Written for THE EVENING STAR.

CONSERVATORIES OF THE RICH.

Beautiful Flower Rooms Arranged for Decorative Purposes.

EFFECTIVE VISTAS IN HANDSOME HOUSES—MRS. W. H. VANDERBILT'S CONSERVATORY—FLOWERS AND PLANTS IN THE MARQUAND HOUSE—TROPICAL FOLIAGE THE RAGE—RENTING FLOWERS.

In the play at the Madison Square theater applause inevitably greets the rise of the curtain on the third act. This popular favor is deserved. The stage setting is a conservatory and is not only an instance of fine stage effect, but it exemplifies for our purposes the conservatory in its latest aspect, which is as a decorative feature of an interior, and not a place to cultivate flowers even as an elegant accomplishment. The conservatory is composed of indented arches, arranged in a semicircle making small alcoves. In the center is one still more recessed, where stands a diminutive goddess, before whom a veiled light burns as before a shrine. There are no flowers, but the scene painter has admirably simulated in each of the small alcoves palms, India-rubber plants and other tropical foliage. The tiled center is left free. Here are wicker chairs, lounge and table. It is a place for quiet companionships, cigars, coffee and comfort, and in the purposes of the play serves exactly the same mission as in private life.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE

in kind has been too prominently exploited in the newspapers to have escaped notice. The description will bear retelling. "The green trees of the floor were painted with a rank growth of grasses and ferns. Through the palms and tropical shrubs that crowded the conservatory glared the wild beasts of far-off jungles marvelously stuffed and poised. The walls were forgotten behind a tapestry of reeds and birds of the orient. In one corner was a fountain simulating a pool, and on its surface floated the pink, fragrant lilies that lie on eastern lakes." The prominence which has been given to this conservatory was due to its supposed exaggeration and was intended to indicate the writer's unbridled imagination, but the illustration was badly chosen. As a whole it is exaggerated, but the details, barring the stuffed beasts and painted floor, can be found in one or another of the different conservatories in town.

IN A CITY HOUSE.

The conservatory as a detail in a city house is always an attempt to render a certain decorative effect, not, to be sure, in every case so fierce and tropical as that described, but having some relation to the rest of the house. It belongs to the ensemble, and is ordered with reference to the rooms with which it is in relation. The most artistic purpose of the conservatory is the perfection and culmination of a vista. To counterfeit, to simulate space in a city house is the desire of every architect and every owner. To do this has taxed their resources and their ingenuity. Nothing so well serves their purpose as the conservatory, for the eye loses in the foliage massed at the back, which may extend, the mind lending to the illusion, to unknown depths. To this some such scenic effect as the drop curtain of the Madison Square theater may even be called in.

IN MR. VANDERBILT'S HOME

the conservatory is immediately back of the main gallery and is entered at the side from the second gallery. The main gallery connects through the open passage that serves for water colors, with the square central hall. This in turn connects with the drawing-room. Here, from drawing-room to the conservatory is the vista of 200 feet, proportions in a New York house which are truly magnificent, and which are enriched by superb draperies, columns of marble, carvings, color and works of art. The conservatory is semi-circular. The floor is mosaic, and the walls paneled in cream enameled tiles. There are no shelves, for there is no floral cultivation. Gigantic palms, ferns, all manner of broad leaved, curious, bizarre, grotesque plants with impossible names stand round in pots and jars that are grouped to perfect the view from the vantage point of the distant drawing-room. These pots and jars are in themselves works of art; majolica, Spanish lustra, Japanese bronzes, old terra cotta, museum spoils, all are none too good for the beautiful scene. Here and there hang orchids, and before the sheet of plate glass that makes the sliding door into the art gallery, hangs an orchid like a tassel. This delicately guards the unbroken sheet, which gives so little evidence of being a barrier that otherwise it would be in constant danger.

MR. MARQUAND'S CONSERVATORY.

The conservatory in Mr. Marquand's house terminates another superb vista of at least 175 feet through dining room, Japanese room and the Louis XVI drawing room, and connecting, on the Madison avenue side, with the Moorish room. Mr. Marquand's conservatory has an eastern exposure filling the angle at the southwest corner of the house, where Mr. Vanderbilt's has only the western sun. The curious and inexplicable stained glass has puzzled many a passer by. From within it resolves itself into a Watteau scene—rustic arbors, distant sky, figures disporting in French fashions. This glass is from Paris, and is intended to carry out in landscape the effect of the conversatory within. According to the same idea but in a different way, and with different results than did the tapestried back ground of reeds completing Hermio Suydam's jungle. Mr. Marquand's conversatory has a very pretty feature copied from the Alhambra. This is a gutter cut in the marble floor and along the sides of the conservatory, with here and there openings through which jets of water play. These are not only a charming detail, but keep the atmosphere of the conservatory desirably moist.

A PART OF THE DINING-ROOM.

Where the vista is impossible, the next desirable position of the conservatory is attached to, and a part of, the dining-room. Sometimes both of these ends are accomplished, as in Mr. A. J. White's house on upper 5th avenue. This house is the splendid monument of an enterprise that, it is said, began in a wash-bowl, and is so curious, interesting and typical that it tempts digression.

The drawing-room is Japanese and opens into a Rennaissance music-room, which is the expansion of the hall and receives the magnificent stairway. This leads into the dining-room, beautiful with carved wainscotting and marbles and opening into the conservatory. This succession affords one of the most superb coup d' œil in town. The conservatory in itself is beautiful with carvings and marbles. The floor is of marble. In the center is a large marble fountain. The sides below the glass are wainscotted with tawny-hued Numidian marble, brass-bound. On the side walls is a frieze richly modeled, the motives, being birds and flowers and other significant attributes of a sylvan scene. Such is the background, and against it massed and grouped with proper effect are the broad-leaved tropical foliage plants that for the most part compose the conservatories in town.

SOME EFFECTIVE CONSERVATORIES.

In Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt's house the conservatory juts out to 57th street and opens into the dining-room which I have before described. This, as the other conservatories, is a mass of tropical greenery which can be discerned from the Moorish smoking room through the lovely Italian corridor that intervenes. Mr. Jay Gould's town conservatory is attached to his dining-room but has no prominence aside from the restful effect of a mass of green. One of the prettiest conservatory effects in town is in the house of a Mrs. Fogg, on upper 5th avenue. The conservatory opens out of the dining-room, which is a leather hung, brass-studded room bearing the impress of Mr. Louis Tiffany's ingenious decorative talent. The conservatory is screened behind by glass doors that shut if off if desired, but the doors are so fashioned as to blend with and admit the beauty of the green beyond. The greater part is of clear glass, but mingled with it is stained glass which takes the semblance of vines and flowers. These are admirably drawn, glorious in color and assist in the prettiest illusion possible.

AN APPENDAGE OF WEALTH,

These are inefficient to show the scope and disposition of the city conservatory. It is not intended for the cultivation of plants or flowers. It is prompted by neither love of flowers or knowledge of plants. It is an appendage of wealth, a feature of decoration, and has nothing in it more personal than carpets and curtains. The little woman who grows early primroses and cultivates rose slips under a disused sash, and is supremely content if she can attach a few yards of glass to the side of her house, may have fancied she would like to exchange cuttings with the mistress of some fine city conservatory, but the two speak different tongues. They both have the pleasure of possession, but they arrive at it in an entirely different way. It could not be otherwise. There is not sun enough in town for the cultivation of flowers. The most that can be hoped for is a place to display them. Tropical foliage is preferred not only because it is decorative, but because it comes from the stifling, shadowy jungles and can be appropriately housed in a steam-heated, shaded city conservatory. Morover city people do not care to take trouble in doing what can be better done for them, as there are enough other distractions to occupy their lives. Money can do most things for them. In the spring their bits of yard are one day dun and brown. The next day they are set with emerald turf and enameled with primroses, daffodils and tulips.

HOW THEY ARE TENDED.

For conservatories such as those described there are no gardeners. They are stocked and tended by some city florist. One of the most prominent orchid growers and florists who does a great deal of this sort of thing says:

"A rich man concludes he wants a conservatory. He comes to me and tells me the sort of effect he wants to produce. I go to see his place, we compare ideas, talk it over and the rest is left to me, I agreeing to take charge of it for so much a month. The plants I own; my client probably doesn't know their names. So often a week my men visit it, water, wash and look after the health and welfare of the plants. The only thing my client is responsible for is frost. He has the heating of the conservatory, I can't control that. If he allows the plants to be killed by too low a temperature he has to pay for them, for I own them, and so to speak rent them to him, the rent being included in the gross sum paid to me monthly. There are fashions in plants as in everything. At present the basis of every conservatory is tropical foliage. These we get mainly in palms and ferns, of which there are endless varieties. These are not transplanted, but stand in tubs that may be hidden if desired in costly jars. Those we do not furnish. In their season we furnish plants in bloom, and when the period of bloom is over we take them away and substitute others. A short time ago azaleas were in great demand. Again it is rhododendrons. At present orange trees in bloom are the object of everybody's desire."

"Surely the craze of all crazes is orchids."

ABOUT ORCHIDS.

"You remember when everybody had rustic baskets swinging from the ceiling? Well, that craze has passed and now we have orchids. Orchids are more curious. A bit of wood suspended from a thread alive with strange shapes of wondrous color."

"Are they not difficult to cultivate?"

"They are difficult to start and require the closest care. This is done in our country forcing-houses. But when once they started they can be transferred to a city conservatory, and require no more care than do the ferns and palms."

"Then there are no private orchid fanciers in town?"

"There have been but two to my knowledge. Mr. Jay Gould has a fine collection, but those are in his glass-houses at Tarrytown. The only orchid grower in town is Mr. Arnold. He has a collection to be compared with that of Mr. Gould and of Mr. Chadwick of Albany, whose orchids are probably the finest in the country."

MRS. MORGAN'S ORCHID HOUSE.

The other orchid grower to which the florist referred was the late opulent Mary Jane Morgan. Mrs. Morgan's orchid house was a plain but extensive glass affair over her stables. Her ambition was to have the most comprehensive collection in the country, and her $2,500 orchid out of the Duke of Devonshire's sale of duplicates is a matter of orchid history. The schoolmistress element always remained in lively force in Mrs. Morgan's nature. As she took up one fancy or another she acquainted herself thoroughly with it, and a library of specialties was the result. In this case her enthusiasm is embalmed in an orchid morganiensis, named for her by orchid growers.

Nothing about city conservatories would be complete without an allusion to the winter gardens of some of the hospitals. The New York hospital has a spacious glass house on its roof with a center of palms and tropical foliage, and about it a wide promenade where convalescents are wheeled in rolling chairs and may lie and luxuriate in the health-giving sun.

MARY GAY HUMPHREYS.

KENTUCKY MOUNTAINEERS.

A Visit to a Typical Family on Bullskin Creek.

Correspondence of THE EVENING STAR.

CLAY COUNTY, KY., May 10, 1889.

It was early in the morning of a perfect April day that we went down the road that leads to the banks of the Bullskin—a creek that traverses a part of eastern Kentucky. It was a charming ride through the mists and shadows of the early morning. Our destination was the house of an old man named Barger. It was a quaint old place, much cleaner than the houses in that country usually are, with the remarkable luxury of an "upstairs." Old Mrs. Barger was preparing dinner when we arrived, and we sat down to dine at 10 o'clock in the morning. We told the family that we dined at home about eight hours later than that, but they would not believe it.

Most of the party belonging to the geological survey set off immediately for the mountains, but I spent the long afternoon reading, napping and chatting with old Mrs. Barger. She busied herself about the stove, which, with the dining table, wsa under a shed in the yard, and sang old time hymns in the highest voice I ever heard. She suddenly stopped singing and asked me if I had ever heard that "hime" before, and while I was trying to guess at her meaning she explained by saying that she got it from an old "hime-book" that was nearly a hundred years old.

THE FAMILY.

She was an active old woman, the mother of many stalwart sons and daughters. One of the latter, a strapping bare-legged lass of eighteen, had just gone to the creek with the family laundry. This is quite a serious matter, particularly for the clothes. They scrub them in the water, then pound them with heavy paddles till their ideas of cleanliness are satisfied. It takes good homespun to bear such heroic treatment. In the evening I joined the group sitting about the fire waiting for supper. They were "the boys" come in from the farm work with several neighbors who had been helping. Darkness had fallen, and the men about the fire were as silent and sedate as only a group of mountaineers can be. The silence was suddenly broken by the entrance of a hale, hearty, old man, whom all the party addressed as grandpap and treated with great respect. The old man placed himself with utmost care on a stool near the fire, and waited until Mrs. Barger had resumed her work at the fire, and the men had gone back to chewing their "long cut" and to silence; then he looked about him with an air of enjoyment, and slowly remarked:

"I lay I'm goin' to leave this creek."

"Why, what's the matter, grandpap?" came in a chorus from all sides, for grandpap had been a land mark on the creek before any of them were born.

"Cause," he replied, "cause it ain't safe fur nobody as lives on this creek; it ain't safe."

WHY IT WASN'T SAFE.

The men sat upright for a moment and forgot the chew, the bacon burnt unnoticed on the stove, and after enjoying the suspense for a moment, the old man continued in his soft drawl:

"Bud Simpson has done beat Joe Baker's wife all to pieces with a fence rail, and run off and lef' her fur dead." Various exclamations came from all sides, while I sat by and listened to the details of what seemed to me to be a shocking assault. Grandpap explained, with slow care, how the quarrel originated with the "dawgs and the hawgs," and finally concluded by repeating, "I tell ye I goin' to leave the creek; it ain't safe." Mrs. Barger returned to her bacon with the astute observation, "Wall, that beats my time," and took no further part in the conversation, but the men were thoroughly aroused and discussed the outrage with solemn eagerness. One tall fellow who seemed to be a man of some importance reached quite a fever of excitement and all the little circle stopped to listen when he delivered his opinion. "A man ain't no right to beat a woman with a fence rail. A man shouldn't beat none of my women-folks with a fence rail. If Bud Simpson wanted to beat Tildy Baker, why didn't he take his fist an' beat her? A man ain't no right to beat a woman with a fence rail. He orter have took his fist."

The party all agreed that punishment with the fist was the proper mode for women and silence soon reigned again. The old man then inquired who was this man as was around climbin' all the mountains and havin' all the trees cut down," and the same tall spokesman enlightened him by replying: "He belongs to the Joel Hodgkins survey, least ways, that's what he told me." Think of it. That learned bureau of science, the U. S. geological survey, to be known in Kentucky as the "Joel Hodgkins survey." The belated party came in at last after a hard days work, and supper proceeded with utmost harmony. We left the banks of the Bullskin as soon as the work was finished, and I had no opportunity to ascertain the fate of Tildy Baker. What good old people the Bargers were, kindly, honest and intelligent; it was quite a treat to be with them for a while.

M. L. B. Y.

☞ Advertising is profitable only when properly done,—that is, in the medium sure to reach the largest number of those whose attention is sought. Money otherwise expended for that purpose is wasted. To expend it wisely, advertise in THE STAR. It not only claims the largest circulation, but gives the figures, and swears to them!

Oliver Lankford, aged seventeen, and Effie Lankford, aged thirteen years, of Southampton county, Va., cousins, recently eloped to North Carolina and were married.

THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN.

The gate shut with a click behind her. Philomel turned and waved her hand.

"Wish me good luck. I am going to try," she said, and John Elliot, who was passing, smiled and lifted his hat.

"Good luck!" he said, cheerily, but, in spite of the smile, a tiny frown between his eyes suggested that his obedience cost him something.

Philomel walked quickly up the path leading to the house.

A sweetbrier put out a slender finger and tried to catch her dress.

But Philomel was too swift to be detained. The syringa bushes nodded "Good luck!" and the polyanthus looked up so brisk and knowing that Philomel actually stooped to pick a spray, saying:

"Bless your little heart! Who told *you* the news?"

She ran up the steps of the ancient colonial house which had belonged to her mother's family—oh, for generations.

When middle-aged, reliable Judge Durant married silly, pretty, helpless Philomel Seagrave, every one drew a sigh of relief.

"Now the poor child will have some one to take care of her, and the Seagrave homestead will be repaired," they said.

But Mr. Durant must needs die only a year after his marriage, leaving a little Philomel on her mother's feeble hands. There was enough money to keep the two from sinking. "A very genteel insufficiency," our Philomel called it as she grew to womanhood.

"I wish we had a little less blue blood and a trifle more yellow gold," she added. That was the day when the rambling shed leaned languidly to one side. "Like an old weak-back person lopping over on one hip," declared Philomel. As for the stable, long guiltless of horses, it gave up the struggle for existence as a hopeless job and dropped to pieces in the last gale.

The house itself bore up bravely, but cried aloud for fresh paint.

As for Philomel herself, she had grown up tall and straight, like the Seagraves. But she had the Durant way of putting down her feet with a firm tread, and her Seagrave hands had a decidedly Durant fashion of taking hold with a strong grasp; also her voice had the Durant ring. "Her voice was ever soft—gentle and low—an excellent thing in woman!" I fear Philomel might have shocked King Lear when she grew earnest.

"Mamma," she called, as she opened the front door and came into the big hall.

Up the stairs she bounded, and burst into the room which Mrs. Durant always spoke of as "The Boudoir." Here she sat to-day, mending some old thread lace with exquisite stitches.

Philomel paused on the threshold, alert, wide-awake, her eyes shining like stars.

"My pretty lady," she said, "any one who is over seventeen may try. I was seventeen yesterday. Wish me good luck!"

Mrs. Durant dropped her lace with the puzzled look which her soft eyes often wore. Philomel, life, the world in general, were puzzling to this "pretty lady."

"Try what, my love?" she asked, plaintively. "Pray, Philo, speak more slowly. When I was young it was considered ill-bred to hurry one's words."

Philomel caught her breath.

"I am speaking of the new public library, mamma," she said, trying to curb her tongue. "You remember I explained it all yesterday. The place of assistant librarian is to be filled. Four hundred dollars salary. Competitive examination. No one minus brains need apply. 'A certain general knowledge of books required, &c., &c.' That's the way the notice runs. Judge Akers and Dr. Loomis are the examining committee. Four hundred dollars would be a very neat little sum to add to our income, my pretty lady."

"Oh, but, Philo, would you really be willing to—to earn money?" exclaimed Mrs. Durant, holding up both hands, as if to ward off a blow.

"You know I must, mamma," said Philomel, gravely. "Since that railroad began to pass its dividends, we have less money than ever. I can't sit still, dear, and see you go without—Lubin's soap and silk stockings," she ended, with a faint laugh.

"I was brought up to use sweet soaps, Philo," said Mrs. Durant, gently, "and as for silk stockings, my love, really I wish you would consent to wear them, and economize on something else. The ladies of my family always wore them. And oh, what would your great-grandmother have felt had she known you would go into business? When she was at the court of St. James King William himself danced with her, and remarked especially on her beauty and grace."

"His majesty didn't happen to add, 'And pray accept £5,000 for the use of your future great-granddaughter,' did he? Possibly he didn't realize how much I should need new rubber boots while my chariot was laid up for repairs."

Philomel laughed her frank, wholesome, girlish laugh. "But speaking of royalty, honey, couldn't you and I make over that green velvet dress of great-grandmother's for the Akers party on Thursday? Very pretty of you to leave your gowns behind you," she added, nodding at the portrait of the ever-young ancestress which smiled upon her out of the heavy gilt frame.

When dress was the question, Mrs. Durant was in her element.

"I had thought of that velvet, Philo. This lace will finish the neck and sleeves to perfection. Ring the bell and send Norah to the cedar chest."

But Philomel was half-pay up the attic stairs already. No clumsy maid-of-all-work fingers should meddle with what she irreverently called her "ancestral toggery."

This particular gown was easily made to do renewed service. Philomel and her mother deftly coaxed a plait here or a fold there—Mrs. Durant giving advice and Philo sewing busily. But the latter's mind was so full of her library that it was difficult to bring down her thoughts to seams and gathers.

"Turn that corner under, and the lace will cover the joining," Mrs. Durant would order, her whole soul absorbed by the velvet.

"And if I get the place," Philomel would reply, dreamily drawing her needle, "I shall buy a dozen hens, and see if I can't sell eggs."

"This ostrich plume just matches. It will be charming on your hat, Philo."

"Thank you, my pretty lady. You see there are only three of us to try. One is Nellie Gill. She is aggressively stupid. So is *not* Algeria Tibbets. I'm afraid of her when it comes to general information."

"Algeria Tibbets?" echoed Mrs. Durant feebly.

"She lives in Lincoln Court," said Philomel, smiling.

"But, my dear, she must be a very ordinary person, this Algeria."

"I don't suppose she ever had a grandmother, not to mention a 'great,'" confessed Philomel. "Perhaps some day she will be an ancestress herself. The line has to begin with some one. Algeria is frightfully intelligent. I'm afraid she'll leave me nowhere in the examination."

"Come, Philo, come!"

That was on Thursday, when Mrs. Durant was all alive with excitement. It was a long time since she had been to a merrymaking. Her cheeks glowed with pleasure; she might easily have been taken for her daughter's elder sister. They were a lovely-looking pair. The old-fashioned dresses, which on anybody else would have been queer, were enchanting when worn by them. Philomel, in her dull-green velvet, broad yellow laces and big plumed hat, might have stepped bodily out of one of the picture frames which lined the hall. Had King William seen her I am sure that she too might have had her chance to tread a stately measure with royalty.

Judge Akers' new house and grounds were gay with guests. There was to be a grand reception to-day. To-morrow archery and a small dance would be in order. Philomel was to spend the night with Madeline Akers, and to be on hand for the shooting.

"This way, mamma," she said. "We are to take off our wraps in the study. Why, here is Algeria Tibbets! Thank you, Algeria."

This last because Algeria came forward to take the shawls. That was her share in the festivities. That she went to the same school with Madeline and Philomel stood not at all in the way of her making an honest penny by temporary service.

"I see you are studying hard for the examination," Philomel said to her in a low tone. "Did you think they might ask us questions out of *Reed's English Literature*? I saw a copy of it on your desk."

"No information will come amiss," said Algeria.

"My father has been making a list of questions," said a fresh voice. Madeline Akers had come near. "I wanted to get them to show to you two; but that would have only been 'cramming,' brother Tom said. The papers are locked up in my father's spindle-legged desk, in his sanctum," she ended, pointing to a small room which joined the study.

There was a little breeze of merriment, interrupted by Mrs. Durant.

"Come, Philomel. And indeed, my dear" (as the two entered the drawing-room), "Miss Tibbets is very ordinary. Let me hear no more of that dreadful library. What would your great grandmother—"

But Judge Akers came forward with his cordial greeting, and for the time Mrs. Durant forgot all minor matters.

"I shall be desperately disappointed if I fail." Philomel confided this to John Elliot as they sauntered out on the lawn, where the Chinese lanterns were trying to outshine the moon.

"My whole heart is in it," she declared, standing up tall and vigorous. "I'm so thankful I wasn't born a hundred years ago, when it was thought disgraceful for a gentlewoman to earn her honest living. Now"—Philomel stretched out her two arms—"now she is as free as air to work—to work!"

"Oh, Philomel!" said John Elliot, wistfully.

The evening came to an end, with its lights and its music and its happy gayety.

"Philo," said Madeline Akers, "you won't mind being 'treated like one of the family,' as they said when they gave the boy a good thrashing. The house is so full that we are going to give you a bed on the sofa in my father's sanctum. I have tucked your blankets in his closet. Hold the light, will you, please? And hold the door open too. Those stupid joiners have put no handle on the inside, and I've no fancy for being shut in, as if I were caught in a trap. You won't be afraid, will you, Philo? The windows are all locked, and I can hear you if you call, for I am going to camp on the parlor lounge."

Philomel smiled. "Afraid?" It would be amusing if a young woman who aspired to earn her own living should be timid in being left alone at night. Nevertheless, she went to the window to make sure it was fast.

As she turned away, her dress touched something which jingled faintly. She was passing the judge's spindle-legged desk, and— What carelessness! A bunch of keys had been left dangling from its lock.

Like a flash Madeline's words darted into Philomel's mind: "The papers are locked up in my father's spindle-legged desk."

She turned away instantly, her lip half curling as if in scorn that she should even remember what had been said.

She took out the pins, and brushed and braided her hair for the night. She sang a little tune under her breath, heartily vexed that her unruly brain persisted in repeating: "The papers—in the spindle-legged desk."

"*Noblesse oblige*," she quoted to herself, haughtily. "I have not so far *descended* as to disgrace my people in that fashion."

She laid herself down on the sofa. She shut her eyes. Even in the dark she could see that desk on its slender legs.

"The examination is scarcely fair. Algeria is naturally quicker than I. I ought to be given some advantage over her. Ah!" she cried, drawing a long breath and shaking her head on the pillow. Why could she not sleep? Why would the blood throb in her temples?

"'The papers are in the desk!' It is so important that I get the place. Algeria can do so many things that I can't. She can teach. She can go into a store. She can advertise to go to Europe as somebody's companion. And—and—'the papers are in the desk!'"

What had at first seemed an absurd impossibility began to take on a certain fearful likelihood. Could it chance that even a Seagrave-Durant—

"Oh, dear Lord!" cried Philomel, from her inmost soul. She sat up straight. She made a bound and stood upon the floor. Softly she struck a match and lighted her candle. She began to dress herself rapidly. She was terrified—appalled at her own thoughts.

"Oh, dear Lord!" she kept repeating, like a bewildered frightened child.

She blew out the candle, made two long strides, found herself inside the closet.

"*Snap!*" went the lock. There was no handle inside.

"Now, young woman, you are safe from yourself," said Philomel, triumphantly. "If you won't do right by fair means, then you must be made.'"

Philomel curled herself up on the closet floor.

"One may be comfortable, though honest," said she, gleefully.

The whole affair, now all temptation had vanished, took on the aspect of a joke.

"How shall I get out when morning comes? I'll thump till some one hears me. How shall I explain my being here, hobnobbing with Judge Aker's dressing-gown and slippers? Oh, we'll confess and make a clean breast of it! It's no shame, in a case like this, to 'run away and live to fight another day.' I must admit to you, Miss Durant, that this closet isn't as cool as we could wish."

It may be that the heavy air made our girl drowsy. She must have dropped asleep, for it suddenly occurred to her that morning had come very speedily. Was it daylight? Would the sun's beams be so yellow as the glimmer which crept in at the crack under the door? The gleam grew brighter. There was a sound of footsteps—very soft, but "undoubtedly footsteps," decided the prisoner.

At first she thought of calling out. But an unaccountable fear seized her heart. The light grew, but Philomel was sure it was not day. She listened with all her might. There was a sound as of something faintly jingling. Was it robbers? Philomel's breath came thick.

Whatever it was, the light began to grow dim. Slowly it decreased, and then all was dark and quiet.

The closet was stifling. Philomel stood upright and stretched her limbs. The heat was getting worse and worse.

"I wonder if the air will hold out till morning?" thought Philomel, trying to smile. But the whole affair began to seem far from amusing.

"The blackness of darkness." She had heard or read of that; now she began to realize what it meant. The minutes dragged on. The hours seemed like years. Sometimes standing, sometimes crouching on the floor, longing for the breath of a breeze, for a drop of water, Philomel tried to calm her fears. Strange to say, she never once thought of knocking and rousing some one to come to her relief. So firmly had she made up her mind that she was to endure until morning that no other way out of the trouble occurred to her. Besides that, her head began to grow confused, dizzy.

Suddenly she became aware of much sunshine, of a great draught of air, of water on her forehead, camphor at one nostril and ammonia at the other, while voices filled her ears.

She was lying on the sofa. Madeline Aker and a servant maid were bending over her with alarmed faces.

"What *is* the matter?" gasped Philomel.

"That's what I would like to know," exclaimed Madeline, laughing and crying at once. "We found you locked in the closet, in a dead faint. Will you please to mention *why* you went in there?"

The whole night rushed back on Philomel.

"*Why* did you go into that closet?" demanded Madeline.

"*To save my soul!*" said Philomel Durant.

Of course the whole story came out. Madeline was amused. She was also perplexed. She praised Philomel. She scolded her roundly.

"But to do such a mean thing as to look at the papers—why, Philo, I can't imagine it's even being a *temptation*—to *you*."

Philomel looked at her out of the corners of her eyes and shook her head wisely.

"I couldn't imagine it myself until I tried it," said she.

The girls went gayly down to breakfast. Mrs. Akers was already pouring the coffee. The judge was late. He did not come to the table for several minutes, and when at last he did appear he seemed considerably disturbed in his mind.

"Madeline," said he, rather sternly, "have you been rummaging in my desk? I left a long list of questions in one of the pigeon-holes—questions to be asked of you, Miss Philomel, to see if you're fit to serve in our fine new library."

Philomel looked at Madeline. Madeline stared back at Philomel.

"Why, father, I didn't 'rummage.' I haven't been to your desk," said Madeline. "But I knew the papers were there. You've overlooked them, maybe."

"Tut, tut," said the judge, testily. "I never *overlook*."

"May I go and see if I can find them, father?"

"Nonsense! I've searched thoroughly. Well, go, go, if you like, but don't intimate that your aged parent is loosing his eyesight, miss."

Madeline rose. Philomel followed her. The two met Algeria Tibbets in the hall.

"Oh, you were very good to stay, Algeria," said Madeline, cordially. "Mother says you are a real support."

Then, hastily, she spoke of the missing questions, and the three girls went together into the "sanctum."

"Stand back, you two. It's only I who have permission to 'rummage,'" said Madeline, laughingly. "There! What did I tell my blessed pa! Here's the paper," and she waved the big sheet triumphantly.

"Pigeon-hole two from the end, your honor!" she cried, dancing into the breakfast-room.

"Well, bless my soul!" exclaimed the judge. "I could have sworn before a jury that I put my hands on every square inch of that desk. Well, the old gentleman is breaking up," he added, with his jovial laugh, applying himself to a large beefsteak to give the lie to his words.

The examination was to take place on the next Tuesday. Philomel spent the intervening time in frantic efforts to learn a little more of—*something*, no matter if it were mathematics, or chemistry, or Browning, or Mother Goose. What she should be asked she knew not. Of one thing she was sure, and that was of Judge Akers being a very eccentric and whimsical man. It was he who had made a point of there being any examination at all; and history related that he had once insisted on a stupid dolt of gardener reading Cowper's poem, "The Garden."

"To teach the little fellow how to raise cucumbers," said the judge.

What depth of knowledge, in any direction, might he not require of an assistant librarian?

During any leisure moments, Philomel found herself obliged to persuade, repersuade, and persuade again her mother that necessity compelled her to earn at least something toward their scanty living.

Mrs. Durant would sadly assent.

"Yes, I see, I see, Philo."

But the very next time the daughter had to begin at the beginning, for her "pretty lady" had returned to her one idea.

"What would my family have said, Philo?"

Philomel almost lost patience, even with her precious mother.

"You make me feel," she cried, "like Juliet Montague, 'she't was' a Capulet.

"'As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
Where, for these many hundred years the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are pack'd.'"

To which Mrs. Durant, with her puzzled look, replied softly that she didn't know any Juliet Montague, but that she was glad Philomel had an acquaintance who evidently came of a "genteel" family.

Tuesday dawned bright and propitious. Philomel was at the new library betimes. So were Algeria Tibbets and Nellie Gill. There, far apart, lest there should be any communication between the "victims," as Philomel laughingly dubbed herself and rivals, stood three chairs, three tables, and three sheets of foolscap, from which latter seemed to *glare* a long list of questions to be answered in writing.

"Who were the principal poets of the Augustin age?"

That was question number one; and while Philomel was racking her brains for the answer, question number two seemed to be trying to stare her out of countenance with a multitude of beady black eyes:

"What do you consider the best method of making a catalogue of books?'

Up from the bottom of the page question number twenty asserted its claims:

"How would you deal with a crowd of persons making application for volumes at one and the same time?"

"Oh," groaned Philomel, "I never thought anything about a catalogue; and as for question number five, 'What reason can you give for supposing that Shakespeare wrote his own plays?' I know he did, and don't '*suppose*' anything about it."

Nellie Gill, in the further corner, was gazing despairingly at the ceiling. As for Algeria, the steady scratch of her pen was torture to Philomel's ears. She had known that Algeria was clever about books, but she had never suspected her of having ready opinions concerning "catalogues" and clamoring "crowds."

By 12 o'clock at noon Algeria had finished her work. Philomel, after a hasty lunch, plodded on until 4. As for hapless Nellie Gill, the janitor, who came to shut up the building at 6 o'clock, found her bathed in tears, and still wrestling vainly with question number ten, while the rest of the foolscap had as yet claimed none of her attention.

Judgment was suspended for three days.

"I feel like a person standing on the scaffold, with the black cap over his eyes, waiting for the drop to fall," said Philomel, dolefully. "Madeline, the spry sound of Algeria's pen was truly awful. Where *do* you suppose that girl got her superior brand of brains?"

The "drop" fell at last.

"Nothing left of *me*?" announced Philomel, keeping a stiff upper lip, but inwardly feeling as if her doll were truly "stuffed with sawdust."

Algeria had come off with flying colors. Judge Akers declared that he couldn't have done better himself. He had not supposed that a seventeen years old girl could have such sensible opinions ready and waiting to be called for. So Algeria, in a new gown and a lively red necktie, was installed assistant librarian, at a salary of four hundred dollars a year.

This, however, not until the end of the school term, for both Philomel and Alegeria were to graduate in a month's time. Philomel shook hands with the victor, and gave her honest though somewhat forced congratulations. Algeria received them with due meekness, and owned that some of the questions had been "posers."

Philomel tried to absorb herself in her studies. She would, at least, pass her school examinations with honor. She remained after hours, one afternoon, reviewing her Horace until the waning light warned her that the sun had gone down behind a tall factory opposite. That meant tea-time. Philomel rose hastily and went down the aisle. As she passed Algeria's desk her eyes fell by chance on a book with a big ink splash on its cover.

"Oh, that's the *Reed's English Literature* she was studying so hard," thought Philomel. She paused, and carelessly took up the book. A sheet of closely written paper fluttered from between its leaves. Philomel was about to replace it, when suddenly a written line disclosed itself to her startled vision. In a tumult of dread and surprise she glanced over the words. She recognized, in Algeria's handwriting, every one of the questions asked in that examination for the library.

As if a curtain were suddenly uplifted displaying scene after scene unsuspected before, Philomel's quick sense startled itself with its own revelations. She remembered Madeline's thanking Algeria for remaining in the house. The light flashing under the closet door; the faint jingling sound; the Judge's missing, so unaccountably, the papers from his desk; Madeline and herself encountering Algeria in the hall near the study door, and their afterward immediately finding the questions so evident in the pigeon-hole.

She might not be able to "swear before a jury," but, in her own mind Philomel was sure that Algeria had copied those questions. No wonder that several days' meditation thereupon had made her pen "spry!"

For a moment Philomel was overwhelmed. She stood as still as a stone, staring at the witnesses she held in her hand.

Then her own share in that night's doings came across her, and her eyes filled with tears.

"I know what the temptation was," she whispered, with a stifled sob. "I know, for I went through it myself."

She stepped hastily to the teacher's desk, took a match from its box, held it blazing to the betraying paper, and through an open window the charred remains floated pathetically upward, as if to implore pardon at a higher than mortal tribunal. Then Philomel shut her lips tightly. To no mortal did she breathe a word of what she knew. "Poor Algeria!" that was the way that, in her own heart, she always spoke of the assistant librarian.

Algeria would not have thanked her for that. If any one seemed on the wave of prosperity, that person was Miss Tibbets. Judge Akers was never weary of lauding her cleverness to the skies. Mrs. Akers invited her to her house, *not* to wait upon other guests. Many doors were open to one whom the judge's family saw fit to befriend.

In the meantime Philomel did her very best, and contrived to make both ends meet. She was cheery and happy, but she kept an eye open if a stray job should turn up. Concerning hopes of this sort she could speak no word to her mother.

"Work? Oh, no, no. It is such a relief to me that you were providentially cut off from that," said Mrs. Durant, piously. But then she was never called upon to forego her Lubin's soap or her silk stockings.

So it came to pass that Philomel turned more and more to her two most sympathetic friends, Madeline Akers and John Elliot. They were both wise, but John seemed even more reliable than Madeline. John was heartily welcomed at the shabby colonial house. Mrs. Durant held out both hands to him. Philomel watched for his coming. So that there was but one answer in her heart when, a year later, John Elliot said:

"I did feel glad—forgive me!—when your library scheme failed. Let me take care of you, Philomel."

But there was something else to be said on that subject. Philomel held her head very high, and spoke with emphasis.

"I want you to be very sure, John, that I am glad to have you take care of me, because I love you utterly. Not because I am afraid of being poor. I can earn my own living even now. The chance in the library is open again. Algeria Tibbets is going to marry that rich Archibald Wright, who visited Judge Akers. She gave up the situation yesterday. The judge said: 'Will you take it, Philomel? It is yours for a word.' So you understand that I don't say 'yes' for lack of work?"

John Elliot, much edified, replied that he understood perfectly.

So the old house had a fresh coat of paint and the sheds were propped up. And, although many and many a neighbor was heartily glad, no one felt "relieved" on Philomel's account.

And Algeria? At last accounts she had fine clothes, a large house, and a footman in livery. She appeared to be "flourishing like a green bay-tree."

But Philomel's tender heart aches whenever she remembers Algeria. For, as it happens, she knows three facts concerning her former schoolmate: First, that when so many cultivated and agreeable people patronized the little librarian, Algeria found it easy to become ashamed of Lincoln Court and of the honest, respectable, hardworking father and mother who lived there. Secondly, it came by accident to Philomel's knowledge that, from being ashamed to work in others, it was but a step to despise and loathe work for one's self. Thirdly (and Pilomel's very soul cried out with indignation), when the chance came to Algeria to turn her back on all labor, she was ready to marry Archibald Wright for desire of his money and from no love for himself.

"Oh, Algeria!" mused Philomel, mournfully, "from the night when you pried into the judge's desk you have grown smaller and smaller, and meaner and meaner. Will it never happen that you will understand?"

In the mean time Philomel keeps her own counsel. It is not for her to tell tales. But do you wonder that, in her secret heart, she says, "*Poor Algeria!*"—*Mary S. McCobb in Harper's Bazar.*

The Illinois house yesterday passed the bill to prevent fraud and deception in the manufacture and sale of dairy products.

HOME MATTERS.

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICAL HOUSEKEEPERS — HINTS FO