

MY LOVE.

By M. HEDDERWICK BROWNE.

I.

MY love is not like the rose,
Nor the languid lady-lily,
Nor the pansy, pensive-faced,
Nor the drooping "daffy-dilly."

II.

She's not like the pale snowdrop,
Fears of frailty in us waking,
Nor the shrinking violet,
For the shade the sun forsaking.

* * * *

III.

I can only liken her
To the brave and bonnie heather—
Hardy, wholesome, and not made
For a hothouse or fine weather.



ART IN DAILY LIFE.

By AMY S. WOODS.

WITHIN the last fifty years a great revolution has taken place with regard to the realisation, appreciation, and illustration of artistic talent and feeling. Less than fifty years ago the idea that art, in its highest sense, should exercise an influence over our daily life, that we should be guided by its precepts when choosing and arranging the clothes we wear, and the homes we live in, would have been regarded as unworthy the consideration of all practical members of society. Art was then considered a fitting study or pastime for those dwelling in the haunts of Bohemianism, or who were of necessity compelled to use their talent to win their daily bread. The majority of men and women of the upper classes were, with a few bright exceptions, content to admire and criticise the proof of the artist's skill and talent, without any desire of emulation, or of surrounding themselves with any of the wealth of colour, beauty, and form they saw set forth.

The artistic taste of their predecessors, as shown in pictures, carvings, furniture and decoration, sufficed for them also, and they had no desire to form a correct judgment and standard of taste for themselves or to depart from the safe road marked out by custom. So long as her drawing-room possessed white and gold or floral-panelled walls, a carpet covered with lilies and roses, and furniture of the stereotyped pattern of deformity, and her dining-room was sufficiently sombre and oppressive, the average British housewife cared not for artistic forms, sighed not for colours of true purity and beauty. If she happened to possess any artistic tendency, it found vent, with at least the merit of inexpensiveness, in washy water-colours or wax-modelled caricatures of flowers and fruit.

But within the last fifteen years, or even less, a vast change has taken place. Art schools have sprung up and flourished.

English men and women have been taught to breathe "unutterable sighs" over a blue teapot, to "live up to" the standard of a sunflower, and to gaze in speechless admiration, I had almost written adoration, at a peacock's feather in a yellow jar. "Effects," "High Lights," "Intensity," and "Tone of Colour," were five or six years ago the jargon lisped by effeminate youths and would-be pre-Raphaelite maidens, at whose expense so many of our authors and composers have amused themselves.

This, however, was only the period of reaction from the days of artistic stagnation that preceded it, and the majority of those who longed to see the sky yellow, and the fields an undertone of blue have by this time settled down into greater sanity, and have learned to appreciate other tenets, and to admire other types of beauty than those set forth by the extreme æsthetic school.

But the teachings of this school have not been without effect upon the taste of to-day.

Beneath all the absurdity to which its disciples carried their enthusiasm a great refining and elevating influence was at work, which influence is now daily and hourly leaving its stamp upon the houses we build and the pictures we paint. Thanks to the æsthetic school we have learned to value more highly beauty of form and purity of colour; we no longer judge by the standard of our predecessors but by our own opinions or by the artistic taste of others. "An age is like climate; the hardier may escape its influence in much, but the hardiest will not escape its influence entirely;" and we have only to look at our own surroundings to see how greatly the past revolution has influenced us. In the decoration of our houses we no longer bow in meek obedience to the dictates of the upholsterer; our own opinions and requirements are our guide; the result being that, on the average, our houses are more comfortable

because utility is considered, and more beautiful because meaningless ornament and vulgar falsehood have yielded place to purity of form and colour and perfect truth.

"The fine arts," says Mr. Ruskin, "are not to be learned by locomotion, but by making the homes we live in lovely, and by staying in them."

A house is a plain index to the characters of those who dwell therein. If our mind be refined, pure, and cultured there will be no falsehood, no shams, nothing that will not bear close scrutiny within our dwellings. Truth and love will be our watchword, and will guard us against all imitations. All our surroundings will show forth the praise of beauty and will therefore be true exponents of that art which has praise of beauty for its object.

But though we are surely and steadily advancing along the road of art, and are happily becoming more artistic and cultivated in our tastes, how much is there still for us to learn before our surroundings become perfectly beautiful! It is difficult to convince many people that spindle-legged chairs, a conventional dado, and walls bespattered with Japanese fans and china plates, do not in themselves make a room artistic. It seems to be a popular theory that if your chairs are sufficiently uncomfortable and angular, and their limbs swathed in muslin or the like flimsy draperies, your chimney-piece surmounted by an overmantel on which are placed specimens of deformed and variously coloured ware, your walls, tables, and chiffoniers alike covered with enough fancy articles to stock a bazaar-stall, that your room is artistic. Oh, the misery of living in these painful apartments! There is no rest for the eye as it wanders about over knick-knacks of every form and hue, dazzled and wearied as it searches vainly for some restful shade to relieve the incongruous and



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IN HER STUDIO.

heterogeneous collection of colours, no place of real repose for weary limbs. If we desire to put down a tea-cup or a work-basket there is nothing to receive it, for the tables are so crowded with useless ornaments, and are themselves so tottery and unsafe, that they will fall over at the slightest touch. Here is no beauty because use is not considered.

Contrast with this a room similar in shape and size but very different in point of comfort. The walls have for their sole adornment auto-types in plain white frames, and a few really valuable pictures whose handsome mouldings and rich colouring are relieved and thrown up by the plain colour of the walls, which have no dado but a deep frieze of dead gold. Here are resting-places in plenty—deep luxurious chairs and cushioned angle seats by the fire-side, screened from draught and with a low table conveniently placed for your books and work. Along the walls by the fireplace are low book-cases whose tops serve to display a few specimens of old china and quaint Italian glass. A writing-table is not forgotten, where good stationery, pens, and ink may always be found, and where there is a calendar, and a card of departures and arrivals of trains for the benefit of visitors.

All of us, however, cannot afford the luxury of valuable pictures and handsome china, though we have the love of the beautiful deep-rooted in our hearts, and desire to manifest that beauty in our houses. How then can we bring art into our daily life?

Here again the beauty of use must be insisted upon.

Nothing that is really useful is lacking in Beauty, inasmuch as Beauty springs from a sense of fitness. Do not fritter away money on vain and useless ornament and then find that the actual necessities of life have to be curtailed to make up for it. Even if you have few things in your rooms let them be good of their kind, and you will get far more satisfaction out of them than if you crowded your house with trumpery furniture and cheap crockery, which have neither use nor beauty to recommend them.

The most comfortable, aye, and the most beautiful homes are those where the love of Art is expounded by the mistress in even the most ordinary occupations of her daily life. Be a meal ever so simple it is worthy of the daintiest accompaniments possible in the serving of it. Spotless napery and sparkling glass and silver, never forgetting a tasteful

arrangement of flowers and foliage, give a "cachet" to the plainest repast, which a banquet would lack when attention to these artistic details was omitted.

Much can be done towards making our tables beautiful by a judicious selection of the china and glass that we place upon them. These need not necessarily be expensive—in the present day beautiful china, and glass of the loveliest hues can be purchased for a very trifling outlay, and will well repay the trouble taken in selecting harmonious colouring.

And in this point of colouring how far are we, as a nation, and as individuals, from perfection!

Mr. Ruskin tells us that half the degradation of Art in modern times has been owing to endeavours to see things without colour, as if colour were a vulgar thing, the result being in most students that they fail to see anything at all!

Perhaps the reason why so many of our houses as well as our public buildings are cold and lacking in colour is that timidity prevents us from launching from the safe haven of shades and neutral tints into the perilous ocean of richness and warmth of colour, where we may find ourselves shipwrecked upon some dangerous quicksand.

Some hardy spirits have, however, made bold ventures, and often with happy results.

An experiment by which a painfully chilling and depressing breakfast-room with a north aspect, was transformed by Pompeian-red walls and paint, and a dado of cream-coloured India matting into an inviting snugger and smoking-room, is worthy of being repeated by many unhappy possessors of such refrigerators.

In our public buildings many reforms might also be carried out; whitewash, stucco, and stone-coloured paint might with advantage yield place to carefully blended colours like those which so delight the eye in many foreign cities.

Last year, when inspecting the new Palais de Justice in Brussels, I was greatly pleased with the beauty of the colouring of the walls and ceilings, contrasting as it did most harmoniously with the richness of the pear-wood and mahogany doors; the effect was, indeed, most excellent, and worthy of reproduction in many of our cold, bare town-halls and other like institutions. Surely if Italy, with her radiant skies and glowing sunshine can glory in buildings as rich in colour as the world-famed cathedral at Venice, and the feast of loveliness as manifested in many of the

public buildings of Pisa and Florence, we might indulge in even brighter hues in this country, where fogs and cloud so often hold their sway.

Discretion of course is a *sine quâ non* in dealing with colour; it is easy for an uneducated and illiterate workman to cover four walls with white or colour wash, but it requires an educated taste and knowledge of the laws of Art, perfectly to blend decided colours in true harmony.

Here Nature, with her infinite variety of colour, comes to our assistance. No true and earnest student of her marvels should err on the side of vulgarity and over-colouring; no one can be her disciple, and fall into the opposite error of insipidity.

What lessons in purity of tone and richness of hue are ever waiting for us in Nature's book if we will only patiently learn them!

It has been truly said that "Whenever people don't look at Nature they always think they can improve her." It is not to the careless observer that she reveals her wonders, but to those who carefully and patiently study her teaching.

Let those who are doubtful upon their own ability to blend tones of colour harmoniously, examine the wonderful shading of a wall-flower, or the lichens upon some gnarled tree. See how the shades of brown and vivid yellow blend, and keep the remembrance or the flower itself before you when you are arranging the predominating shades of your library or dining-room; or note the tender greys and blues of the lichens relieved by the brown shade of the bark, or the glorious greeny bronze of the mosses that cling to it, and endeavour to reproduce them in your drawing-room. It is wonderful how quickly the eyes that have been trained in Nature's school can detect a faulty blending, or inharmonious juxtaposition of tones! In conclusion I trust I may be pardoned for again quoting from the works of the great modern teacher who has done so much for the cause of Art in our own days.

"The entire vitality of Art," he never fails to impress upon his followers, "depends upon its being either full of truth, or full of use; and that, however pleasant, wonderful, or impressive it may be in itself, it must yet be of inferior kind and tend to deeper inferiority, unless it has clearly one of these main objects, either to state a true thing, or to adorn a serviceable one."

AMATEUR UPHOLSTERING.

ROLLER AND VENETIAN BLINDS, TO REPAIR AND REMAKE.

By DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.



COMFORT of the house is so largely connected with the order or disorder of its blinds, that there is no apology needed for giving any article on the

subject. Most families have no ideas on blinds, and do not know anything of their internal mechanism. Their sole thought is, to send for a man to come and put them right when they go wrong, or to pack their venetian blinds off to the manufactory when the blind-tapes get dirty or broken; but the thought never dawns on them that every trouble of the sort is quite within the powers of the home upholsterers to set right, and that

when the saving of money has to be considered they ought to be done at home.

There are three kinds of blinds to be considered in our houses, *i.e.* the common roller-blind, the spring-blind, and the venetian. The ordinary roller is dependent on the absolute exactness and straightness of the blind itself; and the least failure in this makes the blind go up crooked, and wrap round the roller in a bunch. Of course, the making of the blind requires accurate measurements; but even these will not be enough at times. The linen should be cut by a thread, and the sewing of the blind itself to the tape, which is nailed along the roller, must be very carefully done to avoid the least pucker. The ends should first be pinned, and then the middle; and both ends should be begun before the centre is reached. Some people buy the blinds too

wide, and think this fault can be remedied with a hem at the edges. This is quite fallacious, and it is better to wait and obtain the proper width, than to buy anything that does not exactly fit.

The spring blind is a much more difficult and complicated thing; and consists of a hollow cylinder of metal in which a spiral spring is coiled. The act of pulling down the blind by the tassel winds up the spring, and a little catch prevents its flying up again. The lever is pulled up by a string fastened to it, and the blind goes up again. The tassel should be held in the hand as the blind goes up, to prevent a sudden jerk, and the action of the blind should be steady and continuous. This forms the first rule, I think, in the well-being of all blinds. Strict attention to it should be enforced on the household, and