

the village, in whom she took a great interest, were in sad trouble. The father, who was only an ordinary farm labourer, had been laid up for six months with a broken leg, and as he had met with the injury while suffering from the effects of a drinking bout, his employer had refused to do more towards helping him than paying him a few weeks' wages. Poor Job Harding, indeed, found out to his cost what it was to have a bad reputation, for even the kind old vicar had made up his mind that it was useless to assist a man who as soon as he got well would probably begin wasting his wages in the public-house, as had been his way in the past. Everyone, indeed, thought it would be better if the home were broken up, and the children, of whom there were five or six, put into some institution. But Job's wife took a different view of the case, as wives will, and was perfectly certain that during his long confinement Job had repented of his evil past, and that if he could only get a fresh start everything would go well. The little girl of whom I have spoken was the only person in the village who agreed with Mrs. Job, and when the boy met her she had just come from the tumble-down old cottage—which, however, was kept clean and bright as could be by Mrs. Job—and had been listening to all the poor woman's troubles.

"It seemed a sad case to her. Job, who was now on his feet again, had been offered a job at good wages; but during his illness the rent had fallen into arrears, and they had received notice to quit their little home. They owed money in the village too, and unless they had some fifteen pounds within a week, the home would be taken from them, and they would have to leave the village where the man's only hope of work lay. The little girl had been to see the vicar, but for the first time in her life he had been cross to her, and had refused to help the Hardings, as she had asked him. To do the good man justice," said Dorothy, "I think he was only cross because he hated to refuse help to anyone; but in this case he thought he was doing his duty better in refusing assistance than in granting it. So the girl told the boy all about it, and in his good-natured way he tried to comfort her. But all was to no purpose. Unless the Hardings had the fifteen pounds wanted so badly, she was convinced she would never be happy again. The boy turned out his pockets, and she brought her little store of savings; but between them both they could only make as many shillings as she needed pounds.

"'Never mind!' said the boy at last, trying to comfort her. 'Don't cry—it's not your fault! Fifteen pounds is an awful lot of money. I don't believe my uncle gave much more for Bob here!' And then, as the girl still kept on crying, he added, 'I say—I've an idea! You go home and say nothing to anybody, and to-morrow I'll tell you all about it'—and off he trotted on Bob.

Next day the girl got up early, and waited all the morning expecting the boy to call for her as he was wont to do, the more especially as he had promised to tell her about his grand idea for relieving the Hardings. But he did not come; and when she met the groom in the village, and asked him where his young master was, Jim grinned as he touched his cap, and answered, 'Sure/y, miss, 'e's away to that there fair they be holdin' at Beeston.' And then she felt sad, for she thought, 'He's gone off on his own pleasure, and forgotten all about these poor people.' But later on she was sorry for her hasty judgment, for that evening a knock came to the door of the little house where she lived, and when she ran to open it, she saw the boy standing there, hot and tired-looking and dusty, and he said simply, 'Here it is! I'm sorry I'm so late, but you'll find it all there!'—and then he ran away before she could question him further; but in her hand he had left a purse, in which she found fifteen golden sovereigns. She knew whom they were for, and early next morning she was at the Hardings, and made them the happiest people in the village by giving them the money, and telling them who had sent it to them.

"But when she met the boy that day he was not riding his pony as usual, but was walking, and whistling as he walked, as if to keep his spirits up. After thanking him for bringing her the money—which of course she thought he had persuaded his uncle to send—she said, 'But where's Bob? Aren't you going to ride him to-day?' 'No,' said he; 'I shall never ride Bob again'—and he looked rather glum. 'Has anything happened to him?' asked the girl. 'I hope not,' was the answer; 'for I sold him at Beeston Fair yesterday to a man who promised he'd be kind to him, as we've always been. And I think he meant it.' And then the girl understood it all. In order to do a kindness to people who were so wretched that they were forsaken by everyone, this boy had parted with the possession he prized beyond everything in the world. And when she thought of how little she had given up, and how

much the boy had, she felt that she had never read in any story-book of any nobler action. And though that was many years ago, and both boy and girl are grown up, and are playmates no longer, she thinks so still"—and Dorothy stopped.

"And what became of Job?" asked the sceptical one. "Did he ever break his leg again, and take too much to drink?"

"No, my dear; I am glad to say he turned into a sober, hard-working man, and it was all due to the self-denial of the boy who sold his pony."

And then, as some of her auditors had fallen asleep, somewhat disappointed at having had a true story instead of one about fairies and giants and dwarfs, Dorothy packed them all off to bed.

The echo of the last pair of little clattering feet had hardly died away, and she was leaning back in her chair, her thoughts running on old times and old faces, when a deep voice sounded behind her.

"You forgot to add, that if it had not been for the little girl old Job would not have reformed as he did."

"Thee startles me, Lord Beechcroft," said Dorothy, as what she had taken to be a mass of rugs and wrappers on a near-by bench rose and resolved itself into that young man's well-knit figure. "Did thee hear my little story?"

"Yes, Miss Dorothy, I heard it, and it brought all the old days back to me. Do you know I have a confession to make—I deserve no credit at all for doing as I did."

"Nay, thee sold poor little Bob, and it was none the less a sacrifice for those who had no friends even if the vicar did buy Bob back for you next day."

"Yes; but, you see, I didn't do it for old Job's sake. I didn't care twopence for him, and thought, as everyone else but you did—that he was an old villain, of whom the parish would have been very well quit."

"Then why did thee do it, Lord Beechcroft?"

"Because I thought it would please a little Quaker girl, of whose good opinion I thought everything in those days. And I don't think I've altered in that respect, whatever I may have done in others," added the young man, in such a tone that Dorothy, thinking discretion the better part of valour, quickly gained her feet, and with a hasty good-night, descended the companion-way to her stateroom.

(To be continued.)

## OUR SEASIDE COTTAGE, AND HOW WE BUILT IT.

By JAMES AND NANETTE MASON.

### PART I.

IT came about in this way. We had lived for nine years in the highlands of Surrey. The fresh breezes, solitary heaths, sandy lanes, and extensive fir-woods of that lovely region suited us, and we felt as if we should like to stay there for ever. But how uncertain everything is! We are settled and contented to-day, and

by to-morrow morning everything is turned topsy-turvy.

One day, on returning from a visit to Scotland, we found a letter lying for us from our landlord, to the effect that he had received an advantageous offer for the purchase of the house we occupied, and that the person making the offer wanted the place with a view to

residence. "I have made up my mind to sell," he added, "but as you have been good tenants, I should be willing to let you have the house and garden for the sum named"—it was £550—"rather than have it go to a stranger, of whom I know, and for whom I care, nothing."

It was very good of him to say this, but that did not alter the fact that the price appeared



to us far beyond what the place was worth. We wrote in answer that our pockets were not well enough lined for us to buy at a fancy figure, and that, with as good a grace as possible, we should accept the inevitable, and remove.

This done, like the fox who discovered that the grapes beyond his reach were sour, we every day consoled ourselves by finding out faults in our little dwelling. It was an ugly cottage; it was a cold cottage. Did not thirty-five buckets of snow come through the roof the previous winter? Did not the well nearly run dry? Was it not three miles by field-paths, and four by driving-road, from the railway station? Did it not take twenty minutes' walking to reach the home of our nearest friends? Did not the delivery of every telegram cost eighteenpence? And was it not deplorable that our *Times* was always twenty-four hours old, and that the post came to us only once a day?

But even though these reflections brought some comfort, it was far from a pleasant prospect. Life, as Dickens used to say, is made up of partings, but it grieved us to think of separating from the simple-hearted and kindly cottage neighbours, who had done so much to make our residence agreeable. The scenery, beautiful though it was, could be matched and even improved upon, but in changing, what were our fortunes to be as regards human nature?

Our chief trouble was with reference to our library. Partly for the sake of our work, and partly because we both loved to buy books without giving a reason for it, we had gathered together a library of about six thousand volumes. Now as an anchor to keep people firmly fixed in one spot, there is nothing like a library. But for our six thousand—our only family—who knows but that we might long ago have been like two valued friends, with names not unknown to readers of the *GIRL'S OWN PAPER*, who have been married sixteen years, and changed their place of residence nineteen times.

Our collection represented considerable bulk and weight, and we gave a shudder when we thought of the time that must be spent in packing, and of the expense we were likely to be at before our book-cases were set up in a new home.

Another trouble was one from which we might have saved ourselves by the exercise of a little forethought. It was in connection with our garden. We had made it the prettiest garden in the neighbourhood; so pretty, indeed, that people came from far to look at it, and sixpence a head for a peep over the hedge would have been about as profitable as the possession of a small gold-mine.

Our outlay had been considerable. The garden was little over a quarter of an acre in size, but latterly we had been spending on it at the rate of about £40 a year. We had laid down a lawn, made a strawberry bed, started growing asparagus, planted fruit-trees, ornamental trees, and a fine assortment of roses, and filled the flower-borders with interesting plants of all descriptions. It was a feast of colour in summer-time, and a joy and an occupation all the year round.

This would have been very well had we been owners, and not merely occupiers under a yearly tenancy. To improve other people's ground on the scale on which we had been working, was conduct worthy of two green-horns, and whenever now we feel anything approaching the conceit of common-sense, we are restored to humility by remembrance of this affair of the garden.

The place we had made so beautiful had to be abandoned, and a great deal of money wasted so far as its doing us any good was concerned. It is true we had an agreement with our landlord to the effect that everything we planted or erected in the garden

belonged to us, and we were to have the right to remove it; but even with this agreement there were a hundred outlays which had to be reckoned as sheer loss. For this reason, and speaking from experience, we advise all who are tempted to make fine gardens on ground not their own, to keep their money in their pockets, unless they can get a lease of sufficient length to enable them themselves to profit by all their improvements.

We clung for a little to the hope that the would-be purchaser would back out of his bargain; but that hope was extinguished on the receipt of a formal notice to quit. "I hereby give you notice to quit and deliver up to me, or to whom I may appoint, quiet and peaceable possession of the house and garden which you now hold or occupy as tenants,"—and so on.

This settled it.

By good fortune, under the conditions of our tenancy we had thirteen months in which to look about us. It was now May, and we need not remove till the Midsummer term of the following year. But thirteen months, we knew, would soon slip by, so the very day that the notice was received we took our first active steps in the direction of discovering new quarters.

We had previously spent many an exciting hour in poring over the map of England, and discussing the respective merits of Bath, Clifton, Lynton, Bournemouth, Leamington, Barmouth, Llangollen, Lyndhurst, Windermere, and many other attractive resorts. What places had we not talked about, and what castles had we not built in the air! The nature of our occupations enabled us to live pretty well anywhere so long as the postman could knock daily at our door, so we had a wider field for choice than falls to the lot of most people.

There was just one condition we laid down as indispensable in connection with our future house—it must be healthy. It might, and very likely would, have many weak points; but about its healthiness there must not be the shadow of a suspicion. We both wanted to live long in this funny world, and to run no risk of having our happiness and usefulness ruined by insanitary conditions which we need not come under unless we pleased.

Our experience of rented houses had made us desirous to try the experiment of ownership, but that would depend on what came in our way. Ownership, we felt, would set our minds at rest as to where was to be spent all the rest of our days, and besides, it would be a distinct rise in the world. One of us exhibited much keenness on the subject.

"I tell you what," she said; "we must have a house of our own."

"And have it we shall," said the other; "for you always have your way."

We advertised in at least half a dozen local journals:—"Wanted, to rent or purchase, a cottage with garden, healthily situated in the neighbourhood of—" such and such a place. We subscribed to provincial newspapers; we took in two or three monthly registers of places to sell and let; we wrote to our friends; we let it be very generally known that we were on the look-out.

For three months nothing came of it. We had many answers to our advertisements, entered into correspondence with not a few advertisers, and went to and fro, and sometimes for long distances, to see places which in description were tempting, but of which the inspection only ended in grumbling and disappointment. We met with no house that we cared to rent, and no house either that was worth our while to buy.

Then it struck us that we might get out of the difficulty by purchasing a piece of land and building a cottage to suit ourselves. A friend told us that he knew of what was just the

thing—nine and a half acres in the wilds of Hampshire.

We went to see it, and it took our fancy; looking back now, it is clear we were influenced by sentiment and not at all by common-sense. It was miles away from everywhere; remote from railway station, post-office, church, and shops; not even a cottage near. Finding it was a feat. From the railway station of Smallfield, on a branch line off the direct railway from London to Portsmouth, you walked nearly two miles northward on the hard road till you got to the Woolpack Inn, then you turned down to the left by the side of the school and entered a lane which led to a stile. Getting over the stile, you crossed, first a meadow, and then a field of mangels, and at the end of the second field there was a coppice, through which you passed, and then you found yourself on a common. The path over the common led to a sand-pit; and at the sand-pit you turned sharp to the right and descended a little hill. At the foot of the hill was a stream, and to the left of the road, and bounded on the east by the stream, were the nine and a half acres.

To have lived there would have been equivalent to being buried alive; but that was a thought that only came to us months afterwards. At the moment we were charmed with the retirement of the situation, the air of peace, the feeling of freedom.

The ground was uncultivated, covered with heath, ferns, and furze bushes. It would have proved a white elephant. We fell in love with the little stream, and had visions of fish-ponds and fountains. We planned making a wilderness garden, saw our way to the erection of a fine summer-house, and congratulated ourselves that now we should have room enough for keeping poultry. The price asked was £13 an acre—a good deal for the money.

A word, almost a breath, would have committed us to the lifelong inconveniences of this outlandish spot. But whilst we think we are ordering our lives, our lives are really being ordered for us.

One morning towards the close of August, whilst we were talking it over for the twentieth time to buy or not to buy, the post came. Amongst our papers was the *Western Star* of the previous day; and on looking over the list of places to be sold or let we came on this advertisement:—"Tideswell.—Michaelmas. —Detached cottage, large garden; would suit pensioner; about 270 yards from spring, 300 from stream-water. Apply Postmaster, Tideswell."

This arrested our attention for a special reason.

Ten years before, when on a walking tour in the West of England, we two had passed through Tideswell on a bright spring morning when the birds were singing gaily and the apple-trees were all in bloom. It was before we took the cottage we were now in, and we were making enquiry as we went along whether there were any cottages anywhere to be had.

We met an old man, well over eighty, at the east end of the village, just where the road turns off to the famous watering-place of Falconbridge, and in the course of a chat with him we asked about cottages, and whether many strangers came to Tideswell to reside?

"Not many," he said, "for people have not discovered Tideswell yet; but if ever you come here to live you will never go away, you will like it so much."

These words had remained fixed in our memories, and we had often repeated them to our friends.

Here, then, was an advertisement relating to this very place, and the thought jumped into both our heads at once—What if the old man should prove to be a true prophet?

We wrote to the postmaster asking for



particulars, and saying that we were not pensioners, but as we were annuitants we might hold ourselves to be of a kindred race. Three mornings after we had a reply from him, which by its straightforwardness contrasted favourably with the enthusiastic trumpet-blowing of many of the proprietors and agents we had encountered up to this time.

He said the place advertised was a small thatched and whitewashed cottage, with two rooms downstairs, two upstairs, and a small scullery behind. "It stands," he added, "high up on a hill overlooking the village, and is within five minutes' walk of railway station, post-office, church, and chapel. The garden is over half an acre; the soil is shallow, and things run the risk of being burned up in a hot summer. But for early crops it is very well suited. The last tenant but one grew early vegetables for the market and made money at it. Unfortunately the garden is just now in a bad state, for the present tenant has let it run all to weeds. The view from house and garden is very fine over both sea and land. You could sit in the garden enjoying the fresh air and watching the ships crossing the bar on their way up the river to Ashburn and Sunningdale. The weakest point about the place is, that there is no water supply. Water must be fetched from the public well at the foot of the hill. The rent is £7 10s., taxes paid by the landlord."

We thought there was something in this. The cottage, however, was much too small, and we wrote and told the postmaster so. "But," we said, "perhaps you might be willing to build an addition, and let it to us on a lease long enough to remunerate you for your outlay. Or you might be willing to sell the place to us to pull about for ourselves."

The answer came to this that he was willing to sell. It was freehold, and he would take £150. This price was in harmony with the state of our finances. If we became owners, we did not wish to spend more than £600 at the outside. Now, £150 for the cottage and the garden would leave £450 for building operations. We did not expect to get anything very grand for that sum, but we thought it might at least secure a comfortable dwelling suited to our simple tastes.

It was tempting weather for an outing, and we decided to go and have a look at the place. If it did not suit us, we should at any rate revive our recollection of a beautiful corner of this beautiful world.

We are not going to tell the line of railway we took, as if we were to speak of the attractions of Tideswell in the terms they deserve there would be such an influx of strangers that the village would soon grow to be a town, and be spoiled for ever. We do not say that we shall not divulge the secret one of these days. We may, but in the meantime we promise nothing.

The journey—it was in the first week of September—passed without any memorable incident till we reached Thistlewood, a station about twenty miles from Tideswell. Here a young man entered the carriage, accompanied by a girl of about nineteen years of age. He had a robust, sunburnt look, was full of energy and character, and carried himself as if he were on good terms with everyone. She was tall and slim, with delicate features, a singularly quiet manner, and the sweetest expression that we, with all our experience, had ever before seen on a youthful face.

We fell to talking with the young man. His companion never said anything. The first commonplaces led to our growing communicative.

"We are going on to Tideswell."

"I have lived there for many years," said he.

"What sort of people are the Tideswell folk—nice people?"

"Very, if you take them the right way."

"And if you don't?"

"Then you had better look out. But if you are friendly to them, they will certainly meet you more than half way in kindness."

We asked if there were many large landowners in the neighbourhood, hoping the answer would be in the negative; for we knew what it was to live in a district where everything was in the grasp of two or three wealthy proprietors.

It was as we wished. "No," he said, "there are no large owners, but a host of small ones. There are in the place about as many owners as occupiers. This makes us very independent. We have no 'baron, or squire, or knight of the shire,' to lord it over us, and are all little kings on our own accounts."

So, thought we to ourselves, if we settle at Tideswell we shall become royal highnesses just like the rest.

The train drew up at the station; the porters called out "Tideswell!" the young man gave a glance to his companion, and said, "Well, Annie, here's the end of our outing."

We both noticed it, and after we had bade them good evening, one of us turned to the other and said, "The heart's letter is read in the eyes." The two somehow interested us, but we little dreamed that their lives were to be woven into our schemes, as afterwards happened, to the pleasure and advantage of us all.

We arrived at Tideswell at five o'clock in the evening, half afraid that we had come on a wild-goose chase, and half hoping that here we were to settle down and live the rest of our days with at least as much happiness as we had enjoyed in the past. For headquarters we chose the Golden Lion, an old coaching inn in the main street, with a hanging sign in which the royal beast was shown with a tail a good part of a mile long. It laid claim to being one of the oldest inns in England, and outside, with its windows resting on brackets of grotesque figures, it looked ancient enough. The interior, however, had been completely modernised.

Opposite the inn was the chief public well—there were several public wells—a weather-beaten structure, surmounted by a well-worn stone figure of a comfortable saint sitting astride a beer-barrel, and with the legend, "St. Hugh is kind to strangers." It was a comforting piece of information for new arrivals like us.

Immediately our evening meal was over we started to have a look at the little property. We came on a man breaking stones by the wayside, and asked him if he knew the whereabouts of a cottage and garden belonging to the postmaster.

"Away over yonder," said he, pointing to the opposite hill. "Do you see that garden all weeds?—that's the garden. And the cottage at the lower end of the garden?—that's the cottage."

They were placed high above everything, and were full in view from every point of the straggling village. The cottage was a homelike little house, but the garden, even with the softening effect of distance, looked a scene of desolation. Chickweed, groundsel, buttercups, and couch-grass we could see were running riot there. "One year's seeding, seven years' weeding," says the proverb; and whoever bought the place would need a considerable stock of patience and perseverance to bring it into good order.

"The garden looks rather neglected," said we to the stone-breaking man.

"Well, you see, it's just this," said he: "The present tenant was a seafaring man, and knows nothing about gardening."

Feeling fatigued with our long journey, we remained satisfied for that night with a distant view; but next morning we called on the

postmaster, and went with him on a visit of inspection.

It proved to be precisely as he had described it. The thatched cottage was eighty years old, but had been recently put in repair. For a country cottage at a low yearly rental it was well enough.

We have hardly patience to speak of the garden with its *innumerable weeds*, regarding which the tenant was not even apologetic. He seemed to take them as a matter of course. An interesting feature of the garden was what had been an old quarry, well sheltered from the wind, and all overgrown with ivy. A dozen ideas came into our heads as to what could be done with it; it looked as if it had been made for picturesque effect.

As to the view from the little estate, whoever had eyes could see that it was wonderfully fine. The view from Richmond Hill is perhaps as good: so is that from the Mons Meg Battery at Edinburgh Castle; but most people of taste will be found to prefer the prospect from this Tideswell garden.

For variety and extent it was extraordinary. We looked to the right, over a range of sandhills about two miles away, to the blue sea, across which the wind came fresh from America; then our eye followed a long line of rocky coast, terminating in a lighthouse. There were hills in the distance leading up to a wild moorland. We saw several villages, and two or three coast towns. At our feet were fertile fields, and beyond the fields a broad river running through the valley from left to right.

Below, to the right, lay the village of Tideswell, with its orchards and the little trout stream; the old-fashioned church at one end, and the railway station at the other. The sounds of the village came up to us subdued, and not distracting. The children playing, the trains going up and down the valley, the dogs barking, the thrashing machine at work; all these were heard, but their noise was softened till it ceased to be troublesome, and only in a companionable way suggested the presence of life and industry.

Almost a single look round decided the question which had brought us there. "This will do," we said one to the other. It was like the famous William Cobbett, who said, when he first saw her who afterwards became his wife, "That's the girl for me!" In the same confident strain we now spoke about that little house and garden.

Having made up our minds, we returned to the Golden Lion, and, sitting in the inn parlour, we offered the postmaster £120 for the property. He stuck to his price of £150. Then we proposed to halve the difference, and give £135. He agreed to that, and we parted from him with the understanding that the matter was to be at once put into legal hands to arrange a formal conveyance, and so complete the transaction.

We spent the rest of the day in rambling about the neighbourhood, and about sunset climbed the hill, on the slope of which stood what was now our little property.

We stayed on the hill till evening closed in. Leaning over a gate that opened on a sloping meadow, we watched the distant lighthouse throwing its beams over the sea. Behind us the wind made music in the trees, and from the sands came the music of the rising tide. The moon rose on the other side of the valley, and lit up the river till it looked like a long line of silver.

Then we went down to the Golden Lion, pleased with our purchase, and thinking what joy it would be to live day after day face to face with one of the fairest scenes in the country.

"Now," said one of us, with tears of happiness in her eyes, "I think that old man spoke the truth. We are going to like this place so much we shall never want to go away."

(To be continued.)



was not half as cheerful as she was last year, old Thomas was quite melancholy, the tabby cat sulked, the fires wouldn't burn—nothing went right. Everybody said—cook, house-maid, Thomas, even my aunt and your humble servant—"I wish Miss Fane was back." So I up and said, 'Shall I go and ask her to come back?'"

"And mamma so poorly!" ejaculated Laura, the dimples triumphant. "But I never thought she liked me."

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Fane. My aunt said that she would rather I did not disturb you and your mother, who was ill, and proposed that I should bring her a lifelong companion in her pet idea, Marion. I turned restive, and positively refused to bring anyone but you. We quarrelled, and made it up, and quarrelled again; and I made a grand stand upon a good Government appointment that I have just had, declaring myself my own master, and vowing that, if she would not have you, and you would not have me, I would bring her no companion at all, but leave her to her own devices for the rest of her life. What do you say, Miss Fane?"

Laura looked bewildered. She understood nothing of the rapid discourse beyond the fact that there had been a quarrel about her.

"I should not like to offend Mrs. Fairfax. I hope I shall not lose my situation. I am quite ready to go if she wants me," she began.

"All right, then," exclaimed Arthur, seizing Laura's hand in a very unexpected manner. "You will not offend her, for our quarrel ended by her telling me to bring whichever young lady I liked best, having seen each once more, 'always provided either of them will accompany you,' she added, 'for, judging from

your manner to Miss Fane last year, I think you must be a perfect bear amongst ladies.' Now, dear Laura, will you be my lifelong companion, and continue to my good aunt, who really loves you, those gentle offices you perform so unobtrusively yet so tenderly; for she says she finds she cannot live without you, nor, indeed, can I?"

The truth came to Laura by degrees. The expression of her face varied with the varying firelight. Anxiety, surprise, pleasure, shame, a burning blush, a trembling hand, a tear and a dimple contesting, a half-uttered "Impossible! Can it be?" reassured the doubting Arthur.

"And I may have a home and a wife?" he murmured, his voice choked with emotion—"I who have never had anyone to love me much!"

The little word "Yes" was either expressed or understood, and two hearts that had been constant for as many years were made one. There was no greater happiness for Arthur and Laura during their joint lives than at that moment.

"And Miss Marion Albion?" asks Laura, not unmindful of her supposed rival.

"I think she will console herself with Mr. Hart. And she does not care for me," is the reply.

A knock at the door, and Mr. Fane's voice is heard in the passage. Laura runs away to her mother. Arthur greets Mr. Fane so warmly, that the worthy man is almost as much startled as Laura was; the children rush out again to meet their uncle; Trotty kisses him under the mistletoe-bough, and Arthur is reminded of his merry English Christmas Eve at Lowdown. They recognise him. Mr. Fane is

much surprised; but grows more so when Arthur draws him aside, and explains matters by saying, "You once gave me shelter and hospitable welcome; I am now come to crave a better, richer gift still—your niece Laura."

"God bless her!" cries the good man. "Whoever wins her will have a treasure indeed! She is a good daughter, a loving elder sister, and an affectionate niece."

Mrs. Fane finds her strength revive, and joins the party in the sitting-room. Tears are streaming down her pale cheeks as she puts both hands within Arthur's, saying, "Laura has told me all, Mr. Dalzel. You have been my benefactor; you are—you wish—" She hesitated.

"To be your son," says Arthur proudly, and so that all might hear.

There is a great shout from the children, "Laura is going to be married! We shall have a wedding! How jolly! Laura, Laura! Where are you?"

Off rush the children, and return, dragging in the blushing Laura. Trotty's arms are round her neck.

"The sort of family happiness I have always dreamed of, and first saw at Lowdown," says Arthur, going towards her. "I must send a note of explanation to the Park, and they will excuse me when they know all. May I spend my Christmas Eve here?"

"Yes, yes!" shout the children; "and you must kiss Laura under the mistletoe, won't you, Mr. Dalzel?"

"If she will let me," replies Arthur; and this astonishing feat is performed to the general satisfaction before the close of this our third Christmas Eve.

## OUR SEASIDE COTTAGE, AND HOW WE BUILT IT.

By JAMES AND NANETTE MASON.

### PART II.



WE had cold water thrown on our enthusiasm soon after we entered the inn.

At the Golden Lion that evening there was a man who was so confidential that he talked with us as if we had been his familiar friends

for years. He was a native of Tideswell, and knew everybody and every item down to the most minute of everybody's personal affairs. We have hardly ever met a local gossip like him. His name, the waiter afterwards told us, was Peter Bacon—"Farmer Peter" would find him in all the country round.

Without disclosing our errand, we led the conversation to the subject of cottage properties in general, and those at Tideswell in particular.

"I had the offer of one a week or two ago," said Farmer Peter. "It belongs to the postmaster. But I would have nothing to do with it, for he asked far more than the value. You see it up there," pointing out of the window to where our white-walled cottage stood bathed in moonlight.

"Oh," said we, both together, "far more than the value, was it?"

"Yes; he asked £150, and according to the worth of property in Tideswell, it should not be more than £75. The postmaster himself bought it for £45."

Our spirits fell nearly to zero. Were we really giving about twice as much as we ought?

"But there is a fine view, isn't there?" we exclaimed.

"That's what the postmaster says. But I don't see much in the view. What's the good of it?"

"And there is a fair-sized garden?"

"Mostly stones."

"Would it not do for a building site?"

"Building site! Why, the man who built up there would be out of his mind. It is so exposed to rain from the south-west—and we have lots of rain at Tideswell—that no wall ever built would keep out the wet. And as for wind, he would need sometimes to have his stupid head tied on to keep it from being blown off. Then how could the building be done? How could one ever get up that hill the bricks, and lime, and stones, and gravel, and scaffold-poles, and all the rest of it? No; it will never do to try building up there."

With that he got up and took his candle. "Good-night!" he said, and went off to bed.

His back turned, we recovered confidence. It was quite clear that Farmer Peter was no authority on the subject of beauty in nature, and we encouraged each other by saying that his judgment might be equally unreliable on the subject of building. So, indeed, we found it in the end. He had certainly hit weak points in our new possession, but he had laid far too much emphasis upon them.

But he was right about the price. We had agreed to pay what appeared to every native of Tideswell a perfectly extravagant figure.

However, the deed was done, and there was no going back on our word. We even reasoned ourselves into the belief that the postmaster had a right to a pretty considerable profit. It was, from our point of view, a rare

site, and when a man buys a rare thing cheap, there is no reason why he should sell it cheap. It was fully worth the money to us, and if the postmaster was chuckling over the transaction, so much the better—there would be three people pleased instead of only two.

The following day we paid a visit to the neighbouring county town of Ashburn, and arranged with Messrs. Bullen and Lawrence to prepare the conveyance, they being recommended to us as the most respectable solicitors there.

Our next step was to engage a Tideswell jobbing gardener to look to the slaughter of weeds. Immediately the tenant went out at Michaelmas he was to make a start with a war of extermination, and never give in till he had killed them all, or himself perished in the struggle.

Then we returned home and settled down to our ordinary occupations, nothing happening in connection with our Tideswell property for at least six weeks, except that we paid the purchase-money and received the documents in return, which showed that we were now the rightful owners of "all that cottage or dwelling-house, with a garden thereto belonging, situate and being at West Hill, Tideswell," and that, subject to our not interfering with the rights of our neighbours, we could do with it what we pleased.

It was about the end of October when we went down to Tideswell again. Our object was to decide what to do in the way of building. Two courses, it seemed, were open to us, the first being to do up the old cottage and build an addition, and the other consisting of the erection of an entirely new cottage a little higher up the garden.



When we had established ourselves at the Golden Lion we sent for the landlord, and asked him if he knew of any respectable builder at Tideswell who could take in hand a piece of work for us.

"I know the very man," he said. "My cousin, John Halford, is a good builder, and an honest fellow into the bargain, which is more than they often say about people in his line."

"Has he been long in business here?"

"No; not long. He only started on his own account about four years ago, but he is getting into a good position, because whatever he does is well done. He is keen after new work. Between ourselves, he is engaged to be married, and he who has love in his heart, you know, has spurs in his sides."

One of us, who is always curious about such matters, asked if the girl belonged to the place.

"No; she was born and brought up at a village about twenty miles down the line; but her parents being both dead, she has come to stay here with her grandfather. He lives at a house on the way to the sands—Standalone they call it."

We said we should be glad if Mr. Halford would favour us with a call at nine o'clock next morning; and next morning sure enough, punctual to a minute, he came. To our surprise—and it was a pleasure too—he proved to be the same young man who had travelled with us from Thistlewood the day we first arrived in Tideswell.

The good impression he had made on that occasion was heightened at this interview. His cheerful manner and open countenance convinced us that we were safe in his hands, and that none of the thousand and one tricks which are in the power of every unscrupulous builder, would ever be played by him. He looked and talked and carried himself as if he had never intentionally done a shabby or unkind thing in his life.

John Halford was not the man to waste time, so we were soon talking of business. He was told that the first thing we wanted was an estimate for doing up the old cottage, and that afterwards we should like an estimate for building an addition.

"Let us go and look at the place," said he.

So we went, and all that forenoon was spent in discussing how to make the old cottage a pretty, habitable little house.

We proposed to rough-cast all the outside; to do away with the thatch and slate the roof; to raise the walls so as to give at least a height of eight feet to the upper rooms; to alter the window-openings; to replaster all the internal walls; to have ornamental tiles in the passage; to alter the position of the stairs, and throw out a new window; to have a new and handsome front door with a brass knocker; to pave the yard with star bricks; to make a huge rain-water tank; to rebuild the boundary-wall, and a dozen other things besides.

"We want to do the thing thoroughly when we are at it," said we.

"Then," said Mr. Halford, "I am afraid you are going to spend more than the place is worth."

Two days afterwards he brought us his estimate for all the suggested alterations. To rough-cast the external walls was to cost £23, the slating and alterations to the roof were set down at £16 15s., the raising of the walls figured at £17, and so on. The total was £157.

We opened our eyes. It was clear the builder was right.

"I have cut down the estimate," remarked Mr. Halford, "to the lowest possible, allowing for good work and good materials. You are really proposing to treat the cottage pretty much as the Highlander did his old gun, when he gave it a new stock and a new lock and a new barrel. All the inconveniences in the

shape of narrow dimensions would be retained. It would be very neat, I grant, but it would be uncommonly like a doll's house."

"But there would be good-sized rooms in the addition."

"The new and the old," said he, "would not harmonise. You would regret the addition as much as the alterations."

"Then what do you think we should do?"

"Pull down the old cottage, and build a new one on the same site."

"No," said one of us, "that won't work. We have made up our minds that if we build a new house, the old one must still stand. There is a sentimental interest about an old house that is not about a brand-new one, and for that reason alone we would like to keep it. What we thought was, to have a new cottage higher up the garden."

"You might get a very good site there."

"Then suppose we meet in the garden to-morrow forenoon, and discuss the matter further."

This was agreed to, and we two spent the rest of that day in turning over books on cottage building and homes of taste and landscape gardening, of which we had brought down a good supply; one of our beliefs being, that nothing is to be done well without preparation, and that before starting a subject it is best to consult all available authorities.

We read up "How to Choose a Site," finding the first important points to be openness, airiness, and good drainage. These, fortunately, characterised every square inch of our garden.

Our authors insisted much on freshness of air, one of them quoting Thomas Fuller, who, speaking of the choice of situation for a house, says, "Chiefly choose a wholesome air, for air is a dish one feeds on every minute, and therefore it need be good." On this point also we saw we had no need to worry ourselves. If there is purer air in England we should like to be told where.

The exposure—that is to say, the liability to be affected by certain winds—was a weak point. No house could be built in the garden without having to encounter the south-westerly blast—the wind of the rainy season. But it is impossible to have everything just right: there is always a weak point somewhere.

We were easier in our minds about the relation that the proposed house would occupy with regard to the sun's rays—a very important point in house-building. "The aspect," says one authority, "has much influence on the warmth and general comfort of a dwelling. A southerly aspect has the advantage of the sun's rays during the greater part of the day; an aspect to the north never has full sunshine, and is, therefore, cold and cheerless. An aspect to the east has the sun only in the morning; one to the west only in the evening. With respect to the views from the house, with an aspect due south the objects opposite are all in shade in the middle of the day, and the contrary is the case with one to the north; in the morning and evening in both cases they are partly in light and partly in shade."

It was laid down in all our books that the best thing was for the front to face to the south-east, the diagonal line through the main building being a north and south line. Now, the question upmost in our minds as we went up the hill next morning was, whether a south-east front would in our case be possible.

It was an early hour, when everything looked fresh in the morning sun; a haze was over the sea, and the distant river, a mile and a half away, was smooth as a mirror, with a bank of mist here and there giving it a touch of mystery.

We were apparently not expected. In the garden we found Mr. Halford, and with him was the young girl in whose company he had been when we first met in the train.

He introduced her as Miss King. A very appropriate name, thought we. Standing there erect and graceful, modest and self-possessed, she looked truly every inch a king's daughter.

"I asked Miss King," he added, "to come here to see what a fine view you had, and to give her opinion as to the best site for the new house—I mean the best in relation to the view. We did not look for you quite so early."

"Can't you trust your own taste?" said the younger of us two, laughing.

"No, I can't. In matters of straightforward work and plodding I can well enough, but whenever taste comes in I find that Annie—that Miss King—is more to be relied on than I."

And we came not to be surprised at it. This young girl, by a natural gift, knew just what was right in everything relating to beauty, whether that beauty imparted glory to a landscape or cast its glamour over a poem or a song. Her head had not been crammed, neither had her judgment been confused by reading works on the problem of the æsthetic. She troubled herself nothing with reasons for her timidly-expressed opinions, or rather, we should say, she gave only the woman's reason, "because"—with her it was so because it was so.

Mr. Halford pointed out what had seemed to Miss King the best site—about halfway up the garden, and near a private road which led along the lower side of our property to an adjoining field.

We looked at it: we walked over the whole garden: we noticed how even a few paces served to change the appearance of the picture; and at last we returned to the spot from which we had started, and inserting a stake in the ground, one of us said, "There is no mistake about it—here is the best site, and this is to be the south corner of our future home."

It was remarkable, and we both took it as a good omen, that the site thus selected as the best for looking at the landscape proved also the most convenient in the judgment of the practical builder. A south-east front, to our great joy, was not only possible, but it seemed as if it would have been difficult to make the house face any other way. For carting building material to it was undoubtedly the best spot, and nothing *could have lent itself more* conveniently to disposing of the waste material got in excavating for the foundation.

We had in our heads a rough idea of the place we wanted, so we set to and measured out on the ground what we thought should be the dimensions, adding three stakes to the one already driven in to indicate the remaining corners.

Going down the hill to the village, one of us walked with Mr. Halford. He started the subject of Miss King, and made a half apology for her being there.

"We heard that you were engaged."

"Yes; we have been so for rather over a year. Our engagement is pretty well known, for Tideswell is a great place for gossip. Because of its turn that way we used to be afraid of being seen together, but now we rather like it, for it saves Miss King from many attentions that would be distasteful to her and displeasing to me."

He then went on, speaking in the subdued tones of affection, to tell how she often proved of service to him as he tried to make his way in the world. "She takes an interest," he added, "in everything I do; and if she does not always help me by practical suggestions, she encourages me, which is just as good, and perhaps better."

On our way home, two or three days after, we met a friend who had recently done what we were now going to do. We told him how we purposed building. "No doubt," said we,



"it will be a worry, and we expect our hair will grow white before we get through with it."

"No, it won't," said he, "but it will afterwards, when the bills come in."

When we reached our haunt on the Surrey hills the first thing we did was to call on an architect of our acquaintance, and ask him to draw out the plans and specification for the proposed cottage. We gave him an idea of what would suit our requirements, and told him how much we wished to spend. We thought that it would be enough if we had on the ground floor a large room for a library, a small dining-room, kitchen, and larder; and upstairs a drawing-room and three bedrooms, and we limited him to an expenditure of £400, knowing well enough that extras would bring the cost considerably over that sum.

It took several interviews before the plans were finally settled, but at last we had them done to our mind.

The total length of the house was to be 34 feet 4 inches; the breadth 27 feet 6 inches.

We arranged to have a cellar all under the house, to be used for storing provisions, wood, coal, etc. Part of it we intended to use as a photographic dark-room.

On the ground floor the large room for the library was to be 24 feet 6 inches long by 14 feet broad, with two windows in the south-west side and one in the south-east end. This room was to be to the left when you entered by the front door. To the right was placed the little dining-room—10 feet by 12 feet. This certainly was no great size, but it was big enough for ourselves, and when we had company we should entertain them in the large room. The kitchen behind was to be the same size as the dining-room. The larder was to be 6 feet by 8 feet. The hall—if one might call it by so imposing a name—was to be 15 feet by 6 feet.

Upstairs, above the long room were to be two rooms, each 14 feet by 12 feet; the room to the front, with two windows, to be a little drawing-room, and the other to the back to be a bedroom. Two rooms above the dining-room and kitchen, and corresponding in size, were to be bedrooms.

A feature of the roof was a lead flat above the bedroom that stood over the kitchen. We planned to have a permanent stairway from the upstairs landing to the lead flat, so that we might be able to go and sit there of an evening, and look away over to the sea. Besides, it would be handy for commanding the chimneys in the event of their ever needing repairs.

A large circular rain-water tank was also to be dug a little distance from the house, 6½ feet diameter inside and 8 feet deep, and this tank was to be connected with a pump fixed over the sink in the kitchen.

Once the plans were settled, our architect drew out the specification—in other words, the statement of particulars, describing the dimensions, details, peculiarities, etc., of the work to be done by the excavator, bricklayer, mason, plasterer, carpenter, joiner, plumber, and painter—for so many people does it require to build and complete a house.

We sent the plans and specification down to Tideswell to Mr. Halford, and asked him for an estimate. Had we acted strictly in the spirit of business, we would have asked an estimate from two or three more; but Mr. Halford had impressed us so favourably—in fact, we had taken such a liking both to him and the young girl to whom he was engaged—that we resolved he should do the work, and no other. If we felt sure about anything it was that he would charge no more than a fair price.

Two or three days afterwards the estimate came. It was £393.

We showed it to our architect. He said, "Wages must be low in these parts: we could not do it at that figure in Surrey."

We wrote a formal acceptance, and urged Mr. Halford to go ahead with the excavating that would be necessary for the foundation. It was now the middle of December, and we thought we might have our house complete by Midsummer, or if not then, by Michaelmas.

During the next two months we had occasional notes from Tideswell telling how things were progressing, and at last Mr. Halford

wrote:—"All the excavating is finished, and a much bigger job it has been than I expected. We purpose laying the foundation-stone in a few days, and no doubt you would both like to be present."

We answered that we would not miss that occasion on any account. So we travelled again down the line, and at half-past two on a bright February afternoon we two laid the first stone amidst the cheers and congratulations of all the workpeople who were likely to be engaged on the building. It is a belief at Tideswell that good fortune will attend the house whose second stone is laid by a little child, and in accordance with this pleasing fancy our second stone was laid by Dolly, a bright-eyed, roguish spirit, cousin to Annie King—a child whose affectionate disposition and playful ways afterwards to us brightened up many an evening.

At seven o'clock that night we gave a supper in the large room of the Golden Lion to all the men and their wives and sweethearts. It was a highly successful entertainment, at which no fewer than twenty-seven were present. There were speeches in connection with the laying of the stone, and the warmest spirit of kindness marked everything that was said by old residents about us new comers. Local songs were sung, recitations were given, and anecdotes were told, and all our friends were as merry as could be.

Annie King was there, but our attention was distributed over too large a company for either of us to notice her much. We both, however, remarked the courtesy with which she was treated by all, even by the roughest; and neither of us will ever forget her sitting down to the piano at the close of the evening, and singing, in a sweet clear voice of a singularly pleasing quality, a song, of which the words have escaped us, but the meaning of which is contained in the saying of the Psalmist, that "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

It was a note of earnestness and devotion, giving a touching and beautiful close to a happy meeting.

(To be continued.)

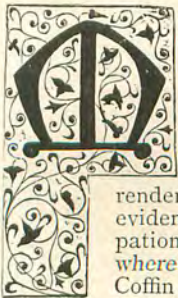
## THE LITTLE GIRL IN GREY.

### A STORY OF TWO CONTINENTS.

By HORACE TOWNSEND.

#### CHAPTER XI.

FLORENCE MAKES UP HER MIND.



MEANWHILE, in the cosy morning-room—where the ultra-gorgeousness which prevailed unchecked in Lawton's study was softened down, and, to a certain extent,

rendered nugatory, by the evidences of feminine occupation and refinement everywhere visible—Miss Keziah Coffin and Florencene were enjoying a confidential chat, an occupation which did not seem to have succeeded in raising the spirits of either of them to a very exalted pitch. Miss Keziah was stitching away with somewhat vicious energy at a piece of plain sewing which lay in her lap, while Florence was standing gazing

dolefully out of the window as she drummed on the pane with the fingers of one hand.

"He's wuss nor ever this mornin'," said the elder woman, shaking her head. "Truth to tell I thought he was bad enough yesterday, when he got that there letter which driv' him into such a rage; but I must allow that he goes fairly beyond everything to-day; and I haven't lived with your paw for twenty years without knowin' somethin' about his temper." And the appalling retrospect of the vagaries of Mr. Lawton's disposition led Miss Coffin to infuse so much energy into the tug with which she drew the thread through the piece of linen on her lap, that it broke off short with a sudden snap.

"But who is the mysterious visitor, the expectation of whose coming seems to have put him into such a flurry?"

"That's the cur'us part of it. It's no one but that little pale-faced gell in

grey that was on board the *City o' Gotham* with us. There's nothin' about her as one would fancy could put anyone in a temper. I never see a gell who was quieter or more gentle in all her ways—sorter reminded me of someone I've seen afore, though who on airth it kin be I can't fur the life o' me tell."

"You don't mean that it's Miss Darling that's coming?"

"I think thet's her name as nigh as I kin recollect it; but what she wants to see Mr. Lawton fur, 'cept about some nonsense of his knowin' her father out West, or why he should take on so about her comin', is more'n I kin make out."

"Don't you know how he always hates any reference to his early life?"

"Of course I do! But I never knew him in such a way as he is now."

"Well," said Florence wearily, "I hope he won't be cross to poor Miss Darling. I never met a girl I liked better, and when she disappeared in



## OUR SEASIDE COTTAGE, AND HOW WE BUILT IT.

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## PART III.



We had praised so highly the loveliness of our view—speaking of it always as if we had the monopoly of the landscape—that a natural curiosity was excited amongst our friends. Two of them chanced to be in the neighbourhood during this visit of ours, and they wrote saying they were coming over to see whether it was not all “pure brag.”

They came, and the result was a greater enthusiasm even than our own. They wrote to all our common acquaintances that it was an ideal place, a place that would make one wish to live for ever on this beautiful earth; and the best proof of their sincerity is, that on returning home they sent us an offer of over three times what we had paid for the ground and already spent in excavating for the foundation.

This first advantageous offer was by no means the last; but no offer has ever seemed to us worth *entertaining* in the face of the fact that we have fallen in with *what suits* our taste and individuality. Another change would be too great a risk, for such happy fortune as ours is not likely to occur more than once in a lifetime.

Foreseeing that we should have a difficulty in housing all our effects in the old cottage when we removed, we instructed Mr. Halford to proceed as speedily as was convenient with the erection of a tool-house in what was to be the back-yard. This was built of stone and slated; it measured twelve feet by twelve feet inside, and cost, together with a little out-house adjoining, £12.

In it we afterwards stored, waiting the completion of the new house, all our belongings that were not likely to be hurt by a little damp.

We have spoken of the future back-yard. This was the old quarry which we mentioned as having taken our fancy when we first saw the property. It had not been used for over eighty years, and the rock face which formed two of its sides had come to be all overgrown with ivy, and looked more picturesque than can be put in words. It stood just behind the site of the new house.

Connected with this old quarry the builders and ourselves made a mistake which may as well be mentioned *here*. Hundreds of cart-loads of rubbish had to be disposed of in connection with the excavating for the foundation, and because no other convenient place presented itself, they were brought to the quarry and tumbled out there. In this way the level was raised several feet, and the beauty of the quarry sadly interfered with. We did not know what to do; the waste had

to be got rid of somewhere, and where if not there?

The credit of the happy thought which got us out of the difficulty belongs to Annie King.

“It is a pity,” she said one morning, after frequent meetings had made us grow confidential—“It is a great pity, for the quarry does not look half as pretty as it did. When I was sitting sewing last evening the idea all at once came into my head, that you might use up the rubbish by making a terrace in front of the house.”

Now it happened that the front of the house was on a slope dropping away from the east to the south corner. It looked awkward, but we had taken it as a matter of course—as if there were no help for it. Looking from the front the ground also fell considerably.

The terrace plan would give us a level space instead of a slope, and Annie’s vivid imagination pictured it as already gay with roses and fragrant with wallflowers and carnations.

It was an admirable suggestion, and when reduced to practice by Mr. Halford, we found ourselves in possession of a terrace extending a considerable way in front of the house—as far, indeed, as the waste material allowed—banked up by a rustic wall on two sides, and with a flight of steps leading up from the garden in front, and another flight at the south corner of the house. The garden mould which covered the ground where the terrace was formed was a precious article, so it was carefully lifted and laid on one side, and wheeled up in barrow-loads to cover the surface when the terrace was finished.

This was generally allowed to be one of the greatest improvements made on our little estate. It seemed a waste of money, certainly, to take from the quarry what had already been placed there; but that sort of experience must be allowed for in the erection of houses, according to the proverb, “Building and marrying of children are great wasters.”

A great advantage that we enjoyed was that our house was to have a solid foundation. It was literally to be built on a rock. We had no fear about the foundations giving way, and were free from the dangers that dwellers in towns often experience through unscrupulous builders erecting houses on made ground composed of the unsorted contents of dust-bins.

The question as to the material of which the walls of our house should be composed was settled for us by our having plenty of stone on the spot. And good stone it was too, though we could not on our own ground get sufficiently large blocks for facing the south-east and south-west fronts—the sides seen from the village, and most exposed to the weather. We had to obtain these from a neighbouring quarry.

The thickness of the walls was twenty inches from the ground up to the sitting-room floor, and eighteen inches beyond that. It was a thickness which we expected would keep out the wet, and secure for our little house an existence of centuries.

By way of preventing the rise of damp, what is called a “damp course” was introduced a little above the ground. According to the specification this was to be formed by laying on slate; but we departed from the specification, and made it of boiled tar well mixed with gravel.

We left the excavators active with pickaxe and shovel, and the masons busy with the trowel, and went home to begin the business of packing. This kept us employed for several weeks. We became purchasers on a big scale of empty boxes from the village grocer; ordered mats, straw, chaff, and balls

of cord; grew knowing as to how to avoid breakages, and wrote address labels till we were tired of seeing our own name.

We could not give whole days to it, as in our literary work we had to keep pace with printers greedily after copy. But every day we gave two or three hours, and ere long had the satisfaction of seeing piles of boxes ready for nailing down and cording.

All our books were packed by ourselves, and we took a note as we went on of every volume that each box contained, partly in case it should be wanted before the general unpacking was arrived at, and partly to check our catalogue, which had not been overhauled for several years.

We packed in all ninety-one boxes of books, each box weighing a little over a hundredweight. It was a labour, but it proved a pleasure as well, for it enabled us to renew acquaintance with, and have little chats about, many volumes we loved; and now and then we had a surprise in finding ourselves the owners of books of the possession of which we had quite forgotten.

Good times, and bad times, and all times get over; at last we arrived within a week of the end. Then we called in the aid of Mr. Knight, an expert in packing, who lived in our neighbourhood. He came, and under the experienced hands of himself and his assistants, chairs and tables, carpets and rugs, pictures, brackets, and curtains were soon tied up and ready for the journey. Our oak bookcases, which, luckily, had been made to take to pieces, had all the parts carefully lettered and numbered, and were sewed up in mats.

Whilst all this packing went on indoors, there was a scene of activity in the garden. Close on midsummer, it was not a good time of the year for removing anything; but it was a question of removing or leaving behind, and we decided to risk the former course.

The gardener who had given his aid in making the flower-borders and shrubbery so pretty, now, with his two sons, lent his aid to unmake them. Every plant worth anything was lifted and carefully packed, and, to make a long story short, out of every hundred plants we did not, on an average, lose more than half a dozen. In the following season our floral friends were lifting their heads as gaily and apparently enjoying life as much in their new quarters as they had ever done in the old.

During the bustle many friends came calling to wish us a prosperous journey to Tideswell, and good fortune ever after. They ought to have been entertained better; but what could we do? The house was occupied by the packers, so we were forced to have our farewell conversations in the wood-house, sitting some on the wheelbarrow and others on garden baskets.

Everything had to be carted to the nearest station, situated four miles away, and sent thence to Tideswell over the lines of two different railway companies. We had obtained a quotation—so much a ton for books, so much for plants, and so much for furniture—so knew at least about what the carriage was going to cost.

And now a strange thing happened.

Our goods were in bulk and weight equal to six waggon-loads. During two days five waggon-loads had been got off without mishap, and their contents were safely on board the trucks at the station. A waggon was drawn up at the gate for the sixth and last load.

The weather had been thundery all day,



and about half-past three in the afternoon on came a thunderstorm. It rained incessantly for over an hour, and when the sky at last cleared it was too late to pack the waggon and get it to the station before the gates were closed against goods for the night. Our trucks, it was clear, could not be despatched till the following night. There was no help for it, but we felt a little disappointed.

Had we only known, how thankful we should have been. The thunderstorm saved all our property from being wrecked in a railway accident.

From our station the line ran westwards for about a mile on perfectly level ground, and then came a steep incline lasting for a considerable distance. Now, by some oversight or defect—it was never very clearly explained—the hinder portion of the goods train that night became detached from the front part when going along the level line. The hinder part kept moving, but more slowly than that to which the engine was attached, and the distance between the two kept gradually increasing.

All this was reversed when they reached the incline. The back part of the train then came rattling down till it dashed into the trucks in front, breaking them into splinters, and scattering their contents over the line and down the embankment.

When we heard of the accident the following day we went to the spot and saw a scene of confusion never to be forgotten. Out of the fifty-one trucks which composed the train, forty-three were totally wrecked; in the centre ten of them lay piled one on top of another. Wheels lay about everywhere; iron bars were bent and twisted into grotesque shapes, and over the line and the meadow at the foot of the embankment every foot of ground was occupied with a confused mass of bricks, timber, sacks of flour, tins of biscuits, and barrels of beer, and as we looked we came to the conclusion that a thunderstorm to interfere with a removal is not always to be grumbled at.

That afternoon the last waggon went off. We felt in doleful dumps as we watched it down the road, for the end had come to another chapter of our lives.

But our hearts are still light, and so long as we go through the world together, nothing can interfere much with our good spirits. No sooner had it turned the corner than we set about making a huge bonfire in the garden of all the trash that had been unearthed during the packing.

When that was burned out we had tea in borrowed cups out of a borrowed teapot, and with the copperlid for a table. Then we bade farewell to the faithful Mary, whose watchful attention for many years is something to look back on with gratitude, and who would have accompanied us to Tideswell, but that she was tied to the neighbourhood through the duty she owed to her parents.

We set out on our last walk to the station—past the duck pond, past the old mill, over the heath, through the fir wood, and down the long sandy lane. We caught the evening train for London, where we intended to stay the night, and such was the end to us of life on the Surrey hills.

On our arrival at Tideswell on the following day we went to live as before at the Golden Lion. And there we remained till our books, furniture, and plants were carted up to the old cottage. A day after that was spent in settling the bills of the railway company and the Tideswell carters, and in remitting to those who had lent their aid at the other end. As a matter of curiosity—and perhaps some reader may find it one of these days a matter of utility—it may be mentioned that the cost to us of packing ten tons of goods and bringing them over 200 miles was within a few shillings of £30, all charges included.

When the plants were all in the ground, and the things which could safely go there were placed in the woodhouse, we fell to discussing whether there would be room for ourselves in the cottage. We wanted much to go there, for living in the inn did not suit us after the novelty had worn off, and we wanted besides to be on the spot, so that we might at any time go up to the new house to see how the builders were getting on. Alas! there was no room. It was hardly possible to turn, much less live.

A way out of the difficulty, however, presented itself. Mr. Halford told us of an empty room in the village which had been used at one time as a dissenting chapel. It was large enough to hold two hundred people, so could be relied on to accommodate a portion of our library. The proprietor asked a rent of only 12s. a year—in fact, until he knew that we would not take it for nothing, nothing was just what he proposed to charge. Such were the kindly ways of Tideswell.

Forty or fifty cases were moved out of the cottage and taken down to this room, and the same day we moved in, to have our home for some months under the thatched roof. We unpacked enough furniture to give a cosy appearance to the two upstairs rooms, hung quite a crowd of pictures on the walls, had our large American organ placed in one of the rooms downstairs, and converted the scullery behind into a passable kitchen.

The village carpenter had put up for us a set of bookshelves in our upstairs sitting-room, and on these we placed a few books we greatly cared for, and those we knew we must have at hand to satisfy the requirements of our business. There was the latest edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; two or three dictionaries; an atlas; a few historical works, works of fiction, and guide books; a collection of books on gardening, rural life, and natural history; a dozen books about building; several works, critical and historical, on music; Shakespeare; Robert Burns—in short we made our little library consist of about four hundred of what we thought the best and to us most useful books in the world.

In our confined space, even with careful management it was difficult to get things into order, and once in order, still more difficult to keep them so. "A place for everything, and everything in its place," was a maxim to be impressed upon each of us a dozen times a day. And what brought it home to us more than would otherwise have been the case, was that, with such occasional aid as our neighbours gave, we took to running the show for ourselves. We could not for a long time get properly suited as regards attendance. Half the girls in Tideswell were dressmakers, engaged in making dresses for the other half. Few entered domestic service, and those who did were continually on the move.

Now, personally, we dislike change, and never, if we can help it, enter into relations with anyone unless there seems a reasonable chance of their being permanent. We therefore filled up the interval whilst we made enquiry about a suitable maid by looking after ourselves, and we managed it on the whole so well that most of the heads of households in Tideswell when they came to know of it would but for pure laziness have followed our example. They were quick enough to see what freedom and independence it gave.

It was a Robinson and Robina Crusoe kind of existence, and for a time it was very enjoyable, especially when that time was summer-time. There was an air about it of a perpetual pic-nic, and many a laugh we had over the make-shift contrivances we had to adopt until all the little things necessary to our comfort were unpacked.

But recollections of this original episode in our more or less Bohemian career must not

make us forget the building of the new house. We had expected to get the house finished by Michaelmas; but when mentioning these expectations to a friend, he said "Is that what you think? Then you don't know Tideswell."

These ominous words we took at the time for a joke, but we came to see afterwards that they were uttered in grim earnest. Tideswell was a place where no one was ever seen in a hurry about anything. Mr. Halford, our builder, was the only one who struck us as desirous of really going ahead; but even he was not to be driven, and the easygoing nature of those who worked for him proved a more than sufficient drag to his exceptional activity.

The way of the village was to take everything at a moderate pace. It would have been irritating if we ourselves had been in particular haste; but our way is to float with the stream, and if the stream goes slow so do we. We therefore began to make fun of every delay, laugh over the excuses for it, and almost regret that delays and excuses must one of these days come to an end.

When the walls were raised to eight feet or so above the foundations, we were in good spirits at the accommodation which the cellars promised to afford. These were spacious enough to satisfy the most exacting house-keeper.

The portion to the lower side of the house was only half underground, and was lighted and ventilated by two good windows. The back portion was ventilated by air-bricks in the wall, and by two or three ventilating shafts. Access was provided for by a stair *inside* the house, and also by one outside, just beside the kitchen door.

There was room for a large coal-cellar, and also for one in which to store wood. The coal-cellar was later on furnished with an air-tight door, to prevent coal-dust flying about when coals were shot in through the coal-shoot which opened on the yard. This coal-shoot we forgot all about at first, but it fortunately occurred to us before it was too late to remedy the defect. A coal-shoot, we may add, should always be provided if possible, as it saves the labour of carrying the coal in sacks on men's backs into the cellar.

We had plenty of accommodation for all sorts of domestic purposes such as the storing of provisions. "This alone," says one authority, "makes the cellar an indispensable part of every well-finished house. To those who have not had experience of the working, so to express it, of cellar rooms when used to store up and keep provisions, it is not easy to describe the difference between the condition of provisions—especially those of a quickly perishable nature—kept in a cellar under and those kept in a larder above the ground-level. In the underground cellar there is a uniformity of temperature, and a 'something'—difficult to say what—in the atmosphere which keeps the provisions in a sweet, healthy state not obtainable in any other room or larder."

A corner of the cellar we resolved to have fitted up as a dark room for developing photographs; for we two occupied a humble rank in the great army of photographic amateurs.

From the cellar the builders crept upwards, adding stone to stone and brick to brick, and one fine morning we found them putting in the joists of the chamber floor. Joists, we may explain, are pieces of timber to which the boards of a floor or the laths of a ceiling are nailed. They rest on the walls.

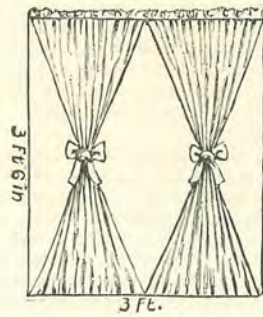
At this stage our first payment became due. We had agreed to pay one-third of the contract price of £393 on arrival at the chamber floor, one-third on the completion of the roof, and the remaining third when the workpeople handed us the keys of the finished house and went down the hill for the last time with their dinner-baskets over their shoulders.

(To be continued.)



diamond or sandglass pattern is popular in some places, and while it seems to us that this is rather a stiff style, it may be as well to explain the way of cutting, as it is frequently spoiled for want of a knowledge of the principle.

Take a sash three feet six inches high by three feet wide. Now the way to cut this is to get two pieces of muslin, or whatever the curtain is to be made from, one yard and a half long by one yard wide; draw a line across the middle; on either side of this line, at top and bottom, draw a line AB twenty-one inches from centre line. Make a mark, as at C and D, six inches along each side from A and B, draw lines CD, leave as much of a lay as will allow a small slip of wood about an inch wide by the thickness of a venetian blind lath to pass through, sew these large hems, and the curtain is ready for fixing. It is an improvement to have a frill on the top. When fixed



the curtains are gathered in with bows and ends, as shown on sketch. These are better attached to a band of ribbon about three inches long, with hook and eye so that they can be easily fixed and unfixed.

A more graceful dwarf curtain is made by simply frilling a pair of small curtains for each window, being sure to make them full, and crossing them a little on the top; this is easily done by having a small separate lath—as already described—for each. In the case of a bow window variety *can be introduced* by draping the centre window high, and the side ones, one of the curtains on each high and the other low.

Now we cannot ask the indulgence of the editor further. Some other time we may return to other forms of draping, more complicated and difficult, such as archways, etc., where the festoons are higher at one side than another; for the present we hope that the foregoing may have proved both interesting and instructive to readers of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*, and that many pleasant half-hours may be spent by the ladies beautifying their homes.

T. J.



## OUR SEASIDE COTTAGE, AND HOW WE BUILT IT.

BY JAMES AND NANETTE MASON.

### PART IV.

WHEN the builders reached the level of the chamber-floor, we reckoned that a third of the house was finished. This was made the occasion of a little demonstration. Refreshments were provided, and the senior partner of us two climbed up the ladder and sat down with the men on one of the joists that were to support the floors of the bedrooms. Not being accustomed to such a giddy situation he felt decidedly uncomfortable, but the workmen thought nothing of it, and tankards of ale and bottles of lemonade and ginger-beer were handed round, and speeches were made full of kindly feeling for "the master and missus." Several songs, more or less appropriate, were sung, but we neglected to take note of them at the time, and the only ones we now recall were the familiar *Home, sweet Home*, and a Scotch ditty sung by a man who hailed from the other side the Tweed:—

"Gin I had a wee house, an' a canty wee fire,  
An' a bonny wee wife to praise and admire,  
Wi' a bonnie wee yardie aside a wee burn,  
Fareweel to the bodies that yaumur and mourn."

They were well sung, too; but musical enjoyment was hardly possible with one's toes dangling over emptiness and nothing satisfactory for the hands to clutch hold of. It was a relief for the senior partner to stand again on the substantial earth.

On the day after this event we made our first payment to Mr. Halford—that is to say, we paid him a sum to account representing a third of the contract price. We felt sure

we were getting good value for the money. Mr. Halford had not only promised good work, but we saw him doing his utmost to act up to his promise. We knew next to nothing about building when we began, and so had to trust him on many points in connection with which he might easily have taken us in. A less honest man would have profited by our ignorance, and perhaps no line of business offers more temptation to roguery than building.

The walls rose still farther. If there was one thing we were anxious about above another it was those walls. The external walls of houses, we knew, were comparatively seldom built with requisite care, which means playing into the hands of mildew and rheumatism. We, therefore, urged the builder to take every precaution to protect us, especially against the driving rains which were sure to visit our exposed situation.

It may be thought that rain would have a difficulty in making its way through an 18-inch stone wall. But every sort of stone has, in a greater or less degree, a tendency to absorb moisture, though brick, as a rule, beats it in that respect; for the porous nature of brick is so great that a distinguished German hygienist has demonstrated the possibility of blowing out a candle through a brick wall 9 inches thick.

If damp got in through the walls, it would be sure in the long run to rot the joists and other woodwork of floors and ceilings, and by way of reducing the risk we had ventilating bricks put at frequent intervals just at the level of the floors; thus there was continuous ventilation from without.

Between the level of the chamber-floor and the point from which the roof was raised we

built into the wall a tin case containing a square stone bottle, and inside the bottle put several written and printed documents of interest relating to ourselves and to the building of the house. We flattered ourselves that hundreds of years afterwards the case might be discovered and the contents read, and that so for a day or two in the distant future we might live again and be objects of interest and curiosity.

In a narrative drawn up by us as we sat one evening on the rustic seat that now stood at the higher end of our little garden, we told our distant audience who we were, and how Fortune had sent us to Tideswell, together with all the circumstances which led up to the building of the house. We added the names of those who were engaged on the work, from Mr. Halford down to Willie, the mischievous boy, who brought up light loads from the village in his donkey-cart.

With this manuscript we placed a series of permanent photographs taken by our local photographer, giving Tideswell as it actually appeared that summer; a map of the district, showing all the public roads and footpaths; and the last edition of a local guide and directory. We also added a list of our intimate friends, that they might be handed down to posterity in company with ourselves. We told what they were and where they lived, and added a few details about them to prevent the list from being put in the waste-paper basket of posterity as a mere catalogue. Last of all we sealed up in the bottle a monthly part of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*. It was near the beginning of the career of that famous periodical, and our hope was that a remote age would find entertainment in contrasting that early part with a current number



of the same paper, and would congratulate itself on the possession of so great a curiosity.

Whilst the masons were busy continuing their work, laying stone on stone to raise the walls still farther, we had leisure to look about and to add to our circle of acquaintances.

Fortunately for ourselves, we were both of a friendly turn, and long practice had taught us the art of getting on with most people. "Confidence begets confidence, and love begets love," was a maxim we had learned early in life. Except in matters of importance, we were far from reticent about our own affairs, and to feel affection for people outside our little circle had become almost a necessity to our slightly sentimental natures. Like true Bohemians, too, we thought ourselves equals of everybody and anybody, and for our oyster took the whole world.

Such being our disposition, it is not to be wondered at that we soon knew everybody in Tideswell. After once making a beginning that was not difficult, for all the natives were cousins more or less distantly removed, and being introduced to one formed a tie that bound us to all the rest. The relationships were wonderful, producing on us an effect as if we had landed in the midst of a huge family party.

Our coming had been a wonder spread over more than the regulation nine days, and the building operations, so long as they lasted, furnished material for village discussion. At first the general opinion was that we were two lunatics, fortunately harmless, who had a craze for building a house above everybody else, and in an exposed situation where howling winds and lashing rain would be in keeping with our troubled minds.

But after a while the tune was changed to a chorus of admiration for the lovely prospect commanded by the new house. One would have thought it had never been there before. But this is often the way: what people have before their eyes every day they do not see till some stranger comes along and points it out to them.

To ourselves the view went on improving, because we were always meeting with new and interesting incidents that got worked up in our minds with the scenery. It acquired a human interest, which it had not at first when we were still strangers, and looking over the landscape could not see the smoke from the chimney of a single friend. With friends and acquaintances now by dozens, wherever we looked recalled a pleasant meeting, or a kind word, or a bit of family history, or a queer story—and Tideswell was a place for queer stories.

Whoever has had experience of village life will not be surprised to hear that Tideswell was also a great place for gossip—gossips had good time of it there. If these had confined themselves to facts, it would have been only vulgarly stupid, but the redeeming feature and the fun lay in this, that there was enough imagination at work somewhere to make another Shakspeare.

Annie King had a quick ear for such things, and though one would not have thought it from her quiet manner, took a roguish pleasure in repeating what she heard. She brought a good deal of news of ourselves.

The puzzle to everyone seemed to be why we came to Tideswell, and to solve it dozens of stories were put in circulation. Sometimes we were said to be in hiding from creditors; other times they had it that the house was being built on the proceeds of the robbery of a bank, and when these stories got played out many dark deeds were suggested in which we had been accomplices. Would anyone, it was remarked, come to settle in this quiet place without a very good reason?—with a marked emphasis on the "very." Not likely.

But what appears funny to some does not strike others always in the same light. We had a literary friend, a bachelor, who had taken it into his head like us to build a house, and we induced him about six months after our arrival to come down to have a look at Tideswell.

Liking the neighbourhood he entered into negotiations for a piece of ground, and took estimates for building. When this was known Tideswell grew interested. Why was he a bachelor? Over forty years of age too, and still a bachelor! Then to account for it the report spread that he was a woman-hater.

It took our friend three or four weeks to live that down, and then the story was started that his being a bachelor was a mistake, for he had a wife and six children—some said six lovely daughters—for whose occupation the house was to be built.

This myth was exploded in turn, when popular report returned to the bachelor notion, and set to work to have him engaged one after the other to no fewer than five of the young ladies of the place.

"I am off," he said to us one morning when the fifth was spoken about. "London for me for ever. Should I stay here my fate will be to marry one of these five, and the trouble will be to make up my mind which of the five is the nicest."

And off sure enough he went. We thought him rather foolish to go, for those who live in a country-place must care nothing for what is said. Besides, between ourselves, if he had made a match with the one we thought the nicest of the five, he would have been a lucky fellow. But this is parenthetical—Let us return to the cottage.

When the walls were finished, the next proceeding was to construct the roof. We decided on slates for the roof-covering because they make the best surface for collecting the rain, on which we relied for a water supply.

An objection to a slate roof is that it makes the house cold in winter and warm in summer. But we got over that by having the slates laid on boards with a layer between of asphalt roofing felt, which is a bad conductor. This made almost as comfortable a covering as the thatch of our old cottage, which during our residence we found little liable to admit changes of temperature.

The slates we had fastened with copper nails, because copper is not so likely to oxidise as other metals.

When the slates were fixed, and the ridge-tiles of the roof were put in place, and the chimneys had the finishing touches given them, the scaffold-poles were taken down and we had an uninterrupted view of the new house.

There was no denying it, it looked an ugly house. But almost every new house looks ugly, and the appearance of hardness, coldness, angularity, and general stupidity, only wears off when Time, with his improving touches, has had it in hand for a while. With prophetic eye we saw that our house would be handsome in a few years. We determined, however, that if Time did not do his business fast enough, we would with clematis, and honeysuckle, and climbing roses, lend him a little assistance.

The red ridge-tiles were no sooner showing their uneven line against the sky, than we considered a second payment to become due, and so paid Mr. Halford a second third of the contract price. This was a mistake; the work between the chamber-floor and the completion of the roof was considerably less than a third—we should have delayed the payment for a little.

Mr. Halford being so honest and reliable, it did not matter, but with another sort of character for a builder the result might have been not quite satisfactory. Indeed, it is a

good general rule never to make payments to account without having had work done fully to represent the payments.

The slates being now on the roof, our thoughts were given to the collecting of rain-water, on which, as has already been mentioned, we had to rely for washing and scrubbing, not to speak of tea-infusing and the manufacture of summer beverages. It was an important subject, for a plentiful supply of water is essential to health and comfort.

Long-established habit had accustomed us to the use of well-water. In our home on the Surrey hills our arms had grown strong in drawing up bucketsful from a depth of nearly eighty feet, a rather more tedious and exhausting method than the town one of turning a tap. Never having used rain-water for drinking purposes we were at first not quite easy in mind about it. It was excellent, we knew, for washing, but what about drinking?

This was a misplaced uneasiness. If rain-water could be collected as it leaves the clouds, it would be found to be the purest and most wholesome of all waters. In fact, it is the parent of all waters; rivers, lakes, wells, and fountains are only the more or less degenerate offspring of the rain. Foreign matters and impurities belong to them and not to the water that comes down from the sky.

Of course, rain-water cannot be collected just as it leaves the clouds, and is sure to get something mixed with it as it washes and cleanses the air on its passage to the earth; but the situation of our house was so favourable that dust or dirt in the air were only conspicuous by their absence.

We had the roof of slate—it was mentioned a few paragraphs back—as the best surface for receiving the rain. Some valued friends pointed out that tiles were more picturesque. That was true, but a utilitarian acquaintance had more influence by telling us that rain-water generally takes up a little decaying vegetable matter from a tiled roof by reason of the small mosses and other plants usually found growing there.

From the slate roof the rain-water was conveyed to the level of the ground by eaves-gutters and down-comers, as they are sometimes called. Then it was led by a pipe into the tank which was situated at the back of the house about twenty yards off. It had been excavated, as we have already told, in the rock, and was large enough to hold about five thousand gallons.

Our establishment being so small this was more than enough. A doubt was expressed by some of our visitors whether we would ever get the tank filled; five thousand gallons struck them as a big number. But we never had any difficulty about it. It is calculated that the average quantity of water which falls on any square yard of roofing in Great Britain during the course of a year is about a hundred and twenty gallons. We had roof enough to give us ten thousand gallons of water a year had we wanted to use as much as that.

A pump was fixed at the kitchen door and by its means we drew the water out of the tank. Our first intention was to have the pump in the kitchen over the sink; but after consideration induced us to drop that plan. Even with care the water would every other day have been spilt over the floor, and that in time would have rotted the boards.

The out-door pump had this weak point—Jack Frost sometimes caught us napping and froze it up. We were then obliged to open the little door placed in the dome of the tank, and fish for water by means of the well-rope and bucket we had brought with us from Surrey. The pipe between the pump and the tank had less chance of being frozen than the pump, for it was laid between two and three feet below the surface.

Besides the slate roof to our house there



was a flat roof covered with lead over one of the bedrooms at the back. Rain-water was to be collected off this also, but it had to be kept separate from that which fell on the slates, otherwise we would have been in danger of lead-poisoning. Pure water is known to act most powerfully on lead, and many persons have been affected injuriously by drinking water containing even the minute quantity of a twentieth of a grain of lead to the gallon. No wonder we were careful.

We bought three empty forty-gallon mineral oil casks, burned them out with a lot of shavings, so as to have them quite sweet, and had them placed under the down-comer from the lead flat in such a way that when the first became full the overflow ran into the second, and when that was full the overflow from the second ran into the third. This gave us an extra hundred and twenty gallons.

Thus we were well provided with water, soft water too, and every housekeeper knows what a blessing that is whether the water be required for the cooking of food, or the making of tea, or the cleansing of the skin, or the washing of linen.

It was just about the time of our getting the dome finished which covered in the tank that we solved the difficulty as to who was to aid us in the domestic management of the new

house. This happened in the nick of time, for we had grown busy with our own work and attending to home affairs as well had begun to prove a little irksome. The fun of looking after ourselves was exhausted.

The granddaughter of one of our neighbours once or twice brought up a parcel from the village, and getting acquainted with Ethel in this way we asked her to go on an errand occasionally for us.

Not thinking it right to do so without making her a gainer by her services, we proposed one day to pay a trifle for every errand.

"No," said Ethel, "I don't want to take anything, but I should like to do the messages all the same."

This kindly way of putting it, though it was quite the natural thing in Tideswell, endeared Ethel to us, and we began gradually to feel as if the day were not as it should be if it passed without our seeing her bright face. We noticed her gentle ways, her self-respect, her intelligence, her willingness to take any amount of trouble without thinking of reward, and all these features convinced us that if she could be induced to become a member of our little household we should have one whom we could respect and have every confidence in.

It is of importance to have a bird out of a

good nest, and we were well pleased when Annie King told us she knew all Ethel's people and that they were well spoken of by every one.

Ethel, who was in her fourteenth year, was at the end of her education so far as school was concerned. She was face to face with the question what she was going to be. A dressmaker? Yes, our fear was that she would be smitten with the dressmaker craze.

A large proportion of the girls in Tideswell, we mentioned a while ago, made a living by means of needles and thread. Not bad dressmakers they were either, to judge by the perfectly-fitting costumes we saw every day in the village street, looking for all the world as if the wearers had been first melted and then run into them.

But Ethel had more sense.

"I have no wish to be a dressmaker," she said, "and I would rather come to you than go anywhere else."

And come to us she did, first to look after the old cottage and afterwards to take charge of the new house. The arrangement proved a happy one both for us and for Ethel; for us it certainly was one of the most fortunate of all the fortunate circumstances connected with our early stay in Tideswell.

(To be continued.)

## VARIETIES.

### "THE CARELESSEST CREATURES."

He came home the other night tired from a busy day's work, and his wife waited till he had got his overcoat off and had sat down.

"Did you get that piece of silk I asked you to bring up to-night?" she asked, seeing he had not laid it before her.

"Yes, dear; I left it out there in the hall."

"Did you get the pins?"

"Yes, dear."

"And the ribbon?"

"Yes."

"And Bobbie's shoes?"

"Yes."

"And the wisp broom?"

"Yes."

"And a wick for the kitchen lamp?"

"Yes."

"And some matches?"

"Yes; they are with the other bundles."

"And did you see the man about the coal?"

"Yes; it will be up on Monday."

"And the man to see to the grate in the dining-room?"

"Yes; he's coming as soon as he can."

"Did you see Mrs. Smith about the sewing society meeting?"

"She said she'd come."

"And—and—oh, yes, did you get a new shovel for the kitchen stove?"

"N—n—no," he hesitated. "I forgot it."

"What!" she cried. "What did you do that for? You know we needed that shovel, and I told you about it the very first thing when you went to town this morning. I do think men are the most forgetful and careless creatures that ever lived." And she flopped out to see about supper.

SUITABLE NAMES FOR WIVES.—Sexton's wife, Bell; porter's wife, Carrie; jeweller's wife, Pearl; lawyer's wife, Sue; farmer's wife, Tillie; printer's wife, Em; minister's wife, Grace; gambler's wife, Betty; gardener's wife, Rose; musician's wife, Viola; undertaker's wife, Nell; fisherman's wife, Nettie; shoemaker's wife, Peggy; auctioneer's wife, Biddy.

### A WONDER EXPLAINED.

Many things seem extraordinary till they are explained. It was a very hot day, and a number of people were standing talking in the grounds of a country house. In the centre of the grounds stood, on a pedestal, a large glass globe, which one of the company happened to touch with his hand. To his astonishment he found that it was warmer on the shady side than on the side turned to the sun.

He communicated this discovery to the others, who at once proceeded to verify the statement. What could be the cause? An animated discussion ensued, in the course of which every imaginable law of physics was made to account for the strange paradox. At length the scientists agreed that it must be owing to the laws of reflection, repulsion, or exhalation, or some other law of physics with a long name.

The owner of the house, however, was not quite convinced, and, calling the gardener, said, "Tom, can you tell us why the globe is warmer on the shady side than on the side turned to the sun?"

"Yes," said Tom; "because I turned it round a minute ago for fear of its cracking with the great heat!"

ABOUT MIRRORS.—It is only since the early part of the sixteenth century that mirrors have become articles of household furniture and decoration. Previous to that time—from the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century—pocket mirrors, or small hand mirrors, carried at the girdle, were indispensable adjuncts to ladies' toilets. The pocket mirrors consisted of small circular plaques of polished metal fixed in a shallow circular box covered with a lid.

### REST.

Rest is not quitting the busy career;  
Rest is the fitting of self to its sphere.

'Tis the brook's motion, clear without strife,  
Fleeing to ocean after its life.

'Tis loving and serving the highest and best:  
'Tis onward, unswerving—and that is true  
rest.—*J. S. Dwight.*

### ANSWER TO A MISSING LETTER (p. 381).

Ye see where gentle Eveleen dwelt,  
The sweetest scene we ever knew;  
The sheltered beech-trees where she knelt,  
Trembled when western breezes blew.

### CHARADE I.

A quality by which men choose  
Their friends, their horses, or their shoes.  
Ladies are wont at this to smile,  
And choose apparel more for "style."

- In mediæval Italy a claim  
To noble birth, long service, honour, fame,  
And used as prefix to baptismal name.
- Pope says, "A monster of so frightful mien  
As to be hated needs but to be seen."  
He did not think what virtues in it lurk  
For smiths and turners in their daily work.
- Dost thou the mysteries of the needle  
know?  
Cut out, fix, fit, stitch, hem, seam, gather,  
sew?  
Laying thy books of cultured thought aside,  
And entering the kitchen, canst thou guide  
The cook unversed in culinary lore,  
And teach her rules she did not know  
before  
For soups, French dishes, sweets, or savoury  
pies?  
Say, canst thou soothe a wailing infant's  
cries?  
With children play? their hasty tempers  
stem  
With loving tact, and be a child with  
them?  
Skilled at all points, naught comes to thee  
amiss,  
And thou mayst truly answer, "I am this."
- Look!—dost thou mark yon crag's pro-  
jecting ledge,  
That cuts the air with so defined an edge?  
Our feature's outline, when as clearly  
shown,  
Suggests the term by which such cliffs are  
known.  
XIMENA.



to leave anything really necessary until then. With regard to geraniums, the ordinary gardener's method is to strike them in pots later on; but I always adopt that taught me by an elderly relative who was a distinguished amateur in his day. That is, to cut off small side shoots of the plants it is desired to propagate as soon as any have grown to the length of three inches, and having trimmed them in the orthodox manner, by cutting the stem slantwise immediately under a joint, remove the leaves from that joint and the one above it and all buds whatsoever, and insert the cuttings in the ground close to the parent plant. The latter will yield sufficient shade, and by watering every other evening for a week or so, one may thus make sure of a good supply of strong, well-rooted young plants before the time comes for potting up. There are very few beds so full that room cannot be found for a few dozen of the tiny slips which before the season is over will themselves give a fair amount of bloom.

Fuchsias for next year's bedding should also be struck now, prepared in the same manner as geraniums, and inserted in pots of light sandy soil, the pots being kept shaded for some little time.

As most pansies produce smaller blossoms during the hotter months, it will not be much loss to take them up now; indeed, in mixed beds it is sometimes necessary, to prevent the long robust shoots from crowding out more fragile things of which the blossom is only just coming on; and where a bed is still making too good a show to be disturbed, the earth should be well dug up and raked over in between the plants, rings of sand strewed round them and the side shoots pegged down into this with hairpins. Tufted pansies or violas grow in close cushions, and are therefore used more for summer bedding-out than for a spring display. The long hollow stalks are of no use for cuttings, but those small ones should be taken which spring out from near the root and often have already fine roots of their own attached. If these have all their flower buds removed, and are inserted to above two joints in a bed of fine leaf mould in a cold frame, they will make nice healthy plants before winter, but the frame, unless in a northern aspect, must be carefully shaded by a mat for a few weeks, the glass kept a little way open night and day, and moisture only given when the earth gets dry. If they are once scorched by the sun, they seldom revive.

With all cuttings these rules must be observed.

Use light soil with a large proportion of rough sand.

Take short sturdy shoots from near the root by preference.

Shade well until growth has commenced.

Cut immediately under a joint, as this is where roots always grow.

Cut off all buds to prevent the plant putting its strength into them instead of making roots.

Never leave any foliage to rot under the surface of the earth.

Do not keep the soil too damp.

Carnations are layered in the following manner:—Select good strong shoots close to the root; cut each of these half way through just below a joint; take away a little earth a few inches distant from the main stem; fill up the hole with coarse sand, and peg the incised piping into this with as long a hairpin as can be obtained. Care is necessary not to cut the stem too far through, and not to break it altogether when pegging down. The layered piece will be assisted by daily watering in dry weather, and perhaps I had better add that flower-bearing stalks cannot possibly root.

Side shoots of sweet Williams and clematis are layered in the same way, except that the stems are not cut at all.

The principal seeds which ought to be sown now for early blooming next summer are German scabious, in boxes in a cold frame; herbaceous calceolarias, tuberous begonias, and early stocks in some gentle heat; while in the open border a winter bed of parsley should be prepared in a shady place by digging in some well rotted manure and leaf mould, raking it smooth, and sowing the seed in drills, which, lightly covered with fine soil, require to be kept fairly damp.

Chinese primulas sown according to directions in April will now be quite large enough to prick out into small pots filled with loam, good leaf mould and sandy peat.

Even though one may not admire topiary work as a whole, and would leave "vegetable sculpture" to a few old-fashioned country gardens where it has existed for centuries, that branch of it which produces only clean, well-clipped hedges is a distinct feature of every carefully kept garden; and during the summer it is very often necessary to cut into shape the box edgings which have probably grown rather ragged since they were done in the spring, and which will have plenty of time now to make fresh growth before the winter.

In all greenhouses and conservatories ought to be grown some climbers up the roof, as well for their beauty as for the sake of the partial shade they give in the hottest weather to the plants beneath. Roses, plumbagos, clematis, abutilons in the unheated structure; hoyas and

stephanotis in addition to them in a regularly warm temperature, are suitable for this purpose; while myrtles, geraniums and fuchsias want only protection from frost to make beautiful roof-coverings—in time. Where none of these are growing, the roof should be either painted inside with green wash, or fitted with proper canvas blinds, the former being, of course, the most economical plan.

Where a conservatory is glazed on three sides and very light, as are many which enter from sitting-rooms, it should certainly have as well a blind on the southern side to pull down during the middle of the day.

Abutilons often grow very straggly in a greenhouse, and show no inclination to bloom; where this is the case, they should be cut down short at this season, leaving on the main stem only about three or four shoots, which will then grow rapidly, and probably bloom before the autumn.

It is very gratifying to look round one's garden now that all its summer tenants are in it, and a good deal of time must be spent every day in keeping in order the gorgeous crowd which seem to come into flower all at once.

The earlier perennials, such as peonies larkspurs, lychnis, have mostly perhaps lost their bloom, and should have the dead flower-stalks neatly cut down level with the main clump of leaves; but their place is well supplied by the carnations, *poppies*, *stocks*, summer chrysanthemums, Turk's cap and trumpet lilies; while the more temporary occupants like geraniums, calceolarias, begonias and fuchsias should make a fine show of colour.

The walls are beautiful with the little clusters of starry jasmine; and on sheltered balconies or in airy rooms the myrtle, agapanthus, and graceful oleander form conspicuous ornaments.

Poppies need staking, and their seed-vessels picking off as soon as the petals fall, or where it is desired to save the seed, a little paper label with the colour written on should be slipped over the pod and held round the stalk by means of two parallel slits cut in the paper lengthwise. As a rule, however, poppies do not come true to seed; and among my own the preponderating shade is always purple—a fact for which I was puzzled to account until I watched for an hour one morning the movements of the bumble bees, intent on their business, and noticed their marked preference for the purple flowers, and remembered that they are the chief fertilisers of all the poppy race. But, after all, I am not a scientist, and so these observations may be quite worthless.

## OUR SEASIDE COTTAGE, AND HOW WE BUILT IT.

By JAMES AND NANETTE MASON.

### PART V.

THE skeleton of the house was now finished, as we told in our last article.

It was a sensible-looking skeleton; not handsome, but calculated to come victorious out of many a stand-up fight with the roughest of rough weather. The builder had done his work thoroughly. We had trusted him, and he had responded by doing his duty. It was to our gratification, though it disappointed the prophecies of some of our knowing friends by whom we had been warned, that builders, of all men, were not angels before their time, and that Mr. Halford would likely enough turn out to be a rogue in bricks and mortar, who would reward our confidence by scamping what he took in hand.

We had reached the inside work which was to make our cottage fit for living in. The joiner was to come on the scene with his flooring-boards, staircases, doors, and window sashes; the plasterer with his plaster and stucco; the glazier with his glass, and the painter with his paintpots and varnish.

It had been agreed that all the woodwork of the house was to be yellow deal, free from large or loose knots, and in the specification it was insisted on that the timber used was to be well seasoned. We did not want after a short time to have the floor shrink so as to leave chinks between the boards, or to have the doors look as if they were falling to pieces.

The floors we had rabated, as it is called, that is to say, the edge of one board was made

to overlap the edge of another. Prevention is better than cure, and we saw that by this method there would be little chance of draughts or dust finding their way up from below. Rabating is also a safeguard when the floor is washed, or when water is spilt accidentally; it prevents any water getting through and damaging the ceiling of the room below.

To have the doors made of well-seasoned wood was a subject of some anxiety, for we had a vivid recollection of living in a house where the doors were seamed with many an unsightly rent, through which the wind used positively to whistle of nights, all due to their having been put together fresh from the forest.

You never can get anything right unless you take trouble, but we found that it needed extra



pains to hang a door properly. The door had to be made to move easily on its hinges, and yet not too easily, for in that case the slightest draught of air hastened its falling-to so much that it shook the building, not to speak of the sudden bang being disagreeable.

For the front door we had polished oak. It was costly, but we were not often extravagant, and with what a sense of respectability that front door inspired every visitor! As a shelter to this door we had a rustic porch with a seat on either hand, and the roof of the porch was supported by two iron brackets, representing huge nondescript beasts, which we had brought from serving a similar purpose in our Surrey home.

Some said they were putting out their tongues at Tideswell with the same impudent leer which one notices in the famous "Devil looking over Lincoln" sculptured on the walls of Lincoln Cathedral, but nobody in Tideswell took them seriously. They were as funny in their way as the griffin at Temple Bar, which is saying a good deal.

Excepting the cellar windows, which were casement windows, and opened outwards, being fastened to their frames by hinges, all the windows of the house were sash windows. That is to say, they were suspended in their frames by weights attached to cords that moved over pulleys. The weights in the case of the plate-glass windows were much heavier than in our ignorance we had imagined necessary. Our ignorance, however, was dispelled when we once saw a sash weighed with its heavy sheet of glass, and the workman selecting the two weights which together amounted to within a few ounces of a counterpoise.

We watched the progress of the windows with fear and trembling, for we had read in a treatise on building by a well-known authority, "Such frames require greater truth and precision from the workman than anything else in the joiner's work of a building; and unless the stuff employed be quite sound and perfectly seasoned all the workman's care will be thrown away."

The ten windows on the two sides of the house that commanded the beautiful view were of plate glass. This was much dearer than the ordinary sheet or window glass, but the effect was much superior, and the prospect was done full justice to. When you look through common glass, you see lines that are straight outside all wriggling about more or less—everything is distorted; but through plate glass everything is seen as if viewed through air. Looked at from the outside, too, sheet glass appears wavy, whilst plate shows a surface as smooth as a mirror. Plate glass also has the recommendation of being warmer because of its extra thickness.

To the cellar windows and to the windows on the ground floor we had outside shutters fitted. These were to be put up when we went from home for a few days: when we were on the spot, they were stowed away in a corner of the cellar.

In the recesses of the bedrooms, closets and cupboards were fitted up, and shelves were placed wherever it was thought they would come in useful. Shelves, closets and cupboards are great aids to orderliness, and we wanted to run our house as a practical illustration of the proverb about having a place for everything and keeping everything in its place.

The mantelpieces next occupied our attention. We had these of enamelled slate—it looked very well and was but a fraction of the cost of marble—except the mantelpiece in the long-room we intended for a library. There the material was oak, to be in harmony with the book-cases.

We made a slight mistake here, which may be mentioned as a warning to others who are tempted to do the like. To save ourselves the

trouble of going to select the mantelpieces at the works, we chose them from a coloured book of designs, and on their arrival two of them turned out much less handsome than we had expected. It was through no fault of the artist, for he had done his best to represent them: it was our own blame for expecting a chromo-lithograph to do what was impossible.

The kitchen range and the grates were now built in. In connection with these we took the advice of friends; it was a pretty confusion, for everyone had a special grate to recommend. We ended in selecting—no, we shall not name the make, for it would look like an advertisement.

When the grates were in, we went up to the house one day to try the anxious experiment of lighting fires for the first time. Would the chimneys smoke or would they not? Luckily for us they did not, and after a long course of fires with the wind from every point of the compass, we came to the conclusion that our house was to be free from one of the greatest plagues that can befall a housekeeper.

About bells—we quite forgot to mention these. A good while before we had arrived at the point of which we are now speaking a man called and introduced himself as an electrician. How he had come to settle in Tideswell was a puzzle, for modern improvements were little known there and except at the railway station an electric bell seemed almost as much an affair of dreamland as a flying machine.

Anyhow he called, and with him was his little daughter, whose bright eyes took our fancy as much as the father's intelligence.

The electrician said he had heard of our building and thought we might care to have electric bells. If we did, he could supply them and fit them up for us.

We laughed at the idea; electricity appeared a servant too grand for our unpretentious abode.

He did not take a laugh, however, for an answer: he enlarged on the advantage of his bells, pointing out how they were certain in action and reliable for all time, and how the expense was not much to start with and a trifle a year afterward. In fact he put the matter so attractively that we ended by promising to think about it.

Those who hesitate are lost. The next time he came we got an estimate, and two days afterwards we gave instructions to proceed with the bells. So were we led into what we had never contemplated, and so was rewarded the enterprise of our electrician.

Before the floor boards were nailed down the tubes were put in, and all that was needed when the house was finished was to run the wires through and fix the indicator in the kitchen.

At last the floors were down, the doors hung, the windows fixed, the staircase completed, the walls plastered, and almost everything of a matter-of-fact character brought to a close. Now we came to the finishing touches. The painters arrived, and they varnished the woodwork, whitewashed the ceiling, and colour-washed the walls.

The walls we proposed to have painted in the long run, but we were told that it would be prudent to have them colour-washed at first and let them stand a few years before doing anything further.

Two or three of our rooms we wanted to have washed with a lovely shade of green, and we were priding ourselves on our good taste when one morning in walked an acquaintance, who after looking round said, "Are you sure there is no arsenic in that paint?"

We were not sure; indeed we had never given a thought to the subject. But if there was one thing we wanted more than another it was to be obedient to all the precepts of sanitary science. Luckily, the colour as yet

was only laid on a small corner of one of the walls. We got a sample and sent it to an analytical chemist, who reported it to be highly arsenical, and that if we wanted to be healthy we had better not use it.

"But," he wrote, "you may obtain any colour, even the brightest greens, free from the slightest trace of arsenic if you only know where to apply." This information he gave us, and so we finished the colour-washing of our walls with easy minds.

Labour and industry had now brought us to the point of the house being habitable. Habitable, that is to say, after it had stood for a while to get thoroughly dry. "Let your enemy live in a new house for the first six months," says the proverb, the object no doubt being to make an end of him.

But though the house proper was completed, several pieces of work remained to be attended to out of doors.

A cement cover, for example, had to be put to the dome of the tank so as to keep it from being injured by the frost.

Then the pillars had to be built on which to hang the double doors that formed the cart entrance to the yard. When the pillars were built and the doors were hung, the yard had an air of privacy which it had previously lacked, for the gap in the boundary hedge where the pillars stood had hitherto been kept closed against stray donkeys—our only trespassers—by a couple of hurdles.

Next, the entrance gate for visitors was set up, and this was a much more ornamental structure. To this gate, which was about sixty yards distant from the house, there was an electric wire run, and our electrician contrived it so that the gate on being opened set a continuous action bell ringing in our little hall, which ringing when once started went on until stopped by raising a lever on the bell.

We now set to work to get up the furniture we had in the cottage, and the cases of books that were stored away, as we have told, down in the village.

Some additional furniture had to be bought, but our ideas of furnishing we found getting every day more simple. Although perhaps in these articles we have made light of the trouble of building, we rather had a good deal of bother, and when it was all over a natural reaction set in. We began to think how foolish it was for us to be slaves to our possessions, and to be worried and anxious merely on account of what we owned in this world.

When we started we had ideas of furnishing the new house with a trifle perhaps of extravagance, but we came to see that if carried out they would entail trouble in keeping in order, and the necessity of having people always on the spot to look after things. We should cease to be master of our own goods; the tables would be turned and they would lord it over us.

The more people have as a rule the more their care. We wanted to go laughing along and to preserve that sense of freedom which is one of the delightful characteristics of life in Bohemia. So we made a resolution that we would complete the furnishing in the simplest manner. Things must be nice; but they must not be numerous, and they must be of a kind to be easily looked after.

Would this way of managing suit everybody? Probably not. But we were of an exceptional race. If the truth be told, girls, we too were always happy and contented, because we lived in shadowland where everything was just right because it was created by our fancy.

The bookcases were set up, and considering that they had not been made for the house they fitted very well. Then came the labour of unpacking the books and sizing and arranging them on the shelves. This took a con-



siderable time, which was to be expected, as the shelves to be filled, if put end to end, would have extended to about a seventh of a mile.

We put all the poetry together, and all the fiction, and all the history, and all the biography and autobiography. The art books were arranged in one bookcase, the music in another, the topographical works in a third, the encyclopædias and works of reference in a fourth; in short, we did everything we could to make it easy to lay hands at once on any book we wanted.

This pleasant labour being at an end, we had a little breathing space which we determined to utilise by giving a supper-party to celebrate the completion of the building, just as we had given one after the laying of the foundation-stone.

By this time it was summer, and we thought it would be an original plan if we had the supper under the shelter of a tent hired for the purpose and erected in the garden.

All the men who had done any work on the building were invited, together with their wives and sweethearts, if they had any, and space would fail were we to attempt telling of the doings that signalled our pleasant friendly gathering. When it grew dark we had from the terrace a display of fireworks which we had ordered from London. It was the most sensational exhibition that had been seen in Tideswell since the far-back date rejoicings for the marriage of the Prince of Wales, and our house took its place in the village amidst a blaze of coloured lights, golden flower-pots, jewel fountains and Roman candles.

At the supper-party Mr. Halford and Annie King were present, of course. We had come to look upon them both as dear friends, whose presence formed one of the charms of Tideswell, and it may therefore be imagined with what pleasure we heard from them a piece of news to the effect that that very day they had arranged to be near neighbours of ours.

It was in this way:—There was a field adjoining our little property, and when we first came we looked at it several times—being smitten with what is known as "earth hunger"—and wanted to annex it to our territory. But the owners, who were shrewd people, took it into their heads that we wanted it badly, and asked rather more than three times what it was worth.

We consequently gave up all thoughts of it, and subsequently, having got the better of the earth hunger malady, told Mr. Halford we would not think of it at any price. Knowing this, he *had come* to the conclusion that he could not do better, if the owner would only listen to reason, than buy it himself and build a house on it for the occupation of himself and Annie.

He managed the bargaining cleverly, paying for the property within a few pounds of what we thought its value. In little over a fort-

night they hoped to lay the foundation-stone of their new dwelling.

"And the same day," said Mr. Halford, "we have fixed for our wedding-day. I know you will remind us of the saying, 'Before you marry be sure of a house wherein to tarry'; but we have thought about that, and taken a house on the road to the sands for the next twelve months."

And so it all ended happily. The stone was laid and the wedding-bells were rang, and Annie King became Mrs. Halford, and in course of time she and her husband lived within a stone's throw of us in a house on the same plan and equally well built with our own.

For months before they settled there we had a busy time of it trying to get our garden in order and the outside of our cottage made beautiful. In this we were greatly assisted by nature. The ground was irregular and seemed meant for picturesque effects. We tried as much as possible to fall in with what appeared to be its character, for it would have been foolish had we attempted anything like formal gardening on our rough hill-side.

The spirit of Tideswell was not that of the rhyme—

"Never will I give advice  
Till you choose to ask me thrice,  
Which if you in scorn reject  
'Twill be just as I expect."

We got advice gratis on every subject under the sun, and very kind and enlightening some of it was. On the subject of gardening advice came more plentiful than ever, for all our neighbours had gardens and were more or less authorities on floral culture. And what was best and kindest of all, they backed up their good counsel with practical examples, sending us plants of all kinds till we grew positively uncomfortable under such liberality.

But the gardens of Tideswell were matter-of-fact and utilitarian as a rule—nobody pretended to anything else. We told a neighbour one day we were going to try a higher flight, on which he very gravely remarked that we must try to lay out our grounds in accordance with "correct principles of taste."

"And what are those?" we asked.

"I have not the least idea," he answered; "but I thought it the correct thing to say."

We started operations at the front door and worked outwards from the house. Paths were made winding about and about, and every path was bordered with flowers, and when one tired of looking at the flowers the eye could rest on the lovely view that lay for miles beyond the hedge. And seats were placed everywhere commanding the sands, and the marsh, and the lighthouse, and the woods, and the fertile fields in which all day long there was something doing.

For plants we resolved to confine ourselves pretty much to old favourites, and to cultivate

perennials in preference to annuals. And we made this a leading question to be answered in the affirmative before any plant was admitted to our domain—"Was it able to take care of itself?"

If it required nursing in winter and spring, or needed any special care to bring it to perfection, we would have none of it.

This was just carrying out the rule which we had laid down to govern our life in the inside of the house. We were not going to be slaves to our surroundings.

Under this regulation, once the garden was fairly started, it was gay with flowers for the greater part of the year—snowdrops, crocuses, winter aconites, primroses, cowslips, pansies, sweet violets, thrift, white and tiger lilies, Jacob's ladder, Moses in the bulrushes, ladies' locket, Black-eyed Susan, and many more equally familiar and equally beautiful. And little trouble it gave us either except in the way of keeping down weeds and feeding the ground with manure.

At the higher end of the garden we had a rustic summer-house built with a thatched roof for coolness, and with plate-glass in all the windows. And this summer-house was connected by an electric bell with the house, which saved a great deal of trouble in going to and fro.

About the time of the completion of the summer-house the question came up, What should be done with the old cottage? It had served its turn so far as we were concerned by giving us shelter whilst the new house was being built, but now that we were settled in the new house it looked as if it were going to prove a white elephant.

There were objections to letting it even if we were fortunate in securing the best tenants in the world, and if we chose to keep it empty there would be an annual charge for repairs—and a cottage that has been up for eighty years may be excused if it needs repairs—and that cost would just be so much wasted money.

We decided to pull it down, sentimental regrets notwithstanding.

Every bit of the old structure was made useful. The cob of its walls was put to enrich the garden, the stones to help to make the paths, the woodwork went for firing, and the windows helped to make lights for a garden frame.

The day when the last of the rubbish from the foundation was carted away we had a bonfire of all the packing-paper, straw and chaff, with which our goods had been protected in the removal.

And when the bonfire had died out, we two were sitting at tea in the summer-house.

And one of us said, "What an improvement this life is over our life on the Surrey hills!"

"Yes," said the other, "it was a fortunate day when you first read out that Tideswell advertisement."

