



MRS. LOUDON

***THE LADY'S
COUNTRY
COMPANION; OR,
HOW TO ENJOY
A COUNTRY LIFE
RATIONALLY***

Mrs. Loudon

The Lady's Country Companion; Or, How to Enjoy a Country Life Rationally

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PREFACE.

In the present edition of the "Lady's Country Companion," a reduction has been made in the price, to render the work still more generally useful than it has hitherto been; but in all other respects it is essentially the same.

The principal object of this work is to save young housekeepers the pain and trouble of buying their own experience; and though it is particularly addressed to those residing in the country, I have had the satisfaction of finding that it has been in many cases almost equally useful to those living in towns. It may, however, be interesting to my readers to know that it was originally written for the benefit of a young friend, who was precisely in the position I have represented Annie to be in, and who, knowing I had resided

in the country in my youth, asked my advice. Of course, in preparing the work for publication, many things were added or enlarged on, particularly in the parts relating to cooking and gardening, and in the suggestions for altering and furnishing the house; but nearly all the housekeeping and farm-yard details were the result of my personal experience. It happened in my youth, that my father, who was in the law, was obliged, from ill health, to give up his profession, and to reside in the country; and as my mother was dead I kept his house. I had thus to practise what I have here attempted to teach; and I shall be only too happy if I am the means of sparing others the annoyances I suffered myself.

I have stated these facts now, as it is possible, from the gradually declining state of my health, I may not have another opportunity of mentioning them in their proper place, and as I think my readers will be likely to place more confidence in my counsels when they know they are founded on realities. I have always been anxious to make my books useful, but I am now still more so than ever I was before.

J. W. LOUDON.

Bayswater, Dec. 10, 1851.

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LETTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Your letter, my dear Annie, informing me that you are about to be married and to settle in the country, has interested me exceedingly, as it reminds me of my own youth, when my first essays in housekeeping were made under circumstances very similar to those in which you will be placed. It is true I was not then married, but, as my mother was dead, the care of the house devolved on me; and I knew even less about household affairs than most girls of my age and rank in life, as my mother had an old and favourite housekeeper, who managed every thing, and who would not suffer the slightest interference in her department. When my mother died, this person left us; and my father, with a shattered constitution and a greatly diminished fortune, retired to a small estate he had in the country. I was then young and thoughtless; I had no sisters; and having, like you, been brought up in a town, I had no ideas of the country but as a place where eggs, cream, and

fruit were in abundance; where I might keep as much poultry as I liked; and where there were shady lanes, and green fields abounding with pretty flowers.

The place we went to live at had a good house, commanding a splendid view; an excellent garden; three fish-ponds, and about thirty acres of grass land, which enabled us to keep cows and horses, without troubling us with any of the laborious duties of cultivating arable land.

At first I was enchanted with the change. I was never tired of feeding my poultry, watching the dairy-maid, and managing the fruit and flowers; but, alas! I soon found that there are few roses without thorns. My first trouble was three gentlemen calling on us one day unexpectedly, and my father asking them to stay dinner. We were seven miles from the town where we had formerly lived; and, though there was a small town within two miles of us, the road was bad, and the miles very long ones; while the town itself, when we reached it, was one of those provoking places the shopkeepers of which never have what is wanted, though they always say they had abundance of the required article the week before, and believe they shall have it again the week after. I need not enter into the details of my troubles in preparing for this well-remembered dinner. Meat was out of the question; and though I was enabled, with infinite difficulty, to give my father's friends enough to eat, no one but a young housekeeper in a similar situation can have any idea of what I suffered. The lesson, however, was not lost upon me; and you may easily imagine that ever afterwards I took care to have a cooked piece of hung beef, or ham, or

some similar substantial article of food in the house, that I might be provided for a similar occurrence.

The recollection of what I underwent while buying my experience makes me anxious to spare you, my dear Annie, the pain of a similar ordeal; particularly as it is more disagreeable for a young newly married woman to feel in housekeeping difficulties than a single one; as it makes you fear your husband had a higher opinion of you than you deserve. In your situation the difficulty is increased by your husband not having lived at the Manor-House since the death of his parents, when he was only ten years old; so that he can have no idea of the petty troubles you will be exposed to. Under these circumstances I will do my best to clear the path that lies before you, and to teach you how to enjoy rationally a country life.



The Manor-House in its original State.

BOOK I. THE HOUSE.

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LETTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE COUNTRY—MAKING FIRES.

You complain, my dear Annie, that when I wrote to congratulate you on your marriage, I did not send you any of the advice I promised. The neglect was intentional. I was unwilling to disturb the happiness of the honeymoon by any allusion to the troubles of life; but now that you are actually arrived at the mansion which is to be your future dwelling, I will not delay any longer beginning the fulfilment of my task. I am sorry to hear that you felt chilled and depressed at the first appearance of the Manor-House; though I am not surprised that you found the room you were ushered into dark and cold, since you tell me that the windows are shaded by some lofty Scotch pines, which are certainly the most gloomy of all the vegetable race, and which must necessarily impede both the light and the warmth of the sun. You add that you are ten miles from a market-town, and at least seven from any visitable neighbours; that the kitchen-garden is a mile from the house, and under the care of a cross old gardener, who cannot be displaced; that there is no separate flower-garden; and, in short, that if it were not for your affection for your husband, you would be miserable.

Your letter would make me very uneasy on your account if I had not had a good deal of experience of the world; but I am comforted when I reflect that in early youth the

vehemence of our feelings always makes us exaggerate both our pains and our pleasures. Have you ever looked at a landscape through a window of coloured glass, and remarked the cold and miserable appearance presented through the purple pane, contrasted with the rich glow thrown upon every object by the orange glass? Both give a false idea of the reality; but the impressions thus received are not more erroneous than those we often experience of what passes around us, when viewed through the medium of our feelings. I thus consider your letter as produced by a view taken through the purple glass; and I am far from believing that you will dislike the country when you know it better; and still less do I give credence to your vehement assertion that you never can be happy in your present residence.

Happiness, I suspect, in most cases, depends more upon ourselves than we are generally willing to allow; and I am quite sure that young married people who are attached to each other, and have a competency, may be happy if they will, particularly in the country, where their principal amusements must all centre in home. You will, perhaps, be surprised to find that I think this a cause of happiness, but you will find in time that I am right; and that our chances of being happy decrease in proportion as we depend upon others for our enjoyments. I cannot conceive a more miserable life than that of a beauty who has no pleasure but in being admired; and who, consequently, must pass her time in fits of alternate depression and excitement. It would give me the greatest pain to see you plunge into this species of mental intoxication, and I rejoice that you are

placed in a situation where you will not be exposed to the temptations arising from bad example. In this respect your present abode seems to be everything I could wish; as, from the description you have given me of the difficulties attending visiting your neighbours they seem to be enough to cure the most ardent lover of dissipation; and, unless the neighbours be more than commonly agreeable, I think you will not feel inclined—

——"Frequent visits to make

Through ten miles of mud for formality's sake,
With the coachman in drink, and the moon in a fog,
And no thought in your head but a ditch or a bog."

Do not suppose from this that I think you should be unsociable; on the contrary, I think it a duty to mix occasionally with the world, as, unless we do so, we should soon learn to set a false value upon ourselves and upon every thing around us. The society of persons in our own rank in life is, therefore, essential to teach us our true level; and I have no doubt you will find some agreeable persons among your neighbours when you know them better, whose friendship you will think worth cultivating.

I will now take your objections to your residence in detail; and we will try if some remedy cannot be devised for them. I am glad your house is large. In town, we are often content to put up with the inconveniences occasioned by want of room, as we know that space is valuable, and cannot always be had; but, in the country, where we feel the free air, and see no houses before us, it seems hard to be confined. You may also find it convenient, in the winter, to have room to take exercise within doors; and I hope you have a good-

sized hall or gallery to play at battledore and shuttlecock in; for that is a game not to be despised in the list of country amusements. The trees are certainly an objection. Our ancestors seem to have had strange ideas about planting trees in front of a dwelling. It is true, that the modern conveniences of blinds and verandas were then probably unknown; and, therefore, a few trees were judged agreeable to shade the windows from the glaring light and heat of the sun. At least, this appears to me the only way of accounting for the strange manner in which we often see trees placed close to the windows of an ancient manor-house, as though purposely to intercept the prospect, and to impede the entrance of two of the greatest blessings of nature, light and free air. I should hope that your husband will consent to have these trees cut down, or at least thinned out; and I am sure he will find the sacrifice amply repaid by the air of cheerfulness which will be given to his rooms. I have also no doubt that when these rooms are better ventilated, and the sun is permitted to reach them, you will find them warmer; though I confess that a country-house is generally colder than one of the same size in town. I do not mean from the size of the rooms, for large rooms, having fewer draughts, are less difficult to warm than small ones; but because houses in the country are more exposed to the wind, and the air round them is colder than in towns. In some old country-houses the rooms are small, and there are numerous long, narrow passages, which are sure to produce draughts: but to cure this evil, thick curtains may be suspended over the doors, care being taken not to prevent

the doors from opening freely; or there may be double doors and double windows.

In warming a room, if an open fireplace be used, a good deal depends upon the mode of managing the fire. Servants are very apt to throw on a quantity of coals at once, in such a manner as to smother up the flame; and, when this is the case, the heated air produced by the imperfect combustion of the coals passes up the chimney with the smoke, and very little warmth enters the room. If, on the contrary, the coals are carefully arranged on the fire so as to allow a free current of air to pass through them, perfect combustion takes place, and the coals become a glowing mass, from which rays of light and heat spread in every direction; while the cheerful appearance of a bright glowing fire must be felt by every one. Where an opportunity occurs of altering a fireplace, its capability for diffusing radiant heat will be greatly increased by making the back and sides of fire-brick or fire-stone; as these substances retain heat much longer than any kind of metal, and are consequently more likely to prevent the fire from being chilled by the addition of fresh coal. Drying the coal before burning it is an excellent plan to prevent smoking, as it makes the fire exceedingly bright and fierce. It is true that the coal appears to vanish with extraordinary rapidity, but the combustion is so complete, that a much greater quantity of radiant heat is evolved from the same quantity of fuel.

In many country places it is convenient to burn wood, especially where the fireplaces are large, as wood burns best on the hearth, or with the logs supported by what are called andirons or dogs; and fires of this kind harmonise

admirably with large rooms and the general appearance of the fittings up of an old country-house. A wood fire, however, requires a good deal of attention to manage it well, as, without care, it will often go out before the logs are half burnt; especially when wood is burnt in a grate, unless it is mixed with a little coal, and there is a plate at the bottom of the grate to keep in the ashes. It must also be remembered, that, though large logs are very useful to make a large fire, yet, when a quick supply of heat is required, it is best to use wood cut into short thick pieces; and that wood burns much better when dry than when green. Green wood, indeed, contains about one-third of its weight of water, which of course evaporates in the shape of vapour, and this vapour aids in carrying the heat up the chimney; dry wood, on the contrary, produces a clear bright fire, which gives out radiant heat. Opinions differ as to what kind of wood is best for fuel. Pine wood burns freely, from the quantity of turpentine it contains, but it does not give out much heat. Beech is preferred on the continent of Europe, and maple in America; but Count Rumford says that the greatest mass of radiant heat is produced by the fuel of the lime tree. Generally speaking, close-grained smooth woods make better fuel than those the grain of which is open and rough. Pine cones are admirable for lighting a fire; and you will find the gloomy Scotch pines, which have so annoyed you with their shade, may be useful in this respect, as producing an article of domestic economy.

If any of your chimneys should smoke, the usual remedy is contracting the mouth of the chimney, or raising it higher by the addition of a chimney-pot. The last is a most

unsightly remedy, and I hope you will not have occasion to try it. Indeed, old houses seldom smoke, unless their chimneys are damp for want of use, or that birds have built in them; though nothing can be more common than to have smoky chimneys in modern houses. One reason, I believe, is, that newly built chimneys very often smoke because they have not been properly cored; that is, the projecting pieces of mortar, &c., which are formed inside the chimney while it is building, have not been removed, and prevent the proper ascent of the smoke. Another common fault in modern fireplaces is, that they are too shallow to allow sufficient space for the grate; and, when the grate is set too far forward into the room, it is evident that a very strong draught will be required to draw the smoke up the chimney. Neither of these faults is common in old houses; in them the chimneys are generally as smooth inside as the walls of the room, and the fireplaces are usually two feet deep, or even more, instead of being only nine inches, as I am told is the case with some modern villas. I say nothing about stoves, as I confess myself prejudiced against them, from the numerous fires they have occasioned; and I think open fireplaces not only safer and more agreeable, but much more conducive to health, as they aid in ventilating the apartments, and without a constant change of air there can be neither health nor happiness.

In speaking of the different kinds of fuel, I forgot to mention peat and charcoal, but you will find these more useful in the kitchen than in the parlour; and coke I would not advise you to employ, on account of its close unpleasant smell.

LETTER III.

**HALL.—MORNING ROOM.—BOOK-CASES; PLANTS IN
POTS; SQUIRRELS; CANARY BIRDS, PARROTS AND
MACAWS; MONKEYS; GOLD FISH; AND CUT FLOWERS.
—DRAWING-ROOM.—DINING-ROOM.**

I have just received your letter, enclosing a plan of your house and a sketch of its present appearance; and, I confess, it appears to me that you have not complained of its gloominess without having abundant reason for doing so. Pray tell your husband, however, that I fully sympathise with his reluctance to cut down trees that he has been familiar with from his boyhood; and that, so far from liking to see wood felled myself, I feel positive pain when even the large limb of a noble tree falls to the ground. But I think it a weakness to give way too much to this feeling; and, if I had a favourite tree that I was convinced was injurious to the health, or even to the comfort, of human beings, I would instantly have it cut down, in the same manner as I would submit, without hesitation, to the amputation of an arm or a leg, if I had sustained an injury that I was quite sure could not be cured in any other way. You say you felt excessively pained when your husband said, that, though he did not think any circumstances could ever have induced him to order those trees to be cut down, he was quite delighted to have such an opportunity of pleasing you; and that, when you heard the workmen employed in cutting the trees down the following morning, you felt every blow they struck, and you thought he must hate you for wishing him to make such a sacrifice. These feelings are quite natural; but, in my opinion, the readiness with which your husband complied

with your wishes will strengthen the bond of affection between you instead of weakening it, as there cannot possibly be a stronger proof of love than is shown in sacrificing our prejudices in favour of the beloved object; and I am sure, with your grateful and amiable disposition, you will be delighted to prove that you can make sacrifices in your turn, whenever a proper opportunity for doing so may occur.

I am sure the removal of these trees will make the house appear more cheerful; and I can now only recommend you strongly to take care that your rooms are well ventilated, by the windows being always opened in fine weather, whenever the rooms are unoccupied, for, I repeat, though you laughed at my former assertion, that a free circulation of air is essential both to health and happiness. You ask, how is it possible that fresh air can contribute towards happiness? and I, in return, ask you if you have never felt the influence of a fine clear bracing morning in making you feel gay and happy, quite independently of moral causes. On such occasions,

"The bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne,"

and we feel equal to any exertion that may be required of us. Look at the contrast between country children, as they run shouting and laughing only from the irrepressible glee of their own hearts, and the children of a close and over-populated town, who creep from school shivering and sad, with countenances as dull as the appearance of the atmosphere they are compelled to breathe. You enjoy in the country the inestimable advantage of being able to procure as much fresh air as you like, only by opening your windows;

but the inhabitants of towns, when they throw open their sashes, often admit air more impure than that already in their rooms.

I will now give you my opinion as to the best method of furnishing your rooms, so as to make them look as cheerful as possible.

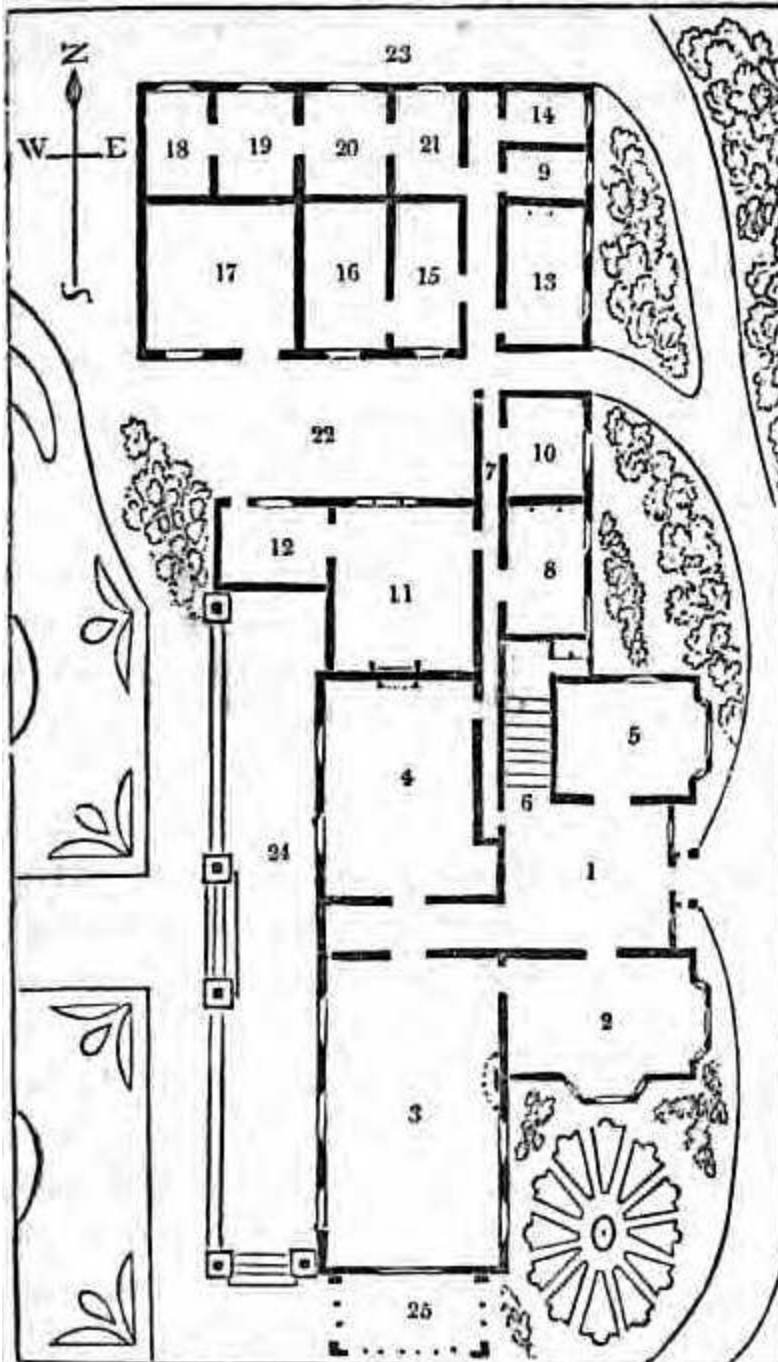


Fig. 1. *Ground Plan*—1, Hall. 2, Morning room and library. 3, Drawing-room. 4, Dining-room. 5, Gentlemen's business room. 6, Staircase. 7, Passages to offices. 8, Housekeeper's room and store closet. 9, Dressing-room for men-servants. 10, Butler's pantry. 11, Kitchen. 12, Scullery. 13, Servants' hall. 14, Room for female servants. 15, Dry larder, or pantry. 16. Wet larder and salting room. 17, Laundry. 18, Cheese room. 19, Butter room. 20, Churning-room. 21, Dairy. 22. Kitchen court. 23, Road to stable. 24, Terrace. 25, Conservatory.

I see by the plan (fig. 1.) that you have a good-sized *hall*, so that you will have room for playing at battledore and shuttlecock after all; and I repeat that it is a game not to be despised, though you do speak so contemptuously of the

"Transports that shuttlecock yields."

I think you do wrong to treat with so much scorn these trifling amusements. It is the part of true wisdom to enjoy every harmless pleasure which falls within our reach, provided we do not occupy, by so doing, those hours which ought to be devoted to more serious employments. Thus, if you do not like battledore and shuttlecock, perhaps you may billiards, and your hall would do admirably for a billiard-table. The small room on the right hand is your husband's business-room, and it is very conveniently situated, as people who want to see him on justice-business, or to show him dogs, or any thing relating to sporting, &c., can go in by the side glass door, without entering the house.

On the other side of the hall is the room you thought so gloomy the night you first arrived; and this I would advise you to fit up partly as a *library*, and partly as a *morning*

sitting-room. I see that one of the windows faces the east; and this you will find is in itself sufficient to make the room pleasant for a morning room, as you will have the rising sun upon it, and that always diffuses an agreeable warmth in a room, at a period of the day when warmth is particularly agreeable. I wish the other window looked on a flower-garden, as it faces the south; and, now that the gloomy Scotch pines have been cut down, it would be just a little sheltered place, where flowers would delight to grow, particularly if your husband would consent to remove a small cedar that I see still casts a shade upon it. However, we must not ask for too much at once; and, till your flower-garden is made, I would advise you to have a few plants in pots in the east window. Remember though, you must have only a few plants, as more than five or six would give the window the appearance of being a substitute for a greenhouse, a most unpleasant idea at any time, and particularly so in the country. Two rather tall and spreading geraniums, with showy trusses of flowers, a large well-trained *Sóllya heterophýlla*, a fine *Polýgala oppositifòlia*, and two showy well-grown Fuchsias, will be quite enough. They should be in large handsome pots, standing in saucers for the sake of cleanliness; and care should be taken not to fill the pots with earth higher than to within about an inch from the brim, so as to leave plenty of room for watering. The space left should be filled with water every morning, and the water suffered to run through the pots into the saucers; which, after waiting about ten minutes, or more if necessary, so to allow as much water as possible to drain through the earth in the pots, should be emptied, as nothing

can be more injurious to most kinds of plants in pots than to let water stand in their saucers. If a constant fire be kept in the room so that the air is always hot and dry, the pots in which the plants are kept should be set within other pots, and the space between the two filled with moss. This is also a good plan with plants in balconies, to prevent the roots of the plants becoming dry and withered. Plants in rooms always require a great deal more water than plants in a greenhouse, to counteract the dry atmosphere of a living-room; and when practicable they should be set out in the rain, or syringed over head, to wash off the dust which, from sweeping the room and other causes, will inevitably rest on the leaves and choke up their pores, thus impeding the action of these very important organs. Air also is as essential to the health of plants as it is to that of human beings, as both live by decomposing it; and thus when plants are kept in a room, that room requires to be more carefully ventilated than would otherwise be necessary.

You say that all your rooms must be completely new furnished, and ask my advice as to the colours of the curtains, &c., in the different rooms. It is extremely difficult to give this, as taste differs exceedingly as to colours. As general rules, however, it may be observed that cold colours, such as pale blues and greens, never look well in rooms lighted from the north; and that warm colours, such as rich yellows and reds, should be avoided in rooms lighted from the south. As, however, it is desirable, if possible, to shake off the dislike you have taken to what I hope you will make your morning sitting-room, and as that dislike has arisen partly from the gloomy dark green curtains and dingy

tapestry on the walls, I would advise you to adopt only light colours in the furniture; particularly as the room will be generally used by daylight. First, the tapestry must be entirely removed: indeed you say it is already half-decayed from age and damp; and I would then advise you to have the walls, if they are in a proper state, painted or papered according to your fancy; taking care that the colour of the curtains and other furniture harmonizes with that of the walls. If your curtains are of moreen or damask you should have inner curtains of white muslin, which may be trimmed with lace, or have a coloured border: and these white curtains alone you will probably find sufficient during summer. There should be two sofas, an easy chair or two, comfortable footstools, and several small tables of different kinds, in addition to the ordinary chairs and tables; and I should add a chiffonier and a cabinet piano. You can, if you wish to be economical, have brown holland covers to the sofa and chairs; and you can pin plain white muslin over the silk of the piano and the chiffonier, to save them from the flies. The carpet may be Brussels, or Kidderminster, or a printed drugget, the first of the three being far the most expensive; the Kidderminster carpet and the drugget are nearly alike in price, but the drugget looks best, though it does not wear well. Whatever the material of the carpet may be, the colours should correspond with those of the furniture and the walls. As your books will be in daily use, they will be best in open cases with a little curtain of leather nailed along the shelves to keep out the dust. They should always, if possible, fill up entirely the space left for them; and on this account it is best to have movable shelves

where it is practicable. Should the books not stand high enough to fill the space for them, the housemaid may remove the dust with a goose's wing, or with one of those brushes with long hairs now sold for similar purposes; but do not let her take the books down oftener than twice a year, as frequent removals will not only injure the binding of your books, but will occasion you great annoyance, from the confused manner in which they are sure to be replaced on the shelves.

I know you were always fond of pets, though you never kept any, as your aunt did not like them; but now you are your own mistress, I think it very likely you will have a canary bird, and perhaps a parrot; and I am sure you will have some gold fish, which you will keep in your morning room. I would not advise you to keep a squirrel, on account of its unpleasant smell in a cage, and its hiding propensities out of one; though in other respects squirrels are pretty little creatures from their gracefulness and agility, and the intelligence that sparkles in their bright little eyes. If you do keep a squirrel, feed it with bread scalded in hot water, and plenty of nuts; and take care that its cage is cleaned, its hay changed, and its tin for food washed out with hot water, every day.

Your canary bird, if you have one, should be kept scrupulously clean, and the bottom of its cage should be strewed with clean sand every morning. It should also have fresh water every day, both for drinking and bathing, the latter being in a shallow vessel; in the moulting season a small bit of iron may be put in the water for drinking, but no other medicine should be given. Its food should be as simple

as possible, and should consist principally of summer rape seed, that is, those small brown rape seeds which are produced by plants sown in spring, and are ripe in summer; and not those sown in autumn and reaped in spring, which are large and black. A little duck-weed in spring, lettuce leaves in summer, endive in autumn, and slices of sweet apple in winter, may be added; and occasionally a few poppy or canary seeds, and a very small quantity of bruised hemp seed: but this last should be given as a great treat, and only sparingly: all sugar, bread, and other delicacies, are very injurious. It must never be forgotten that birds kept in cages are in a most unnatural state, and that they require the greatest care to keep them in health. Three things should be especially attended to: viz. cleanliness, simple food, and abundance of fresh air. This last particular may appear strange to those who know that the canary bird, being a native of a warm climate, is easily injured by cold; so much so indeed, that in winter its cage should never be hung in a room without a fire. But, notwithstanding this, it should have the windows of the room open frequently when the sun shines, even in winter; and in summer it should be kept as much as possible in the open air. The poor little creature shows its own feeling on the subject indeed very distinctly; for, as soon as it is placed near an open window in the sunshine, it begins to bathe, and to preen its feathers, and then it sings gaily its loudest songs of joy, frequently fluttering its wings at the same time, as though from a sensation of intense enjoyment. The cage for a single canary bird should never be less than eight inches in

diameter and a foot high, and should have sticks placed across it at different heights for the bird to perch on.

Parrots, macaws, and cockatoos thrive best on a pole with a stand at the bottom for sand, as their tail and wing feathers generally become ragged when they are kept in a cage. Some grey parrots and blue macaws are very apt to pull out their breast feathers; but this is the result of a disease brought on by eating too much meat. The same cause also brings on gout in the feet, and other complaints. All the parrot tribe are hard-beaked birds, and consequently not carnivorous: their food in their native country is grain and fruit, and their habits in this respect should always be kept in view in feeding them; for though birds in confinement are in an unnatural state, and require more indulgences than they would need if wild in the woods, yet they should never have food given to them which their organs are quite unfitted to digest. Parrots and other similar birds should therefore be fed as much as possible on ripe fruit, boiled wheat or Indian corn, and milk; or, if these articles be not attainable, bread or captain's biscuit soaked in boiling water, with enough milk added to enable the bird to drink, will be found the best substitute. Bird-fanciers use generally bread made without salt, and very well baked, crumbled into water and then slightly squeezed; but the birds get very thin if kept for a long time only on this diet, and require a little milk, though that is a food they certainly never can have in their natural state. Bechstein says that they will get fat on the seed of the safflower (*Cárthamus tinctorius*), and indeed these seeds are called by the French *graines de perroquets*. Though the parrot tribe are not

carnivorous, they are all very fond of a bone to pick; and I believe that they may be indulged with one occasionally, provided there is no fat and very little meat on it. Parrots should be supplied every day with clean water to wash, and their feet should be frequently examined and cleaned from any dirt that may be adhering to them.

Should you take a fancy to a pet monkey, most of the common kinds are kept chained to a pole on a stand, and fed like parrots; but marmozets, which are pretty little creatures, are very tender, and are generally kept in a cage like squirrels. They will eat animal food, and one that was at liberty is said to have snatched a gold fish out of the water, and devoured it. The most interesting circumstance relating to them is, however, their fondness for their young, which is nursed by both the male and female like a baby.

Gold and silver fish are very ornamental and suitable objects to keep in a lady's morning room. It is generally supposed that they are quite incapable of affection; but some that we have certainly knew me again when I came back after having been out of town; and one, which I call Goldy, and which we have had four or five years, will come and nibble my finger when I put it near him, or swim after a feather when I draw it gently along the surface of the water.

It is, however, very difficult to keep gold fish long in a room, particularly in a glass globe. When it is wished to do so, only two or three should be in one globe, and the water should be changed every day in winter, and twice a day in summer; the fish having no food but the animalcula which they find in the water, which should always be from a pond or river, as spring water is not only too cold, but often

contains some mineral substance which is likely to prove injurious. When several fish are kept in a small space, the water should either be kept continually changing by a fountain, or in some other mode; or the fish should be fed with some farinaceous substance, but never with baker's bread, as it is decidedly injurious to them. I am told that the dealers in gold fish, who always keep a great number together in darkness, in a large tub or tank, feed them twice a day with boiled grits; other persons recommend crushed barley or oats: in France they use a kind of paste made of maize or Indian corn; and in America, I am told, they prefer brewer's grains, or a paste made of bran and flour. Whenever farinaceous food of any kind is used, it should be given in small quantities, and be quite fresh; the vessel in which the fish are kept being always cleaned thoroughly every day, to prevent the possibility of any of the food in a sour state remaining in it.

Though gold and silver fish certainly look best in a glass globe, I doubt whether they live so long in one as they will do in an opaque vessel. When I kept my fish in a large oblong china vase, I lost only one in five years; but in a glass globe I lost seven in about six months. I tried various modes of treatment, such as putting gravel in the water, and giving the fish duck-weed and pond-weed to shelter them from the sun; but I had still the mortification to see my fish die, and generally without any apparent cause. The first symptom was the fish appearing languid and unwilling to move; but in a few hours, it began to swim on one side, and when turned on the other side it instantly resumed its former position; shortly after, the tail drooped down, so as

to throw the body into an angular position, and in the course of a few hours the poor fish was dead. It is true that the year in which these experiments were tried appears to have been decidedly unfavourable for gold fish, as a great many died, even in ponds, where they are generally much more healthy than when kept in rooms. In one instance, especially, nearly twenty died in the marble basin of a fountain, where fish had been kept for years with an average of not more than two or three deaths in a year. In many cases, the cause of death in gold fish is evidently a plant nearly allied to the green scum formed on stagnant water. This plant, which is called *Achyla prolífera*, consists principally of threads so exceedingly fine as to be imperceptible to the naked eye, but which take root in the body of the fish, as the mistletoe grows on the apple tree, and in time produce a soft downy substance like mould, that first appears on the gills and tail, but gradually covers the whole body of the fish. When this extraordinary disease, if it may be so called, is discovered in its first stages, it may be stopped by sprinkling salt on the back and sides of the fish; but the application appears to cause intense pain, as the fish, as soon as it feels the salt, darts from one side to the other of the vessel that contains it, and appears to be writhing with agony. This, however, soon goes off, and the fish appears quite restored, seldom requiring a second application.

The best way of keeping gold and silver fish is certainly in a pond in the garden; particularly if the situation be warm and exposed to the sun. It is necessary, however, if the pond be shallow, and the water clear, to have two or three bundles of faggots thrown into it, that the fish may find

shade, when they wish it. Faggots are also very useful when it is wished to breed gold fish; as they afford both warmth and shelter, without which gold fish never produce young. When first hatched the gold fish is nearly black, but it gradually becomes streaked with gold or silver; the metallic hue increasing every year, till the black finally disappears.

As you are fond of having flowers in your room, and as your present garden is so far from your house, you will perhaps be glad to know how to preserve cut flowers as long as possible. The most simple rules are, not to put too many flowers in a glass, to change the water every morning, and to remove every decayed leaf as soon as it appears, cutting off the end of the stems occasionally, as soon as they show any symptoms of decay. A more efficacious way, however, is to put nitrate of soda or nitrate of potash (saltpetre) in powder into the water; as about as much as can be easily taken up between the forefinger and the thumb, put into the glass every time the water is changed, will preserve cut flowers in all their beauty for above a fortnight. Camphor in powder has nearly the same effect.

The *drawingroom* should be fitted up with more elegance than any other room in the house. The walls may be panelled, and the panels filled in with fluted silk, with a gilt moulding round them; or the walls may be covered with flock or satin paper, with a gilt moulding under the cornice. In either case the cornice should be rich; and there should be bosses on the ceiling to indicate the place for the chandeliers, if you have any. A slight degree of conformity between the style of the furniture and that of the house is, I think, advisable; but, as your house appears to have had