

DREAMS.

By E. NESBIT.

SHE looks on beauty, and it stirs her soul
 With longings vague, and hardly understood;
 Her timid fingers lack the large control
 Wherewith her hopes endow her womanhood.
 She dreams of days when she no more shall sigh
 At strife of tremulous hand and eager eye,
 When she, too, shall find grace her dreams to show
 In such fair form as the immortals know.

Like some fair bud plucked ere it come to flower
 The dream may fade, yet not be all in vain:
 Though Time should give her for her utmost dower
 The common gifts of common joy and pain;
 Though Art and all her visions fade away
 From eyes that watch her children at their play,
 And all the skill that was to give dreams life
 Makes wise the hands of mother and of wife.

Not vain the golden dream, the radiant fire
 That kindled once the innocent brave heart:
 Man's soul grows nobler by a pure desire,
 And Life, thank God, has nobler ends than Art!
 Yet in her home, where Love's wings only stir,
 Whence Art has flown—shall it not profit her
 To have loved beauty in her maiden youth,
 To have kissed the feet of beauty's sister, truth?



"GLORIFIED" WORKMEN'S DWELLINGS.

PART I.

DEAR ELSIE AND ANNIE, Miss — tells me that you have made up your mind to "house-keep" in London on your own account, and to try a flat. She also says your dear mother is anxious about the experiment, having heard dreadful tales of the discomfort and miscellaneous company you might encounter in the sort of flat you propose to take.

As I have tried the plan myself and as I know you two girls are practical and ready to take useful hints, I must give you some, and hope they may be of use.

First of all, I should never recommend any but steady, "level-headed" girls to go to live in a flat. Only, nowadays, when all women must work to live, and I must often live alone or in lodgings, the question is, how to make life as easy as hard daily work will allow. Boarding is one plan, for girls who are out all day, but it is expensive, unless they are prepared to "rough it" very considerably, and the mixed company and want of privacy is often uncongenial. Then comes the plan of lodgings, furnished, or unfurnished: the former leaves you very much at the mercy of the landlady, and the latter is even worse, for it is all but impossible to get unfurnished rooms in a nice house, and here again, a good or bad landlady makes or mars your comfort to no small extent, so, given two sensible girls like you, I should recommend your giving the "flat" a fair trial.

On the principle of "first catch your hare" you will have to look about for a flat, and this is not quite so difficult as it seems, if you are willing, as so many working women of all classes do now, to try "workmen's dwellings." Of these, there are many, in the various districts of London, but naturally you will wish

to be fairly central and within easy, i.e., walking, reach of your work. I should strongly advise your making full inquiries before you settle. Supposing you do hear of desirable rooms, at a weekly rental, you will be asked to give references, and to sign an agreement, and here you had better consult a man friend. Mr. — will be the best, as he knows so much about these dwellings. Do not take rooms with a gloomy aspect, but be sure that on one side or other you have sunlight.

Now as to rental, etc. You ought to get two rooms varying in size from 16 feet by 14 to 17 feet, with a scullery from 9s. 6d. per week to 10s. 6d. Two smaller ones, without scullery, would be cheaper, 8s. to 8s. 6d. Your landlord, or the agent acting for him, will see to the papering and painting of these, but will probably leave the choice of paper, etc., to you. You can now have very lovely shades of plain paper, with no design on it, and unless your rooms are very sunny, I strongly recommend a lemon yellow for both paint and paper. It is cheerful by day and lights up so well at night.

In your "flat" you will find that one of the two rooms is fitted as a kitchen, that is, with a cooking range and dresser. If you have a scullery, the copper will be in that, so I need not trouble you as to contrivances for utilising and ornamenting it, till I hear more from you. But, perhaps you may feel alarmed at the dresser and the cooking range. Well, here is a plan for both, which I think you will like.

First take the stove. That you will find necessary for cooking purposes, but not always necessary for heating. So your best plan will be to have a small oil cooking-stove, which can be placed on the top of the other, and which, if kept clean, will have no odour and will be quite sufficient for all you require. Round the

top of the mantelshelf have an iron rod placed, and hang pretty curtains, to match those at the window. These can be drawn close directly your cooking is over, and will be rather ornamental than otherwise.

The dresser is comparatively easy to manage. You will not require it for plates or saucepans, if you have a scullery, and so you can make it as ornamental as you please. If your rooms are being painted, see that all unsightly hooks and nails are taken out before the painting is done. If not, then you will have to do that for yourselves. Remove the iron handles, and paint the dresser with whatever colour suits your hangings, carpet, etc. It will have to be gone over twice, and if a hard-drying, good enamel is used, it will look very well. Replace the drawer handles with brass ones, which you can often pick up at a furniture dealer's very cheaply, or can buy new for little more. The bottom shelf, where the saucepans usually live, is an excellent place for your typewriter and sewing-machine to stand when not in use. Also it makes a place of refuge for newspapers and magazines which will gather, whether one wishes or no. The drawers you will find invaluable for your tablecloths, serviettes, mats, and so on, and in one, the knives and cutlery and salt cellars can be stored away; also your duster, for the time being. The shelves hardly need any suggestion. Photographs, books, and all sorts of odds and ends will naturally find their home there, and your taste is sure to make the dresser a "thing of beauty." Should you be able to afford it, a strip of looking-glass inserted between two of the shelves, at the right height will be found very useful. This costs about 2s. 6d. per square foot and can very easily be fixed, so as to be removed when you move, if you should have to do so.