

About the House.

House Furnishing.

day you don't see any blossoms and the next day there may be thousands. But you know the blossoms developed slowly, out of sight; and so does the soul, though the outward change may be instantaneous. Take the case of Saul of Tarsus, for instance—that is generally supposed to be a typical "sudden conversion." But was it as sudden as it seemed? "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad" (R. V.) said a voice from heaven, and the strange words were plain enough to the man who had long found it hard work to resist the conviction that he was making a great mistake. The revelation was instantaneous, and so was the outward conversion—the turning about to aim in another direction—but he had been quietly and secretly prepared for it by the still, small voice which made him very uncomfortable, and his spirit was ready for the blaze of light which blinded his outward eyes.

Take courage, then, though you may not be known as a splendid church worker. If you are doing simply and lovingly the work God has put into your hands, speaking a quiet word for Him sometimes, as you can hardly help doing if you care for Him—for one's words will sometimes reveal the thoughts which lie hidden in the depths of the heart—then you are far more likely to be a power for good than if you were a noisy, fussy person, too busy for prayer or quiet meditation. Tender unselfishness will do far more mission work than any amount of wise and clever talk; and there is no need to be discouraged because you don't see any swift answer to your prayers. Remember, a good deal of necessary growing goes on under the surface before a plant gives any outward sign of life, and any rash interference with this secret, hidden growth might stop it altogether. If God, in answer to your eager, unwise prayer, let the full light in too soon on a weak soul, you might have good reason to repent your impatience and to wish that you had been willing to trust Him more. If you sow good seed and water it with prayer, He will, in due time, give the increase. "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted."

"We mar our work for God by noise and bustle;
Can we not do our part and not be heard?
Why should we care that men should see us
With our tools, and praise the skill with which we use them?"

HOPE.

The Sweet, Mysterious Places.

I want to go back to the sweet, mysterious places,
The crook in the creek bed nobody knew but me,
Where the roots in the bank thrust out strange, knotty faces,
Scaring the squirrels who stole there timidly.

I want to lie under the corn and hear it rustle,
Cool and green in a long, straight, soldierly row.
I am tired of white-faced women and men of iron,
I want to go back where the country grasses grow.

To the well-remembered pasture's shadiest corner,
Where under the trees the wild ferns wove their laces:
Hearing the whip-poor-will's voice in its strange rich sadness,
I want to go back to the old, beloved places.

—Clinton Dangerfield, in Youth's Companion.

Cheerfulness.

Did you ever notice how many people you meet on the street have unattractive faces? Yet worry, ill-health or depression will put ugly lines around the mouth and between the eyes. So cheer up, look pleasant and train the corners of your mouth to turn upward. Laughing may wrinkle the face, but it will be in a different way, and you know the fingle:
"Laugh and the world laughs with you;
Weep and you weep alone;
For this sad old earth has need of our mirth—
It has troubles enough of its own."
—Success.

There is much talk nowadays about the "simple life," and much misunderstanding in regard to it. More popularly than one would imagine, the word carries with it the idea of primitive, uncomfortable houses, food of the plainest variety, and minus the little dainty touches which even ordinarily epicurean palates have come to demand; and yet the greatest apostle of the simple life, Charles Wagner, does not insist on any of this monk-like severity. "Simplicity and lowly station," he says, "plain dress, a modest dwelling, slender means, poverty—these things seem to go together. Nevertheless, this is not the case. Just now I passed three men on the street; the first in his carriage; the others on foot, and one of them shoeless. The shoeless man does not necessarily lead the least complex life of the three. It may be, indeed, that he who rides in his carriage is sincere and unaffected, in spite of his position, and is not at all the slave of his wealth; it may be also that the pedestrian in shoes neither envies him who rides, nor despises him who goes unshod; and, lastly, it is possible that under his rags, his feet in the dust, the third man has a hatred of simplicity, of labor, of sobriety, and dreams only of idleness and pleasure." So, according to this, it appears that the rich man in his fine house may lead the truly simple life, the poor man on the street the most complex. The main thing is to be sincere, open-hearted, interested, liberal-minded, unfettered, happy. If a man is happiest and can do his best work in a little house in the woods, with two chairs, a bed and a table, as did Thoreau, then that is the simple life for him. If he is interested in art, and loves to surround himself with beautiful pictures and fur-

if sometimes eccentric, thoughts which were to Thoreau all and more than luxurious surroundings, treasures of art, social intercourse: rather to him or her would the meagreness of furnishing suggest bareness; the little bean-patch, poverty; the great forest, gloom; and the separation from human kind, loneliness. And so it may be well for the great common world to think about its little home surroundings, and bring to them when possible, the best that loom, or brush, or chisel can supply; or, if this be impracticable, the best that "taste," with a limited purse, can demand. Beautiful homes, however humble, assist in developing refined minds; and surely this is no small thing. A boy in a beautiful, tasteful room, feels that his manners are put on mettle. In a slovenly, carelessly-planned apartment, he feels more in mood to relax. Again, æsthetic surroundings should be aimed at, were it only for the keen pleasure which they bring to all but the least discerning eyes; and, surely all such harmless pleasures are worth while. The main thing is to remember that all things must be looked at in the right perspective, and done with reason. Just as soon as one's sense of beauty leads to over-straining one's purse-strings, or to pressure on one's liberty in any way, is the harm done, and the simple life forfeited.

To begin with, it is necessary to understand that great wealth is not essential to good results in house-furnishing. Often the room which costs little is more æsthetic far than the one that costs much; but here again that indispensable factor called "good taste" must be the fairy godmother. Now, good taste may be natural to you—or it may not. If not, you will do well, before investing money in furniture, to make a study of what people of recognized taste have

are, by the best judges, considered more artistic than one whose floor space is crowded with furniture, and whose walls are covered with pictures indifferently arranged.

2. Avoid "spotty" effects. If the wall-paper is figured, try to have comparatively plain carpets and upholstery; if the carpet is figured, have plain paper hangings, etc. A room figured all over—carpets, wall-paper, upholsterings—is positively "night-marish."

3. Choose for each room one prevailing tone, with which any other color in the room must harmonize.

4. As a rule, let colors be either soft or rich, never crude or glaring.

These rules are admirably carried out in the dining-room from which the accompanying illustration has been taken, and which, with the addition of a few easy chairs, might be very well imagined as a charming living-room, or dining- and living-room combined. This room is furnished in tones of brown, the carpet, which has a very unpronounced figure, being in two tones of brown, and the furnishings and woodwork also in brown. The walls are a warm buff-gray, unpapered, and finished in rough plaster effect, while distinction is lent to the room by a plate-rail for bric-a-brac, the hooded grate, and the shade hung by dull copper-colored chains. A touch of warm color is thrown over the whole by window curtains of rich crimson. The hanging beams are a feature coming much into vogue now in some of the most artistic houses. They are not painted, simply stained, when it is impracticable to have them of the natural, oiled wood.

In a future number we hope to speak in more detail of house furnishing especially suited to the artistic rural home, but to-day lack of space demands a reluctant dismissal of the subject.

Ventilating a House.

The thought of opening every window in the house, top and bottom, is very shocking, of course. It is intended that it should be. Many people who think that they are really very fond of fresh air need a shock of some kind—a shock that will make them realize what a well-aired house really is.

"I always sleep with my window open," they will tell you. Yes, but how wide do they open it? Perhaps only six inches, and that only at the bottom, and only one window, so that there is no circulation through the room at all. If that is your way of "having lots of fresh air in the house," then you need a shock of some kind—one that is hard enough to jar the windows wide open. Of course, it is not possible to keep all the windows open all the day and all night all the year round, but it is possible to always have a little circulation across every room in the house at all times. And it is possible to have all the windows wide open during a good part of the day and night.

Do not be content with a house that is not actually ill smelling. Have the air in the house just as fresh as the air out of doors.

This takes constant thought, but the results pay.—(Maxwell's Talisman.)

The Kitchen Sink.

Placing the sink in front of a window helps to make the routine work of washing pans and kettles less like drudgery, says a household magazine. To secure an architectural effect for the exterior of a house this pleasure of an outlook is often thoughtlessly taken away from the kitchen. The secret of making kitchen work enjoyable is to keep recurring duties at a minimum, relieving them by every possible labor-saving device.

For the impossible places to dust—walls and room corners—a broom bag is invaluable. Make it of cotton flannel, with the nap inside, and make it just big enough to slip over the whole "head" of the broom. Run a drawing-string of tape in to hold it in place at the handle. A couple of these bags will be enough for ordinary usage. They should be washed each time after using to keep them always ready to pass over delicate-colored papers in search of dust and cobwebs.—(Sci.)



AN ATTRACTIVE DINING-ROOM.—Note its prevailing characteristic—simplicity. The round dining-table increases in popularity, but any other kind might be substituted for convenience, or if deemed in better harmony with the lines of the room.

nishings, finding that he can live and work best thus, in the midst of such, then, may he find his simple life.

"Plain living and high thinking" is a good rule; yet, looking at the question from the above standpoint, we need not feel condemned if we spend some thought on the beauty of our homes. The little hut at Walden pond, with its woodland surroundings, answered every need for the keen-eyed Thoreau, alive to every beauty of nature, whether the crystallization of the ice on the pond, or the shy flowers nestling in the fence corners. But it is surely no far stretch to say that the great majority of people are not Thoreaus—although there are but few who might not well profit by taking a few lessons from him. The ordinary man or woman, placed in the hut at Walden, would not find it thronged by the green-

written or said on the subject. You may, and should, and must, if you wish to be "individual," develop the faculty of judging for yourself, but you will have to do some plodding, just as you would at the principles underlying algebra or trigonometry, were you anxious to become a higher mathematician. . . . In this first paper we cannot hope to do more than indicate a few first steps, by stating a few broad principles agreed to by artistic furnishers everywhere, and which those who are furnishing or re-furnishing houses will do well to grasp primarily:

1. Avoid cluttering rooms with a crowded mass of furniture, pictures, easels, drapes, etc. etc. A room relieved by broad, yet not stiff, spaces, with touches of color skillfully introduced, and a few good pictures well hung,