

Brown!" she said. "Do you really read my stuff?" Somehow it sorter hurt my feelings to hear her call it stuff.

"I am so glad if I have helped you, so very glad!" I hated to tell her that when you came right down to facts, that while I read every word of what she wrote, I hadn't been helped exactly; but I'd been set thinking, and now she could—but just here some more folks came in, and we had to let the matter go over till she came to lunch a few days later.

"Now tell me all about your house," she said, "and I'll give you my best efforts."

So I got out my lists and we set to work.

"The lace curtains," she said quite decidedly, "will have to go. You might replace them with sheer-white organdie ones, made with little three-inch ruffles down the front."

"Three-inch ruffles down the front," I wrote.

"And the walls I think I should repaper in a good two-toned yellow paper."

I almost pinched myself to see if I was dreaming. To think of having "Helpful Hints" talking to me face to face!

"Then cover your chairs," she went on. "I think you said they were walnut frames."

"Yes," I put in; "but the plush on them is perfectly good crushed plush—one red, one blue, two old-gold."

"But that must come off," she went on, seeming to forget that they were my chairs. "I would get a good piece of imported linen taffeta, some with yellow and rich red tulips and green leaves on the ecru ground—that would be stunning in a room of that character. Make some straight curtains of the same to hang over the ruffled organdie ones."

She talked exactly as it read in the paper, and I kinder forgot what a little, young thing she was, and listened to her as an oracle. I couldn't write as fast as she talked, and I was real glad when Cynthia came in.

"Listen, good people," Cynthia said, "I have an idea. We'll go down to the farm in the morning and spend a long lovely day in the country, and after Miss 'Helpful Hints' here has looked over the ground she indeed can be 'helpful' to you, and the next evening we'll all come back to town and buy things."

It really seemed too good to be true; but the next day there we were driving home with Joshua. Cynthia had sent him a despatch and told him we would be there. After we sat and rested a spell on the piazza, I suggested that Miss "Helpful Hints" and me go in an' look at the parlor. I was that anxious I could scarcely wait. So we left Joshua and Cynthia together. They always have a lot to say to one another.

When the windows were opened and the light

streaming in, I looked around to see how Miss "Helpful Hints" liked it. She was looking straight at the portraits; but she said: "The room has beautiful proportions," and went on to say she was right in all the advice she had given me. The yellow would be good on the walls, and the linen taffeta gave just the color needed, and the woodwork must be painted white, ivory-white, she said, and then she kind a' hesitated. "I suppose, dear Mrs. Brown, you haven't any upper hall where those portraits could hang? You might inaugurate a real picture gallery—add to it from time to time, you know. I think you could find a better light for them some other place, perhaps."

So there I was—my curtains not right, and the pictures really too good for the best room.

After a little more talk she said: "And now I am crazy to see the sitting-room. Cynthia had told me about that even before I saw you."

Well, that was pretty poor taste on Cynthia's part, I thought, to laugh about the old room. I guessed Miss "Helpful" wanted to get at it, like I feel when the silver needs rubbing terrible bad—because you can see what you do. I only hoped to myself Mary Anne had tidied it up a bit, and I led her in.

I was that relieved to see it all looked spick and span, and she had put a big glass bowl filled with sun-flowers in the middle of the old mahogany table, and all the pewter mugs and brass candlesticks were a-shining. The pots of geraniums in the window were in bloom. I was glad of that; but the beams in the ceiling and the rest of the woodwork of the room seemed most dreadful black. She'll want, that changed at once, I thought, and I wished Joshua wasn't sittin' right there listening. She stopped still in the door, and sort a' drew in her breath and held her hand clasped in front of her. Land sakes! I thought. Is it as bad as that?

She was letting her eyes travel up and down, an' around that room, then she says, speaking soft: "Oh, what a delicious room! What mellowness! What color!"

My old sittin'-room! You could a' knocked me down with a feather, after I got it through my head she wasn't making sport of me. She looked at every piece of furniture and bit of old china and brass, even the old brass warming-pan that Joshua would have hung by the fireplace just cause it always had. And she fairly gloated over the old glass knobs on the secretary, them as I'd planned to change.

"This room," she said, still looking around and speaking like she was reading it out of 'Helpful Hints,' "this room is the embodiment of all that we are striving for when we stain our beams and wainscot, and have

the varnish removed from our furniture, and try to take the color out of fabric and rugs. But yours is evolved, and it's time that has softened and toned it.

"But never mind," she laughed as Cynthia looked at her; "I'll put it all in 'Helpful Hints.' It's a real inspiration. Those curtains—could there be a more perfect cold green? And the brilliant green of that fascinating lamp accentuates it, and the gleam of the brass and crystal knobs, and the perfect color of the walls—"

Well, when she wound it all up by asking me to let her photograph it and publish the picture I just dropped in a chair, and laughed till I cried. My old sittin'-room!

Now I felt surer than ever that I didn't know a thing. When they went back to town next day I stayed behind, and they promised to send me down all the goods to fix the parlor, which, when I come to think of it, was to be clean done over. An' the sittin'-room! Well, the last thing Miss "Helpful Hints" called back to me as they drove away was: "Don't touch it!"

Words That Live

By Smith D. Fry

THE last words my mother ever breathed were uttered to me a few minutes before she died. I said an old philosopher, "and they have lived in my memory ever since. She was bidding goodbye to a large family of grown-up men and women, and when she came to me she said: 'Better son never lived.' Maybe she was mistaken or over-appreciative; but her words have helped make a good man of me during all of the years."

That reminds the writer of a story Senator Davis of Minnesota used to tell about one of his cousins, who had worked all day in a harvest-field, and was going to dinner, when his father asked him to take a small package to the village, almost a mile away. The young man was tired, and his impulse was to resent the request with hot refusal, but some good angel made him smile and cheerfully do his filial duty to an indulgent father. When he started away, the father said: "I am very thankful to you, for I am very tired to-day and feeble. You have always been a kind son to me, and your old father loves you very much."

On his return, he found a crowd gathered around the house, and was told that as soon as his father had entered the house and sat in his easy chair he died. The last words that were ever uttered by him were words of commendation for a good son. Those words were inspiration to a lifetime of duty in all things. The world would be better if all boys were worthy of such expressions of commendation.

THE BEST OF ALL--By Edwin L. Sabin



Be it ours to gain with the hand and brain,
And wealth like the sands create,
Or steer o'er the perilous, darksome main
The staggering ship of state;
If the truth be told neither rank nor gold
Buys haven on Fortune's map,
Like that spot of old, which two arms enfold—
The bourne of a mother's lap.

Gold will do while the world is new
And the sun is high o'erhead;
But there comes a time when the play is through
And the zest of spending sped,
And rank is brave; but there's many a knave
Poses in jeweled cap,
While princes by right are czar and slave
When throned in their mother's lap.

When low the sun, and the east grows dus,
What wouldn't you give, friends all,
To steal, each one, from his work and fun,
Through forest and field and hall,
And safe midst the gray let happen what may,
And be but a little chap,
Tired with the play and the stress of the day,
Hugged close in his mother's lap!