



The winter with its long evenings will soon be here, and in our country, as well as city homes, they are too often regarded as a wearisome time, or else frittered away in useless occupations, when, with a little care and thought, they could be of infinite value to the home circle.

In the homes of our great-grandmothers the winter evenings were a signal for all the members of the family to assemble in the general sitting-room, when the busy housewife plied her spinning wheel, and the girls fashioned their garments, and the boys mended their snowshoes or polished their skates for the next day's sport, while father read aloud the last news received from the old country. The great logs in the old fashioned fire-place blazed and crackled merrily away, throwing a warm glow over the scene and making a home picture pleasant to look upon.

Just such a room is needed in our homes of to-day, when the different members of the family can assemble and help to make the time pass pleasantly during these long winter evenings. The room should be made as cheerful and comfortable as loving hands can make it.

One of the principal items in the furnishing of the room was the lounge, the genuine old-fashioned lounge, with its broad, comfortable seat, where one can lie down without danger of rolling off. If you have consigned the lounge to the garret as being too old-fashioned nowadays, bring it out and never mind if it is old-fashioned; comfort before looks, besides, after you have upholstered it you will be surprised to see how pretty it looks. Give it a coat of varnish and make a good broad mattress and a couple of large pillows.

Make the covers to fit the mattress and pillows of bright-coloured chintz, which can be taken off and washed when required. Next comes the table; let this be large enough for the family to gather round with their work and books. Somehow it seems cosier to sit thus than scattered round in different directions. In the day time the table can be folded and pushed to one side. Some comfortable chairs, and, if possible, a grate fire. If the window has a broad sill, fill it with some choice plants, and one or two hanging baskets; with a little taste and ingenuity in arranging your plants, you may make this one of the most charming and effective spots in the room.

With a good fire blazing and plenty of light you will find your sitting-room requires no second invitation to enter. One by one the family will come in with their books and work, and there need be no yawning and ejaculation of, "Oh, how dull it is! wish I had gone out!"

A pleasant occupation for these evenings is reading aloud. Select carefully books of history, tragedy, adventures, biography, and a few humorous ones which will cause a general shout of merriment round the table, for who does not feel better after a hearty laugh?

Who cannot recall the enjoyment experienced over the adventures of Pecksniff or Pickwick, how the laughter bubbled up and overflowed till the reader was begged to stop. If one of the members of the family happens to have a blue fit, the mirth will become contagious, and lo! it will vanish, unless he were so unfortunate as to be like the lady, who, while a company were laughing over some of Betsey Bobbit's adventures, exclaimed: "I dinna ken what you are all laughing at, to me it is maun foolish."

Reading aloud in the home circle will not only be a source of enjoyment, but one which will help to form a taste for good reading and "open up the springs at which the human mind loves to drink and the sweet waters be freely given to everyone."

#### MORDUE.

WINDOW GARDENING.—Nothing furnishes a room like sunshine and flowers, and with a little care everyone may have a window garden, which will more than repay the trouble bestowed upon it. If one has raised plants from seed, with what pride and pleasure one watches their growth, discovering every day something new and pretty about them. For an amateur, it is better to have only those plants which are easily cultivated. Among these are the Geranium, a handsome one being the Pelargonium. The Bridesmaid which appeared in the October number of *Vick's Magazine*. The delicate colouring of its large flowers is exceedingly handsome. It requires a well enriched loam, heat enough to keep it growing steadily, and a full exposure to the light. Pinch in the shoots from time to time in its earlier stages. Do not let it bloom until it has become strong and shapely. The variegated Aloe is only occasionally seen among house plants, and yet it is easy to cultivate and makes a beautiful appearance, if only for its rare foliage; which can be washed with soap and water to keep clean of dust without injury. A suitable soil for it is one made up of sandy loam and a fourth part of dry mortar beaten up into a rough powder. If wanted to flower the plant must be strong and richly clad with leaves, which in a good plant are marked with transverse stripes of white. It will bear great exposure to sunshine and may be kept dry for a considerable time. Then who would be without the Primula, or Primrose, which all through the winter and late into the spring, gives an abundant supply of flowers? It requires very little care and will thrive as well in a shady window as a sunny one. If the room is very warm, give it the coolest place, and see that the earth is lower at the edge of the pot than in the middle,

as water standing around the crown of the plant rots the flower buds. One of the chief things in management of house plants is plenty of light and sunshine, and an atmosphere neither too dry, nor too close. In our next we will speak of the watering and syringing and give a further list of plants.

#### A SWISS FESTIVAL.

The "Fête des Vignerons" has its legend and its history. Tradition places the confrerie which celebrates it as far back as the Crusades, but its documents take us only to the seventeenth century. At that time its duties were to look after the culture of the vines and visit the vineyards at stated periods. Modest fêtes were held from time to time. Since then the society has obtained a place of great importance in Switzerland, and its fêtes, the last one of which was held in 1865, have developed into a superb and striking spectacle, which any nation might be proud of. The confrerie, while expending a great deal of its energy on these fêtes, has not lost sight of its principal object. It has always retained its motto of "Ora et labora," and undertakes to watch over the culture of vines, visiting the vineyards twice a year, and distributing prizes to those "vignerons" who have attained the highest degree of cultivation, and to whom is also assigned the place of honour in the procession. This year's fête, for which preparations have been going on during the past two years, was held the second week in August. Vevey, the scene of it, is a pretty little village situated on the north shore of Lake Lemman, at the foot of some lofty mountains, which shelter it from the north wind. The heights of Savoy, on the other side of the lake, bound its southern horizon, while the long ranges of the Alps and the Jura extend west and east. In the immense open theatre were crowded spectators from every quarter of the globe. All eyes are fixed on the three magnificent arched entrances, artistically decorated with the attributes and symbols of Pallas, Bacchus and Ceres, the divinities of Spring, Autumn and Summer, and the heralds of the fête. At a blow of the cannon and flourish of trumpets, they made their triumphal entry. First comes the guard of honour, then a band of musicians, followed by a hundred Swiss soldiers, superb men, wearing the traditional red uniform with the white cross. After them comes the *personnel* of the confrerie, all the officers in Louis XV. costumes, and finally the bearers of the prizes and the successful competitors clothed in green and white. Nothing better could have been chosen to affect the mind of the spectator than this brilliant and solemn entrance. Under these costumes of a former time, the Swiss recognizes the Fatherland in its military and agricultural aspects, and feels with the foreigners on either side of him that something grand and worthy of the country has been prepared. The three large allegorical groups enter simultaneously, that of Bacchus in the centre, and we then have before our eyes a scene of incomparable richness and splendour. The bands marching before them are costumed *à la Grecque* white and blue for that of Pallas, red for Ceres, and white and green for Bacchus. Suddenly the vast arena is covered with people—followers of the divinities, grand priests and shepherds, sowers and reapers, satyrs and bacchantes, vintagers, gardeners and joyous villagers. How is it possible to communicate to those who were not present the charm of those rustic songs, of those representations of rural life, of the dances, so different from the theatre ballet, carefully studied and yet so simply and gracefully executed that they seem the attitudes and movements most natural to the dancers? Above all, how can we describe the "entrain," the gaiety with which everything is done by these voluntary actors who, in idealizing their daily life, instinctively unite the poetical and the real? The troop of Pallas was, perhaps, the gem of the fête. Spring was represented in all its virgin freshness by a young and smiling goddess, seated a care of azure blue, decorated with wild flowers and followed by a host of little children, all in Greek costume, shepherds and shepherdesses *à la Watteau*, mowers and reapers. Blue is the predominating colour, though in the ballets, danced to quaint village airs, pearl gray and pale rose form with it a beautiful combination.

The children's ballet was most fairy-like, the effect being heightened by quantities of light gauze, which the little ones threw around and over them as they danced.

The car of Bacchus was a masterpiece of art. Under a dome of green leaves, the whole having been grown especially for the fête, the god, a boy of fourteen years, is seated on a cask in a graceful attitude with two companions of the same age at his feet. The car is drawn by four superb horses, harnessed in red, and led by Ethiopian slaves of the finest colour. In this procession, mythology plays the principal rôle. Wild satyrs, with clubs on their shoulders, fauns and bacchantes are followed by Silenus on his ass, supported on each side by negroes.

The pleasures and toils of winter fitly bring the bewildering scene to a close. It is the season when the peasant is at leisure, the season of long nights and long talks. They have harvested together; she has seen in him a model workman and he has found her gentle and intelligent, and so the natural consequence follows and we have a wedding—a real bride and groom of three weeks standing taking the central place.

We must here put aside all ideas of paid artists. There is not a scene which has not been lived by those who play it. These vintagers, these mowers and reapers, are the children of the country who tend their vines and reap and mow each year. Everything in the fête is of an exquisite realism—the glorification of agricultural work—laborious but salutary, and joyously performed by a strong and free people. The purely æsthetic emotion of every Swiss must have been accompanied by one of deep patriotism, for although attached to their old republic-towns, they know it is not there that beats the heart of the nation, but, as an author of one of their national songs has it,

"La Patrie est sur les monts."

OUTRE MER.

#### THE CATCHWORD IN ADVERTISING.

Advertisers who wish their notices to appear more prominently than those of others, sometimes stipulate for preferred positions in periodicals, while others rely on the general appearance of their "ads" to attract attention. To these latter the catchword is a boon, for the reason that a few words, neatly put, will generally succeed in calling notice to the advertisement which follows. Sometimes the catchword is a question, and a few samples from current newspaper notices may be found interesting:—

ARE YOUR SHOES INSURED?

DO YOU WRITE?

DO YOU WANT A GOLD WATCH?

ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME TO THINK OF A CHANGE OF CLOTHING?

DO YOUR CONGRESS SHOES BAG OUT?

Other advertisers insinuate:

IF YOU ARE IN NEED—

IT DON'T PAY—

LADIES, DON'T PIN YOUR CUFFS.

As to this last we would say that the advertiser has no cause to exult in the fact that ladies don't pin their cuffs. Ever since babyhood we have pinned them ourselves, and we generally do it with a cuff-button, anyway. In another column we are enjoined thus:

BE YOUR OWN TAILOR.

DO NOT STAMMER.

We must respectfully decline to be our own tailor, and the commandment not to stammer glances off us like water from a greased duck. True, we stammer a little, now and then, but it is from choice, and not in defiance of the advertiser. People, as a rule, don't like to be imperatively commanded on first acquaintance, even through an advertisement. The query strikes one as a more proper form of address. Scores of other catchwords could be shown here; many of them artistic in their powers for "fetching" notice. It is interesting to study them, and the field for studying them is one as large and fertile as it is interesting.

H. C.

The number of foreign students at the German Technical High Schools (*Technische Hochschulen*) is steadily increasing, especially at Berlin, where the number of English students preparing for the professions of mechanical and mining engineers, architects, and chemists, amounted last year to 13. Their presence at Berlin is attributed to the fact that technical high schools in the German sense do not exist in England.