

OUR SCHOOLROOM.

By Mrs. J. NICHOLSON SHEARMAN.



WIN sisters are Alice and I. Since we were born, nineteen years ago, we have never been separated for more than a day; and I often wonder how we should feel if anything should come to

part us from one another, for I think it would seem to me as if some of myself were gone if Alice were to leave me for even a short time. We were always the veriest twins in every way, and my earliest recollection is of our two little cots, side by side, in the dear old nursery, of our toys in the same cupboard, of every item in our dress being similar, from the ribbons in our hair to the buckles on our shoes. A few years later we were each given a little garden, exactly alike, one only divided from the other by a narrow path running between, at the end of which, next the wall, was a rustic seat, where we often sat together, trifling away the lovely summer days playing with our dolls. Then came lesson-days with our governess, and after that school-days; and in all these we shared both our joys and our sorrows. We are not at all alike in appearance, for Alice has fair hair and lovely blue eyes, while I am dark; nor are we alike in our accomplishments, for Alice can sing, oh, so sweetly! while I can only croak; and she can play the piano well, whereas my poor fingers go every way but the right way if I try to learn but the simplest tune. Then Alice is very clever at all kinds of lovely needlework, while I can only manage the plainer kinds, and am not even particularly fond of those. But our tastes being so different seems only to make us fit each other the better, for often, when we are alone together, I work away at my drawing, whilst Alice makes my pencil get over the ground so much better by singing or playing for me; and Alice always says that her needlework is better done when I read for her, sometimes in German, or more frequently from one of our own great writers; for, though Alice dearly loves to be read to, she is not fond of reading much for herself.

Now I think I have said enough about ourselves, for we are not the only members of the family. Next to us comes Jim, who is seven-

teen, and then George, who is fifteen. Another little brother came after George, but he was not left with us very long, and a small white marble cross marks the place where the dear little fellow sleeps, in the churchyard, beneath the shelter of a white cluster rose-tree. Next in the list come Rosalind and Kate, aged eleven and nine; and now you have all the family.

I suppose there is not very much to tell about our home, as there must be so many homes of the same kind scattered all over England; and yet I cannot believe that any other home can be the same as ours. How dearly we love every tree and bush; and to us the scent of our roses seems to be sweeter than the scent of the roses that grow on any other bushes. And yet I know that to anyone else this must only be a very commonplace country house—a red-brick house, with its red-tiled roof sobered down to a comfortable colour by the hand of time. Up the front wall, at one side of the porch, the delicate green of the ivy contrasts so well with the dull red of the bricks, while, at the other side, a Gloire rose is still covered with a wealth of beautiful blossoms; and the hum of the bees gives one a feeling of repose and contentment, as they sip the honey from the ivy-blossoms and from the bright flowers in the beds which stud the grass.

But the place in which we most delight is a little old wood bordering the field which lies beyond the sunk fence in front of the house, for there we wove many a romance and played many a game in our childish days; and I look forward in the future to many happy hours to be spent in it, for it seems to me I see new beauties each time I look at the gnarled oak trees and moss-cushioned stones, and I long to be able to reproduce their effect upon canvas, and have made many ambitious plans for the days to come, when Alice and I shall sit there chatting, she working and I sketching, with our little sisters playing around us.

Alice and I only returned home from school before the summer holidays, and we feel so pleased now to know that we can give, to a small extent, some return for all the money which has been spent in giving us a good education; for though dear father has enough to enable him to live comfortably, he is not rich, and he and mother must have exercised a great deal of self-denial to send us and the boys to good schools; while, at the same time, Rosalind and Kate had a visiting governess at

home. Jim is going to be sent to college next year, and so mother has allowed us to undertake the teaching of our two little sisters until they become sufficiently advanced to need better instruction than we shall be capable of imparting; and thus we shall be able to give a helping hand to lighten, in some degree, the educational expenses, and perhaps by the time Rosalind and Kate must go to school, Jim's college course may be ended.

After we had been settled at home for a few days, it occurred to Alice, that if we four girls were to spend so many hours of our time in the schoolroom every day, it would be well to make it as presentable as possible while we had so many weeks of leisure during the holidays; as, when lessons once began, we should find our time fully occupied with our pupils, for we had determined to continue our own studies as well.

When we came to make an unprejudiced examination of the schoolroom and its furniture, we were obliged to confess that it was very shabby indeed, and that we must decide as quickly as possible what was to be done, and devote some time systematically every day to the work of doing it up. We took mother into our confidence, and asked her to advise us how to set about our improvements. She told us that she had been looking at the room herself before our return, and that father had given her five pounds to spend on making it more comfortable for us; and she said that if we were willing to put our hands to the work ourselves during our leisure time, we could certainly make the money go twice as far as if she had merely gone to a shop and spent it on new furniture.

The room had been very much used as a play-room by the children during the last year or two; and, as is frequently the case where children play a great deal, the lower part of the walls was damaged by the paper being both soiled and torn, and in a few places the plaster was a little bit broken; but in the upper part of the walls the paper was quite good. Mother had a few scraps of the paper put away in the store-room, but these were quite insufficient to be of any use to us; so we drove into B——, the nearest town, to see if we could procure any more of the same pattern. Needless to say, in this we were quite unsuccessful, but we got what answered much better—a paper which suited as a dado and a border to correspond. As we intended trying to be our own paperhangers, we measured the room on our return home, made our calculations, and ordered the necessary quantities of both.

Having gone so far, we got the room cleared of all the furniture, the carpet removed, and the curtains and poles taken down. The curtains were faded and shabby, so we ripped them and sent them to be dyed at once, that we might have them back again by the time we were ready for them. The colour we chose was a deep terra-cotta brown, to harmonise with the darkest tones in the wall-paper.

The room once cleared, we brushed down the walls carefully, and then proceeded to rub them and the ceiling with dough, to make them quite clean. The dough was easily procured, for the baker brought us a good lump of it for a few pence, and there is nothing which cleans wall-paper so well. As soon as your lump becomes soiled you have only to cut a thin slice off it; then it makes no crumbs, like bread, and it cannot scratch or disfigure the paper in any way. Alice and I got the entire walls and ceiling cleaned in a couple of hours.

Our next step was to mend all the holes in the lower portion of the wall, and this we did with plaster of Paris. At first we found this troublesome from our ignorance of the material. We mixed too much at a time, and were rather slow in filling up the first hole, so that the plaster began to set too soon. However, Jim explained to us how to manage it, and made us a little board with a handle, so that we could smooth it after the manner of plasterers, an iron spoon making an excellent substitute for a trowel. Our second attempt did very well, and as none of the holes were large, we had no difficulty in making the surface of the filling quite smooth.

We next marked out the depth of the dado upon the wall. At short intervals round the room dots were made with a pencil showing the exact height to which it was to go; then with a flat ruler and a heavy pencil we drew lines from one dot to another, thus making a distinct mark all round. The cutting of the

paper was the next performance. The left-hand margin had to be cut off the entire length of the paper, and it had also to be cut into the lengths required for the dado, paying due regard to the exact matching of the pattern. All this is best done with a very large pair of scissors. The other implements necessary are—a good-sized common deal table to paste upon, a sixpenny white-wash brush, a soft clean cloth, and a small bucketful of well-made flour-and-water paste, quite free from lumps. With everything prepared and ready, it did not take very long to put on the paper. We found it necessary always to start from the right-hand side of a door, window, or anything that made an interruption, and to paper towards the right, taking care to lay the left-hand edge of each new width over the margin to the right-hand side of the previous one, so as entirely to hide the margin, being at the same time very particular to match the pattern. The width of

paper should be held by the two top corners and settled into its proper place, then it should be gently rubbed, or rather dabbed, all over with a soft clean cloth, to make it adhere to the wall. When all the widths of paper were pasted on, we added the border along the top, taking the pencilled line as a guide by which to keep it straight. We found that it was necessary to be exceedingly particular about the border, as any little crookedness showed very much, and spoiled the appearance of the dado. The painting on the room was in fairly good order. We should have liked very much to give it a coat of paint, but we were afraid to dip too deeply into our little store of capital, lest we should have to leave out something more essential to the comfort of the room; and therefore we contented ourselves with washing it all over thoroughly with a suitable soap, which made it look quite fresh and nice.

(To be concluded.)

A SUMMER SHOWER.

By THE REV. F. ST. JOHN CORBETT, M.A.



PATTER, patter on the pane—
Hear the melancholy rain,
As it falls with sad refrain!
Nature's face is bathed in tears—
E'en our own full sad appears.
Yet to Heaven's will we bow,
Though we're weather-bound just now.
Patter, patter on the pane—
Hear the melancholy rain.

Patter, patter on the pane—
Hear the soft, refreshing rain,
As it falls with glad refrain!
Nature's creatures, one and all,
Seem the gladder for its fall.
See the daisies how they smile,
Though so sad and parched erewhile!
Patter, patter on the pane—
'Tis a soft, refreshing rain.

Patter, patter on the pane
Now no more we hear the rain.
Lo! the sunshine reappears—
God is smiling through the tears.
Thus, though life may have its shower,
'Tis directed by His power.
Though it patter on the pane,
Though it fall with sad refrain,
God is smiling through the rain.

next customer, he leaves behind him a household of simple folk delighted with and never tired of admiring their new garments, and praising the skill which has made them fit so cleverly.

In many parts of rural Sweden teaching and doctoring are carried on in the same curious manner. Once in a long while the doctor makes a tour, and is hospitably entertained at every farm on his wide circuit. If he finds invalids, he of course ministers to their needs; but the people are healthy, and "mother" has usually skill enough to deal with their simple maladies. When the doctor comes, however, each one begins to fancy a few aches or queer feelings—it seems such a pity to waste the opportunity! So much medicine is swallowed upon these occasions which had better have been thrown away.

The travelling schoolmaster is a national institution. "Flyttbara Skoler," or circular schools, are held periodically in all rural districts; and all that can be said for the system is, that it is better than no education at all; but as weeks or months must elapse between each course of study, high results cannot be expected.

Politeness is a striking characteristic of the Swedish nation; and in this particular all classes are alike. Not only do the rich treat their inferiors with kind consideration, but the poor are courteous to the poor; self-respect leading, as it should, to respect for others; for

"Manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal natures and of loyal minds."

How true an insight into human nature is here displayed by our poet! The courtesy of

the Swedish bonde is not merely the outcome of kindly goodwill, but is the natural result of his own innate honesty. His frank open-hearted hospitality is marred by no distrust, no doubt of his guest's honour or kindly feeling; for he is too loyal himself to suspect disloyalty in others.

Life at a Swedish farmhouse must needs be happy, the patriarchal simplicity of the household obviating many of the self-made trials of so-called civilisation. Bonde matrons and maids have no time for nerves and fancies; and where there is no struggle to keep up appearances, there can be no needless anxiety to succeed, or distress at failure.

Unlike his Norwegian neighbour, a Swedish bonde is light of heart and jovial, fond of singing and dancing, and thoroughly appreciating the pleasures of the table. He never loses an opportunity for a kalas, or feast. Not only are all public festivals celebrated with great *éclat*, but every domestic event serves as the occasion for a grand merrymaking. A "bröllop," or wedding, lasts several days; also a betrothal, and a "bärns-öl," or christening. Besides these, there are minor festivities of an impromptu kind, which give great zest to ordinary life.

A bonde is always ready to help his neighbour at a busy time. It may be the building of a barn, or the raising of a hässa; whatever it is that calls the neighbours together, the opportunity is one for feasting. All hands work heartily until the supper hour arrives; then the host invites them to enter the house, where the smiling house-mother stands ready to welcome her guests to her well-spread table, and the grand business of eating and drinking

begins. Not all at once, however. It is one of the canons of bonde etiquette that you should not accept of hospitality without demur. It is the proper thing to protest against the honour done to you, especially if you are invited to sit in the "uppermost room of the feast." Here again the custom is patriarchal. Under these circumstances the placing of guests is a work of time; but this distresses no one, for a bonde is never in a hurry. At length, all preliminary ceremonies duly observed, the company apply themselves vigorously to the pleasant duty of clearing the dishes set before them; the hostess waiting upon them herself.

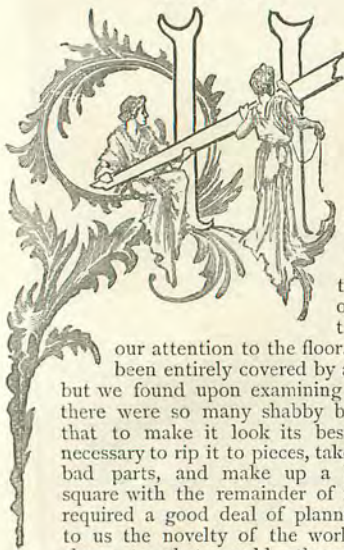
Supper ended, the guests rise, and each one shakes hands with his host and hostess, saying, "Tak för matt"—"Thanks for the meal"—to which they reply, "Väl-bekommet"—"Welcome to it." The custom of giving thanks for food is universal, from the highest to the lowest, and is as necessary a part of a grand city dinner-party as at a bonde kalas. This little ceremony over, the table is cleared with great dispatch; the musician of the party takes his fiddle and strikes up a lively tune, and the dance begins. Some of the prettiest national dances are combined with singing, the dancers keeping step to the cadence of their song.

While the young folk are thus employed, the elders of the party light their big pipes, and sit discussing the state of the crops, the prices of cattle at the last fair, and the prospects of the next. So time flies merrily, and before the party breaks up, another informal revel has been planned by the pleasure-loving lads and lasses.

OUR SCHOOLROOM.

By MRS. J. NICHOLSON SHEARMAN.

PART II.



HAVING got the walls in to good order, we turned

our attention to the floor. It had been entirely covered by a carpet; but we found upon examining this that there were so many shabby bits in it, that to make it look its best it was necessary to rip it to pieces, take out the bad parts, and make up a bordered square with the remainder of it. This required a good deal of planning; but to us the novelty of the work gave a charm to what would otherwise have been a very disagreeable job. As soon as the square was made, we were able to ascertain what margin there would be all round it, and to mark it out upon the floor previous to staining it, using a carpenter's pencil to make the lines heavy.

There were a good many little splashes of paint upon the floor, made there at some former time when the woodwork round the room had been painted. So we made a strong solution of potash, and put a thick

covering of it upon the paint we wished to remove, and left it to do its own work. The housemaid next morning scrubbed the floor for us, and all the disfiguring spots vanished immediately. In using the potash we had to be cautious not to burn our fingers.

For the floor stain we put an ounce of permanganate of potash into a gallon of water, and when it was thoroughly dissolved, applied it with the small whitewash brush which we had used for pasting the wall-paper. When the first coat of the stain had dried, we were somewhat disappointed with the result, as it seemed to have had very little effect upon the colour of the wood. However, as we had heard of the stain from a reliable source, we gave it another coat, and found it much improved. Thus encouraged, we put on coat after coat, until the margin was stained a beautiful warm dark brown, which allowed the grain of the wood to be seen through it, and had not the dead, monotonous colouring of some of the paints and varnishes more generally applied by amateur decorators. As the weather was very warm and dry, we were able to put on three coats in one day. At first we were inclined to splash the stain about a good deal; but a little experience made us more cautious, and we found that when any of it got on the skirting-board, if we rubbed it off immediately with a wet cloth it did no damage. When the last coat of stain was quite dry, we polished the margin with beeswax and turpentine. This was very tiring work; but as we are young and strong, we quite enjoyed it; and we were, moreover, very impatient to see the carpet down, so as to be better able to judge of the effect of our labours.

The curtain poles were very old and shabby,

but they were made to look like new with Aspinall's black enamel, and a little touching up on the ends and rings with Judson's gold paint. By the time we had got the poles in their places, the curtains came home from the dyer's, and we got them sewed and hung up.

Some of the chairs and a small couch belonging to the schoolroom had been discarded from the drawing-room a few years before, and the bright colour of the rep covers was not at all in harmony with the curtains and carpet. The latter had been chosen for a blue room, and was a decided contrast to the shades of terra-cotta in the paper and curtains. So it was evident that to make the room look at all well, we must cover the chairs and couch with cretonne which introduced both colours. We tried in vain for this in B—e; but when wearied out with fruitless searching, I thought of taking a piece of paper, and painting on it great daubs of the colours in the paper and carpet, and sending it to one of the large well-known firms in London, describing what we wanted. Almost by return of post we got patterns of several very pretty cretonnes, any of which would have suited. We chose one which was rather darker than the rest, and likely to be serviceable, costing one shilling and twopence per yard. With eighteen yards of this we made loose covers with deep frills for the four rep-covered chairs and couch; we also upholstered two other chairs with some of it, and had sufficient left to make a frilled cover for a soft cushion for the couch. The loose covers were all easily made, as the sewing was principally done in the sewing machine. But the renovating of a little old arm-chair which we found in an unused room in which

mother had put a few odds and ends of decrepit furniture was a much more difficult and exciting performance.

It had at one time been a lovely chair; but as it was beginning to show signs of becoming a little worm-eaten, mother did not care to pay a high price to have it done up at a cabinet-maker's. It had originally been painted white and gold, and had been covered with some lovely silk material, which now literally hung in rags after the severe test to which we had put it, using it as a plaything for a number of years. We had to get Jim's assistance in taking out all the tacks which fastened the various covers on, as they were so rusted into the frame of the chair, that we found it very severe upon our hands to remove them. The frame of the chair was apparently quite strong; so we first painted it with several coats of black enamel, using the very finest sand-paper to smooth away any roughness after all but the last coat. We then used Judson's gold paint to mark out the carving just as it had been marked out before. The hair stuffing had to be teased out thoroughly, and this being rather a dusty job, we did it out in the open air, leaving the hair spread on a sheet for some hours in the sun. As soon as the paint on the framework was quite hard, we proceeded with the upholstering. The back of the chair was merely an oval frame, into which the upholstering had to be fixed, and, therefore, presented two sides to be thought of. An oval had to be cut out in both the cretonne and the lining; for the latter, Hessian of not too coarse a make was employed. The oval of cretonne was put into the frame from the front, turning it so that the right side of it appeared at the back of the chair. The lining was placed next to this, and both were tacked very firmly into the framework, as upon them depended the strength of that portion of the chair. When working at that part, we found it convenient to lay the chair upon its back upon a table, with something soft between them to prevent injury to the new paint upon the former. The hair stuffing was next laid upon the top of the lining, and fixed in its place as nearly as possible in the same manner as we had found it. A second lining and the front cretonne cover were then fitted upon the top of the stuffing, and secured with tacks, and a row of gimp placed all round the edge of the cover. The chair was then set upon its legs again, and straps of strong webbing were interlaced from side to side and from back to front of the seat; these were drawn as tightly as possible, and well secured with tacks, as they form the real support of the seat of the chair. Next came a piece of lining, and on

the top of that the hair stuffing had to be carefully and evenly arranged. A piece of Hessian lining was placed on this, and last of all the cretonne cover and the edging of gimp. The arms were done last. Our chief difficulty lay in trying to protect the framework from any stray taps of the hammer, which our inexperienced hands were very apt to give it. To prevent this we found a small punch very useful. When a tack was sufficient y caught in the woodwork, the punch was interposed between it and the hammer until it was driven in, and thus any danger of the latter coming in contact with the painting was avoided. When the upholstering was finished, we went carefully over the frame, touching up with gold paint or enamel any places which had suffered from our clumsiness.

There was already a bookcase in the school-room, which stood upon a small table against the wall; but we had no press, which, with so many to occupy the room, was an absolute necessity if we wanted to keep it tidy. We therefore asked mother for an old, shabby-looking press which was not in use, and which wanted only a few slight repairs to make it strong and neat, as far as the woodwork was concerned. It was very convenient for our purpose, as it had a division right down the centre, and three shelves on each side of the division. One side is for our music, and the other for my painting materials and various schoolroom requisites. Jim was able to make the few necessary repairs, and then we were able to decorate it after our fancy. We painted it with black enamel, all except the panels on the doors; into these we glued some gold Japanese paper. We also painted the bookcase black, and nailed black and gold leather along the edges of the shelves. When the paint was hard and all complete, we set the bookcase upon the top of the press, and got Jim to secure it with two strong screws. This gave us the nice little table which had formerly supported the bookcase, in addition to the larger one, which stood in the centre of the room.

The doing-up of the press and bookcase was not at all troublesome, and they looked wonderfully nice when the books were all neatly arranged in their shelves. As I enjoyed the painting of the various pieces of furniture, Alice left that principally to me, while she employed herself working a border in tapestry-wool round a piece of art serge for a cloth for the larger of the tables, also a long mat instead of a mantel-border, worked on a piece of the same serge, and trimmed along the ends and one side with ball fringe.

All this work took us about six weeks to

complete; but when we had all the furniture arranged to our satisfaction, our *cottage piano* across one corner and my easel in another, some freshly-cut roses in little glasses upon the chimney-piece and tables, and our various knick-knacks about the room and upon the walls, we were quite surprised at the results of our industry; and we felt so proud of our handiwork that we determined to give an afternoon tea in the schoolroom, and to invite father and mother to inspect it. Accordingly, we coaxed the cook to bake some of father's favourite cakes, and mother gave us access to her store-room, so that we were able to prepare a very tempting little tea in our own special apartment, and invited the whole family to partake of it. When tea was over, father said he wanted to add a contribution to the work, and he opened a parcel that had been arousing our curiosity. It contained a beautiful framed engraving of "Christ among the doctors." "This," said he, "I chose because I thought, that should our little girls at any time become restive under the authority of their sisters, a glance at the picture might remind them to be submissive, and to learn a lesson of humility from our Great Example; and I know that my dear eldest daughters will strive to give their instruction in a patient and gentle manner." Mother then produced a present from herself, which was a very pretty little inkstand.

Below we give an account of all that we have already spent upon the room, which shows a balance of £1 10s. 1d. still in hand. We are going to spend the last few days of our holidays in London with our grandmother, when we hope to take the opportunity thus afforded of laying out the remainder of our capital to the very best advantage.

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|----|----|----|
| Dough | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Plaster of Paris | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Paper and border for dado | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Whitewash brush | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Three pots of black enamel | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Box of Judson's gold paint | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Eighteen yards of cretonne | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Dyeing curtains | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Hessian gimp and tacks for chair | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| Leather, wood, and Japanese paper for press and bookcase | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Art serge and ball fringe | 0 | 13 | 6 |
| Webbing and carpet thread | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Paint brushes | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Permanganate of potash 4d., and sundries | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | £3 | 9 | 11 |

AN INTERESTING RELIC.

From *Carthage and the Carthaginians*, by BOSWORTH SMITH.

"To the north-west of the ground once occupied by Carthage when it was a Phœnician city, is the promontory of Râs Ghamart, 200 feet high; and the line of rounded hills, called Djebel Khawi, which runs thence in a southerly direction for the distance of a mile, is one vast necropolis, or site of Roman urn burial. But when Carthage had become a Roman city, the metropolis of Africa, and the headquarters of African Christianity, the Pagan practice of cremation was replaced by Christian burial, and the ancient mortuary chambers were filled, after lapse of centuries, by new occupants.

"When these sepulchres were excavated and examined by Dr. Davis and M. Beute, some few years ago, a relic of great interest was discovered, namely, a representation on the

rock of the seven-branched candlestick of Solomon's Temple.

"The seven-branched candlestick carried off by Titus from Jerusalem to Rome was, in the strange vicissitudes of human fortune, carried off again from Rome to Carthage by the terrible Genseric, the lame Vandal king, and so, probably, it comes about that the sacred ornament of the Jewish temple—the exact shape of which is known to all the world from the sculptures on the Arch of Titus—has been found engraven also within a Phœnician sarcophagus at Carthage.

"All traces of the original occupants of these sepulchres have long since disappeared, and the vacant space is chiefly tenanted by the jackal and the hyena.

"For centuries tribes of marauding Bedouin

Arabs have ransacked them for any treasures to be found within them, and they visit them to this day for the chalk which they contain."

To this interesting fact, mentioned in Mr. Bosworth Smith's history of *Carthage and the Carthaginians*, may be added yet another—that the present writer, when travelling in Kabylia and Algeria, has seen this very form of lamp rudely copied in the native pottery, but unmistakable in shape, in use in the mosques in some of the unfrequented parts of the mountains. One such, with five branches instead of seven, was actually sent home to the South Kensington Museum, where it was seen not long afterwards, placed, unfortunately, upside down.

E. F. BRIDELL-FOX.