

*Staircases.* Staircases are a good test of a well-built and well-planned house. If they are light and easy to ascend, convenient for carrying up and down large and heavy things (such as big beds and wardrobes), a channel of ventilation between hall and rooms upstairs, lighted enough and not apt to get either too close or too cold, the stairs may be the route of many a pleasant journey from part to part of the home, and if stairs and passages are both easy and light, agreeable in temperature and offering pretty glimpses and turns, the daily journeys about the house are a pleasure and restful change.

*Floors.*—The floors of the various rooms should receive more than passing notice. For the scullery, sometimes also for the kitchen and other offices, tile-floors may be preferred; for sitting-rooms, especially for a couple of feet from the walls, boards with a clean surface, smooth and with no wide spaces between adjoining boards, are required: and everywhere level floors with strong joists must be demanded. The floors on the ground floor, and in particular when the board level is below, the same as, or only slightly above, the outside earth level, must be furnished by air bricks with sufficient ventilation to the outside of the house, if dry rot is to be prevented. Dry rot has proved to many householders a sudden and serious loss of comfort and a great expense.

*Lighting.*—A minor question from the point of view of health and comfort is that of lighting rooms at night. Electricity is the most cleanly and simple, and is becoming a less costly means of light than it was; the initial cost of wiring a house and fitting up lamps remains very high in comparison with putting in gas. Oil lamps properly maintained have much in their favour and still form the cheapest illuminant we have. Acetylene gas is often very convenient for a country house, or a group of buildings, and is much less costly to instal than electricity. Suffice it here to call attention to a household problem which in country houses is often