THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

HOW TO KEEP BLINDS AND CARpets IN ORDER.

The taste for amateur work of almost every description amongst girls has been greatly increased during the last few years (and is likely still further to increase) that no apology need be offered for the present article.

In our towns and cities, when any of the household machinery gets out of order, it is quite an easy thing to call in a tradesman and have it put right; although it must be confessed that even here, from the incompetency of some men, and the loitering and exaggerated charges consequent on this, dissatisfaction is sometimes the result. But in many districts a competent man is quite unattainable, and when any repairs are wanted it is a question of either letting them alone, bringing a man from a distance—which means a considerable outlay—or executing the repairs at home.

Now it will be understood that matters connected with plumbing, for instance, and all such work where much technical skill is required, are excluded from our review; but it is understood from these, many cases of "disorder" occur from time to time in every house that with a very little instruction and application might be got rid of from stock.

To begin with, take one of the commonest, THE BLINDS.

Those who have the misfortune to possess a number of Venetian blinds, and especially if these have a southern or western exposure, have a fruitful source of annoyance. Hooks wear out, and tapes rot in the sun, and the men's bills mount up. Now, nothing is easier than keeping these blinds in order, and if youavour me with your attention, girls, I will show you how.

First of all it is advisable, provided you are likely to be in the same house for some years, to keep a chart of the windows—say, No. 1, glace-line—the colour of blinds, and perhaps a couple of dozen yards of ladder-web also to match. About this latter a word of warning is necessary, for the depth of the correct size is about six or seven sizes, each an eighth of an inch deeper than the other, and if the size is not correct the blind becomes either too long or too short.

The safest way is, when purchasing the web to take or send about half a yard of the old; if this is not quite convenient, measure the distance between the little cross-tapes.

Now we will assume that tapes and cord need renewing; should the cord only be done, the same process, minus the tape part, will have to be gone through.

Let the blind down to the bottom; cut off the knots on ends of cord and pull the cords out; before passing them aside measure off the new cord from the old, provided it is not too much broken up. Should the little tumbler-cords be all right, as frequently happens, put them upright and leave them attached to the top laths. Next pull out and, if they can be, have them taken away and thoroughly dusted, or, better still, washed and dried. Because the hanging ladder-webs are longer than the top lath, take one of them and cut all the little tapes through, so that it may be laid flat along the floor. Use the side that has been next that end with but a very few exceptions it is usually entire, and it shows the position of the little hole for bringing out the tumbler-tape. Having laid this out on the floor, flat side downwards, take the new tape and lay as many lengths alongside as required, marking the hole referred to, also the top and bottom line and leaving a lay. Make sure that you have the same number of tapes; that is, one more important than the actual length, as an inch here or there in a Venetian blind makes little difference. Sew the bottom ends as the old were done, leaving a pin-hole in the middle of the space through; sew the two side holes already mentioned, and the tapes are ready for fixing to blind. In doing so, remember to have the two side pin-holes being the same, and at the top have each of the tumbling-cords under the centre of the tape.

Now, before proceeding further, it will be necessary to go to the top and unscrew the two screws until there is a space of at least an inch between the topmost lath and window-frame, to admit of passing through the cord; do not twist any more, or the blind may fall before you are finished with it.

Next comes the placing in of the laths; these have to be put in a certain way, otherwise the blind will have a puckish appearance from the front. Pick out the worst ones for "skying" at the top, and give them attention, please. You will find that the best size is to cut the ends of the laths; in every case put the worst side up, and the worst edge to the outside. This will ensure uniformity and make the best appearance from the front.

Having got through the cords, do so from the side at which they pull, guide them along the top and bring them out downwards at each pulley.

Now proceed to screw in the brass pins through the cord on its downward course than would be imagined. You will observe that the little cross-tapes alternate to right and left of the middle of the room. Up to this point pass the cord round the centre, that is to say, to the left of one small tape and the right of the next, and so on. Having got to the bottom, and the cord through the tape, make a large double knot securely. Pass the small tumbling-cords through the same way.

Now, to ensure that the blind will pull square up is to have a hold of the two cords at the sides, pull it to the top, and hold it there while you securely tie them together; after this, you must remember to screw it up at the top, and the blind is then finished.

If you call in a tradesman, who would most likely take the blind, the cost per blind would be somewhere about 3s. 6d. per yard, and the next spring, the cost per piece for at 8d. per dozen. So the whole affair would cost you about 2s. or 3d., should the tumbling-cords require renewing.

The commonest of all blinds is that which is appropriately called the "common,"—that is, a blind with a double cord fixed to the end of a roller, and a back-pulley at the side. This is liable to go out of order in two ways: the brass bracket and the cord on one hand and the blind falls down, also the cord breaks. In the first case, the bracket must be renewed. Should you wish that one that will not wear out, there are geometrical pins, which, being made of thin, soft metal, will wear out very soon, and get an angle-bracket made of block-in and brushed with brass; these are practically everlasting.

In renewing the cord, see that you get the right kind for this blind, the plated cord, being such, because this is totally unsuitable; being a stretching cord, it would soon become too long, and then it comes and goes according to the state of the atmosphere, if dry it stretches, and if wet, it contracts. Here again, the right thing is called "common" cord; that is, a blind with an unstretchable cord inside covered over with a thin surface. One of the causes that leads to the breaking of the cord is the way in which it is fastened, and even most tradesmen do it improperly. Look at any blind of this kind, and in nine cases out of ten, or most likely in the whole pack of them, you will find the cord fastened at the joint the result is, that every time this passes the little pulley or over the end of the roller it not only sticks but it sustains such injury as becomes wearing out.

If you follow out my plan, you will have a join as perfect as anything could be. You must use a linen thread, and instead of overlapping butt the two edges. Pass the thread through both ends about half-a-dozen times, taking half an inch of a hold, bringing the two edges of the cord close together; after this proceed to roll the thread closely and tightly round the inch of stitching, then sew it here and there all over to prevent the thread from slipping. Wet it slightly, lay it down on a table or any flat surface, take a flat piece of wood, and roll it back and forward until it is the same thickness as the rest of the cord, and, as before observed, you have as perfect a joint as one could ask for.

Another kind of blind is that known as the "patent;" that is, one with the cord fastened, from the right hand generally, to the centre of the back-pulley.

This blind, you will frequently find, runs down to the bottom; the reason of this is, that the spring behind the little notched brass bracket is lost the previous, and it can only be properly mended by a smith.

Sometimes the same effect is caused by the roller being improperly fixed, but you can easily prevent this by turning on the end of the wheel round; if it goes round easily then the spring requires renewing; this should cost about sixpence. To fix a new cord in this blind, take the roller down; this is done by pulling the square brass pin at the left-hand side inwards, and pressing the roller downwards. In fixing it, in this pin spring it into its place, otherwise the blind would fall.

There are other kinds of blind-rollers, such as the "spring," but these are better left to be dealt with by the professional, and being somewhat expensive should not be tampered with.

Should the blind cloth require renewing this is a very simple process. Nothing looks worse either outside or inside a house than a badly hanging blind; after reading this article there will be no excuse for such.

Many girls contive to get blind holland the exact width required, thereby saving sides-hems; but this is quite a mistake, because the edge is always irregular, and moreover, being frequently stretched, it does not hang properly.

Be sure to measure the cloth at least two inches wider than the blind is to finish, and nine inches longer, it being advisable to have as much as will spare as will admit of a fresh hem at bottom when it is next made. Appendix: the next year.

Now the simplest way to square a blind is this, double it the long way, and fix it with a couple of tacks on the floor or a long table.

Mark off with a pointed Bradawl or the sharp point of a pair of scissors from the middle of the breadth where the blind is to finish, make another mark of about an inch beyond for the hem, impress two lines vigorously along these marks, cut off all outside of the side one, then lay down the hem, the top half up, and the under one down.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

255

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Still keep the tacks in, and proceed thus to square it top and bottom. Make a mark through with bradawl half an inch down from the top, the same at bottom, then at the last-named place make another about an inch and three quarters. Now open the blind flat, draw lines across at the marks, and from the hem and you have perfect square blind. Should you wish to finish with a fringe, the nearest way is to make a bottom hem of three inches, put a row of stitching an inch and a quarter from the bottom, sew the fringe along the edge; the upper division is for the stick, the lower forms a nice little valance. Next, perhaps, the most frequent item of repairs in the house is the carpets. Lifting and laying these is quite an easy matter, provided certain rules are observed. It is a good plan to use a piece or furniture as possible out of the room; in the case of beds, wardrobes, sideboards, etc., of course this is impossible.

To lift a carpet from under a large piece of furniture, move the latter out from the wall as far as to get easily behind it, take out all the tacks along the carpet, behind and for some distance on the two adjacent sides. Turn the piece of furniture over to the front sufficiently to admit of the carpet being lifted, and skin the carpet over the handle hole in position, next turn it over backwards, and pull the carpet out. In laying, merely reverse this process but, sing, when you have the carpet on the floor, have it spread out and folded in front of the article of furniture just sufficient to go to the wall.

Where it is impracticable to remove the furniture from the room, the best way is, to put it all to one side, lift half of the carpet, fold it over, move the furniture across, and lift the other half. In laying do ditto.

The beating of the carpets, at all events if they are heavy, must either be entrusted to professionals or be undertaken by the men about the house.

In any case make sure that they are clean before putting them down. In my professional capacity, in one day I have laid carpets that were up and "beat" in one house actually dirtier than some I took up in another to beat.

The amusing part of it was that the lady to whom the first lot belonged, called in to beat her carpet men of such "light and leading" as the lamp-lighters of the district. Before leaving the question of carpets, a hint about stretching them might be found useful

A carpet loosely laid is neither nice to look at nor comfortable to walk upon, and more over when tightly laid it is not so liable to wear.

Now it cannot be expected that amateurs will make such a well-stretched carpet as professionals, unless they adopt my simple expedient.

Turn the carpet, if it be a Brussels or other stiff kind, wrong-side up and sprinkle about a bowl of water on it, then, without losing any time, turn over the carpet and lay it at tightly as possible, and after two hours, and it will tighten the carpet beautifully. The reason you must hurry is that the water acts quickly, yet not so quickly, but that the carpet may easily be laid before the process of tightening begins.

Yet one other hint, in lifting the carpets, be sure you take all the tacks out of them, or sore hands in beating them will follow; and when laying, the chances are, that if the tacks are left in, they will get underneath causing a most unpleasant annoyance. It is far less trouble even professionals in laying, yet when properly done about nothing is easier.

Always have the carpet rolled up from the bottom, and where there are pads, the best way is after fixing a rod and pulling the carpet tightly, to turn it up on to the finished part, adjust the next pad, fix the next rod, and so on till finished. In the case of a turning-stair, keep the pile of the carpet straight along the front of the step, fold downwards against the rod all the loose carpet, and where the stair is built of wood fix with a tack. If stone, the only proper way is to draw the carpet down through the rod till tight, make a close layer of it over the wall, and if the carpet up till the pile is as described: make another line, sew in the triangle thus made, and the carpet will take the shape of the stair and lie flat. Nothing so much out of the way as a good looking stair escaping from the rods.

Should your stair be new or an alteration before you where you have had to cut a step of a turning-stair, the only way in which the carpet will lie properly is to fix all the eyes equidistant from the railing or narrow end of the stair.

If the stair is stone, a good plan is to make an easer on the top, pass the rod through, and fix in the eyes.

EDUCATIONAL.

MRS. SUSAN HENSBEL.-We thank you for your prospectus of the Guild of Aid in Home Duties, published at Zeals Rectory, Bath.

LH.1.—The above-named Guild of Aid in Home Duties, at Zeals, trains women in every branch of such work and subsequent employment. We do not understand that it is in operation in London, but there is one in Scotland.—2. We have had an article on this subject in Vol. IV, p. 275, and likewise on "Casting at Table." You would do well to study these (see Vol. IV, p. 407) and you would find in a place under a better you would easily learn how to become a waitress or a maid.

ROSALIE AND ADA CHAPMAN.-We must refer you to our answers to questions of persons of any of them for special rules and terms of each severally. Rosalie does not write sufficiently well for a nurse.

MRS. COOPER.-We regret that we cannot give our-respondents the addresses of those of our staff who write anonymously.

MUSIC.

Pitty Sing.—Begin your singing lessons at sixteen, have a good time at a thousand. The author of the line.

"Pack clouds away, and welcome day," had better be anonymous. It is only doggerel. We do not recommend its adoption to any one.

Miss E. Mackenzie requests us to give a notice of her Excelsior Society for music practice, as the new term begins. Misses Tunbridge and all the members, particularly, address to the care of Misses Tunbridge, Roffey House, Tunbridge Wells.

LOVER OR MUSIC.—The violin is a very difficult instrument to learn, even with the aid of a master. You might succeed, but you are more likely to fail, and to acquire bad habits. Any music publisher will be glad to give a course of instructions.

KOMUNDA WURKENH.-It seems to us that your voice is not worth cultivating, and will not repay any expense in training. Perhaps you are physically weak all over, and your general health impaired, your voice might gain in strength.