color; then near by stand a great Indian jar of blue and red, or, lacking this, one ornamented with decalcomanie in similar tints. Thus will the staring monotony of the chimney-piece be transformed into beauty and variety. In passing, it may be said that nothing so lightens the gloom of a somber corner as a ladder of fans from floor to ceiling, and a skillfully chosen group of them on the wall, away from the sunlight, is much more desirable than a low-toned picture. Other dainty helps in the way of color are the little gathered curtains, generally sixteen by twenty inches, run on a ribbon that ties in a bow at each end, to hide the nails that hold it fast. These, in shades of plum, wine-red, maroon, or peacock-blue, form backgrounds admirably adapted to bring out the delicate lights and shadows of plaques and other bric-à-brac. Sometimes the curtain is smaller and not filled; when this is the case, it is of handsome stuff, such as plush or satin. Tiny cups and saucers look prettily on these colored backgrounds when the cup or saucer hangs by a ribbon; while nothing contrasts so charmingly with the softly-gathered bits as a quaint square plate, a cracked mug or cream-pitcher of old blue-and-white ware, from grandmother's treasures.

Flowers are a most important adjunct to home decoration. All they need is sunlight and pure air, and a little attention. Of course, a conservatory or a green-house can be had only by few. A window-garden or box is, however, within the reach of all. There is a way, nevertheless, in which a winter conservatory can be enjoyed upon a small scale, and can be easily constructed at a moderate cost. Choose a south window, if possible, and purchase three second-hand sashes the size of the window sashes. These are easily procured, because sashes are made in regular sizes. Place these so as to form three sides of a room, as it were; the roof and floor must then be formed of half-inch match-boards. You will then have a compartment or box, three sides of which are of glass; the remaining side is to be left open so as to give access from the room. The whole thing may be supported outside the window on two stout brackets of wood or iron; it will fit exactly into the window casing, and a few screws will make it as weather-tight round the point of juncture as though the window were shut. Of course, the lower window sash is intended to be left open, so that from the room a delightful prospect of growing plants is presented. If a bird-cage or a hanging-basket be suspended from the roof, the charming effect is increased. The warmth from the room is amply sufficient for the most tender plants, the only other care requisite being the

spreading of a piece of matting over the roof on very cold nights.

A vase of cut flowers gives an air of refinement to the most poorly furnished table. But the art of arranging the blossoms in an artistic and effective way is of difficult acquirement. There are, however, a few simple rules to which all should bow. The first thing to be considered is the vase or receptacle. If it is of an intricate pattern, or many-colored, it must necessarily detract from the beauty of the flowers, or of some color in the bouquet. The best for the purpose is pure white, green, or transparent glass; the latter allows the slender green stems to be seen. In a word, the vase must be subordinate to what it holds. For roses use a shallow bowl; for gladiolus, lilies, ferns, or grasses, use tall, wide-spreading vase; for violets, primroses, and such humble wood flowers, use a cup. A lover of flowers will in time possess a specimen of each size and kind and shape to suit these varied needs. Colors should be mixed or blended with neutral tints, such as whites, grays, or tender greens, all of which are plentiful, and which harmonize the brilliant and more showy colors into a soft unison.

There are certain blossoms that consort well only in families; others may be massed with good effect. To the first class belong balsams, hollyhocks, and sweet-peas, whose tender hues have been likened to drifting sunset clouds. To the second class, geraniums, verbenas, roses, etc.; these are all flowers of common growth; others more rare will suggest themselves readily. In arranging a basket or vase, the better plan is to work with some definite scheme, mentally dividing it into small groups of blossoms, and then blending the whole with green and delicate colors. Above all, avoid stiffness or any attempt at geometrical effect. The water for a winter vase should be warm—not hot, of course; for a summer vase cool, but not iced.

As the Greek Temple was derived from the simple wooden hut with its roof of boughs and leaves, the columns derived from the stately tree trunks, the flutes representing the flowing drapery of the human form, and the flowery capital representing curly locks or twining leaves, so should our home decoration be true to nature in its simplicity, and to art in its adherence to all that is elevating and true. The beneficial effect upon the young of a home atmosphere redolent of the beautiful is incalculable. The child that grows up surrounded by artistic objects will be as favorably impressed by them as he will be by a good moral example. Purity of taste in our material surroundings is only second in importance to purity of thought and feeling, and they should always travel hand in hand. Abhor introducing a sham article into your homes as you would to place bread made of sawdust on your child's plate; let no opportunity pass by means of which can be fostered the good, the beautiful, and the true.

Our Kitchen.

WHEN pa lost his property we moved our goods and chattels into an old-fashioned house, where one room served for dining-room and kitchen. It was a large, airy, pleasant room, and nearly all day the sun lay across the floor from the two south windows; these had deep window-seats, such as they built in the "good old times," fifty years ago. It was mother's delight to fill the window-seats with flowers, and very pretty they looked—thrifty lantanas, the unfalling geranium, and the little pot with the large ivy twining up the wall, and making graceful festoons around the figures on the paper. Opening from this room were

two large closets; one we called the china closet, and the other answered all the purposes of kitchen closet and sink-room. In the first one was arranged our best china, and a goodly show of it we had, too. There was the gilt set, always the pride of a housekeeper, the purple and the plain sets; these, with cut glasses of all descriptions, made a fine display. But the glory of that china closet was the old-fashioned set made to order in Liverpool years ago, and brought over to Yankee-land, to be handed down from generation to generation, and to the admiration of all beholders. Each piece of this set has a narrow blue stripe, thickly studded with gold stars, and is further ornamented by a shield inclosing the monogram of the first owner in beautiful gold letters, far surpassing many monograms of modern times.

The floor was rough and homely as old-fashioned floors are apt to be, no matter how nicely scoured; the old knots and defects boldly proclaimed themselves. To hide these unsightly places, mats were laid down. Of every imaginable shape, these mats were works of art. The materials were usually cast-off garments of the family, but the extravagance of buying cuttings of bright-colored flannels had been indulged in. These were cut into certain widths, and braided or knit into strips and then sewed firmly together. Some of them were very pretty; one in particular was the pride of our mother's heart. It had the post of honor in the center of the room, and being about eight feet in diameter, was almost a carpet. Of its beauty, I, myself, cannot vouch, considering it more a monument of industry than elegance. Still it was very much admired, and it was really edifying to see the ladies who came to our house and were admitted to our kitchen, first hold up their hands in wonder and admiration, and then adjust their "glasses" to "see how it was made." I expect many tried their hands at the same work, for several ladies who came with their daughters remarked, "Eliza," or "Sophronia" (as the name might be), "I have some large needles at home, and I think I shall try and make such a mat." As "imitation is the sincerest flattery," what more could be desired? Some, when told that the mats were mother's handiwork, glanced inquiringly at her hands; but although in the reverses of fortune mother's hands became intimately acquainted with much hard work, they always retained their pretty, lady-like shape, the delicate taper fingers having a peculiar grace. Even when roughened in winter, her only cosmetic for them was a bit of goose-grease, thoroughly rubbed in at night. When friends came in "to tea," our kitchen was a place worth seeing. Our table, a relic of better fortunes, was of solid mahogany, very heavy and with handsomely carved legs; this for supper was always laid without a cloth, the table was kept highly polished, and when arranged with our old china, our small silver, which bore unmistakable evidence of its *solidity*, was a true picture of hospitality and comfort. As we were our own waitresses, by the time supper was over the table was apt to be in something more than elegant confusion. On one corner would stand a handsome caraffe in its pretty jappaned stand, and near it perhaps a very plebeian appearing earthen dish, which at the last moment had been brought from the cellar with some delicacy in it and put on hastily as it was. Everything about the house was used and enjoyed; kept as neatly as possible; we were not ashamed to have any one go from attic to cellar of our house. Our kitchen, however, was always a favorite room, and many a time friends would ask to be entertained there, it was always so cheerful and pleasant. Should your journeyings ever bring you to our city, make yourselves known, and the assurance of your having read about our kitchen will insure you a hearty welcome from its occupants.

H.

NEW CARD CASES.—The newest card cases are of tortoise-shell, mounted with a hinge between two so-called "coquilles;" but these are long and round-cornered. The incrustations are very elaborate—flowers with silver contours; and there are puzzle monograms, containing as many as seven letters interlaced. When the tortoise-shell is blonde, these card cases are greatly prized.

LEATHER KNICKKNACKS.—Maroquinerie or leather and kid articles, are handsomer than ever. This branch of industry occupies the larger number of persons who gain their livelihood in *articles de Paris*. Repousse leather and embossed figures are the last novelty. A pretty necessaire is made of black kid, enlivened with bouquets of coral, pink hawthorn and different green leaves, either velvet, satin, or chenille. Portemonnaies thus embossed are not so practical as tempting, the flowers being lightly stamped on in many instances.

TABLE DECORATIONS.—Materials for decoration can be found everywhere in the country by those who look for them, every season bringing its lovely wild flowers, grasses, ferns, or leaves. It is a mistake to think that because moss is green, it is of one color; you will find it of every hue—bronze and emerald, shining, golden, and dark purple-green. The best way to collect it for decorations is to pull it in large tufts, which should be well shaken after reaching home, and spread lightly on newspapers for a day or two, and then again thoroughly shaken, to free them from loose bits and from insects. To keep it for the winter, the sprays should be dipped in water, dabbed dry on a cloth, laid flat between two sheets of brown paper, and immediately ironed till quite dry. The irons should be of the heat required to smooth linen; but do not prolong the process too much, or the moss will become brittle. This process answers for the coarser mosses; more delicate ones should not be ironed, and the "maiden-hair" moss should not be put in water, or the golden extinguishers may wash off. Small, naturally mossy twigs, ivy, oak leaves, acorns, lichens, by occasionally being put out to be refreshed by rain, can be made to last for some time.

FLOWER-POTS may be covered with moss, and flat strawberry baskets thus concealed, and lined with white paper, make very pretty fruit dishes. A plateau of moss for holding dessert dishes is also pretty. A board of the desired size and shape is requisite; the edges may be cut out for the dishes to fit into, or they may stand on it. The moss should be made as smooth and even as possible, and may be of only one or of various kinds. The common feather-moss is perhaps the best. If liked, a boarder of gray and orange lichen can surround it; and outside this, a second of small leaves, trailing or ground ivy. Borders of leaves and ferns can be made for dishes, and wreaths of periwinkle runners, ivy, holly, or bright autumn leaves. Ferns can be ironed like the moss, and will preserve their color. Circles or strips of thin cardboard can be covered with leaves and ferns for surrounding dishes, and single ferns arranged in a pattern on the cloth. Infinite variety can be made by giving time and thought to the matter.

For children's or family Christmas parties, a small silver-frosted, well-shaped spruce fir-tree, hung with tiny glittering liquor-filled French bonbons, crystalized fruits, etc., not forgetting a silvered or sugared star, is a great delight. If the table is large, it may stand on a plateau of gilded nuts, oranges, or apples. A small model Christmas ship, with its masts thickly frosted and ropes covered with tiny silk flags of all nations, a Father Christmas sitting wrapped in white fur in the stern, and a star or a symbolical figure of the New Year perched on the prow, is pretty. Such a center-piece affords great fun to the little ones, and, to complete the illusion, it may be made to swing over a piece of mirror.