



By Helen Fay



WHILE this historical revival in house furnishings lasts rag carpets will be in demand, and a clever woman can have really beautiful floor coverings by utilizing the old garments and pieces generally sold to the junk man for a few cents a pound. To prepare the material for the weaver the cloth should be cut in strips a half an inch in width, and in lengths varying from a half a yard to two yards. These strips should be sewed together with flat seams very strongly and wound in balls. A ball weighing one pound and three-quarters will make one yard of carpet. This is a convenient way of counting for both the sewer and weaver. If stripes or plain borders are desired the pieces of one color must be sewed together and kept in separate balls. Generally a hit or miss effect is more easily made. For this design all colors can be sewed together, and black or some dark shade used for a border. A very pretty carpet for a Dutch or Delft blue room may be made of white and blue rags in hit or miss effect with a deep blue border. White cloth of any kind can be colored the required tint either with indigo or the regularly prepared household dye. Rag carpet is woven in breadths of a yard in width and in any length required. One breadth in solid color can form the bordering if desired. If warp is used one pound and one ounce of rags will be required for one yard, but the fabric will be more loosely woven and not as durable. Silk can be used instead of cloth, and even old ingrain or three-ply carpeting. Old Brussels carpets are re woven by some weavers into very Oriental-looking floor coverings.

AN inexpensive floor covering and bordering for rugs can be made by using denim in the new dull shades—the plain blues, yellows and greens are especially effective when used in this way. The width of the material tacked as a border around a room will be of sufficient size for the ordinary rug, and in a good quality will wear better than some matting. For the bedrooms of summer cottages it answers the place of heavier floor coverings very nicely. As a general thing it is very poor economy to leave any part of the surface of the floor uncovered. It is better in the end to stain, paint or carpet the entire surface. Then the arrangement of the furniture and rugs can be altered, and, at any rate, a clear floor obtained whenever desired, without exposing humiliating makeshifts. Where a very large rug is needed, however, it is possible to utilize an old carpet for the middle of the room by sewing to it a deep bordering in some solid color or small conventional design. A breadth of royal Wilton in some dull shade is wider than regular bordering and generally harmonizes well with most rugs. Matting and what is technically known as filling make effective backgrounds for rugs, which never show to advantage upon ordinary carpets. Rugs are not suitable, however, for parlors, excepting during the summer. For bedrooms they are, all things considered, the most satisfactory floor coverings, especially when no change is made through the entire year. For the sitting and dining rooms they are also desirable, particularly in the home where the mistress is also the maid. They can be kept clean at the smallest expenditure of time and strength.

Matting in small conventional designs and all-over patterns, wear much better than those in solid colors. Plain matting will scratch and show every stain, and fade more quickly than those less highly colored. Fine "fancy Chinese" and Japanese seamless matting are the most artistic in coloring and design, and what are known as cotton and trout line warps wear remarkably well. It is possible to get a roll of matting consisting of forty yards for three dollars, while the qualities mentioned above cost at least twice that amount. A well-lined matting wears much longer than one put upon the floor with nothing but paper under it. Old carpets that are not presentable uncovered make excellent linings for them, provided that they are thoroughly cleaned before they are used, otherwise the dust rises to the surface of the matting. Some housekeepers put regular carpet lining between the old carpet and the matting, believing that by this method they avoid dust and also obtain a soft, heavy floor covering pleasant to step upon, and very good to look at.

FILLING is nothing more nor less than Brussels carpeting without any design upon its solid coloring. For parlors where rugs are used and bare floors are not obtainable, it is the most satisfactory floor covering. Unless well covered, however, it is apt to wear white, especially under rocking-chairs or where much walked upon. If the coloring is dark every particle of dust seems to show on the surface, but in tan, gold and light green it makes the most desirable floor covering for parlors and libraries where large rugs are used. When the housekeeper has only small rugs a very light velvet or royal Wilton will be the most satisfactory covering for the parlor floor. Many small rugs scattered about on a perfectly plain background give a room a patched appearance and diminish its apparent size. For the parlor of an ordinary house one large rug twelve feet in length by eight in width, and two smaller ones ranging in size from three and a half feet in width to seven in length, or from five in width to eight in length, will prove a good arrangement. If these are bought at the same time the color scheme can be more satisfactorily arranged. For a back parlor or library a rug fourteen by nine feet is desirable, as no smaller ones will then be needed, excepting, perhaps, in front of the fireplace, where fur rugs or handsome skins always show to the best advantage. For the ordinary purchaser what are known as Anatolian, Carabagh, Daghistan and Cashmere rugs will prove desirable investments. Age and service give them a velvety sheen, and their coloring is apt to harmonize well with the average decorations of the modern house. For the dining-room a Japanese jute rug is pretty and inexpensive. By purchasing one in rather vivid hues to begin with, time will mellow it into very harmonious coloring. Aside from these so-called foreign rugs there are many ingrain art squares and rugs of velvet and tapestry of American manufacture.

THERE are also very pretty matting rugs especially desirable for use upon enameled floors. Rugs can be made of rags at a trifling expense that will prove durable and artistic as well. Cloth and silk can be cut and sewed together as for rag carpets, and then braided in strands of three stripes, the braided stripe being coiled around and stitched over and over, as children make mats of the worsted rope made on toy knitters or corks. With flour bags and coffee sacks as foundations other floor coverings can be made. A design can be drawn or stamped on the foundation and filled in with cloth cut in pieces a quarter of a yard long and half an inch wide. These pieces are stitched lightly to the background in loops. When the design is filled in these loops are cut open and trimmed. A coffee sack can also be hemmed as a foundation and another sack cut in strips eight inches in width. These strips should be folded over, making each four inches wide and fastened tightly through the centre of each to the background about half an inch apart. Then the rug may be dyed, and when dry the strips can be cut and fringed out. Burlaps, canvas and jute can be treated in the same way. Knitted rugs can be made by substituting silk strips for worsted and following the designs used for knitting afghans. In these days, when the old-time cross-stitch is again fashionable, rugs are made like those in vogue when chairs, ottomans and screens were upholstered in worsted work. The designs used for Java canvas are revived for bordering, and the monogram or initials of the maker or recipient embroidered in the centre. Conventional designs outlined with cotton floss are used on denim, canvas or burlaps, and cotton fringe finishes the edges. They may be lined with double-faced Canton flannel or with bed ticking. These rugs are generally forty-two inches long by thirty-one inches in width, and make very pretty gifts—especially for gentlemen. They are designed more for ornament than service, and are placed in front of a chiffonier or desk. Rugs of sailcloth are suitable gifts for enthusiastic yachtsmen. The monogram of the club to which the recipient belongs or the name of the yacht should be outlined in heavy marine blue cord or in the club colors. The edges may be bound with cord to match or cut in deep points to show a lining of the color of the embroidery. This lining may be of felt or denim, and should be gathered and stitched to the reverse side of the rug.

THE most hygienic and beautiful floors are those of hardwood. Their costliness, however, makes them impossible to many, especially to those people living in rented houses and small apartments. Fortunately there are some methods which may be cheaply followed by women who desire to discard carpets and yet avoid the expense of inlaid wood. The best way in which to treat a floor that has been subjected to various preparations until it has become dirty-looking and sticky is to give it a thorough scraping. It is useless to try any new treatment until the natural wood is reached, and no amount of scrubbing will remove the hard, greasy crust formed by successive coats of oil and varnish. If it is not possible to obtain the regular scraper used by workers in wood, sheet tin can be cut in crescent form, using a common vegetable chopper as a model for shape and size. A small plane also answers the purpose. Both the scraper and plane are generally found in the tool-chests sold in toy shops. Whatever scraper is used the worker should begin at the upper end of the room and follow the grain of the wood. As the layers of varnish and paint scrape off the accumulation should be carefully swept up in order to keep the freshly-exposed surface perfectly clean. Going over the floor with the glass and sandpaper used by cabinet-makers in renovating old furniture produces a fine polish and removes any streaks left by the scraper. After the floor has been smoothed with the sandpaper it may be varnished, painted or stained, according to the general scheme of coloring desired in the room. Shellac will give a pine or natural wood effect and possesses the advantage of showing the dust very little. Two coats should be applied, the second after the first is thoroughly dry. When a darker shade is desired oak, cherry or mahogany stain may be used. When the second coat of stain is dry the floor may be varnished and finally waxed. The wax should be rubbed on with a piece of chamois skin, and left to dry, especially after the first application, for fully two hours. Then the floor should be gone over with the brush and lastly the entire surface polished with chamois skin or heavy flannel cloths. To do all this properly requires the strength of a man. Of course, after the first treatment the work is not so difficult and a floor can be kept in good condition by a weekly rubbing with the brush. It may be dusted daily and kept in good condition by going over the entire surface with an ordinary broom over which a large square of cheesecloth has been wrapped. Occasionally a large piece of cheesecloth moistened with kerosene may be used after all loose dust has been removed from the floor with a soft brush.

AN old and greasy floor may be greatly improved by a thorough scrubbing with soap and sand followed by a bath of ammonia water. If there are cracks between the boards and around the base-board they should be filled up with putty. Some recommend a pulp of paper for this purpose. After the crevices are filled shellac or prepared house paint may be applied. When paint is used the floor should be varnished after the second coat is thoroughly dry. Oak color is more satisfactory in paint than a lighter or darker shade as it does not show dust and wears well. To keep a painted floor in good condition it must be dusted every day and oiled once a week. Crude oil is good for this purpose and should be applied with a flannel or other lintless cloth. Rubbing afterward with cheesecloth preserves the polish. Where milk is plentiful it forms an excellent substitute for oil, and is preferable in point of cleanliness. The expense, including labor and materials used in preparing an ordinary floor, is from four to six dollars. Nothing is gained by the housekeeper attempting the task herself, as an amateur is apt to use twice the material required by one who thoroughly understands the business.

A very pretty and artistic way in which to treat the floors of bedrooms, especially those in summer homes, is to enamel them in the colors used on metal bedsteads. These dull shades harmonize beautifully with the new wall papers, and the matting and denim used for wainscoting. Moss-green shingle stain and the dull copper color used on roofs are very effective with white woodwork, and Dutch blue enamel is just the thing for the floor of a room where the fashionable Delft coloring is desired. No matter what color is chosen the effect will be better if the floor matches the tone of the walls. The enameled floor should be varnished and beeswaxed to gain the best results. In staining or in painting floors the mistake is often made of hurrying the work. To be well done the work must be very slowly done, allowing plenty of time for every coat of paint to dry thoroughly before another is applied. It is a very desirable thing, if possible, to have the floor untouched for at least twelve hours after the rubbing on of the final application of oil or wax. The floors must be allowed to set and harden without disturbing jars if you are desirous of having them present a thoroughly satisfactory appearance.