

drawing-room fire, as she would be going in there to sit directly, and replied—

"You'll excuse my naming it, ma'am, but in the 'ignest families where I've lived they've kep' the drawing-room special like lor company, with the chairs and everything smothered in 'olland covers, even to the chandeliers, and it do seem a pity, begging your pardon, ma'am, to think of all them new things getting spoilt like before two months time."

This was rather rude of Anne, but as it showed the motherly sort of interest she took in her young mistress, Margaret answered good-naturedly—

"Oh, you need not fear the furniture being spoilt, I shall try to keep the room nice and pretty always, and I shall never take any untidy work in there. I think those must have been very rough, untidy people you lived with, if they could not sit in a prettily-furnished room without spoiling it."

Anne seemed crushed for the moment, and said no more till she had nearly finished clearing the table, and Margaret had half-forgotten the subject, when she revived it by saying—

"Only last night, 'm, begging your pardon, maste was sitting in one of them light wooden chairs, which there ain't much wear in them I should say, and had got his feet on that sweet, pretty velvet hassock, and I did feel sorry to see it used so reckless like."

"But that hassock is made of Utrecht velvet, which is very strong and durable. Mr. Trent and I do not like having anything about only for show, and not for use if necessary. So now go and light the fire, please."

And Anne obeyed; but she marched out of the room with such an air of superior wisdom and injured dignity, that Margaret felt relieved when she was gone.

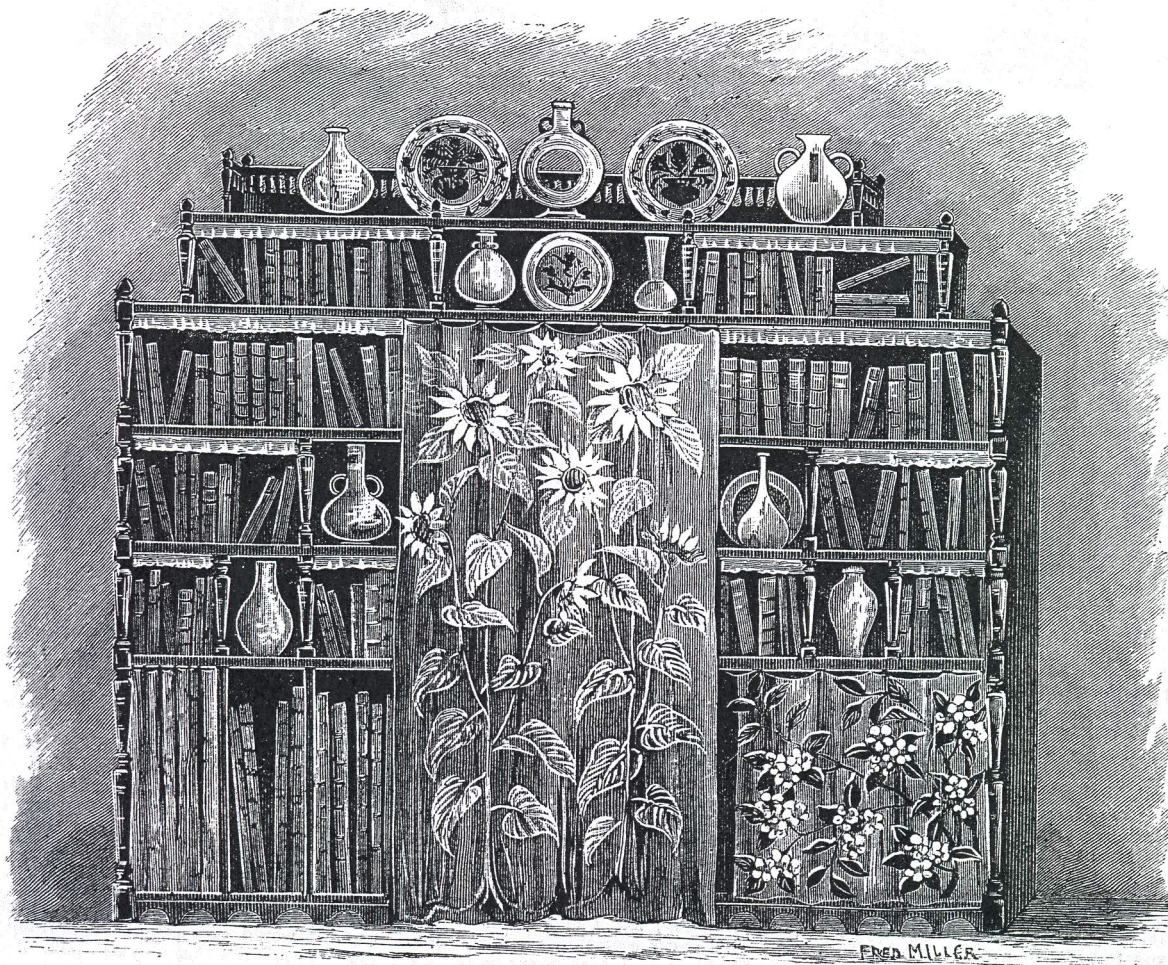
Nevertheless, she so far adopted Anne's ideas as to make some very pretty flowered muslin covers, ornamented with lace frills, to cover some of the more delicately-coloured cushions and chairs during the smoky, winter months, but she was careful that they should be so pretty as to rather improve the appearance of the room than otherwise.

Again Anne disapproved of Margaret's little arrangement of her simple luncheon table. Though she was quite alone, she liked to have the table made to look nice with flowers and glass, and indeed lunch may be made a very pretty meal indeed, and in many ways an economical one too, as all sorts of odds and ends can be used up at that informal meal, which could hardly be allowed to appear at a dinner. Not confining herself strictly to butcher's meat, Margaret varied her bill of fare by little dishes of fish, and *entrées* wonderfully concocted from the remnants of the previous day's dinner. The remains of the last night's pudding, when not "warmed up," were cut into slices and served in a pretty, clear, glass dish. The middle of the table was occupied by a round, china "dumb waiter," on which were placed butter, marmalade, pepper, mustard, and salt, any of which she could bring within her reach by giving the "waiter" a turn. The centre of this was always occupied by a little nosegay. When her supply of flowers was low, Margaret was content with a few green leaves and grass; but

she fancied she could not enjoy a meal unless there was so nothing of the sort on the table.

She had four small square Japanese flower-pots, with a fern growing in each, for the corners of the table, and altogether it presented a very charming appearance, which Anne did not altogether appreciate. She, in a series of hints and politely-turned innuendoes, gave her mistress to understand that on state occasions a large and massive arrangement in the middle of the table was allowable, but every day, and quite alone, and at the four corners as well as in the middle, this was certainly unnecessary, not to say improper, and she could not submit to it without a faint remonstrance, though, as Margaret attended to the flowers herself, it gave her very little extra work.

Margaret and Wilfred had found it the most convenient plan to conform to the usual London custom of dining late, the maid, of course, dining at Margaret's luncheon time. At breakfast Margaret always provided fresh or stewed fruit, or, when that was very scarce, stewed dried apple rings, or Normandy pippins, as she considered it not only an agreeable but a wholesome adjunct to the breakfast table. Margaret always contrived to be down a few minutes before breakfast time to make the coffee (which was always done at the table, for where is there a servant who can make coffee?) and to see that all was neat and right, though the paragon, Anne, considered this very unnecessary. An egg cosy, and a coffee cosy to match, worked in crows, made the table very bright and pretty. At this, as indeed at all meals, the dumb waiter in the middle of the table was invaluable, for those at



NEW TREATMENT FOR FOLDING DOORS (DRAWING-ROOM SIDE).

MARGARET TRENT, AND HOW SHE KEPT HOUSE.

By DORA HOPE.



wearer

MARGARET'S new maid, Anne, was, indeed, a highly superior person, as has been said before. She always wore in the morning the neatest of dark print dresses, changing it at noon for plain black, which impressed one at once with the eminent respectability of the She was never untidy, never behind-

hand with her work, never in a flurry. In a word, she was a treasure, and a perfect contrast from the late domestic, Betsy.

This last-named damsel was now married to the faithful baker, and the young couple, as Mr. and Mrs. Newman, had recently opened a small baker's shop in the neighbourhood on their own account, which, it is unnecessary to say, was patronised by the Trents.

But to return to Anne. She soon fell into Margaret's ways, or, rather, Margaret soon accepted most of her maid's ways and suppressed her own ideas, for her admiration of Anne's good qualities was certainly, at this stage, somewhat tempered with awe. On one or two points, however, they were not quite agreed.

Margaret, as we said before, was resolved not to keep her little drawing-room simply for use on state occasions. She had the idea that it had been furnished and made pretty for their own enjoyment, as well as for that of their friends, and having only the two rooms, she elected to sit there always in the afternoons and evenings. With this idea there had been a gas fire placed there, which could be turned out whilst the family were at dinner, or had vacated the room for any length of time. There had been a good deal of discussion as to the advisability of this arrangement, as gas fires are certainly more expensive than coal, but the consideration which decided them was that with only one servant the very great saving of labour quite compensated for the slight additional expense, and Margaret found it a great comfort, before she began fires regularly, to be able to light it just for half an hour, if she felt chilly, without trouble to anyone.

In spite of its convenience, however, Anne seriously disapproved of this arrangement. She appeared to have conscientious scruples against the "best room" being used by the family when without visitors. She put on a solemn and reproachful look when Margaret told her, after lunch one day, to light the



"WHY, MARGARET, WHAT A HUGE APRON! AND GLOVES TOO!"

table could thus hand things to one another without moving from their seats, and were able to dispense with Anne's presence in the room without inconvenience to themselves.

One morning after Margaret had returned from her usual walk with her husband, she received an early visit from her cousin Elsie.

"Why, Margaret, what a huge apron! And gloves too! Well, you *are* careful of your hands. Do you wear gloves all the time Wilfred is away, so as to have them white and soft on his return?" asked this rude little cousin, after the first greetings were over.

"If you had politely waited to be properly announced, I should have had time to take them off, but now you have caught me," replied Margaret. "I always dust these rooms myself, and before beginning I open the window and

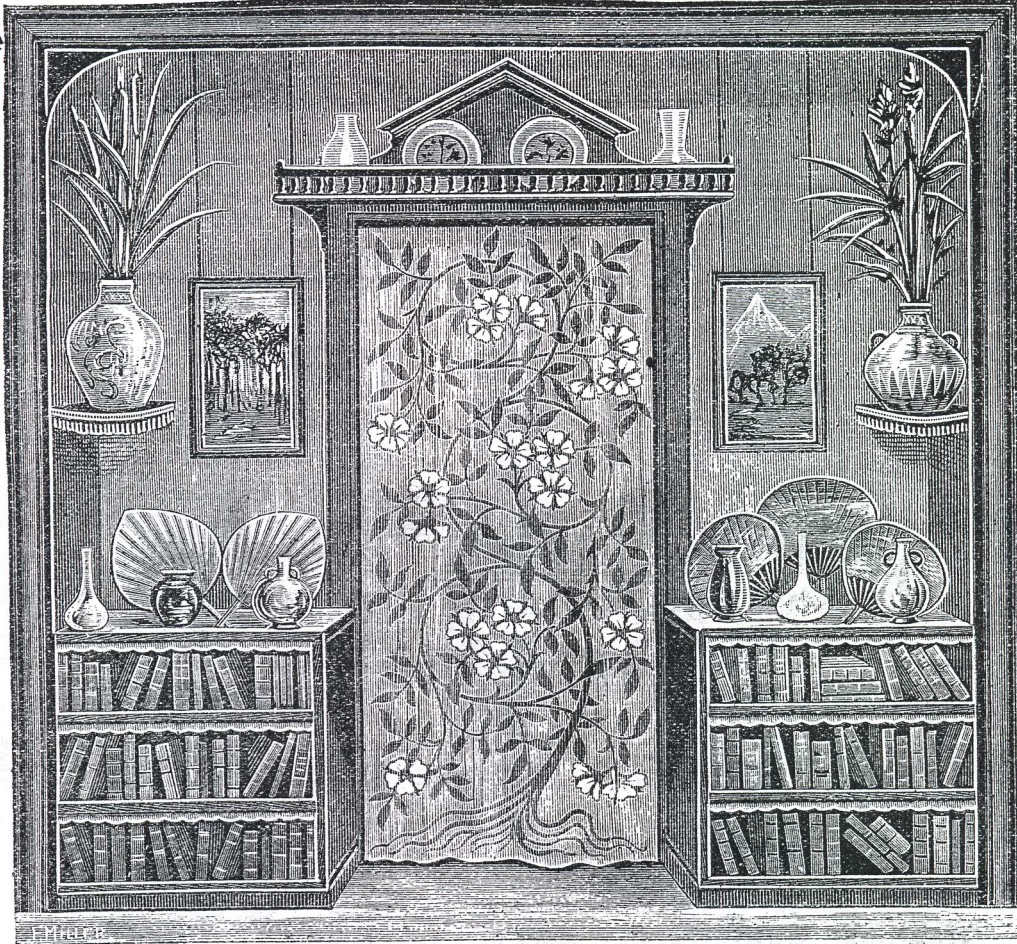
I think, perhaps, I can help you, for I have been studying the subject of little dinners myself, with a view to Wilfred's birthday. What do you say to beginning with real turtle?"

"Now, Margaret, you are making fun. Why Uncle Andrew would never get over it. He would harangue us on the extravagant habits of the rising generation all the evening."

"But he could hardly think it extravagant if you could tell him that the whole tureen full cost only about three shillings. If he looks very much horrified you can lead up the conversation to the great advantage of using dried turtle, and so, after he has tasted it and pronounced it very good, not before, you can inform him that it is made of strips of sun-dried turtle, which you bought at the grocer's for six shillings a

of days longer; but you cannot allow it quite so long this time, and less time will do, though it will not be so good.

"Then for the stock you will require one and a half pound of shin of beef, the same quantity of knuckle of veal, a ham bone, if you happen to have one, or if not you must buy a good thick slice of lean uncooked ham, a little lemon peel, marjoram, winter savory, two bay leaves, and, if you can get it, which is doubtful, a little pennyroyal. You must put all these into three quarts of cold water, and simmer it slowly all day, and then strain it; this must be done the day before you want to use it. Then, next morning, add the turtle, with the liquor in which it was soaked, and boil it all together for six hours, and it is ready for table, only just before serving it up you



A NEW TREATMENT FOR FOLDING DOORS (DINING-ROOM SIDE).

put on this large apron and old gloves, which I always wear for any dirty work, for I certainly think it a pity to make one's hands rough and ugly when it can so easily be avoided."

"Well, Madge, I am in great straits; you know mother is away, and now here is a letter from Uncle Andrew, who, you know, is a sort of guardian to us children, to say he is coming to dinner on Tuesday night. So, first of all, I do hope you and Wilfred will come too, for he is so alarming that we really cannot entertain him alone in mother's absence. Then I want you to tell me what to have for dinner, for he is so peculiar, he looks most annoyed if there is not a *very* nice dinner, and yet he is always thinking we are extravagant."

"So you want to hit the happy medium?"

pond. Only if you decide to have it you must go and buy the materials at once, as it takes several days to make properly."

"Oh, I am sure I could never manage anything so elaborate as that! Fancy having soup that takes ever so many days to make!"

"But it only takes time, because the strips, as you buy them, are so hard and dry, and must be soaked a long time. It is really most simple, and if you do exactly as I tell you you cannot possibly make a mistake. You must buy a quarter of a pound of dried turtle, chop it into pieces; put it in a basin of cold water (rather under a pint), cover it and leave it to soak for twenty-four hours in a slow oven. Then take it out, cut it in square pieces, and put it back into the same water till the stock is ready, which should be, if possible, a couple

should add a squeeze of lemon. This sounds rather troublesome, but it really is not at all—it only requires to be begun in good time.

"Then for fish, I should advise you to have halibut, cut in steaks and fried. It is rather cheap, and rather nice, and not very generally used, so it may be new to your uncle. You ought to have one *entrée*, too, but I cannot think of anything very suitable."

"Would mutton scallops do?" suggested Elsie. "People generally like them, and if you would kindly ask me about them, it would give me the opportunity of letting uncle know that they are made of remnants of cold mutton."

"I will certainly, for I should like to know how to make them myself."

"Oh, you make some mince of any sort of cold mutton, nicely flavoured, you know, with thyme, and nutmeg, and parsley, and pepper, and the yolk of one egg, and just a speck of onion, and all sorts of things, but the meat must not be minced too small. Then you put it in scallop shells, and cover it with egg and bread-crumbs, and just brown them in the oven."

"That sounds delicious. I quite long to come and taste them. Have you decided on a joint? If not, I think I should have a well-hung saddle of mutton if I were you, because you can do it up again so nicely next day, by filling the gap made in it at dinner with mashed potatoes. Then have it warmed up, and it looks like a fresh joint."

"Madge, you certainly are a genius. Now I must rush off and buy that turtle, or the soup will never be done in time. I can manage to invent some sweets myself, I think. Do not forget to be punctual at the banquet on Tuesday. Uncle Andrew is nothing if not punctual. And do not forget to work round the conversation to cold mutton and dried turtle. You might persuade Wilfred to make a few remarks on the various industries of the West Indies, and then it would come in quite naturally, only I am afraid I shall laugh, and spoil it. Now, good-bye; I can see you are longing for me to be gone, so that you can go on dusting those lovely plates on the book-case."

So saying, she departed, leaving Margaret to finish her interrupted work. As "lovely plates" are not always to be found on a book-case, perhaps their presence there ought to be explained.

It will be remembered that the drawing and dining-rooms were separated by folding-doors, to the appearance of which Margaret had a great objection, so they were hidden, and the space occupied by them turned to an account in an ingenious manner by Wilfred's fertile brain. It was in this way. One day before their marriage, Margaret and he were talking over the best place to put the book-case, which was rather a difficult problem, for the space was limited in the little dining-room.

"Look here, Madge," cried Wilfred, suddenly, "you said you did not like folding-doors, so why not have them done away with, or permanently fastened, and the book-case placed in front of them?"

"Yes, perhaps that would do," said Margaret, ponderingly, "and yet I think, perhaps, a communication between the two rooms might be very useful sometimes, though I did condemn folding-doors."

"Well, then—I have it, Margery!" cried the young fellow, starting up, and energetically commencing a rough sketch of his idea on the back of an envelope. "Look here, dear; you have the book-case built the same size as the doors—not absolutely square, but with a few elegant irregularities at the top: so. Have it fitted with shelves of different depths for books, and here and there, perhaps, a shelf for odds and ends of china, or a rack for newspapers and magazines, or a cupboard with handsomely-carved doors, or—in fact, there is no end to the variations you might introduce if once you be an—"

"But, please," broke in Margaret, "I do not quite see how we are to transport ourselves through the book-case; or did you mean us to step on the shelves, and so climb over?"

"I was about to observe," remarked Wilfred, "when I was so rudely interrupted, that a doorway should be cut through the middle of the book-case, from which should hang a curtain of some rich, heavy-looking material: red plush, I believe, is considered the correct thing."

"Oh, charming!" cried Margaret; "but I fear plush will be rather beyond our means."

"And the whole affair mounted on castors, so that, if necessary, it may be moved away bodily, and leave the whole space clear; but as it will weigh probably about two tons, I fancy those occasions will be rare," continued Wilfred.

Margaret's admiration of the genius displayed in this invention was unbounded, particularly after the idea had been most successfully carried out.

The drawing-room side of it was managed thus: the back of the book-case and sides of the recess were papered like the drawing-room. A small, low book-case was made at each side of the curtained doorway, and on them china and other ornaments were displayed, leaving just room above for corner brackets, holding vases of flowers and a couple of pictures. This gave it the appearance of an ordinary recess, and had the advantage of making the room that much larger.

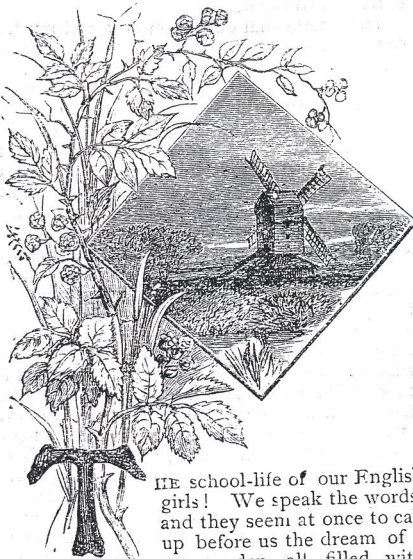
These book-cases and their ornaments Margaret always dusted and arranged herself, whereby she gained the very desirable end of having no ornaments broken, and also having the books always put back into their own particular places, so that she could find any favourite author in the dark.

(To be continued.)

THE FOUR PERIODS.

By ALICE KING.

I.—SCHOOL-LIFE.



THE school-life of our English girls! We speak the words, and they seem at once to call up before us the dream of a rose-garden all filled with buds and perfume. The school-life of our English girls!—we speak the words, and as that rose-garden dream fades away, we grasp firm hold, in joyful thankfulness, of precious certainties, of glorious results, of which this same school-life will be the fruitful root, the fair first chapter, the fountain-head from which stream upon stream of sweet waters will flow to gladden generations yet unborn.

Now, in speaking of a girl's school-life, we wish it at once to be understood that we do not mean to limit ourselves to remarks upon what goes on in the class-room and in lesson hours, when grammars and dictionaries are in the hand, when music-books and drawing portfolios are open. These things have in truth their own fitting time and place in our girls' school-life, and we shall say something about them in their turn; but a girl's school-life will be very meagre and incomplete if it does not extend beyond the doors of the school-

room. Girls are meant for practical daily life even more than boys; girls, even more than boys, must have an education of the heart as well as of the head, because for women's hearts there is quite as much good, brave work to do in the world as for women's brains; therefore our girls' school-life must be in the home as well as in the school. Let mothers look well to this, for this is their especial province and duty and kingdom, this training their girls in the other school-life, which is not the school-life of the schoolroom. A schoolmistress or a governess may fill a girl's mind with rare stores of knowledge, may deck her with graceful accomplishments, but few save a mother can form a girl's heart. And where can this part of a girl's education be carried on so well and thoroughly as in a bright, sympathetic home? And since this is the case, let us strive to make our homes bright and sympathetic to our girls from the very beginning—from the moment when their sweet young eyes peep out of their cradles.

The first thing which the home school-life must give our girls is a solid religious foundation to their characters. No form of religion that the human mind can imagine could be so well calculated as Christianity to make the female sex shine. Let women, then, seize eagerly the proud privilege, and strive to form their daughters on a high Christian pattern. Love, patience, meekness, long-sufferance, self-sacrifice, are all, at the same time, the noblest products of Christianity and products natural to woman's character. Thus, then, mothers, you have a rich soul full of good seed ready for you; in God's name, in the name of children yet unborn, do not root up, or let die through want of care or sun, or dwarf the precious growth, but help it with every effort to come to perfection.

One excellent way of training our girls' hearts is to lead them early to the homes of the poor, to bedsides of the old and sick. Here they will learn to watch suffering bravely, and to meet it with every possible remedy; here they will be taught—without knowing that it is a lesson, the task will grow so sweet to them—how to feel for others, and how to work for them. A woman's influence depends in a great measure on her depth of feeling and sympathy. A woman's noblest work is, in general, for those immediately around her in her home—for husband and children; then this learning betimes to be full of kindness and charity must be, surely, a bit of good schooling for our girls.

It is also good for our girls, in the home school-life, to be taught to take a lively interest in the management of a household. This may be instilled gently, and almost imperceptibly, into them, by inciting them to strive to gain a loving influence for good over the younger servants. They should be encouraged to form sewing-classes or singing-classes, or other little schemes for their improvement, and to exercise over them a lady's high moral power—the power which comes from mental cultivation. Let our girls, too, in their home-school be taught not to hold their pretty heads above bending sometimes over the week's account-book, or the cookery-book. Such things will steady the wings of their young imaginations, without making their flight less swift.

There exists among a certain class of English society a received and well-cut-and-dried opinion that it is a necessary sign and insignia of ladyhood to spend a large portion of every day in a state of elegant idleness, that allows of nothing more serious employing a woman's time than gossip, and some flimsy, utterly useless piece of work in wool or silk, or, by way of variety, a little very-indifferently executed music, or illumination of texts that certainly do not shine the more from the way in which they are thus adorned. Can anything be conceived more

making all who are guests like yourselves wish for a similar meeting, and remember with pleasure the one that is past.

In giving invitations, if you wish your visitors, whether few or many, to be happy, bestow some thought on the elements which are to compose your party. Think whether they will be glad to meet each other; consider in what amusements they have shown an interest, what are their tastes and accomplishments, and how you may best turn these to account for the general good.

A chemist who was combining various ingredients would not put in an extra one which would set all the rest in a ferment, merely for the sake of filling up the vessel which contained them. So let me advise you, dear girls, never to spoil your party for the sake of filling up a seat or giving what may be deemed a "duty invitation," in order to pay a social debt. And let all understand beforehand just the kind of gathering in which they are to take part. In my next chapter I shall endeavour to suggest some ways of entertaining your friends when they are met together.

(To be continued.)

MARGARET TRENT,
AND HOW SHE
KEPT HOUSE.

By DORA HOPE.

"How nice and soft and thick your stair carpets are, Margaret," said Dorothy Snow to her friend as they went upstairs together. It was a week or two before Christmas, and Dorothy had come to spend a long day, to take advantage of Margaret's proximity to the London shops. "It gives me a most luxurious feeling, suggesting velvet pile and that sort of thing, which one does not expect on a staircase," she went on.

"I expect yours are the same, only that my pads being new are perhaps more noticeable."

"Pads!" Whatever have they to do with it?" asked Dorothy.

"Oh, don't you know that it is such an advantage to have a pad on each stair, under the carpet? We used to have an old stair carpet instead, at home, which does almost as well; but in our new house of course we had no old ones, so the upholsterer put down these pads. They make the carpet feel and look much thicker, and save the wear a good deal too; I have a great objection to threadbare stair carpets, but they require a great deal of care to prevent them becoming shabby; I have them moved about an inch either up or down every week. Perhaps you are not aware that stair carpets are always bought rather longer than is absolutely necessary to allow of moving them about, and the surplus piece is either

hidden under another carpet, or turned under, according to circumstances."

"Oh, yes, I did know that. At any rate, I am constantly falling headlong downstairs, and then being scolded for my carelessness in not noticing that the rods were out, and the carpets being moved."

"Well, there is nothing like an experience of that kind for fixing a fact in one's mind," rejoined Margaret, laughing. "Now I think I shall have time to try an experiment on these wax candles before we go out. I am rather anxious about them, for Aunt Annie gave them to me; she was going to use them up in the kitchen, as being too dirty and discoloured for anything else, so I begged them, as I thought I could whiten them by rubbing with flannel dipped in spirits of wine."

"Did you invent that, Margaret?"
"Oh, no. Somebody or other told me about it, but I have had no opportunity to try it before."

Margaret's aunt, being country born and bred, had hitherto had a strong prejudice against gas, and had used nothing but lamps and candles in her house. At last, the superior cheapness and convenience of gas had overcome her scruples, and she had submitted to it; at least, so far as the halls, kitchens, and bedrooms were concerned. She refused, however, to have the large ugly gaseliers hanging from the centre of the ceiling, and instead had branch lights from the walls, in various convenient spots, by which arrangement it was possible to read or work comfortably in any part of the room.



"IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE A MAN TURN BURGLAR."

The dinner-table was illuminated by two, or sometimes three, lamps placed down the centre, which, covered with shades, shed a soft, clear light on the table without causing a glare upon the faces of those seated round it. These lamps gave Mrs. Colville some little extra trouble, as she insisted that they should always be cleaned and filled by herself or one of her daughters (which ensured them being thoroughly cleaned, without which there is always an unpleasant smell of oil), and the servants were never allowed to touch the oil-can, which was kept in the cellar for safety.

Margaret had gladly accepted the rejected wax candles, for in her little dining-room, besides the gas branches from the walls, she had one or two quaint old branching candlesticks on the table at dinner time, as she objected to lamps, because they obstructed her view. Each candle had its own tiny coloured shade on the usual wire frame, and the effect was very pretty.

"Now, Dorothy, will you not make out a list of the purchases you have to make? You are sure to forget something if you do not," suggested Margaret, rubbing away at her candles. "You will find a scrap of paper on that little writing-table, in a gilt clip which I keep for half-sheets."

"Oh, yes! here it is. My dearest Margaret, what a model writing-table! Here is a dictionary, directory, letter-weigher, railway guide, almanac—everything it is possible to want. And underneath a waste-paper basket, I declare!" exclaimed Dorothy.

"And I think you will find a sensible pad of blotting paper and a reasonably large ink-pot, which is kept clean, and several good pens," added Margaret, smiling. "I do rather pride myself on that table. I made up my mind that when I had a house of my own the writing table arrangements should have my first attention, because it is so often neglected, and I know how difficult it is in some houses to write a letter. The stamp-box, note-paper, and envelopes, and a box of new pens are in the table drawer. Now, Dorothy, do see how nice these candles begin to look; not quite equal to new, of course, but they are really very much improved."

That night the little household at Rose-neath Villa had a great alarm, and narrowly escaped something much more serious. It happened that the outer wall of the house was slightly damp in some places, and Wilfred, judging rightly that this state of things was extremely bad for the pictures, determined to protect them from it. For this purpose he took several of them down in the evening, and fixed half a cork at each corner of the frames, at the back. This causing the pictures to project slightly from the wall, allowed a current of air to pass behind them, and so prevented the damp from affecting them. This proceeding took a considerable time, so that it was late before Margaret, as usual last thing before going to bed, threw two or three large clean dust-sheets over some of the pretty drawing-room furniture to protect it from the night's dust, and shutting the piano, went upstairs. These dust-sheets were always left on till the sweeping and dusting were finished next morning.

In the dead of night the whole household were aroused by a loud ringing at the bell, which was repeated till Wilfred went to see what was the matter. Opening a window, he looked out, and saw a policeman, who at once turned his bull's-eye full upon him.

"I don't know whether you know, sir, that your back-room window is wide open, and there's been somebody in there, though he's took himself off now. Shall I come in and have a look round, sir?"

Wilfred thought, on the whole, it might be as well to make sure that the intruder had really "took himself off," and accordingly

admitted the policeman, and the two together searched all the rooms. It was evident that some burglar had been in, for several drawers were left open and the contents scattered upon the floor; but he had apparently been disturbed before he had time to find anything of any great value, and nothing was missed but a couple of silver serviette-rings which had been left in a drawer in the sideboard.

The policeman glanced around with a rather supercilious air, and finally fell to examining the window.

"Look here, sir, this window hasn't been forced; it must have been left open. This house is a pretty tough job for a burglar, I should say, so long as the windows and doors are properly fastened; but to go and leave one of them open! why, you might every bit as well ask them to walk in," he said, with a touch of scorn at the carelessness of householders. "Why, bless you, sir! it's enough to make a man turn burglar, just to walk about at nights and see how people puts every convenience in their way. If they wanted 'em to come in they couldn't do more to entice 'em. Now I daresay you had your dinner to-night with the blinds turned open, so as everybody could see in and watch exactly where the servants put the silver, and how you was all joking and laughing and never noticing as the window was a little chink open at top, and not latched. Ah! I thought so," as he saw a smile pass over Wilfred's face at having his faults pointed out to him in this way. "And look here, sir," he added, being mollified by a silver coin which Wilfred had slipped into his hand, "look here, sir; if you've got servants as you can't trust to look after this work better than that, you take my advice, and look at all the windows and doors yourself every night, and that's good advice from a fellow as has seen a good many jobs of this sort, and not all let off so easy as you've been," and touching his hat, he went out and continued his round.

Wilfred found the rest of the household collected on the landing in a state of abject terror, and expecting every moment to be assailed by fierce housebreakers armed with revolvers, but encouraging one another to defend themselves to the last gasp with the pokers and other weapons with which they had armed themselves.

It took some time to assure them that their lives were not really in danger, and that they might go back to bed without fear of being murdered in their sleep.

On Christmas Day, as it was no longer practicable to keep up the old family custom of all meeting together, Wilfred and Margaret agreed to spend the day with the latter's aunt, Mrs. Colville, their own maid Anne being allowed to invite her mother and brothers and sisters to dinner with her, and to keep her company for the evening.

Aunt Annie's family was a large one at these holiday seasons, for besides the addition of several boys and girls home from school and college, she liked to have with her any waifs and strays who would otherwise have to pass a solitary Christmas, and if no relatives in this condition presented themselves, she made up a household by inviting some inmates from the schools for missionaries' children, many of whom would otherwise have to spend their holidays at school.

At the cold lunch which was always provided on Christmas Day, the *pièce de résistance* on this occasion consisted of a large piece of corned beef, whose bulk indeed excited considerable mirth. The flavour was particularly good, however, and as Margaret, even on such festive occasions, was anxious to get any hints she could, she asked her aunt afterwards how she managed with such a large piece.

"You see, my dear, in such a large family as ours a small joint is gone directly; I am

obliged to have something which one can cut at freely. So about three weeks before Christmas I buy a large piece of the round of beef, about twelve pounds, and either let the butcher put it in pickle or do it myself, for about forty-eight hours. Then I take it out, wipe it dry, and rub it with coarse Demerara sugar and allspice, adding a little cinnamon. Then I lay it in a cool place, and turn it every morning, and whenever it looks in the least dry I add some more sugar and spice, but if it does not I simply rub it with the pickle which has drained from it. This has to be continued for a fortnight, or as much longer as happens to be convenient. Then I do not wash it, but put it just as it is into a jar or tin, into which it fits pretty tightly, with a very little cold water. This is placed in a large saucepan of water, which is made to boil fast, and left on the fire for five or six hours, but it need not boil all the time. I leave it in the jar till it is cold, and then take it out and scrape it, as the spice makes the meat look black, and it is ready for use. It is very simple, you see, and everyone likes it."

"But, aunt, why should you take the trouble of having two pans? It would be much easier to put the meat straight into the one saucepan."

"It is very little extra trouble, and the advantage is very great, because it cooks the meat without hardening the albumen, for though the water in the outer saucepan boils, that in the inner one never gets above 180 degrees. It would hardly be a suitable dish for your small establishment, but if you ever have a picnic, or a good many people coming in hungry, you would find it very useful."

So far from making use of this recipe at once, however, Margaret's principal aim for some few days was to find means of cooking in fresh ways the large supply of meat already in the house, and she wrote to Joanna to describe her experiences.

"DEAREST JOANNA.—Many thanks for your kind thought of us, but you need not have had any anxiety lest we should miss the plentiful fare of our dear old home. On the contrary, we have been rather overwhelmed with presents of good things. You know of old that there is nothing I like more than cold turkey, but I have really had too much of it. You know, we went to Aunt Colville's for Christmas Day, and when we returned, the first sight that met my eyes was a large hamper in the hall. Uncle John had sent it to us full of delicious country produce, chief amongst which was a monstrous turkey.

"Everyone is engaged just now, or we might have a small dinner party on the strength of it, so we are obliged to cook it at once as it was just ready for Christmas Day. We had it roasted on Boxing Day, and two of the Colville boys came in to assist, but even then we did not nearly finish the breast. The next two days we were out to dinner, and Anne feasted luxuriously on the cold remains.

"I felt obliged to have the creature in some form for breakfast, so one morning we had the gibbets fricasséed. (You may copy my idea if you like, as imitation is the sincerest form of flattery; there are several recipes in the cookery book). The next morning I had a brilliant idea. I cut some nice slices and severed the wings as neatly as I could, then dipped them in egg and bread-crumbs, and had them fried. It made a very successful dish.

"Matters became desperate at last, and I begged Aunt Annie and the girls to come to my aid. They rallied round me at lunch yesterday, and I had the satisfaction of seeing the last bone of the turkey disappear downstairs as the final remains of a salmi, or, as Anne calls it, 'an 'ash,' which she and I concocted together."

(To be continued).



HERE it is again, Anne; don't you hear it?" ejaculated Margaret, under her breath, with a horror-stricken expression. She had been sitting sewing in the little work-room upstairs one morning, when a curious noise in the box-room end of the apartment had startled her, and she had called Anne from her sweeping in the next room.

"Oh, that's a mouse, clear enough, 'm," replied Anne,

boldly parting the curtains, and moving about amongst the boxes, when, of course, the noise ceased.

Margaret was relieved to find the noise arose from so slight a cause, for the attempted burglary had increased her natural nervousness.

"The house is regular overrun with them, 'm, and I do think it is time something were done; even my boots was gnawed dreadful last night, and as for our old cat, he ain't no more use than a stuffed one, for if you'll believe me, 'm, I saw a mouse run right across under his very nose, as you may say, and him sitting there blinking and purring and never so much as trying to catch him. He's what you may call *too* affectionate, he is."

"Oh, why did you not tell me before? I had no idea we had so many," said Margaret, rather severely, as her courage returned. "As to the cat, it is clear you give it too much to eat; you must give it less, and not pet it, and then I am sure it will at least try to catch the mice. If it does not, we will get rid of it, and try to find one with a little more spirit, for a good cat is the very best preventive of mice. And then you must be particularly careful not to leave any crusts about, or candle-ends, or bones on the shelves or in any uncovered place; it is usually some carelessness of that sort which first entices them."

Anne did not approve of the personal turn the conversation had taken, so began herself to make suggestions.

"Yes, 'm," she said, "and it happened that Mrs. Newman—Betsy as was—and me was naming the very same subject last night when she called round to bring you them cauliflowers and things she'd had sent her from the country, and was telling me they'd been served dreadful with mice at their shop, but they've cleared them all out now, for her husband he took and filled up every hole he could find with plaster, and then they set traps and kept changing the bait, and the traps too sometimes, or else they cleaned them out well, for mice they are that cunning they can smell if one or two have been caught, and they won't go in the trap if you tempt them ever so."

"Well, the best thing we can do is to follow Betsy's example, and I hope we shall be as successful."

The work in which Margaret was engaged that morning was the manufacture of a warm skirt, to be given to a poor old flower woman, whose post she and Wilfred passed every morning in their usual walk together towards the City. A few weeks before Margaret had given her old *protégée* one or two strong undergarments, and these the recipient constantly declared to be, "Oh, so warm and comfortable, just like a piece of board," which, but for the rapture of the old woman's face, might have been considered a doubtful compliment.

The way Margaret managed her charities was this. She and Wilfred had agreed before they were married that they would begin from the very first to lay by regularly a tenth of their income for charity, and this, after the amount was deducted which they gave in regular subscriptions, was kept in a special cash-box, so that when any appeal was made to them for help they could go to this box and judge by the state of its contents whether they could spare anything, though it must be confessed that the amount was occasionally supplemented from other sources. Wilfred had very decided ideas about money spent in charity, considering that it should not be given indiscriminately simply because it was asked for, but should be spent as carefully as any other investment, after considering, in a business-like light, whether it would produce the desired results. The carrying out of this principle occupied Margaret's leisure moments a good deal, as it involved visiting and inquiring amongst charitable societies and the individual poor who came for help, but she was glad to feel she was of some use, and did it willingly.

The January weather during that year was unusually severe, and there were several heavy snowstorms. Margaret was careful to have the steps swept frequently to prevent them becoming slippery with clogged snow, and also to avoid having it trodden into the house, to the damage of the carpets. But any further precaution did not occur to her, and it was a very unpleasant surprise one morning to discover the ceiling in one of the bedrooms covered with moisture, which was running down the walls in some places and dripping from the ceiling in others. The snow had choked up the gutters, and now that a thaw had set in the water could not escape in the proper direction, so had made for itself a passage through a weak point in the roof. There was nothing to be done but to move the furniture and put pails to catch the drops, and send for a man as quickly as possible to clear the pipes and stop the hole in the roof. When he had finished all he could do at the time, he advised Margaret for the future to have the snow swept from the roof always after a very heavy snowstorm, as soon as it had ceased falling, particularly as theirs was a flat roof, for after the thaw had set in little could be done to stop the mischief.

Margaret mentally vowed to follow his advice as she looked sadly round the disfigured room, but her meditations were disturbed by Wilfred's voice calling to her that it was nearly time to start, and he had forgotten to mention that he had asked two friends in to dinner that evening.

As Elsie and Will Colville were already coming, the usual small repast would require a little expansion, and she had to make her arrangements quickly, to avoid hindering Wilfred.

There was some fish left from the previous day's dinner, so Margaret decided to have fish soup. Anne had made it before, and Margaret simply read the directions over to her to ensure getting all the necessary ingredients.

"Three ounces of butter, put into a stewpan, with two carrots, an onion, and a shallot cut in thin slices, a clove, and a little thyme and parsley. When they are browned, put in three pints of cold water, and as soon as it boils put in a small haddock, cut up (I think we can do without the haddock this time, Anne, as there is such a large piece of cod left), and the heads and bones of two whiting. Simmer it slowly for an hour and a half or more, and when it is strained cut up the fillets of whiting which were taken off the bones, put them in the stock, and boil it up again for a few minutes, adding a little salt and pepper. As I want it to be rather better

than usual to-night, I will get half-a-dozen oysters to put in as well."

Then Margaret thought one of Betsy's cauliflowers would come in very well as a simple *entrée*, prepared *au gratin*. This Anne usually managed very well by cutting the vegetable into pieces after it was well boiled, and laying about half of it on a buttered dish. Then she sprinkled it with pepper, nutmeg, salt, and a little Parmesan cheese, then laid the rest of the cauliflower on it, sprinkled it in the same way, and covered the top with baked breadcrumbs, with a little warm melted butter poured over all. It was baked in the oven for twenty minutes, and was then ready to serve.

Finally, Margaret resolved to add to the sweets an inexpensive blanchmange, which she made herself after the following recipe. An ounce of gelatine, or isinglass, is soaked in a pint of cold milk; when it is melted add another pint, with two fresh young laurel-leaves, or a few drops of essence of almond, and five ounces of loaf-sugar in it. Let it boil a minute or two, then take it off and pour a cup of cold water into the boiling jelly, and let it stand aside, covered, for a quarter of an hour where it will keep quite hot, but not even simmer; then it is ready to strain into the mould. The adding of cold water makes it nice and clear.

"How did that sample of cheap soap answer, Anne, that I told you to try the other day?" she asked, as she was leaving the kitchen.

"Oh, it didn't go no way at all, 'm; 'twas all lather and no substance, as you may say."

"Well, I think we have proved now that the best soap is the cheapest in the end; indeed, I am told that the laundresses always use the best soap to be had, as being really the most economical."

"Yes, 'm, I have always heard so too. My mother, she always buys the best, and has it in the house for weeks before using it, for keeping offices, as she do, she knows how to make it go the furthest, and the longer you keep it in a dry place the harder it gets, and goes twice as far as if you use it all soft, like it is most ways when you buy it."

"Your mother certainly ought to be a good judge with all the scrubbing she has to do."

"Yes, 'm, and she says, for the rough work, there's nothing like some of them cold-water soaps: it takes the dirt out wonderful, and not half the work, and don't take the paint off like using soda."

Margaret had long ago given up the cheap or highly-scented soaps for toilet use, having been so repeatedly warned of their injurious effect on the skin, but she thought cheaper soaps would do for household use. She found now, however, as the result of her experiments, that economy and cheapness were in this case two very different things.

As the party sat chatting after dinner that evening Margaret told her guests about the calamity of the morning in a manner which enlisted all their sympathies.

"I'm awfully sorry for you, Mrs. Trent," said one of Wilfred's friends. "I was very nearly having the same thing happen last winter in my rooms. You must know that like the love-sick individual immortalised in song, who lived in Leather-lane, 'My parlour is next the sky; it lets in the wind and lets in the rain'—at least, it did on one occasion; but my man—a very sharp fellow he is too—noticed the first small patch of moisture on the ceiling, so with a gimlet he bored a small hole right in the middle of the wet patch, and in a few minutes the water began to drip through the hole straight into a bucket he had placed ready under it, so the wet was confined to one place instead of spreading all over the ceiling, and perhaps the walls too."

"That was clever! I shall remember that

for future occasions. Oh, Wilfred, wait a minute," she exclaimed, as she saw her husband rise to put some coal on the rapidly expiring fire; "I was so absorbed in the conversation that I did not notice how low the fire was, but I think you will finally extinguish it if you put coal on now."

So saying, she went to the bookcase, and opening a small cupboard, took out a paper-bag of dried orange peel. A few pieces of this placed carefully amongst the coals soon burst into a blaze, and a bright little fire was quickly obtained.

"Please excuse my playing the part of a taker for the moment," she said, as, with a brightened colour, she returned to the table. "It is so pleasant to coax back a fire to life, and there is nothing so good for the purpose as orange peel, so I always keep a few pieces at hand on purpose."

"But where do you get it from, and how do you prepare it?" inquired Elsie.

"I get it from the greengrocer's, and I do not prepare it at all. There is not the slightest mystery about it, Elsie; you need not look so perplexed. The whole secret of it is that I keep a large paper-bag hung up in a warm corner of the kitchen, and whenever we have oranges the skins are put in the bag and left there to dry till they are wanted. Sometimes, if we have a good many, we put them into the oven for a few minutes, and they are most useful for either lighting or reviving a fire. I am told they are useful, too, in cases of sickness, if the fire gets low whilst the patient is

asleep, as they will blaze up without making a loud crackling noise like wood does."

When the tea was brought into the drawing-room, Anne handed with it slices of bread and butter and gingerbread cake, for which latter Margaret made many apologies, confessing that her agitation about the leaking roof had made her entirely forget to provide any suitable cake or biscuits.

"It was a wonder you happened to have any in the house at all," said Elsie. "If I ever forget anything like that the fates are sure to be against me, and I find, when it is too late, that there is nothing at all that will do."

"Oh, I always have cake in the house. I am blessed with a very good appetite, and invariably get hungry at the wrong times; besides, it is not wise if children come in not to have anything to offer them, so I have a plain cake made every Saturday, generally plum or seed cakes, varied by occasional soda or gingerbread ones, and I am never at a loss for something either for myself or any children who happen to call."

The recipe from which this particular cake was made was a very simple one. A quarter of a pound of butter was melted in a pound of treacle, and the two stirred into a pound of flour, and mixed well together with a quarter of a pound of coarse brown sugar, half an ounce of ginger, a little candied peel, and a *very* little cayenne pepper, and baked in a shallow tin in a very slow oven.

"Have you heard from Tom lately, Madge?" asked Elsie, whilst the gentlemen still tarried in the dining-room.

"Oh, yes, I heard this morning; he wrote to ask for father's address, who, you know, expects to remain abroad some months longer. Tom writes such bright cheery letters. But had you any reason for asking?" returned Margaret, noticing that Elsie looked rather grave.

"Oh, I hardly like to tell you, Madge dear, and yet mamma thought you ought to know that she has heard from our aunt in Edinburgh, with whom Tom lives, and that they are feeling a little anxious about him, because of some rather wild companions of his. There is one young fellow particularly, who is not at all a desirable acquaintance, aunt thinks, and yet Tom and he are inseparable."

"But Tom, himself, does not cause aunt anxiety?" asked Margaret, eagerly.

"Oh no, he is so good and hard-working, so kind and affectionate to aunt and all of them, that it seems all the more strange for him to care to mix with these doubtful acquaintances."

"I cannot think that he would ever do anything *wrong*," said Margaret, after a few moments' silence, "and yet it is wrong to have bad companions. Perhaps aunt is mistaken in her opinion of these friends of Tom's. At any rate, we must hope and pray that he may be kept right. I will write to him more frequently, and get Wilfred to do so too, and I am sure that he will soon be himself again. However, here are the gentlemen, so we must banish the subject. But you will pray for poor Tom, Elsie?"

(To be continued.)

DECIMA'S PROMISE.

By AGNES GIBERNE, Author of "Sun, Moon, and Stars," &c.

CHAPTER XVI. WHETHER TO TELL?



DECIMA sat in her room alone, gazing out of the window, and wearing still the same bewildered air that she had worn at first. A tap at the door, twice repeated, failed to attract her attention, and Mrs. Fitzroy

entered, without more ado.

"My dear, I have brought back your letters," she said. "Thank you for letting me see them. It is very sad about the poor little child."

Dessie gave one look into her aunt's face, and then gazed resolutely out of the window.

"You were very fond of him, were you not?" said Mrs. Fitzroy, doubting the exact meaning of this mood.

Dessie shook her shoulders impatiently. "Yes. O you don't know. Nobody *can* know—"

"I think we all know enough to feel for you, Dessie."

"Feel! I tell you, you don't know—you *can't*," said Dessie, in a tone that

Mrs. Fitzroy would have thought rude, but for the evidences of suppressed excitement accompanying. She saw that Dessie was not mistress of herself.

"We do not know the poor little fellow personally," she said gently. "That makes it so much worse for you."

Dessie writhed, and shook herself again.

"Worse! O it is horrible—dreadful!" she said passionately. "Don't talk about it. Don't say anything."

Mrs. Fitzroy obeyed, standing silently by the window. She wondered whether she had in any degree misjudged Dessie—whether stronger affections than she had suspected lay under the surface. She had counted Dessie rather wanting in heart.

Dessie sat upright suddenly, and tried to laugh.

"It's of no use to mind—not the *least* use. Nothing can change it; Edith says so. I *won't* be wretched. Just look at those students beating their dogs. They are always doing it—isn't it horrid?"

"Dessie, when God sends us sorrow, I don't think He means us to pretend that it is not sorrow."

Dessie's face worked violently. "It's no use," she said again. "Nothing can do him any good now. Don't they say so? Let me see the letters." She read them through to herself, and then flung them down. "Edith doesn't try to make the best of it, at any rate. I suppose she thinks I shan't care. Well, let them think so. It doesn't matter. You see

what she means, aunt Laura. Hugh is to be an idiot all his life. They don't say the word, but they mean it. And he *was*—so—"

Dessie sobbed in spite of herself. "O go away—don't stay," she gasped, "please don't stay. I hate to be comforted. Talking does no good. I only want to forget. And nobody understands—O *do* please leave me."

The entreaty was not obeyed. Dessie found herself, somehow, with her face hidden in her aunt's dress. She held it in a tight clutch, sobbing and choking in an unwilling fashion of yielding to grief. Mrs. Fitzroy said no comforting words, and only stood quite still with one arm round Dessie, not even pressing her affectionately. Once she laid a hand gently against Dessie's cheek, but the sobs broke out again, and Dessie said, "Don't," in a short harsh tone.

"Aunt Laura, I *won't* be made to cry," she said at length, raising her face. "It isn't my way, and I won't be made."

"No, my dear child."

Mrs. Fitzroy spoke quite calmly and coolly, as Dessie wished, and Dessie sat more upright, biting her lips vehemently.

"I hate to cry, and I hate to be unhappy," she said. "It does no good. One may just as well not think. Being wretched will not make him better. Besides, it may be all a mistake. He may get all right by-and-bye."

"The doctor gives some hope of improvement," said Mrs. Fitzroy.



MARGARET TRENT,

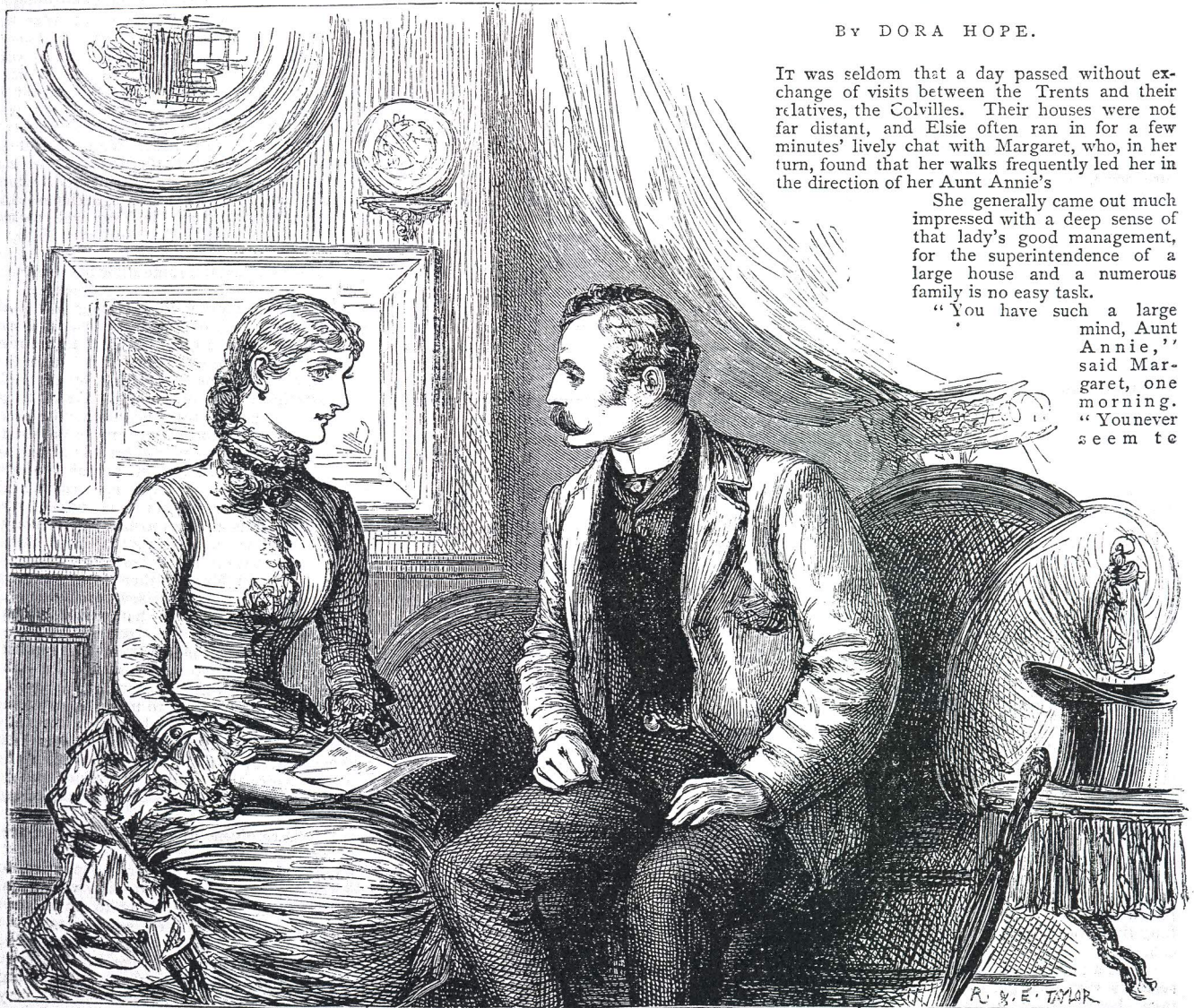
AND HOW SHE KEPT HOUSE.

By DORA HOPE.

It was seldom that a day passed without exchange of visits between the Trents and their relatives, the Colvilles. Their houses were not far distant, and Elsie often ran in for a few minutes' lively chat with Margaret, who, in her turn, found that her walks frequently led her in the direction of her Aunt Annie's

She generally came out much impressed with a deep sense of that lady's good management, for the superintendence of a large house and a numerous family is no easy task.

"You have such a large mind, Aunt Annie," said Margaret, one morning. "You never seem to



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"MARGARET SAT WITH PALE, ANXIOUS FACE."

worry about things, and yet I suppose they do go wrong sometimes, even in this model household."

"Indeed they do, dear, though I certainly think it is foolish, and wrong too, to let oneself get into a worry, as you call it. When I feel myself becoming anxious or irritable about little things, I leave them altogether for a little while, and go away and read for half an hour; but if I were young and active like you, I should take a good walk before trying to put matters right, if I felt at all inclined to be worried about them. You would come to back with your nerves braced up, and ready to face twice the number of vexations. But has anything been going wrong to-day, my child? If you will tell me about it, perhaps I can help you."

"It is nothing very much, aunt. You will think I am very foolish to be put out by such trifles, but I thought when I had a house of my own, and all my own arrangements, that everything would go so smoothly, and I should have quite a pattern house, so I am disappointed when there is constantly some little thing arising to ruin my castle in the air. My last grievance is that the dining-room chimney smokes so badly that my ornaments are getting quite dingy-looking already. I have had a man to see to it, but it is not much better."

"Why, Madge, you surely have not scruples like mamma!" broke in Elsie. "She will not have any of those new patent chimney-pots on, lest they should blow off on to someone's head; but I did not think you would be so particular."

"Now, Margaret, you must not listen to Elsie's nonsense," rejoined Aunt Annie. "The fact is, I have a superior plan of lighting fires which causes so little smoke that it really does away with the necessity for patent chimney-pots, though, no doubt, they are sometimes very useful where there is too much down draught. But my present housemaid forgets to lay the fires in my way, unless I look after her constantly. She ought every morning, after clearing the grate, to put a piece of brown paper in the bottom, and then fill the grate with knobs of coal and a few cinders up to the top bar."

"No sticks?"

"No, nothing but coal till the grate is full. Then, on the top, one of those wooden wheels for kindling, or two or three sticks, a little paper, and a few knobs of coal are arranged. This is lighted and soon becomes a brisk little fire, which burns gradually downwards till the whole is alight. The only objections to this plan are that the fire does not blaze up much, and ought not to be poked, and poking, you know, has such a wonderful fascination for some people. The only attention it wants is sometimes a little patting down to make it more compact. If it is left alone and not touched, it will burn for eight or nine hours without more coals, and be a bright clear fire the whole time."

"Yes, Madge, I can second all mamma says," said Elsie. "I am not generally favoured with a fire in my bedroom, but I have had one the last few nights in consideration of my bad cold. I have it lighted a little while before I go to bed, and rather more coal than usual put in the grate, and it is always burning when I get up in the morning."

"What clever ideas you always have, aunt! I will try it to-morrow morning, though I do not exactly see why it should burn downwards, when everybody knows it is the nature of fires to burn upwards. But if the fire lasts such a long time, surely it must be a great saving of coal?"

"It is a great saving. You will find that servants very soon get to prefer this arrangement, because they have so much less coals to carry upstairs, and it saves them trouble in

other ways, for the fuel is almost entirely consumed, and leaves very few cinders; and even if there are any they are simply put back into the grate next morning amongst the coals. Be sure you try it, dear, and when you have made up your mind to adopt it, I should advise you to follow my example a little farther, and have a thin sheet of iron fitted into the bottom of the grate, when you no longer need the piece of brown paper put in every morning. But stay and take luncheon with us, Margaret, and then you shall see the lighting of the drawing-room fire."

"Oh, mamma, you know you told me we were going to take a humble luncheon of pork chops, and Margaret is sure not to like that," cried Elsie.

"Yes, I do, very much; but I do not often have it, because I have an idea that pork is not very wholesome," said Margaret.

"Nor is it, if there be any doubt of the quality and freshness of the meat," replied Mrs. Colville. "You should never buy it at any but a first-rate shop, and notice that both fat and lean are very white, and the former free from kernels; the skin should look firm and smooth, for if it seems clammy it is probably stale. But if you are careful on these points you need not have any hesitation in buying it, particularly at this time of the year; it is always considered most wholesome from October to March."

"And do you think it economical, aunt?"

"Yes! but hardly as much so as its low price would lead you to imagine, because there is less nourishment in it than in other kinds of meat, and it wastes a good deal in cooking. A leg of fresh pork is generally considered the most economical joint. Then, of course, the dripping from pork takes the place of the very best lard, when clarified, so that there is a saving there, again."

"The worst of two married people meeting together," observed Elsie, meditatively, "is that their conversation entirely hinges upon such extremely domestic topics, to the exclusion of everything of a more elevating nature."

"Oh, Elsie, I am sorry; I never thought of how wearisome it must be to you. I was going to tell aunt about one other little trouble I have, but I will spare you."

"No, indeed! ask away, Margaret; it is good for Elsie to gain information, so as to be better able to take care of a house of her own some day," said Mrs. Colville.

"Well, excuse me, Elsie, but I find it so difficult to get on with Anne properly, aunt, and I want your advice. I am sure in many little things she is not strictly honest, and I must tell her of it when I see it, and, altogether, I seem to be constantly having to find fault about little things. I know I have a hasty temper, and perhaps I speak more sharply than I ought; but after I have mentioned anything she goes into the kitchen, and if any of her friends are there, as I told you they very frequently are, she talks in a loud voice—of course, for me to hear—about 'people who pretend to be religious, and yet are always finding fault.' What am I to do, aunt? I cannot let the work be neglected, and I do not think I ought to allow dishonesty even in trifles, but it is dreadful to think she looks upon me as bringing discredit on Christianity."

"It is a very difficult question, dear, particularly for you, who are only just beginning to be mistress of your own house," replied Mrs. Colville. "It requires great tact and management with a servant like Anne. You must be strictly obeyed if you wish to have any comfort and order in the house. Neglect of your duty in seeing that the work is properly done is only looked upon as weakness, for which servants would despise you. They naturally do not care to work hard for a mis-

trous who does not know good work from bad. But, on the other hand, if you are tempted to speak hastily, you will find it better not to mention a fault, particularly those which have annoyed or irritated you, till you feel that your anger has quite cooled down. Then you will be able to point out a fault or carelessness without losing your temper, which would entirely spoil the effect of a remonstrance, and might reasonably call forth scornful remarks about Christians being no better than other people. And then, you know, dear, it does not do to forget to give praise as well as blame when it is deserved. We all like to be praised when we do well, and it does quite as much good as scolding."

"Thank you, aunt; I am sure that is good advice. I will keep out of Anne's way in the future when I feel cross. I thought I had got over my naturally hasty temper, but I find it was only lying dormant for want of provocation, and Anne seems to have roused it all up again."

"Then there is another thing; we who are mistresses, and able to get sympathy and loving care when we have the least trouble or sickness, ought to make allowances for the many private anxieties and troubles our servants have, and which are greatly enhanced by their loneliness. Our little troubles would seem far harder to bear if we were living alone amongst strangers, so you should try to let Anne see that you are really her friend and anxious to promote her happiness, for while she is your servant you are responsible for her welfare. Speak to her, when it is necessary to scold, in a low gentle voice, and let her see that it is entirely between yourselves, and not a matter for the whole house to hear. You know, dear, you have, as mistress of the house, to set her an example of Christian womanhood, which includes amongst its duties gentleness and forbearance, as well as 'looking well to the ways of her house.' You see, my child, I speak to you plainly, but I do it because I have gone through just the same difficulties myself, and so can judge from my own experience."

"This is certainly more elevating than pork chops, Madge," broke in Elsie, "and I can join in, for I take a great interest in the race of domestic servants, they are so much maligned, poor things, though they certainly are sometimes very provoking. I had to go into one of our servant's bedrooms the other day just after coming out of my own room, which I flatter myself is very prettily arranged, and I was so struck by the bareness of the room and absence of anything ornamental, that I felt quite ashamed of all my unnecessary ornaments; it is really too bad that servants should not have anything pretty about them. So, as a beginning, I got these large coloured texts, and I am binding them with narrow ribbon, and then I shall sew on a loop of rather broader ribbon to hang them up by, and they will decorate their bare walls a little; then I think I shall make them some toilet-tidies out of my Christmas cards, and then—oh! then my patience will be exhausted, I expect; but if it is not, I mean to make their rooms look quite nice. Some people are so dreadfully afraid of making their servants' rooms look pretty that, even if their windows face the front, they give them shabby old blinds and no curtains, and spoil the look of the whole of the house."

"You have given up venetian blinds, I see, aunt."

"Oh, yes, long ago; they are expensive, to begin with, and they get so dirty very soon, and it is such an undertaking to have them either washed or re-painted, so we use those pretty striped linen ones, scalloped along the bottom and edged with fringe, and we have had them lately fitted with patent spring rollers; they are so convenient, and very rarely get out of order. Then for the sitting-