O TRIED to dissuade us as follows: "They ain't nobody home to the Lambs', lessen you go up to the old homestead at Alpine."

Bo's full name was Sambo. He was very fat and black and sociable and seemed puzzled that we should go calling with nobody home.

"Yessah, I does sho' know where they all lives in dem old meadow lots, but they all's gone away and both houses is locked."

When we replied in a cheerful tone, "All right," Bo shook his head gloomily and Jim, the horse, who was a kindred fat, black spirit, jogged reluctantly away from home toward the woods at the edge of the Palisades, which sloped down into the old neglected meadow land, where the two brothers, Charles and Frederick Lamb, had built their homes, far off the main traveled road, on the fringe of the forest.

Our afternoon was late October, mellow and fragrant, with belated bird calls and goldenrod gone brown and bittersweet unfolding tiny yellow jackets and making much of showy cardinal vests. We wound up the hillside road slowly, Bo and Jim sunk in the melancholy of the unusual. An abrupt turn took us out on a narrow road, rough, with trees nearly meeting overhead and a line of tall black cedars marking its limitations as a thoroughfare. Yellow branches trailed kindly along our wagon canopy, and shrubs of flaming red glowed in the landscape as though celestial fires were burning in root and branch. The sun slanted across, red and yellow, making pathways of rose and gold that lured the fancy with dreams of fairy woods, of the great god Pan hidden there to blow sweet melodies for the weary at heart.

The stately line of cedars narrowed, the road grew stonier, and the driver and the driven showed a growing resentment toward passengers who would not keep to plain God-fearing macadam or asphalt on a trip that was bound to keep dinner waiting in any case.

At this point, when Bo felt that matters were at their worst, we pointed out a narrow wagon print running into the deep woods, no more than an overgrown trail. It seemed to zigzag away into the shadows, fitted best to the footsteps of hunter or shepherd. Bo turned heavily around in the seat, "Now, you sho' is never gwine
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back into dis yer no 'count woods, sah? Nobody ain't living yer sence summer. What for you all's wants to go projectin' around to dese dumb, empty houses, sah?” And Jim, the horse, looked up the shadowy path with Bo’s feelings exactly duplicated on his long, curious black face. And as he settled back in the harness, “What for?” was in every toss of his head.

“Here, you Jim; you get right down into dese woods,” was Bo’s reluctant command, full of sympathy and reserve.

A few steps, and we were in the arms of the woods. Yellow maple drooped and hovered over us, dogwood with red berries and misty rose-hued leaves stood sentinel as we moved along; oak, tall and scrub, russet and brown, sent us sweet-scented messages, and white birch gleamed out of the gorgeous mass, here and there, straight and slender and reticent. Branches, exquisitely fragrant, came up close about us, touching the flanks of the petulant horse, caressing our faces, breathing in our ears, folding us in the mysterious, sacred perfume of the remote forest.

We dreamed our way down the trail, our hearts heavy with the full beauty of the ripe autumn day.

As the road divided into a sharp fork, Jim stopped, resentful of further complications, and Bo smiled, for we were at the edge of the pasture land where the houses of the two brothers had been built, and Bo knew that his adventurous hours were over.

RESTING upon a slope at the topmost edge of the old pasture lots, the houses were partly revealed to us, as they stood back from the roadway with a fine reserve. The road branching away on either side left them back from any suggestion of suburban life, all the wild woods for their park, and the slope of the land carrying the view out for miles to the crest of the misty blue Ramapo hills—a vast domain for the owners of a few pasture lots.

We knew the story of the lovely stretches of meadow land. When the two artists, Charles and Frederick Lamb, were little chaps living “up to Alpine” these lots were shorn meadows, where cows strayed when the land was fallow, and where, at the forest edge, there were fine games when school hours were over.

Years after, when the brothers decided that life to be complete must be equally divided into accomplishment and preparation, that brain as well as earth must have its fallow time, that winter months at business must be supplemented by summer months near the soil, they found no fairer spot in all the country near New York than the
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old pasture slope which had been gathered back by the lapse of years into the grace and beauty of Nature’s friendly heart. Mr. Frederick Lamb was the first to build, just where the road forks, and six years ago Mr. Charles Lamb, going further back on the slope, began the home which is illustrated in this article.

On the misty fall afternoon of our visit, as we crossed the green stretch which leads to Mr. Frederick Lamb’s door, we looked from house to house, enjoying the varying personal charm of each, the cascades of brilliant vines, the terraces of gorgeous autumn flowers, the untouched woods for a background and the horizon as far off as the eye could carry.

Mrs. Charles Lamb later told the story of the building of “The Fold” (as her country house is called), in an affectionate untechnical way that made one see how a true home must have its real cornerstone in the heart; how it must be built up of affection and joy and the “home need,” as well as of plaster and stone and wood, and that the permanent foundation cannot be made with hands.

“We had to have a garden,” she first explained, “The children needed it to grow in, I needed it to work off city nerves, and as for Mr. Lamb—well, every artist should have a flower garden. And in our minds the house seemed to grow out of the garden—a house wholly for our contentment, for daily use, and we wanted it beautiful as the daily things of life should be. It was to grow up out of the earth, just as inevitably as the garden would, an intimate part of the landscape in color and form. And so the foundation leans to the slope of the meadow, the stones are from the soil where we dug for the foundation, and the sand for the plaster came from the lower meadows and the wood for the porch from across the roadway.

“Our house belongs there on the edge of the woods just as much as the growing trees and shrubs do, for much of it has always been there. We brought out foreign materials only when our own land could not supply our needs. You see we loved the land, and valued her assistance. People could not have been more friendly to us.

“And in return we did not encroach upon her reserve, or destroy her individuality, or try in any way to change her particular beauty by rendering it conventional or foreign. We cleared off no spaces, nor did we smooth out the pleasant wrinkled surface of the old pasture into hard flat lawns—that would have been a poor return for all the meadows were giving us.

“The country people in the region just about helped us to build. Old Joe Hen’ was our carpenter. He didn’t always approve of our
MRS. LAMB'S STUDIO, BUILT IN A SHADY SPOT NEAR ONE OF THE CEDAR LANES: JUST FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM THE LARGE HOUSE FOR QUIET WORK HOURS.

FROM A PAINTING OF MRS. CHARLES LAMB, DONE BY HERSELF.
THE COUNTRY HOME OF MR. AND MRS. CHARLES R. LAMB BUILT ON A MEADOW SLOPE BACK OF THE PALISADES.

DETAIL OF THE LAMB HOUSE, SHOWING VINE-COVERED LOGGIA AND GARDEN.
"FAR AS THE MEADOW STRETCHES THE LINES OF CEDARS PASS DOWN THE VALLEY IN SINGLE FILE."
THE ARTS: SECTION OF LARGE MOSAIC IN THE SAGE CHAPEL OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY: DESIGNED AND EXECUTED BY ELLA CONDIE LAMB.
"THE OPEN BOOK": MURAL DECORATION IN THE NORTH LIBRARY OF THE FLOWER MEMORIAL, WATERTOWN, N. Y.: BY ELLA CONDIE LAMB.
DETAILS FROM THE MURAL DECORATION IN THE FLOWER MEMORIAL LIBRARY: MRS. LAMB'S FOUR CHILDREN POSED FOR THESE STUDIES.
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simple ways of planning and executing; in his eyes we were getting
out of the village architectural rut, and he felt the jolt; but he 'and
his folks didn't have to live in it,' so as often as consistent with his
professional dignity he let us have our way. He rejoiced when
'doing things as he or to,' and we rejoiced with him, and thus more
easily secured concessions to our foolish city notions. It is joyous
work to build a home to fit your life, all phases of it.'

Truly, a satisfactory ideal for a home for our modern civilization
of intelligent working men and women—that the inspiration should
spring from the hearts of the dwellers therein and the material out
of the earth upon which it rests. And, as you cross the slope to the
flower garden, you feel that this house is not a recently erected bit of
architecture, but a place of peace, immemorially old and beautiful.

You reach the loggia, or roofed-over porch, at one side through
a walled-in flower garden, which sounds very feudal and haughty,
but the walls are low, of soft-hued plaster and vine covered, and the
garden is a tangle of fragrance and color, of iris, violet and cream
and yellow in season, later of asters in blue and purple, and chrysan-
themums great and small; on our autumn day there were many tall,
slender Japanese moon-white flowers, scentless, cold and lovely.
You enter the garden through a low gate and flowers brush your face
as you stoop to the courtesy of formally latching it behind you. You
tread the brick pathway very slowly, for perfume makes laggard
feet, and then you mount the steps of field stones to the living porch,
which may be called a loggia or an outdoor living room or a sheltered
porch. It is all three. It extends the width of the house, facing the
wide valleys and hills. The second story is its roof, and it serves as
a sheltering vestibule for the main entrance. It is the summer
dining room in bright weather, and for summer evenings it is the ideal
resting place. There are wide wooden benches at the sides and
against the house, and a great square table in the center space with
chairs at one's convenience. A trellis projects out at the roof edge
all around, and vines stretch up from the flower beds, which circle the
stone foundation, to shade the porch and drape the trellises. On
one side there are grape vines in profusion, so that dessert for an
autumn luncheon is gathered almost from one's chair, and on the
other side is shade from woodbine, yellow and scarlet the day of
our visit.

From the porch the utmost beauty of the situation is laid bare
for you. The property is bordered by two long lines of straight
high cedars banded into a wall with festoons of woodbine and close-
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crowded bay and sumac. Far as the meadows stretch, the lines of cedars pass down the valley in single file, with here and there in the open lot an isolated tree, upright, slender and green, of a moonlight night seeming to brush the sky, a thing of sacred beauty to those who dwell intimately with trees.

Scattered patches of kindly color over the meadow land prove to be the vegetable gardens, placed where they would attract the most sunlight and add a homely beauty to the landscape. For to these artists in life, a vegetable is not a thing to be despised or its wholesome sweet growth a process to be hidden from sight. All of Nature’s ways seem pleasant to the occupants of “The Fold.”

Later the beauty of the home indoors was revealed through photographs, the delightful great living room, which is dining and sitting room combined, with the large fireplace and built-in window-seat and a round table for knights of modern chivalry and casement windows for the ladies.

There are no schemes nor periods of furnishings, “Just,” as Mrs. Lamb put it, “the best and most beautiful we could get to supply each need.” And the effect of the whole a delightful harmony, a diverse manifestation of one point of taste; for harmony is not sameness, but variety of expressions of a definite ideal.

That a woman so essentially a home-maker of the most intensive kind, so profoundly a mother, with most genuine joy in the bringing up (literally up) of a group of boys and girls should also have proved herself an artist of distinction in more than one field of endeavor furnishes an interesting study to the traditionalist who contends that a woman’s brain must always be wickedly fed by the sacrifices of the heart.

When asked how she had so successfully overcome traditional ideas, Mrs. Lamb said, “I have three reasons—an accurate, determined Scotch father, a beauty-loving, sensitive English mother, and—” Mrs. Lamb hesitated—“and Mr. Lamb, who has believed that I could do things in the art world and who has never permitted me to shut up the studio for the nursery and the kitchen. We have studied and worked together, and no mention of what I have accomplished is accurate without his name. He has given me so much inspiration as well as practical aid that to me the work seems more than half his.”

The work through which Ella Condie Lamb will be longest remembered is unquestionably her mural decorations for public buildings and her cartoons for stained glass windows.

In the Flower Memorial, donated the town of Watertown, New
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York, by Mrs. Emma Flower Taylor (a full account of which was given in The Craftsman for January, nineteen hundred and five), Mrs. Lamb's mural painting is the principal decoration in the north library. The painting is called "The Open Book," and forms an oval panel at one end of the room. The color scheme, the technique, the harmony of design with interior fittings all have been widely discussed; a still further beauty of the work seems more profitable to dwell upon here—namely, the idea that Mrs. Lamb's art is no more separated from her life as a mother and home-maker, than her domestic life is remote from her art. It would inevitably remain for a woman in whom the mother feeling was so richly developed to present "Knowledge is Power," as a woman in exquisite maturity holding an open book for children to study. The four larger models, beautiful in form and expression, were drawn from the artist's own children. "The littlest one" was painted from Mrs. Taylor's youngest child. There was no "withdrawing from life to higher planes" to paint this picture, no shutting away home surroundings to "express oneself." Of course, there were many difficulties encountered, and much hard work, for Mrs. Lamb has a Scotch conscience as a foundation for her art work and she accomplishes slowly; first drawing each figure from a nude model, then drawing special detail studies of the hands and feet she wishes to make most expressive, later the figures are draped, and there are studies of draperies, and often the head of the figures done entirely in detail to establish the idea of color. There is no "running up to the studio and dashing off a great work of art," but weeks of work, all done in connection with planning dinners, managing servants and loving children.

The children's reading room in the Flower Memorial is also decorated by Mrs. Lamb. This room is a memorial to Mrs. Taylor's eldest son, and the children in panels carrying spring flowers were drawn from Mrs. Taylor's little boy and girl.

Other important work of Mrs. Lamb's appears in the Sage Chapel at Cornell University. In the beautiful frieze in the apse the groups, "The Sciences," "The Arts" and "Philosophy" are all designed and executed by Mrs. Lamb; the designer of the chapel as a whole being Mr. Charles Lamb. So perfect is the entire color scheme of the chapel and so harmonious the beauty of the frieze that it is difficult to pass this achievement with so few words. But there is yet the decoration for the house of Spencer Trask at Tuxedo to be spoken of—an oval-topped panel called the "North Wind," a conception
of much vividness of color and action; and there is also Mrs. Lamb’s work as a portrait and landscape painter.

How often the artist seems to delight in limiting himself to what he terms his métier, to landscape alone, even one kind of landscape, or to portraits, or to the remote and symbolic, the greater the limitation the greater the pride. Specializing in art as in medicine.

And yet we find this very busy mother not only designing decorations for churches, universities and homes, but engrossed in doing peculiarly sympathetic portraits in oil or color crayons of “young men and maidens, old men and children.”

Her landscape work is most often sketches in color of the pasture land surrounding the country home, flower studies from the walled-in garden, patches of the vegetable gardens, a vista down by the cedar borders, the children everywhere, a blue blouse in a clump of purple iris, a child at work, at play, equally happy, and so she seems to relate all of life to all of art, and there is apparently in this home no end to the joy of life or the beauty of its expression—the ideal of happiness realized through the completest opportunity for labor.

A CHRISTMAS SONG

IN EVERY babe that gains the light
Through rack of human pain,
In each new-breathing soul tonight
The Christ-child lives again.
In every drop of anguish, pressed
From pallid woman’s brow,
In every virgin mother-breast
His Mother whispers now.

And wise men through the darkness hie,
Lo! In the East—a Star!
O little Christ who is to die
Was your soul’s journey far?
Strange meteor wounds of death and birth
Lighting an endless sea;
A little child has come to earth
And He must die for me!

MARY McNEIL FENOLLOSA.