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DECORATING TRICKS ADD UP-TO-DATENESS.

When entering certain rooms for the first time have you ever been at a loss to discover just what made it look "just right"? Nothing was elaborate. In fact, everything was quite ordinary and simple, yet the whole room conveyed an atmosphere that was restful and so pleasing to the eye.

There are many little tricks in decorating that help to create this atmosphere and I believe tricks with curtains make delightful changes in our rooms that it does not pay us to overlook.

Curtains of one color very different from the walls give too sharp a contrast. A band (on heavy material) or a braid (on light weight) containing colors of both curtains and walls, will tie them together and reduce the contrast. Extending the curtains outside the casing will give the effect of width and help make room lower and more extended. A valance does this, too, besides giving the wanted color that furnishes variety.

Low broad ornaments, vases, etc., add to the effect of repose, as long, low buildings and long low rooms give the idea of repose. Low, wide masses give the feeling of stability, while the slender lines, as church spires and skyscrapers, give feelings of exaltation, action.

Straight lines, especially vertical ones, also may mean dignity, stiffness, austerity; as opposed to the buoyancy, grace, and yieldingness of curved lines.

Curved lines better express richness, and furniture with curving outlines will look more expensive than straight line furniture that costs more.

Straight line furniture in a room demands more color and ornament and design to offset its austerity.

The small room will do better with curves instead of straight lines, all-over patterns instead of stripes.

Placing furniture carefully is another trick that will add spaciousness and repose to small rooms. In small rooms the centre must be left empty to give a feeling of space. The long way of furniture and rugs must be placed the long way of the room, with few opposing cross lines or cross corners.

Should a room be too long, place the furniture with its longest sides across the short sides of the room. Raise the ceiling by making it lighter and of smoother finish.

A ceiling almost as dark as sides, and of rough surface, or brought down on side walls, seems lower than it is.

The mind wants to see likeness in dimension but not sameness. This principle makes the square room or the too long room unpleasing. In the one we see sameness, in the other we fail to grasp likenesses. By these tricks we change apparent dimensions; we make our rooms satisfying.

In the too large room the mind cannot grasp the dimensions or their comparisons. A too large room will lack in the quality of intimacy. Furniture is apt to look too small in proportion. Put in more furniture and place it in groups. Break up long spaces, reduce the light, use contrast, heavy furniture and hangings, deep and advancing colors and rough textures. The size of rooms is apparently lessened by having all furniture, pictures, ornaments, etc., large and heavy.

There are certain other requirements in decoration for emotional satisfaction or feelings. Definite laws or principles bring about required results that the mind accepts as beautiful.

When you buy new furniture or change the fixed decorations you can make your home what you want it. In the meantime, try some of the tricks of the decorator's trade.

PENNY PLAIN

BY O. DOUGLAS

Shopman—"You may have your choice—penny plain or two-pence colored."

Solemn Small Boy—"Penny plain, please. It's better value for the money."

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CHAPTER V.—(Cont'd.)

Jean watched with delight her rather difficult guest blossom into affability. "You are looking better already," she told him. "If you stayed here for a week and rested and Mrs. M'Cosh cooked you light, nourishing food and Mhor didn't make too much noise, I'm sure you would feel quite well again. And it does seem such a pity to pay hotel bills when we want you here."

Hotel bills! Peter Reid looked sharply at her. Did she imagine, this girl, that hotel bills were of any moment to him? Then he looked down at his shabby clothes and recalled their conversation and owned that her mistake was not unjustifiable.

But how extraordinary it was! The instinct that makes people wish to stand well with the rich and powerful he could understand and commend, but the instinct that opens wide doors to the shabby and the unsuccessful was not one that he knew anything about; it was certainly not an instinct for this world as he knew it.

Just as they were finishing tea Mrs. M'Cosh ushered in Miss Pamela Reston.

"You did say I might come in when I liked," she said as she greeted Jean. "I've had tea, thank you. Mhor, you haven't been to see me to-day."

"I would have been," Mhor assured her, "but Jean said I'd better not. Do you invite me to come to-morrow?"

"I do."

"There, Jean," said Mhor. "You can't *un*-vite me after that."

"Indeed she can't," said Pamela. "Jock, this is the book I told you about. . . . Please, Miss Jean, don't let me disturb you."

"We've finished," said Jean. "May I introduce Mr. Reid?"

Pamela shook hands and at once proceeded to make herself so charming that Peter Reid was galvanized into a spirited conversation. Pamela had brought her embroidery-frame with her, and she sat on the sofa and sorted out silks, and talked and laughed as if she had sat there off and on all her life. To Jean, looking at her, it seemed impossible that two days ago none of them had beheld her. It seemed—absurdly enough—that the room could never have looked quite right when it had not this graceful creature with her soft gowns and her pearls, her embroidery-frame and heaped, bright-hued silks, sitting by the fire.

"Miss Jean, won't you sing us a song? I'm convinced that you sing Scots songs quite perfectly."

Jean laughed. "I can sing Scots songs in a way, but I have a voice about as big as a sparrow's. If it would amuse you I'll try."

So Jean sat down to the piano and sang "Proud Maisie," and "Colin's Cattle," and one or two other old songs.

"I wonder," said Peter Reid, "if you know a song my mother used to sing—'Strathairlie'?"

"Indeed I do. It's one I like very much. I have it here in this little book." She struck a few simple cords and began to sing: it was a lilting, haunting tune, and the words were "old and plain."

"O, the lift is high and blue
And the new mune glints through
On the bonnie corn-fields o' Strathairlie:
Ma ship's in Largo Bay
And I ken weel the way
Up the steep, steep banks o' Strathairlie.

When I sailed ower the sea
A laddie bold and free
The corn sprang green on Strathairlie!
When I come back again
It's an auld man walks his lane
Slow and sad ower the fields o' Strathairlie.

O' the shearers that I see
No' a body kens me,
Though I kent them a' in Strathairlie;
An' the fisher-wife I pass,
Can she be the braw lass
I kissed at the back o' Strathairlie?

O, the land is fine, fine,
I could buy it a' for mine
For ma gowd's as the stooks in Strathairlie;
But I fain the lad would be
Wha sailed ower the saut sea
When the dawn rose grey on Strathairlie."

Jean rose from the piano. Jock had got out his books and had begun his lessons. Mhor and Peter were under the table playing at being cave-men. Pamela was stitching at her embroidery. Peter Reid sat shading his eyes from the light with his hand.

Jean knelt down on the rug and held out her hands to the blazing fire.

"It must be sad to be old and rich," she said softly, almost as if she were speaking to herself. "It is so very certain that we can carry nothing out of this world. . . . I read somewhere of a man who, on every birthday, gave away some of his possessions, so that at the end he might not be cumbered and weighted with them." She looked up and caught the gaze of Peter Reid fixed on her intently. "It's rather a nice idea, don't you think, to give away all the superfluous money and lands, pictures and jewels, everything we have, and stand stripped, as it were, ready when we get the word to come, to leap into the beyond."

Pamela spoke first. "There speaks sweet and twenty," she said.

"Yes," said Jean. "I know it's quite easy for me to speak in that lordly way of disposing of possessions, for I haven't got ony to dispose of."

"Then," said Pamela, "we are to take it that you are ready to spring across any minute?"

"So far as goods and gear go; but I'm rich in other things. I'm pretty heavily weighted by David, and Jock, and Mhor."

Then Peter Reid spoke, still with his hand over his eyes.

"Once you begin making money it clings. How can you get rid of it?"

"I'm saving it up for a bicycle," the Mhor broke in, becoming aware that the conversation turned on money. "I've got half a crown and a thrupenny-bit and fourpence-ha'penny in pennies: and I've got a duster to clean it with when I've got it."

Jean stroked his head. "I don't think you'll ever be overburdened with riches, Mhor, old man. But it must be tremendous fun to be rich. I love books where suddenly a lawyer's letter comes saying that someone has left them a fortune."

"What would you do with a fortune if you got it?" Peter Reid asked.

"Need you ask?" laughed Pamela. "Miss Jean would at once make it over to David and Jock and Mhor."

"Oh, well," said Jean, "of course they would come first, but, oh, I would do such a lot of things! I'd find out where money was most needed and drop it on the people anonymously so that they wouldn't be bothered about thanking anyone. I would creep about like a benficent Puck and take worried frowns away, and straighten out things for tired people, and, above all, I'd make children smile. There's no fun or satisfaction got from giving big sums to hospitals and things—that's all right for when you're dead. I want to make happiness while I'm alive. I don't think a million pounds would be too much for all I want to do."

"Aw, Jean," said Mhor, "if you had a million pounds would you buy me a bicycle?"

"A bicycle," said Jean, "and a motor and an aeroplane and a Shetland pony and a Newfoundland pup. I'll make a story for you in bed to-night all about what you would have if I were rich."

"And Jock, too?"

Being assured that Jock would not be overlooked, Mhor grabbed Peter round the neck and proceeded to babble to him about bicycles and aeroplanes, motors and Newfoundland pups.

Jean looked apologetically at her guests.

"When you're poor you've got to dream," she said. "Oh, must you go, Mr. Reid? But you'll come back tomorrow, won't you? We would honestly like you to come and stay with us."

"Thank you," said Peter Reid, "but I am going back to London in a day or two. I am obliged to you for your hospitality, especially for singing me 'Strathairlie.' I never thought to hear it again. I wonder if I might trouble you to write me out the words."

"But take the book," said Jean, running to get it and pressing it into his hands. "Perhaps you'll like other songs in it you used to know and like. Take it to keep."

Pamela dropped her embroidery-frame and watched the scene.

Mhor and Peter stood looking on. Jock lifted his head from his books to listen. It was no new thing for the boys to see Jean give away her most treasured possessions: she was a born "Madam Liberality."

"But," Peter Reid objected, "it is rather a rare book. You value it yourself."

"Of course I do," said Jean, "and that is why I am giving it to you. I know you will appreciate it."

Peter Reid took the book as if it were something fragile and very precious. Pamela was puzzled by the expression on his face. He did not seem so much troubled by the gift as amused—sardonically amused.

"Thank you," he said. And again, "Thank you!"

"Jock will go down with you to the hotel," Jean said, explaining, when the visitor demurred, that the road was steep and not very well lighted.

"I'll go too," said Mhor, "me and Peter."

"Well, come straight back. Goodbye, Mr. Reid. I'm so glad you came to see The Rigs, but I wish you could have stayed. . . . ."

"Is he an old friend?" Pamela asked when the cavalcade had departed.

"I never saw him before to-day. He once lived in this house and he came back to see it, and he looks ill and I think he is poor, so I asked him to come and stay with us for a week."

"My dear child, do you invite every stranger to say with you if you think he is poor?"

"Of course not. But he looked so lonely and lost somehow, and he doesn't seem to have anyone belonging to him, and I was sorry for him."

"And so you gave him that song book you value so much?"

"Yes," said Jean, looking rather ashamed. "But," she brightened, "he seemed pleased, don't you think? It's a pretty song, 'Strathairlie,' but it's not a *pukka* old one—it's early Victorian."

"Miss Jean, it's a marvel to me that you have anything left belonging to you."

"Don't call me Miss Jean!"

"Jean, then; but you must call me Pamela."

"Oh, but wouldn't that be rather familiar? You see, you are so—so—"

"Stricken in years," Pamela supplied.

"No—but—well, you are rather impressive you know. It would be like calling Miss Bathgate 'Bella' to her face. However—Pamela——"

(To be continued.)

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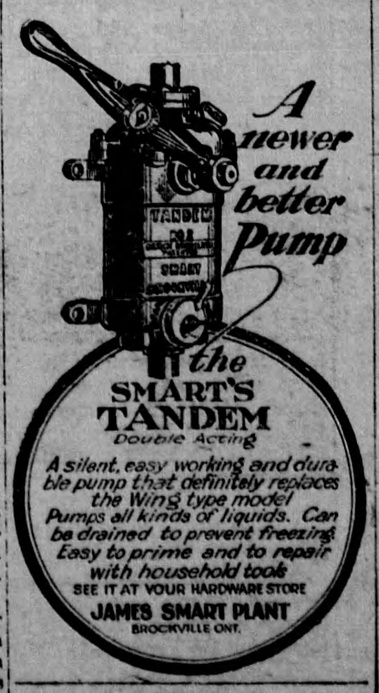

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