

vehemently. "Cough, cough, cough, all the time. It came on specially worse in April, and she died in May. She wasn't never very strong, you know, but she'd been brought up in your wicked old steam-heated New York, and she would persist in wearing tissue-paper clothes right through our rotten icy winters up here. And when I tried to dose her like the doctor said, with cod-liver oil or any of them thick things, I couldn't fool her—she just up an' said it was nothin' but liquid flannel, and spit it out and sassed me. And Gruff—Growly-Dog-Gruff," he finished hastily. "I don't know what ailed him. He jus' kind of followed along about June."

The Partridge Hunter drew a long, heavy breath. When he spoke at last, his voice sounded like the voice of a man who holds his hat in his hand, and the puffs of smoke from his pipe made a sort of little halo round his words.

"Isn't it nice," he mused, "to think that while we four are cozying here to-night in the same jolly old haunts, perhaps they three—Man, Girl, and Dog—

are cuddling off together somewhere in the big, spooky, Unknown, in the shade of a cloud, or the shine of a star—talking—perhaps—about—us?"

The whimsical comfort of the thought pleased me. I did not want any one to be alone on such a night.

But Alrik's tilted chair came crashing down on the floor with a resounding whack. His eyes were blazing.

"She ain't with him," he cried. "She ain't, she A-I-N-T, she A-I-N-T! I won't have it. Why, it's the middle of the night!"

And in that electric instant I saw the Pretty Lady's face set rigidly, all except her mouth, which twisted in my direction.

"I'll wager she is with him," she whispered under her breath. "She always did tag him wherever he went!"

Then I felt the toe of my slipper meet the recumbent elbow of the Partridge Hunter. Had I reached out to him? Or had he reached back to me? There was no time to find out, for the smooth, round conversation shattered pricklingly

in the hand like a blown-glass bauble, and with much nervous laughter and far-fetched joke-making, we rose, rummaged round for our candles, and climbed upstairs to bed.

Alrik's Old Mother burrowed into a corner under the eaves.

The Pretty Lady had her usual room, and mine was next to hers. For a lingering moment I dallied with her, craving some tiny, absurd bit of loving service. First, I helped her with a balky hook, on her collar. Then I started to put her travelling coat and hat away in the closet. In the upper shelf something a little bit scary brushed my hands. It was the Blue Serge Man's cap, with a ragged gash across it where Growly-Dog-Gruff had worried it on a day I remembered well. With a hurried glance over my shoulder to make sure that the Pretty Lady had not also spied it, I reached up and shoved it—oh, 'way, 'way back out of sight, where no one but a detective or a lover could possibly find it.

Then I hurried off to my room with a

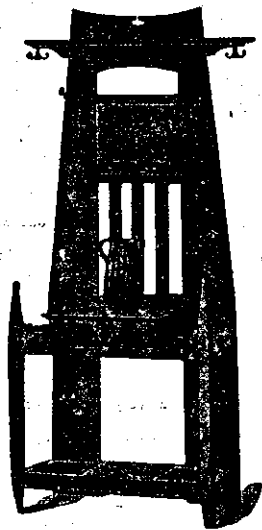
most garish human wonder: How could a mau be all gone, but his silly cap last?

My little room was just as I remembered it, bare, bleak, and gruesomely clean with a rag rug, a worsted motto, and a pink china vase for really sensuous ornamentation. I opened the cheap pine bureau to stow away my things. A trinket jingled—a tawdry rhine-stone side-comb. Caught in the setting was a tiny wisp of brown hair. I slammed the drawer with a bang, and opened another. Metal and leather slid heavily along the bottom. It might have been any beast's collar, if distinctly across the name-plate had not run the terse phrase "Alrik's Cross Dog." I did not like to have my bureau haunted! When I slammed that drawer, it cracked the looking-glass.

Then, with candle burning just as cheerfully as possible, I lay down on the bed in all my clothes and began to wake up—wider and wider and wider.

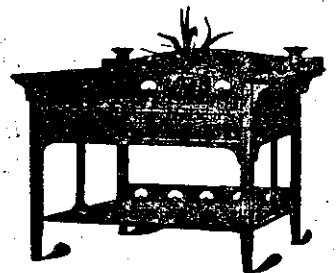
My reason lay quite dormant, like some drugged thing, but my memory, photographic as a lens, began to repro-

# Art in the Home.



**A**RT in the Home can only be obtained by the most careful consideration of the relation which each article bears to the other. Consequently, those who contemplate house furnishing will be well advised to place the entire matter in the hands of an experienced firm.

Such a course not only ensures an artistic homogeneity throughout the Home, but saves time, trouble, and the chance of including what is inappropriate. We shall be pleased to demonstrate to you how you can, with a given expenditure, obtain the best results. Illustrated Furniture Catalogue free on application.



# SMITH & CAUGHEY, Ltd.

Wholesale and Family Drapers, Cabinetmakers, Complete House Furnishers, and Removal Contractors, AUCKLAND.



**WE CAN SAVE YOU MONEY**

When you want **CEILINGS**

or **WALL LININGS**

drop us a line, on receipt of which we will post you a Catalogue of our famous **STEEL CEILINGS**

For durability, beauty and economy they are unsurpassed.

The price is within the reach of all. Don't forget that we manufacture in the Dominion.

Send for our "New Zealand Beautiful Homes" (free of charge).  
**BRISCOE & Co., Ltd.**  
Sole Agents,  
AUCKLAND, N.Z.



## Reasons why Wunderlich Ceilings are the BEST:

- Because they are Artistic and Beautiful
- Because they are Fireproof
- Because they will Not Hold Dust
- Because they are Permanent
- Because they Retain their Colour
- Because Germs Cannot Obtain a Footing
- Because they can be Easily Washed
- Because they cover a range of Designs

Also,

**MARSEILLES ROOFING TILES.**

**SUITABLE IN COST FOR COTTAGE OR MANSION.**

**CALL AND INSPECT.**

**BRISCOE AND CO., Ltd.,** Sole Agents.  
**CUSTOMS STREET.**