

# Margaret Sangster's Talks On Home Circle Questions.

## DEFENSE OF PARLORS PLACES OF NEATNESS

Modern Living Rooms Fail to Answer Their Purposes Completely.

Room Should Be Set Apart From Common Use for Sacred Purposes.



MRS. MARGARET SANGSTER.

By MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

I HAD occasion the other day to look for some outside help in my housekeeping, so I sallied forth to find Benjamin, who, in the suburban region where I live, is the court of last resort when one whitewashes her cellar, cleans her attic or skrimshaws valiantly with the never-ending foe of dust and dirt that defies one's usual method. Wanting a re-enforcement, one sends for Benjamin, and then goes to sleep in peace, assured that the fearsome microbes have been put to flight.

Benjamin's home is a bit of a cabin in the middle of a field, beyond a brook which is crossed by a slender and perilous foot bridge. Around it stand hen coops and bee hives, and about it play the little black children and the little barking dogs, while the gray cat mounts guard on the sunny doorsteps. His good wife, Phyllis, and I are friends, and she met me with a beaming smile, wiping her floury hand to take mine.

"Walk right in, dear," she said. "Step right into the living-room. You, Molly, get out of the lady's way, quick." The fat pickaninny rolled over, and the next in age, frying-size, held out a doll for my admiration. Phyllis proudly stood aside that I might enter her best room, a tiny place, but the pride of her honest heart, her holy of holies. In it there are a table, a lamp, a rocking chair and a sofa. On the wall are the Stitine Madonna and Abraham Lincoln. Lace curtains drape the single window, and a square of faded brussels carpet, once gay-colored, covers the floor.

I had made a feat to sit in the kitchen, where Phyllis was busy with her baking, but this was not allowed, Benjamin was out, so I had to unfold my business to Phyllis, but first I said:

"What a pretty parlor, Phyllis; you must enjoy it. And what beautiful flowers. I think no parlor is complete without a bouquet."

"PARLORS HAVE GONE OUT," SAID PHYLLIS. "Hush, honey, hush," said Phyllis impressively. "This ain't no parlor. This is my living room. Parlors have gone out. Didn't you know that?"

Her air was serious. Her matronly figure almost filled up her "living room." She had an air dignified enough to have befitting an empress in a palace. And why not? She was at home, and she had a place in which, apart from the grind and the toil and the moil, she could receive her friends.

That is what a parlor, a drawing room, or, as we are now taught to say, a living room, is for. A place in order, not littered with Jenny's sewing, or John's papers, or the children's toys, where one may entertain the minister or his wife, the visiting lady or gentleman, or the group of neighbors who come when one has a party. By the way, that is old-fashioned, too. We don't go to parties any more; we are not so simple as we used to be. Yet—a rose by any other name, you know, is just as sweet, and we do have companies that amount to the same thing.

### FURNISHED WITH AN EYE TO LUXURY.

A living room is furnished with an eye to luxury. A parlor, on the other hand, was like a grand dame, who could unbend if she chose, but who did not always choose. In the living room we have a big, stately divan, or couch, or day-sleep, as the owner pleases, and this is heaped and piled with cushions, the more the better. Not to have cushions in the living room is to be shorn of much glory. A table with the magazines and newspapers, a footstool or two, several chairs, and a row of book-shelves, with a rug on the floor, and a plant in the window, and there you are.

The sitting room of our grandmothers has supplanted the parlor, which was never the tramping-ground for everybody, though it may have possessed all the features of the modern living room. Children studied their lessons for tomorrow in the sitting room, the father smoked a pipe there, and the mother did her mending. Intimate acquaintances ran in, and dropped down in the Boston rockers. Grandmother had her special corner. The bachelor uncle whittled a boat for the small boy, and nobody minded that the shavings and chips fell on the clean hearth.

You may do all in the living room that you once did in the sitting room, but again, you may not. It depends on the ideals and standards of the mistress of the house. If she is of the anxious variety and is bothered by trifles, you will then have lost the freedom of the old sitting room, and gained little by the new living room. A room to look at, to wear good clothes in, to have fun in is of little practical value to a family where there are growing boys and girls.

### THE PARLOR IS A PLACE OF NEATNESS.

I still cling to the parlor, to the thing and to the name. The latter carries with it a suggestion of leisure; it is the background for conversation, not the arena for drudgery. The parlor is a place of neatness, of order, and of retirement, of withdrawal from care and immunity from labor. I have seen the man, tired, and tempted and worried with the incertitudes of business, quietly stepping into the parlor and closing the door, in the twilight or the early dawn. He went there as into his closet, to commune with the unseen Friend who could give him strength for the day and the task. The mother went there, too, now and then to pray, when the baby was ill, or the boy was going wrong.

Into the parlor, twice or thrice a day, the little daughter went to practice. The blinds were drawn open, the light fell on the keys—  
Four and twenty black slaves,  
Four and twenty white,

and the little fingers touched them, while the little voice counted, one, two, three, four, five.

### COMPANY SMILE LIKE A QUEEN'S CROWN.

When grand folk came, there was the parlor, and they could sit in state, until the lady, who had hastily changed her gown, came floating in with outstretched hand, in her silk raiment and her company smile. You need not sneer. A company smile is like a queen's crown, the proper accompaniment of ceremonial occasions. It does not suit a mere living-room. It does harmonize with a parlor.

For my part, I like to have one room in the house set apart from common uses to sacred functions. I like that "beauty should go beautifully." My few carvings and curios and pictures, and my old mahogany tables and the satin covered chairs are for my parlor. It is a retreat to which I may turn when weary, its aspect of composure soothing me when perturbed, its quietude inviting me to rest, and renew my wasted energies. If it were a museum, it would tire me, but it is not. It is merely a parlor.

Some of you who read remember parlors in which, however dumbly and imperfectly, the homemaker expressed the melody and poetry of her soul. They were shrines, kept closed for the most part, except for weddings and funerals. Here were marble-topped tables and slippery sofas, covered with uncompromising rep or shiny horse-hair. On the table, a photograph album with large clasps. On the mantle, peacock or pampas plumes and grasses crystallized with alum. On the walls, ancestral portraits. Somewhere on a stand a family Bible, and a glass case with wax flowers under it. All horribly ugly and fatally respectable and unspcakably precious to the presiding genius. The reaction from this has given us the living room, which is the pendulum's swing in the opposite direction.

Thus far have I wandered from Phyllis and her living room. And here is Benjamin coming in to beat the rugs. The rugs are a modern improvement that makes easier the never-ending battle with dirt; they are a not-to-be-devised ally when you would rout pestilent microbes.

## DRUDGERY TOUGHENS THE COUNTRY YOUTH

Adversities Endured in Early Life Frequently Prove Blessing.

Large Proportion of Successful Men Has Come From the Country.

By MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

IN MOST occasional gatherings of successful city men, it will be found on investigation that a large proportion of them began life in the country. They passed their early years in plain homes. Not of necessity in homes of poverty and want, certainly not in homes of squalor and distress, although some of our most eminent Americans have in youth known the sharpening of brain and toughening of sinew that come through the buffeting of adversity. When every rough place is smoothed and every angle cushioned, it is difficult for a lad to learn the initial lessons of persistence and strenuous endeavor that carry him forward to success.

What is success? Different people attach different meanings to the familiar word. The dictionary defines it as favorable results or a prosperous issue. It is arriving at a goal which has been kept in sight. Undoubtedly circumstances assist some men to ultimate success, but unless the man is big enough to avail himself of opportunity and dominate circumstances he will never succeed.

I would not limit the attainment of success to any single line. Men are poor their lives long who are conspicuously successful in their chosen careers. A man may be immensely rich, and at the same time be a perfect picture of Old Scrouge.

### MAN WHO IS RICH AND NOTHING MORE PITIABLE.

Of what use is a fortune if its owner is miserly and mean? A man who is rich and nothing more, is a pitiful figure, notwithstanding his array of dividends. The man who stands in the pulpit and sways a great congregation, or sits in an editorial chair and influences a wide community, or presides over a great university and stamps his personality on young men, seldom gets beyond a modest salary. Most of this he spends on the education of his children or gives away in charity. His real estate may not be much more when he dies than the six feet of earth in which to lay his coffin, yet this man has been splendidly successful. He has served his generation, and left his mark on his period. The men who have exerted commanding influence on their times have often started life in rural sections of this land.

They have been born on the farm, of hard-working fathers who tilled the field and hard-working mothers who managed their own kitchen. Or else, they have come from the small country village, have attended the district school and the academy, and have been graduated perhaps from one of the smaller colleges. This last is only a detail; it matters very little from what alma mater a boy receives his diploma if the boy has had pluck and brains and has earned his honors. These boys have worn patched trousers and coarse boots, and sometimes their mothers have cut their hair. Can home economy drop lower than this level?

Of a country boy who has been the governor of one of our great States and a member of a Presidential Cabinet it is recorded in the household annal that his mother once cut his hair and made of it a rather unfortunate job. The boy withdrew to his little room under the eaves, and stayed there sulking and protesting against his mortification. Finally his mother climbed the stairs and said, "Never mind, John, perhaps the barber can shingle it and your hair won't look so badly after all." John had passed his eighth birthday. "Mother," he said, "please go away. I wish neither your presence nor your sympathy."

### TRAMPING MANY MILES TO ATTEND SCHOOL.

I heard the other day of a bright little fellow in Massachusetts who is half way through the high school. In order to attend school he tramps three and one-half miles there and the same distance back every day, and through all the snow and cold of last winter he did not miss a single session. The boy who carries enough for school to walk seven miles a day that he may pursue his studies will amount to something worth while later on. I knew a lad in the mountains of the South, today an eminent physician, who walked 100 miles from his home to the college town where he matriculated, and where largely he paid his own way by his own efforts.

A Western boy from a country parsonage came some years ago to Columbia University, maintained a high place in his classes, lived sparsely, worked hard in vacation, and by efforts that to the on-looker seemed little short of miraculous succeeded in gaining his degree and the education he sought. That boy is now a professor of Oriental literature, and a successful author. My point is that the early training of a country boy is a great advantage; that he learns to endure hardships, not to mind self-denial and sacrifice and to be indifferent to luxury. Too much coddling enervates and ruins a boy who must sooner or later engage in a rough tussle on the battlefield of life.

### ALWAYS PLENTY TO DO IN COUNTRY HOME.

There is always plenty to do in a country home. Blessed be drudgery! Without it no character is strengthened. Few of us would accomplish much in the world unless we were forced to work. Labor is by no means an unmitigated calamity. It is a good thing to be compelled to work. About a country-house there are chores to do; the wood is indigenous to the soil. Wood to split, cows to milk, chickens to feed, fields to plant, work to be done. These things develop responsibility and foster stability of character.

One great defect in American youth is irresponsibility. A boy may be ever so brilliant, ever so quick-witted, ever so capable, but if he cannot be depended upon to finish what he begins, to do what he promises, and to fulfill his tasks with constancy and determination, he will be more or less a failure.

We need not expect that every boy will become a leader. Thousands of people compose the rank and file. It is not desirable that every man shall emerge from the safe and pleasant obscurity of the common lot.

### NEED OF SERVICES OF GOOD CITIZENS.

What is needed imperatively in a country like ours, into which hordes of people from other nationalities are continually pouring, is that the leaven which leavens the lump shall be of good stuff, warranted not to fail in the work it must accomplish. We send this man to Congress and the other to the army, but we need just as much and should prize just as much the services of the good citizen who stays at home, minds his business, tills the soil, makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before, and does his plain duty without any fuss.

Fortunate it is that when testing times come we may usually depend on the fidelity and common sense of the average man.

In all candor we must admit that a sensible nature is sometimes crushed and goes under because life is too hard at the outset. I would be sorry to have anyone suppose that hardships in themselves are desirable, though for some of us they are inevitable. But just as we are by the way at present of making everything too easy and too refined, even to the heating of our houses and the furnishing of our tables, so we are in peril of bringing up our boys with too little regard to the future.

### A BARGAIN.

"What possessed you to choose such a dull girl as this, my dear?" "Well, you see, it had 47 pages, and all the others had less than 40, so, as it was only 98 cents, I thought it was a good bargain. I didn't see any others for less than \$1."—Cincinnati Commercial-Tribune.

### CAN PICK THE WINNER.

Mrs. Watkyns—Your husband goes to the races pretty often, doesn't he? Mrs. Wylkyns—Whenever he can get a chance. Mrs. Watkyns—Can he often pick the winning horse? Mrs. Wylkyns—Almost always. He generally bets against him.—Somerville Journal.

## SOCIETY GIRL SCRUBS STEPS OF CAPITOL

Governor Peabody Watches Fair Worker, Who Lost a Bet on Him.

DENVER, Nov. 19.—Governor Peabody is expected to acknowledge defeat soon, since Miss Sadie Kennedy, a society belle, who made a bet that he would be re-elected, paid the wager by scrubbing a flight of steps in the Capitol before his eyes and in the presence of fashionable friends.

The party reached the Capitol in an automobile at noon, and the loser hurried up the steps and through the hall to the stairway in the center of the building. She carried a bucket in one hand and in the other a scrubbing brush and a piece of soap. Without a moment's hesitation she got on her knees and began to apply soap and water to the steps. Every stroke of the brush brought laughter from her friends.

When the young woman got half way down the stairs Governor Peabody emerged from his private office and stopped to watch her. Miss Kennedy looked up at the governor, and said: "I'm doing this because you couldn't win." Everybody laughed, and the governor was visibly embarrassed, and hurried away.

## FERDINAND GAWLER DYING FROM OPERATION

Ferdinand Gawler, of 1734 Pennsylvania Avenue northwest, who has been confined to his bed for a week with appendicitis, cannot recover.

All hope for his recovery had been given up at a late hour last night, and the doctors said death was a matter of only a few hours.

Mr. Gawler had been complaining of ill-health for some time before taking to his bed. During the week peritonitis and other complications set in, which prevented an operation.

Gawler is fifty-eight years old, and has been associated with his father, Joseph Gawler, in an undertaking business at 1734 Pennsylvania Avenue. He has been connected with local Masonic organizations for a number of years.



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