

The Things I Ask

I ask not wealth, but power to take
And use the things I have aright,
Not years, but wisdom that shall make
My life a profit and delight.

I ask not that for me the plan
Of good and ill be set aside;
But that the common lot of man
Be nobly borne and glorified.

I know I may not always keep
My steps in places green and sweet,
Nor find the pathway of the deep
A path of safety for my feet;

But pray that when the tempest's breath
Shall fiercely sweep my way about,
I make not shipwreck of my faith
In the unbottomed sea of doubt;

And that, though it be mine to know
How hard the stoniest pillow seems,
Good angels still may come and go,
About the places of my dreams.

—Phoebe Cary.

Healthy Homes

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MOST of us spend a great part of our lives at home. It is therefore very important that our homes should be as healthy as possible. We cannot all choose where we shall live or in what sort of house we shall make our home; and, unfortunately, there are many houses so constructed that they are not very conducive to the health of their inmates. But apart from these matters of structure over which we may have no control, there are several little things which, if attended to, materially lessen the dangers which we all run when we shut ourselves in from the free air and sunlight of the outer world. The three things I wish to insist on are *Fresh Air, Sunlight, and Cleanliness.*

Fresh Air is the most important of all. The air of an occupied room soon gets quite unfit for breathing unless there is sufficient outlet for the used-up air and an inlet for fresh air. Most people know this; but they also know that if they open the windows on a cold day there is a draught which, to many people, is very unpleasant. They are told that if the windows are open at the top there will be no draught, and they are given scientific reasons why this must be so. In practice, however, they find that this is simply not true; and though they may willingly admit that fresh air is a good thing, they prefer their immediate comfort to a possible ultimate benefit which is brought about by so much present unpleasantness. Now, to those who are so susceptible to draughts, I would point out how much can be done to obviate the discomfort of open windows by gradually becoming accustomed to them. Begin in the warm weather, and you will find that the practice can be carried *right through the winter.* Until this is possible the best plan is to throw the windows wide open at intervals, so as thoroughly to flood the room with fresh air. Every room when not occupied should have its windows open, and the whole house should, for some portion of each day be exposed as much as possible to every breeze that blows.

During sleep the bedroom windows must always be open, and care should be taken that the chimney is clean and not blocked up in any way. Many people sleep with their window-blinds down or with curtains drawn. This is a great mistake. Not only is the free circulation of the air in the room interfered with, but the *life-giving light of the morning sun is shut out.* Some people find they cannot sleep after day-break if their window-blinds are up; but this is merely a matter of habit, and a little perseverance will soon get over the difficulty. It should be a rule at all times to let what sunlight there may be to penetrate into every part of a house. The over-careful housewife who shuts out the blessed sunlight in order to save the color of her carpets is usually a mean-spirited creature. Let the light in. It will show up the dark places that are dirty.

The cleanliness of a house is a key to the character of the women that live in it. Quite apart from any considerations of health, many women have a passion for "tidying-up." They are constantly pulling the furniture about, scrubbing and sweeping and dusting in all sorts of out-of-the-way corners. It is often overdone, but it is a wholesome instinct. The dust of the highways may carry the germs of disease, and should not be allowed a resting place in our dwellings. Men as a rule greatly resent the inconvenience and discomfort of a spring-cleaning, thinking, perhaps, that it is a small matter compared with their own lofty pursuits. The young philosopher begins to say hard things about women when he finds his books disarranged and his papers in hopeless confusion. But his housewifely sisters must not mind. They have right on their side. They may quote to the young philosopher these words of wisdom: "Our house is unkept and dirty because, lost in many speculations, we despise the humble broom. Man's first duty is to clean up his premises. . . . In reality man does not know enough yet to be a philosopher. But he can always wash up.—*The Guild.*"