

case— Did you see the witch anywhere around, Hanzel?"

The brown one opened his mouth, closed it and shook his head.

"Dumb, perhaps," I suggested to Ann. "You try Grethel."

"Would you like some gingerbread, Grethel?" asked Ann, diffidently. A vigorous nod was the only answer.

"Both dumb," I said sorrowfully. "But that doesn't matter. Doubtless it is but a temporary dumbness owing to some evil enchantment. They seem to be able to eat gingerbread all right. Milk, kiddies?"

"I wish they would speak," said Ann. "What is your name—I mean how did you get here, dears?"

The bigger brown one made a great effort and succeeded in saying, "Came."

"Just so," I said, "exactly what anyone might do. He seems to be a sensible lad, Ann. Isn't the gingerbread good?"

Ann took another piece by way of answer. "I wonder," she said, "if it is a diet of gingerbread that makes these kiddies so brown? Even their eyes are brown."

The eyes referred to opened still wider, but neither of their owners spoke. Only, Grethel, seeing something inviting in Ann's smile, edged a little closer. "What is it, dear?" asked Ann.

"Pretty," lisped the child.

"What is pretty? This?" Ann lifted a slender chain which hung about her neck.

Grethel shook her head and stretching out a tiny brown hand very reminiscent of gingerbread. She stroked the front of Ann's white blouse.

"She means you are pretty," I explained. "Great eye, Grethel."

Grethel laid down a half slice of gingerbread for which there was positively no room and, stretching out the other hand, demanded, "Up."

"Up. Where?" Ann's enquiring eye wandered toward the ceiling.

"She wants you to take her up," I explained again.

"Oh!" said Ann.

She lifted the little thing almost timidly, but finding the action quite natural, instinctively arranged her comfortably, Grethel gave a sigh of huge satisfaction and, leaning back with a little snuggling motion of her round head, closed her eyes. Seeing that Ann looked embarrassed I applied myself to sweeping up gingerbread crumbs and Hanzel, deciding that the feast was over, basely deserted his sister and uttering a wild whoop fled.

"Are you ready to go now, Ann?"

"No."

I swept up more crumbs and then went to the door and looked out. In the open country it would still be bright with sunshine, but here the path was already shadowy, what sun there was came slantingly and lay in little pools of gold. There was quiet save for the native unrest of the wood. The warm air was laden with wood scents; a squirrel peeped saucily around the nearest tree, pausing to observe me with bright-eyed interest.

"She must be heavy," I said without turning. "Better let me lay her down."

"No," said Ann.

After a little while she said: "It has been a perfect day. I wonder why you did it, Jack?"

"Well, you see, Ann, it was impulse, really. But perhaps there was a reason. You remember that I promised that you should always have whatever you wanted? I thought you had everything—until lately. Lately, I have known that you wanted something. I did not know if it were something real or just—just a gingerbread house, you know. And I thought that perhaps if we had a day together, all by ourselves somewhere, I might find out. Won't you let me take the baby?"

"No. And did you find out?"

"No."

"You've given me so much already, you see," said Ann.

"There isn't any limit to what I want to give you, Ann."

"What if there were a limit to my pleasure in taking?"

I was silent.

"What if I say that I am beginning to be ashamed and dissatisfied. What if I am beginning to want to do a little giving myself?"

"You have given me everything."

"Everything? Isn't there anything more that you want? Not even a 'gingerbread house'? Be honest now."

"Nothing," I said stubbornly. "And now we must go back, dear. Give me the baby. I know where she lives. Do you want to know—"

"Oh, no. That would spoil it. Be careful, don't waken her. How awkward men are! Oh, Jack, be careful of her feet! There, that's better."

But we were not destined to bear the sleeping Grethel home. Someone who looked very much like her mother met us at the turn of the path.

"The charcoal-burner's wife," I explained to Ann. Ann gracefully acknowledged the introduction and superintended the exchange of Grethel. "She's just the dearest baby!" she told the charcoal-burners' wife.

"What did you say, Ann?"

"Oh, nothing!"

We found Pagasus where we had left him, the picture of abused but resigned patience. The remains of a frugal meal lay scattered on the grass.

"Wouldn't do to give him oats, you know," I said. "He is much too fiery, and we don't want to hurry home, do we?"

"No."

We settled ourselves in the funny old phaeton and turned Pagasus homeward. The sunset burned

through the haze of fine, white dust on the long, straight road.

"It was a lovely gingerbread house," said Ann, musingly. But I've changed my mind. I don't want a gingerbread house. I don't want anything but what I have this very minute—except what I'm going to get."

"What are you going to get?" I said, idly.

"Well, you see, it's hard to explain, because it is for you too, and you have just said that you don't want anything."

HINTS ABOUT HOUSECRAFT

NOW often do we hear the expression, "comfort of a home," and how frequently we find a home whose furnishings are not suggestive of that quality! We remember many "best rooms" or parlors which struck a chill to the very heart, in their impressive gloom and stiffness. There was nothing cheerful or inviting about their prim and frozen order, and we recall with sadness the slippery horsehair furniture with cold mahogany "frames," which extended no welcome to weary limbs.

The modern city house affords little room, for either decoration or true comfort, until we come to residences costing upwards of ten thousand dollars. Yet, even with the smaller homes, much may be accomplished if every effort and thought are expended to secure cheerfulness and light. If



A WIDE STAIR LANDING

possible, the dining-room should be made a sunshiny spot. In the illustration shown on this page, there is light and cheer in this most important room, where the family assembles at least twice a day. It is enough to send one to business or school with a headache, to have breakfast in some of the dismal, ill-lighted rooms which serve as dining-rooms. Imagine coming down to breakfast on a cold and rainy November morning, in a room with dull wall paper, ugly carpet and depressing hangings! It would take the heart out of you before the day's work was even begun.

In a description of a bright dining-room, the architect says: "The sideboard nook has the walls above the sideboard lined with mirrors set in gilt frames, and the large window on the opposite side of the room is a French casement leading on to the front porch, while the group of three windows on the front has a wide sill on which rest potted house plants. The fireplace is so arranged that when the fire is burning, one's back is not scorched with the heat while sitting at the table, an annoyance frequently met with in poorly arranged dining-rooms. All the woodwork is painted white, and the fireplace is faced with Delft-blue picture-tile and has a red brick hearth. Dull green tiles might be substituted here if preferred. The dado between base and chair rail is of cement painted white, like the woodwork, and above the rail is a striped green paper with a finish like satin. The ceiling is tinted cream white."

The hall in the average city dwelling is narrow, dark and not too well ventilated. In village and country homes there is the opportunity for better things, and the hall may be made a veritable place of welcome if cosy seats are arranged and an air of brightness given to the entrance. First impressions are half the battle, and, if the hall presents a scene of comfort and well-being, the guest is sure to carry away a pleasant memory. Pictures hung in the hall should always be of a bright and cheering nature. If you must have scenes of slaughter and sickness on your walls, put them in the library or the "den," and do not let them be the first sight on which the eyes of the stranger may rest. If you can have an open fireplace in the hall, by all means let it be found facing the open door, and shedding an inviting and consoling warmth on a winter night. The blaze on the



A BRIGHT DINING-ROOM

"For me? Then, of course, I want it. Is it a surprise?"

Ann dimpled. "It begins to look as if it might be," she admitted. Her eyes were observing me narrowly from under the shade of her hat. "Think," she commanded suddenly, "think of the things that you want most of anything in your very heart of hearts! Quick!"

Involuntarily my mind flew back to the vision of Ann with the sleeping baby in her arms—

"That's it!" said Ann, with a contented sigh.

hearth gives a courage and heartiness to the tired or disconsolate that nothing else can bestow, and its charm will never be less. Whatever changes may come in modes of heat or illumination, the open fireplace will hold its own and give comfort unto weary travellers.

I N the bedrooms, there is a great latitude of taste and choice. It is noticeable how much modern fancy runs to light effects. The bronze and dark greens of the "Eighties" appear to have disappeared entirely. The floral effect, in rosebuds, violets and forget-me-nots, with ribbon-like decoration, has been in vogue for the last two years.

A light blue satin-stripe paper supplied the foundation color for the principal bedroom suite in a picturesque model house, as described by the decorator. Sheer white muslin ruffled curtains next the glass would give the required touch of daintiness, the inner curtains being of blue and green cretonne. The furniture might be of mahogany or white enamel with a brass bed and a blue-green-and-white rug.

The popular amethyst and plum and wine shades can be beautifully combined this year in a bedroom or dressing-room scheme as wall papers, draperies and carpets are shown in these delightful tones, which form an admirable background for either light or dark furniture. For a small chilly-looking chamber looking east, the suggested scheme was bright yellow walls, with white woodwork, and furniture, a brass bed, cream Madras curtains, and a golden tan carpet.

A MONG unique floral decorations, *The Table* discusses several modes of such dainty embellishment.

From the florist will be ordered five wire-pieces, four shaped as horseshoes, and one as four-leaved clover. The four-leaved clover shape is for the middle of the table. It should be of fair size, each of its four leaves being about six inches across. The stalk should extend about a foot away from the point where the four leaves join. This point should have a round hole where a vase or a slender piece of rusticana glass can be set.

The clover shape is really outlined in tin, being, in actual fact, a narrow edging in this shape of tin an inch in height. Very fine wire net is stretched over this tin to form the leaves. A person handy at wire twisting can, with strong wire, form the shape, then coarse net may be sewn over the outline with equal effectiveness.

Having obtained the shape, all that is needed is to cover it entirely with white flowers massed together, the stalk, which should be an inch wide, being covered with moss, though a trail of smilax answers well enough.

The four-leaved clover, when flower-filled over all its net, will have a thick, cushion-like, raised appearance. It must be set upon a color that will bring out its shape perfectly. A green centrepiece would show up the white flowers well, but would spoil the stalk. If such a color is used, the stalk, too, must be filled with white blooms. A scarlet centre will show out the massed flowers exceedingly well, and the green stalk also.

It is well, in making this white emblem of fortune, to make a delicate edging all round the leaves with feathery fern, just short bits being inserted in the rim's edging of holes.

The four-leaved clover looks well in scarlet blooms, and is also pretty in Neapolitan violets which are expressly grown for New Year decorations.

In changing the color of the flowers, care must be used in making the table centre of a color that will show the mass up well.

At the point where the four leaves meet a blanché centre glass of rusticana ware will be set. This glass is cheap, and is made to simulate rustic branches. It is tinted in pale greens very often, the branches being of pipe-like slenderness, each made to hold one bloom and to show it to the best advantage. These branching vases stand on slender feet and are tall. When filled they need but a very few flowers, yet make a good show, ferns being used to give grace and lightness.

A home-made wire stand can be contrived if this glass is not to be obtained. A tall wire stand, with wire circlets attached to hold flowers, will answer just as well.

The four horseshoes are for the table corners. They are really horseshoe-shaped vessels, holding water. Flowers and ferns are set in these, the stalks being firmly held by netting, which is sewn over the inch-wide tops of the tins. The shoes should be of a size which is equal to each leaf of the central clover. If this sign of fortune is filled with white flowers, the corner emblems may be red. A vase with a single flower and a fern should stand in each shoe.