



The Family Circle.

THE TRUE IMMORTALITY.

BY EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER.

Long years a sculptor wrought,
Slowly to carve upon the pulseless stone
The glowing vision in his heart that shone;
Then dying, proudly thought,
"Long as the heavens endure, a glorious fame
Shall keep the deathless memory of my name!"

A poet sang such songs,
Where, with his dreaming soul, he sat apart,
As thrilled the great world to its mighty heart,
And swayed the listening throng;
Then dying, thought, "While sun and stars
shall shine,
All men shall sing these deathless lays of mine!"

Beside a sleeping child,
In the still twilight of a summer day,
A mother knelt with folded hands to pray;
Saying, in accents mild,
"Ah! loving Christ! how blest my life would be
Might I but lead my little child to Thee!"

Ages have passed since then;
The sculptor's marble is a shapeless thing;
The poet's song all lips forgot to sing;
And from the hearts of men
The mother's name has faded with the rest,
And only daisies grow above her breast.

Yet, in the world of light,
The child she prayed for by the cradle side
Is shining now among the glorified,
Praise God! both day and night;
And so shall sing, a seraph high and pure,
Long as the years of God's right hand endure.
—Selected.

HOW WE DID OUR HOUSEHOLD ART.

I was always ambitious—at school, at college, in my professional studies, and, after my engagement, extremely ambitious to be married; but so would you, had you loved a girl half as bewitching as my Ophelia.

I said to her father one day, "I think we had better hasten our marriage, look up and furnish apartments, and then I will hang out my shingle and see what I shall do in my profession."

"It seems to me," said Mr. Gager, very deliberately, "you are putting the cart before the horse."

I will not relate the rest of our conversation, but simply say that my persistence won the day. I had by careful saving accumulated a moderate sum, which I believed would carry us along until my profession began to be remunerative, and I felt that the companionship of my sweet Ophelia and the delights of our home, however humble, would be a great stimulus. So we were married, and after much hunting and searching, settled in very small but cozy quarters in the little city of Borrak.

But however expeditious we had been up to this point, it took us no little time to "get to rights"—to arrange curtains, carpets, and furniture. The truth was, I felt called to show my general good taste and "gumption" in the furnishing of our little home, to make it a model, a light for others, who, with small means but much taste and ingenuity, aspired to Art, and I did it in a manner to have made Eastlake mad with envy.

We could not afford carpets, and, indeed, were too "high-toned" to desire them. After I had painted the floor a dark brown, we took some pieces of carpet that Ophelia's mother had given her, and sewing them together, transformed them into rugs by putting on a border of frayed stuff made into a kind of fringe. When completed we could truly say they did not look like everybody else's.

The curtains were made of unbleached cotton cloth; they had "cross bands," of course (they wouldn't have Eastlakean otherwise); the cross bands were of black cambric and Turkey red. I had a suspicion that they had seen service as dress linings or something of the sort, but I never felt like mentioning it to Ophelia, lest it should hurt her feelings, dear thing!

Of course our best room had to have a dado; it would have been like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out, without it. For some time I wondered how I was to manage this, but at last accomplished it bravely by getting a cheap piece of dark-wall paper and pasting it horizontally around the room just above the base-boards. The room was in plain white,

and this rather strong paper made a decided contrast, giving a dado in earnest.

"Don't it look rather queer?" said Ophelia, when it was done. "Somehow, I can't get used to it."

"Oh no," said I; "it is High Art—Household Art—what I believe they call Art furnishing."

A frieze was next in order, and although a difficult matter, my wits served me again. I remembered having seen in my father-in-law's garret a package of papers that came with tea-chests (he had been a tea merchant); thither I hastened, and with the eagerness of a huntsman about securing his game drew forth from their hiding-place a bundle of the scarlet wrappers covered over with Japanese characters.

After being suitably trimmed they were mounted on the upper part of the wall just under the ceiling, and formed a rather bright frieze, to be sure. "But," I remarked to Ophelia, "a bit of bright color in a room is a good thing."

"Doesn't that look just a little bit startling?" queried she, with misgiving.

"Oh, it is 'Household Art,'" I replied; "it is 'beautifying the home.'"

"Well, it may be; but it gives me a sort of restless feeling. I suppose I shall get used to it, though. By-the-way, when I was down street I saw some beautiful pottery in the shop windows—'Beverly Pottery,' I believe they called it. Some pieces were plain, yet to be decorated; some were painted in a most stylish way; and others were covered all over with bright little things cut from paper, pasted on and varnished. Oh, how I longed for some of those pretty things to set off our apartments!"

"Well, you shall long no longer, my pretty maid," said I. "We can do them. Don't you know Aunt Hannah has a lot of Seltzer-water jugs in her cellar that she doesn't know what to do with? With a little fixing they will become real antiques, objects of beauty and art; more than that, some large flower-pot saucers, under the same treatment, will be transformed into plaques; and then—glorious idea!—I can get two or three large pieces of drain-tile, and, decorating them, we can have some great vases fairly rivaling the Chinese. That will be Household Art indeed!"

"Very fine," said Ophelia; "but we can't either of us paint."

"We don't need to," I replied. "The beauty of this Household Art is that it is so simple that even a babe can do it. It doesn't require learning or skill; every man is as good as any other man, and a good deal better."

I hastened away, full of my purpose and enthusiasm, and in an hour returned with a large basket of Seltzer jugs and flower-pot saucers, as well as three pieces of large earthenware drain-pipe. From a neighboring painter I procured two little pails of paint, one red and one yellow, with which I painted the several articles. While engaged in this pleasing task I remarked to Ophelia that in Household Art work the red would be called "a ground of Pompeian red," and the yellow "a body of amber."

"What a great thing is Household Art!" she replied—"to transform the things we have always considered common or vulgar into the very height of refinement! What an age this is!"

"Yes, yes, it is a wonderfully progressive age; Art flourishes on every side. By-the-way, I saw something at Mrs. Joubinboy's the other day that would 'make your mouth water.' She had all her furniture covered with a cheap coarse stuff called burlap, upon which she had stitched little dragons and devils cut from red flannel or black cloth, and you can't think how unique it looked."

"I should think it would have looked awful," said Ophelia, somewhat solemnly.

"Oh no, far from it—truly artistic. We must do some. Then at Mrs. Cutting's I saw some furniture that they had painted black; and then—what do you think?—she had glued on flowers and leaves cut from cretonne and chintz goods, after which she varnished the whole, and you can't think how splendid it looked—so showy and stylish!"

"Well," remarked Ophelia, "I should like to try that. I've got one or two old dresses from which I could cut some excellent things. Really, what a depository of art our apartments will become after a little time!"

Just here there was a loud shout, followed by a rattling sound, as my old friend and chum Tom Bowler bolted in, upsetting the pail of "Pompeian red," which had been resting on the top of the step-ladder while I was painting the upper part of the door-frame only a few moments before.

"Well," exclaimed Tom, "what's going on here, old boy? Are you fixing traps on your doors to catch burglars? I declare" (surveying several streams of "Pompeian red" and amber flowing down his coat) "this is painting the lily! I suppose you consider this the reddest way of receiving your friends. What are you up to? You haven't turned house-painter, have you? Why, you are a gump;

you could get a man for a dollar a day who could do that a great deal better than you can."

"Oh, you don't comprehend it," said I, somewhat piqued; "this is no ordinary painting—this is Household Art."

"Household fiddlesticks!" said he. "You'll make your place look like a child's play-house, as though there wasn't a sensible thing in it—a nest of shams; but never mind—have you got something I can wipe this paint off with?"

After he had taken his departure, I remarked to Ophelia that as we progressed in culture we failed to find the same pleasure in the society of former friends who had not made the same advance as ourselves.

"That's true," she replied; "showing Tom our pretty things seemed like casting pearls before swine."

As the days passed by, our furnishing advanced; the chairs painted black, upon which the flowers were gummed and varnished, were our especial pride.

One day, shortly after we had finished them, a knock was heard at the door, and when Ophelia opened it, she saw, not a little to her embarrassment, two quite elegantly dressed ladies—Mrs. Shinar and Miss Bustle—who had come to make a formal call.

Matters were not well to rights, and the ladies, seeing our embarrassment, very graciously seated themselves, and soon made us feel quite at home. As opportunity offered, I led the conversation up to Household Art, launching out upon its charms, and growing quite eloquent as I explained what we had been doing. "Would you credit it," said I, "those tall vases are only painted drain-pipes, with twenty-five cents' worth of little chromos gummed on and varnished? and would you imagine that that smaller and more antique-looking pair are only Seltzer jugs that by an interesting but simple process—" Here it flashed upon my mind that the ladies were sitting in the very chairs we had so recently decorated in paint, pictures, and varnish—a malicious, exasperating varnish that seemed to have made up its mind never to dry. My voice stuck in my throat. I was unable to finish my sentence, but turned pale with dismay.

"You are not well," said Mrs. Shinar, rising. "Your enthusiasm has been too much for you; you are worn out. I think, my dear" (turning to Miss Bustle), "we had better go." Both the ladies essayed to go, but were held fast; surprised, they started the more energetically, when there followed a great cracking, ripping, and tearing, as one left a good part of her silk gown torn and mangled upon the chair, while the other stood up with the chair (miserable black imp that it was!) clinging to her.

"Oh! o—h!" "Hi—i!" screamed they, at the top of their voices.

Mrs. Shinar's poodle added to the wretched confusion by rushing wildly around, when suddenly it disappeared from view.

When equanimity was regained, my wife explained to the ladies the cause of the accident, and expressed her deep mortification. It was no small matter to get Miss Bustle separated from her chair, and it was finally decided that I should retire while she slipped out of the dress and incumbrance, leaving to Ophelia the separation of the two at her leisure. The ladies arrayed themselves in some plain dresses of my wife's, and as I spied them from the pantry window making their way home in their changed attire, all their airs and graces gone, I could not help laughing in spite of myself. Ophelia, just entering, said I was a wretch; and I merely replied that we couldn't always expect to have things to please us.

Just here the conversation was interrupted by a fearful howling and yelping, which possibly had been going on for some time, but had not been noticed in the excitement. Hastening to the parlor, we found that when Mrs. Shinar's poodle disappeared it ran into one of the newly painted and varnished drain-pipes that had been left to dry in the bedroom upon a little frame I had arranged for it, and there the poor creature was literally stuck fast. We tugged and pulled at him, but in vain; finally I had to get a hammer and break the thing in order to release him. I grieved as I saw two or three days' work sacrificed for the miserable poodle, but there was nothing else to do. Misfortunes followed to the very end; for in endeavoring to give him a hearty "send-off," and applying my foot vigorously for that purpose, the wretched dog slunk away, the newly painted door receiving the full impress of my manly sole.

One day sometime after these events Ophelia came to me with a letter in her hand, saying, "Oh, I've such capital news! Cousin Grace is coming to make us a visit. You've never seen her. She's so nice, and accomplished too. She has studied abroad, and is all up in Art. How she will admire our home! how she will appreciate this Household Art!"

I did not fully share Ophelia's feelings, for my ardor had become a little dampened in regard to Household Art. I had come to have

a vague feeling that "things are not what they seem." However, I was glad to have Ophelia pleased—dear girl!—and so I brightened up my countenance.

In a few days Grace arrived—a very quiet, lady-like person. She was accompanied by Tom Bowler, who, it seemed, was an old acquaintance, and took the opportunity to come up with her. I cannot say that I was particularly glad to see him; I could not forget his last visit; but fortunately he did not remain long after leaving his charge.

It was not long before Grace became quite at home, and so intelligent, sensible, and modest was she that we could not but greatly respect her. Somewhat to our surprise, she made no allusion to our "art treasures," and though I skillfully endeavored to draw her out upon the subject, she avoided any expression with a woman's tact. On one occasion, after tea, as we were sitting around the evening lamp, Ophelia said:

"Now, Grace, you have not told us what you thought of our 'Household Art,' of the 'Home Adornments' we have here. I'm curious to know what you think of them."

There was for a moment or two a slightly embarrassing pause, after which Grace very quietly said, "I fear my views upon the subject of Household Art are unpopular, and as they may not be agreeable, suppose we avoid the topic?"

This expression of course made Ophelia all the more anxious to know what her views were, and I shared her curiosity somewhat. So we pressed her, and told her she should say what she pleased, and we should like her none the less for it—that we wished to improve our views, etc.

"Well," said Grace, "if I speak at all, I must speak frankly, and I fear lest I hurt your feelings." Upon being reassured, she said, "I am heartily in sympathy with the desire to make homes more attractive and beautiful, but I believe a love for what is genuine, sensible, and good of its kind must inspire any successful effort, for whatever possesses these qualities must command respect and give lasting satisfaction. The fault of much of the so-called 'Home Adornment,' it seems to me is, that it is a sham and a pretence. The gorgeousness of the Ind is to be reproduced in paint, putty, and chromos for a shilling. Now the gorgeousness of the Ind is not glaring, for its richness is the richness that comes from most skillful, delicate, and elaborate work, but the cheap imitation lacks those qualities, and is simply tawdry. The beautiful art of pottery (aside from the matter of form) has its peculiar charm in those effects which can alone be obtained in pottery; the exquisite glazing, so varied and surprising; the results obtained from different kinds of clay, or the combining of different clays; or the use of instruments that produce sparkle, variety, or form in relief. These things, it seems to me, are the peculiar charm of pottery—a charm that can be obtained in no other manner; but to take a jug and paint a picture upon it that might just as well, and better, have been painted on a little canvas, is certainly misapplying art, for while pretending to be pottery, it is only paint, and lacks what makes the ware precious."

"Well," said Ophelia, with a half-suppressed sigh, "what do you think of dados, friezes, and rugs?"

"I think they are desirable where a reason for them exists, and where there are means to warrant the undertaking; but as to making them a fashion and applying them right and left, as though they were an end unto themselves, it seems to me a great mistake. They are usually features that imply a considerable amount of richness of decoration and equipment, but how often they are used where they are only a caricature of expensive furnishings! It would be in far better taste for persons of moderate means to furnish simply, having everything good of its kind and wholly unpretentious, than to be decked out in an imitation of costly finery."

"But really," said Ophelia, "don't you think our curtains, with their cross bands (and they were so cheap)—really, don't you think they look quite stylish?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Grace, "you have characterized it all in one sentence—'cheap style.' Cheap stylishness is a bad atmosphere for good people; frank, straightforward simplicity would be a far more healthful one; and the idea that there is any art in it! It is entirely contrary to the spirit of Art, which is built upon the 'True, the Good, the Beautiful—'"

"Bow-wow-wow, ki-yi, ki-yi!" What could it be—a dog loose?

Soon the laughing face of Tom Bowler appeared, as he exclaimed: "I've come to make a little call, if you won't stick me down in one of your Art chairs, or entomb my dog in an Art drain-tile."

I felt provoked, but got Tom a seat. I did not, however, introduce the subject of Household Art, but talked rapidly about other matters; twice he alluded to the paint, but I instantly changed the subject. Near the close