

the bottom of everything before he begins it and builds substantially and without frills or filigrees. His railroad offices at St. Paul are severely plain in their construction, and you see the same good taste displayed about every part of his house. The front doors are of massive oak, beautifully carved, and you pass through them over a vestibule of Roman mosaic, as carefully inlaid as a Florentine breastpin, into a grand hall finished in antique oak. As you go in you note that the walls are of carved oak and that the ceiling is of the same wood in great panels. You come first into a grand hall nearly as long as the promenade corridor of the White House, but far more beautifully finished. It must be a hundred feet long and about twenty feet wide, and it runs from the picture gallery at one end to the great mahogany dining room at the other. Its roof is made up of four great panels inclosed in rafters of carved oak, each four feet wide, and these are upheld by eight fluted oak columns, each of which is as big around as the waist of a good sized man. The walls of this hall are hung with fine paintings. Its floor is covered with soft rugs, and it is lighted, as are the large rooms of the house, in a most wonderful way. From the center of each of these panels, strung as it were upon wires, seems to hang down a bushel of diamonds. These are prisms of cut glass festooned in the shape of a basket, and lighted by electricity, which coming from globes behind them and reflected by mirrors above make a most wonderfully effective illumination. There are four of these diamond baskets in the hall, one in the dining room, another in the library and others in the music, reception and drawing rooms. A chandelier always looks out of place in a house. It makes a big room look larger and a small room look smaller, but these diamond baskets take up no room and they are the most beautiful things I have ever seen in house lighting. From the center of this hall rises the staircase between these fluted oak columns, by easy landings to the second story, and looking down upon you from it, as you come in, are great windows of stained glass, which throw a soft light into the hall. At the right and left of the staircase are grates covered by mantels of the same massive oak, and over one of these is a painting of Mrs. Hill and the other of Mr. Hill.

THE DINING ROOM.

The dining room is about fifty feet long by thirty feet wide. It is finished in South American mahogany, and the furniture is of the same wood. The walls from your feet to above your head are paneled in the richest of mahogany, which has a polish equal to that of the finest piano. The ceiling is made up of panels framed in great mahogany rafters, and the panels are of rough stucco covered with gold leaf. Window seats run around the end of the dining room, sitting upon which you can look out over the Mississippi. There is a great sideboard of mahogany twelve feet long filled with the finest of china and cut glass. In two corners of the room are glass covered cupboards filled with beautiful glass ware, and on the sideboard and other places about the room are pieces of the finest of all kinds of china, not a few being of Sevres and Royal Dresden. The butler was with me while I stood in the room and he

told me the cost of furnishing it was over \$14,000. The dining table is of carved mahogany, and it is of immense size. In fact, all the furniture in this house is fully from one-third to twice as large as that you find in ordinary houses. Mrs. Hill told me that when she came into the house she was surprised at the immense size of the rooms and she was in despair as to how she could make them look smaller and more homelike. She did so by having the furniture made in proportion, and the result is that the whole house has a homelike character and everything is harmonious. In Mrs. Hill's bed room, for instance, the bed, of white maple, is six feet wide, but it does not look larger than an ordinary one, and I was not aware that it was so large until my attention was called to it. The sofas are very long and the chairs and tables match. Even the lamps have been made larger than those of ordinary houses, and the result is a combination which you will not find in the great palaces of Europe nor in the other fine houses of the world. Speaking of lamps, one on the center table in the music room has a body two feet high and is fully a foot in diameter. Mrs. Hill hunted for it for a long time, and finally had it made out of a vase which she found which just harmonized with the coloring of the room.

THE DEN OF A RAILROAD MAGNATE.

The living room of the house is the library, and just off this is Mr. Hill's den. It is not more than ten feet square and it is walled in mahogany. It has an air of solidity about it, and it is furnished elegantly but simply. On the book cases on one side of the room are great volumes of railway reports and railway magazines, while a globe stands in one corner. There is a little library table under the window with paper and pens on it, and at the rear of the room there is a mahogany door, which opens into a great vault, in which is stored at times, I doubt not, securities which are worth millions. The library is furnished in mahogany. Bronze figures of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster stand on each end of the low book cases, which run around the room on either hand as you enter. The great library table is covered with papers and magazines and the room looks as though it were used. The collection of books is a good one. All of the great authors of fiction and science may be found upon the shelves, and you will find French and German books as well as English. Mr. Hill is a good French scholar and both himself and his wife have good literary taste. They are both well read and their domestic relations are of the happiest nature.

THE BASEMENT AND THE ATTIC.

The basement and the attic of this great mansion are to me even more interesting than the living rooms. The house must have a quarter of an acre of floor space and the basement is a house in itself. It has a hall, so wide that you could drive a wagon through it without grazing the walls and its rooms are all large, airy and well lighted. The floors are of marble. The halls and rooms are paneled with slabs of white marble, so polished that you can see your face in them and the whole is lighted by electricity. These marble floors rest on a bed of mineral wool and 50,000 of pounds mineral wool were used in making this house fireproof. Mr. Hill

says it is fireproof, rat-proof and cyclone proof, and it has a steel roof over the whole of it so strong that you could run a train of cars over it without injury. The attic has been turned into a theater for the amusement of Mr. Hill's children, and there is a miniature stage here and an audience room about thirty feet wide by fifty feet long. The stage has scenes and footlights, and it is, in fact, a complete little theater. The boys have a magic lantern and they sometimes give exhibitions.

TWO TONS OF COAL A DAY.

It takes two tons of coal a day to keep this house warm, and I spent some time in looking at the great boilers in the basement. There is an engineer who does nothing else but attend to these, and Mrs. Hill tells me that the house is so thick that during the past winter they have not had to open the registers of the different rooms for heat, but have only had to warm the halls. The engines represent 300 horse-power, and if you will keep 300 horses at work day and night you will get an idea of the amount of force that it takes to turn winter into summer for Mr. James J. Hill. There is a dynamo and electric plant connected with the house. One of the most interesting parts of the basement is the laundry. It has a marble floor and brick walls. The washing is done in great porcelain tubs and the clothes are put on racks that are rolled in and out of cases under which steam pipes are coiled. These pipes keep the temperature of the drying cases at 130 degrees and the clothes are dried in a jiffy. The kitchen has the same marble floors, but its tables are of white wood, which are as clean as those of a Dutch housewife. I noticed that most of the cooking utensils were of copper and the range seemed to me to be large enough for the roasting of an ox.

HILL'S FAMILY LIFE.

As I said above, the strongest feature of this big mansion is its homelike character. Mr. Hill is a man of domestic tastes. He loves his family and he has a beautiful home life. His wife has borne him nine children; and when I took lunch with her there were three pretty dark-eyed girls and a very bright eight year-old boy with us at the table. The lunch was served in the breakfast room, and it was as simple and unconventional as those which you find in any well-to-do family in the United States any day. Mrs. Hill is a charming woman. She does not look to be more than forty, and though she has these nine children there is not a gray hair in her head, and her face is free from wrinkles. She is refined and well educated and is full of common sense. She is a woman of remarkably good taste, and she impressed me as an excellent mother. She is a Catholic, but not an illiberal one, and she is, I am told, always doing good in the way of charity. Mr. Hill is himself very charitable, though most of his gifts are never known to the public. Not long ago he attended a sermon of Bishop Ireland which pleased him very much. It was one in which the great bishop preached on true Americanism, in which he said it was every young man's duty to be a true American, to become permeated with the spirit of the country and to aid in its government and development. At the close of the sermon Mr. Hill told the bishop he would like to have him call upon him and that he would give