

## A GIRL'S ROOM.

HARRIET FRANCENE CROCKER.

COME gather around me all ye girls—blue-eyed, brown-eyed, black-eyed, gray-eyed, slender girls and plump girls, tall girls and short girls; merry, blithe, warm-hearted maidens, bright in the golden sunshine of your fresh, young womanhood.

Let me talk a little with you (for I am a girl too) about that thing which is of interest to us all—a girl's room.

Should it not be one of the brightest, prettiest, neatest, most expressive rooms in the whole house?

To us it should be, and oftentimes is, I am sure, the dearest spot in the whole dear home—a haven of rest after hard physical or mental toil, a refuge from all the little troubles and anxieties of every-day life, so trivial in themselves, yet so harassing when combined, an ever-waiting friend offering its silent welcome to its girl-mistress.

It is universal, I think—this devotion of a girl to her room.

There is a sort of pride in the possession and responsibility of even one small room, if it be hers—her very own—which is a pleasant thing to see.

A girl should, from the proud young days when she first begins to "help mother," assume the care of her own room, and strive to make it one of the prettiest, pleasantest little retreats in the world. I can imagine a little maid taking charge of her own little room, and keeping the same one all the way up through her teens till she arrives at woman's estate. I can fancy the little alterations being made, very gradually, as the child's mind expands, and her character broadens and deepens. The beloved dolls and toys giving place to books and pictures, the books and pictures themselves replaced by others a little "older," treasured little souvenirs, valueless in themselves, but dear to her whose property they are. A girl's room need not necessarily be expensively furnished to be a lovely room. Some of the simplest and least expensive bed-chambers are often the prettiest. Here is a fine field of operation for a girl's taste and talents. It is possible for every girl to have a dainty room if she will.

First of all, dear girls, let the room be *clean*. It can never be too clean or too neat for health, beauty or comfort. Be especially careful about the bed. Have its draperies white and pure as a girl's nest should be, always. Never have a soiled pillow-case concealed by a beautifully-embroidered "sham." If necessary have the sham of Puritan simplicity (and in my eyes they are the prettiest), but never have occasion to be glad that they will cover up those soiled cases so nicely when a friend drops in. Many are discarding the sham entirely, leaving the pillows exposed, but many also cling to the pretty affairs.

Just a word about the spread or outside covering. That crazy-quilt you have been making is beautiful indeed, and veritably a work of art, but, do you know, somehow a plain white counterpane seems ever so much prettier and daintier to me? The quilt would add a bright bit of color to the room, folded and thrown across the bed at the foot. Let the toilet stand draperies, and those of the dressing-case and mirror be snowy in whiteness and soft in texture.

Is it necessary to say a word about fresh air? You girls are studying hygiene at school, and listening to lectures on the subject, so we will not discuss it. We all know how important it is to flood our sleeping-rooms with a rush of pure fresh air, and give them a daily bath of sunshine.

Strive, girls, to make your room express individuality. Let it be so arranged and decorated that everything shall possess its own significance, and that, should a stranger enter the sacred precincts, it would not be a difficult matter to determine, to a great extent, your character. Rooms are great tell-tales. They are very expressive of the tastes and pursuits of their occupants. A girl's room is often a true index of her real character, and she should aim to make it express or suggest nothing which is not pure and good, and beautiful. The articles in our rooms influence to a great extent, our lives. That which we see constantly, cannot fail to impress itself upon us, either for good or evil. Dear girls, we must never let it be for evil!

Let your pictures be not many but well-

chosen. Have none that may arouse any slumbering tendency to ill, or fan to life any faint ember which you are trying to crush to ashes. I would have every picture *mean* something. One fine, well-framed engraving is worth more to you than all the woodcuts and chromos with which some girls almost literally paper the walls of their rooms. I have in mind, just now, the room of a dear friend of mine. Her walls are almost hidden from sight by pictures from magazines and papers, chiefly portraits of great people. It is pretty in effect, but it seems to me it would be a distracting room in which to rest. This same girl has a large library in her room, a perfect luxury of books, scattered around in delightful confusion. You who are not the happy owners of so many books, never mind, but have your own little book case in your room, filled with your few treasured volumes. Do not have a single book on your shelf, just to fill up, one for which you care nothing, but let each one express a choice and a taste on your part. It is a good plan to have a favorite book or magazine propped open on your dressing-case. A good bit of reading can be done each day while you stand before your mirror combing your hair and making little changes in your toilet. The time would otherwise be wasted, and is it not better to save it? At this moment I have "The Gates Ajar," that oft-read book of mine, propped open on my bureau, waiting for an odd minute.

Let your room express repose and rest. Let it be the ideal of comfort, and peace and quiet. Do not be so careful of it that it is too good for the dear tired mother down stairs to come up at your call and lie down upon that soft spotless bed to rest, while you sit near and read from your mutual friend Dickens. Never mind the creases and depressions in your pretty bed when mother rises refreshed from her little afternoon nap; you should be thankful that they are there.

Have, if you can afford it, everything beautiful and luxurious in your room. Make it smile with quiet loveliness; have soft, furry rugs to step on the first thing in the morning, dainty wicker rockers to offer your girl friends, a cosy little grate to sit dreaming by in quiet evening hours, a writing-desk, which will make letter-writing a delight, and oh, there is no end to the pretty things which

contribute to make a girl's room a thing of beauty. Have always, when possible, a few flowers on your table—in summer, daisies—and have among your books that one of Ruskin's in which is that exquisite little thing about daisies and girls.

If you can, have one or two plants growing in your sunniest window. It is a very pleasant thing to watch and water and care for a little slip of a thing, and see it gradually expand into a lovely, blossoming, flourishing plant, and know that by your encouragement the change was wrought.

It is not difficult to keep your rooms in order, if you are punctual and systematic in your attendance upon them. Set apart a certain forenoon each week to devote to the care of your room. Even though it does not seem to need the broom and duster, use them, and you will see it did, after all. I remember, when I returned from boarding-school a few years ago, I found, pasted on my mirror-frame, a little motto, "old as the hills," but always good: "Order is Heaven's first law." I knew it was the mother's hand that placed it there, hoping it might cure me of a certain disorderliness of habit. It is still on my mirror-frame, and still preaches its little sermons as of old.

It is a good idea for girls to purchase with their own money, articles of furniture for their rooms. To make little sacrifices now and then, and buy some new chair or table, a set of bed-springs or a mattress, perhaps, or a set of crockery. These she can feel she owns, then, and her room will seem doubly dear if it cost some sacrifice. Let the room, I repeat, express individuality. Do not try to make it just like some other girl's room, but let it be your own. Let your favorite color predominate. Let little souvenirs of good times meet your eye, to renew the pleasant thoughts of other days. Let the photographed face of your most-loved friend greet you when you awake from your slumbers in the morning.

Do not forget the little Bible, girls, but keep it handy for hours when strength and help are needed.

Strive to make your own especial domain a restful, harmonious apartment, a quiet peaceful, refining room, the emblem of purity, a place of which you may be proud, a perfect "poem in itself!"