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CONDUCTED BY LIDA AND M. J. CLARKSON.

CHAIRS AND CUSHIONS.

THE proper stuffing and covering of furniture is generally considered as belonging to the province of the upholsterer but even feminine hands have attained to the perfection of the trade sometimes by dint of perseverance and practice.

The wicker chairs, now so fashionable, really need cushions and head-rests to make them either pretty or comfortable.

These cushions require first a covering of strong ticking, or unbleached muslin, then an outer one of silk, cretonne or chintz. With a slip cover however this outer case is unnecessary. A few hints to the inexperienced may not come amiss. You will need a couple of the upholsterer's long needles, one straight and one curved; that is if you are to do an elaborate piece of work, such as the covering of a chair or sofa.

For the cushions cut first a paper pattern, one for the back and one for the seat, then from this pattern cut the upper and under parts of each cushion, allowing about an inch and a half all round to be taken up in stuffing. Tear off next an inch and a half strip for the sides or border lengthwise of the material, but do not use the selvedge as it might draw in making up.

Sew the seam *firmly* to the upper and under sides of cushion to prevent the stuffing from coming through. As the sewing for a curved back especially requires skill, a few hints will not be out of place. Two things have to be guarded against, corners out of square and a puckered border.

Some upholsterers in the seat cushion make sure of the first by fastening the angles as well as the center of the back, and in some instances the leg-hollows and backs, before beginning the sides, a plan which will commend itself to all workers. The border can only be kept flat with care, as rounded edges stretch more readily than straight ones; it is best in sewing to hold the side of the cushion

towards the chest, pinning the work to the dress front in order that the fabric may pull evenly. Lastly let the stitches be nearly upright, and work back over several at each fresh needleful. Leave on the underside of the back an opening large enough to admit the hand in stuffing. Excelsior, cotton wool and horse hair are used for this purpose, but wool mixed with horse hair is best, being more elastic and taking a better shape.

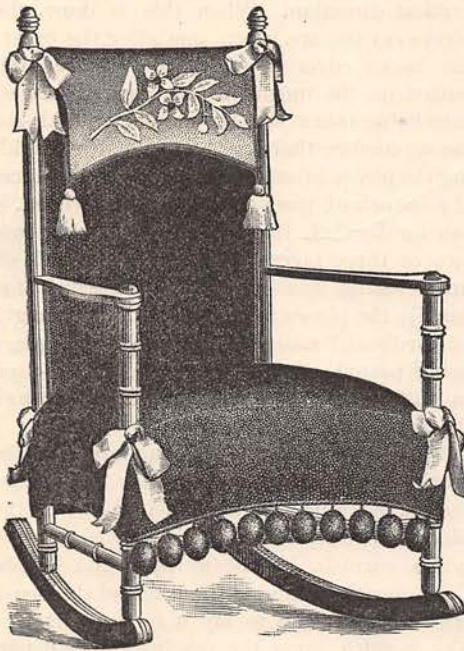
Inexperienced workers always stuff too loosely; the cushion to keep firm requires not filling alone, but absolute cramming, and as to the corners they must be squeezed again and again before sufficiently firm to keep their shape any length of time, as you may have often noticed when filling pin cushions. The flabbiness of bad stuffing not only looks unsightly but also spoils the covering material. The filling, being well distributed in the cushion, is regulated and pushed up by the long needle and the opening at the back neatly sewed up.

For the tying, mark the spaces first in red or white chalk, beginning with four or so, for the front of the seat, continuing with three and four alternately to the end, letting each mark come exactly between two in the preceding line. Thread the long needle with stout twine and start it up through a chalk mark to the right side leaving an end on the wrong side, and thread a button, a mould covered with the material is best. Now return the needle to the wrong side, clip the twine and secure both ends with a firm knot, drawing just as tightly as possible. This is the important feature of the work, for unless drawn very tightly the weight of the stuffing will cause the twine to relax and in a little while the cushion will look scarcely dented. To obtain a more equal pressure put in all the ties before fastening any, and while tying keep the edges full as they are apt to flatten.

Over-cases or slips in silk, twill, cretonne,

etc., should be stitched and overcast. One side of the bordering may be left unstitched and afterward felled down or finished off for buttoning like a pillow case. A cord completes the whole, the putting on of which is the most awkward and tedious part of the work. Here the curved needle will come into use, the convenience of which will be readily seen.

Back and side cushions and elbow pads require no inter-border and the depth of stuffing is a matter of individual taste. The back and side cushions should have tapes or ribbons sewn all around, and tied to the wicker rounds three or four inches apart. Straight



UPHOLSTERED CHAIR.

back chairs may be fitted with two long square pillows, one for the back, the other for the seat, or may have a single shallow cushion stuffed or wadded and adorned by strips of needle work or fancy stitches. The lower part is left loose, and is edged with fringe or ornaments, while a cord or fancy galloon edges the other sides. The cushion is fastened to the chair by straps passed through the cane, or by tapes or ribbons, one at the top, another at the end, and a third in the center or bend.

Our illustration this month shows how a very homely, and even a worn chair may become not only a comfortable, but an ornamental piece of furniture. The back and seat are neatly upholstered, in this instance with furniture plush, but a cheaper fabric will answer, only let it be strong, as the work of covering is too laborious to be wasted on poor material that will not stand wear. The frame work of the chair may be neatly painted or ebonized. The coach black which can be had at any carriage factory is the best for the latter purpose and gives a highly polished surface.

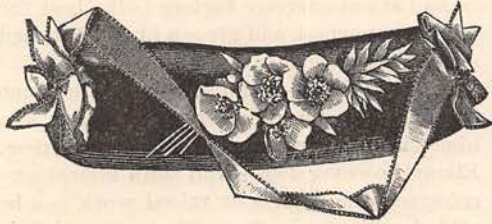
Some prefer to paint the wood in some bright color using coach or enamel paint, as a blue with blue or deep gold for the covering. Ebony however looks well with almost any color and the rounds or raised work can be gilded with good effect. For a fancy chair white enamel paint with pale blue or delicate upholstery is pretty, but only a slender, delicate chair should be so decorated, as it is more ornamental than useful. The ribbon bows may be added or not as suits the fancy. For a chair in constant use they are best omitted as they become soiled and ruffled, giving an untidy look to a room. The head rest is simply a *sachet*. This is made of thin muslin or cheese cloth covered with surah silk, satin, or pongee, and lined either with layers of wadding or a flat cushion of down or feathers may be inserted between the covers. Between the layers of wadding sprinkle *sachet* powder, or if down or feathers are used sprinkle inside. Fasten the sachet with small safety pins on the underside to the upholstered back of chair. The ornaments for front of seat can be had in a variety of shapes and sizes, and are furnished by the supply department of this Magazine, J. F. INGALLS, Publisher, Lynn, Mass.

Some of the more expensive rattan chairs are made comfortable by a long head rest or slumber roll alone, without additional cushions. We show a very pretty one in our illustration decorated as follows: The embroidery is upon moss-green plush, the green leaves being left the natural color of the plush and simply veined and outlined with filosele. The flowers are white shaded with a pale green, ivory white embroidery silk being used with pure white, for the lights. The centers are greens shaded with the same

color. This design may be all outlined with gold thread if desired. Use a thread which will not tarnish, couching it down with fine gold silk.

In couching, an embroidery frame is always necessary, as the material should be stretched tightly or it cannot be worked nicely or without drawing.

There is still another way of making a head rest or chair pillow; that is by allowing the



SLUMBER ROLL.

covering about seven inches longer at each end than the cushion and tying these loose ends with ribbons, or a cord with tassels or balls. The frills at the end, which are formed in this way, may be lined with a contrasting color of satin, making a pretty finish.

If readers know of anything novel and attractive in the way of cushions, or in fact any pretty household decoration, we would like to hear from them.

Window Decorations.

WE were shown the other day a charming window decoration very easy to make, which we will now communicate to our readers. A stretcher must be made of the exact size of the window to be decorated, as light as possible, but sufficiently strong not to be put out of shape by stretching the stuff on it. A fine, good muslin, of very regular tissue, should then be chosen and stretched on the boards by means of tacks, in the same way that canvases to be painted are spread upon stretchers. The muslin must be nailed, first in the middle of one side, then of the other, then in the middle of the extremities, care being taken to keep it well stretched. Nails are then placed at the angles, as many as are necessary to prevent the muslin having the least fold. It is most important to only use a muslin of very good quality, for cheap muslins stretch very badly, and the

irregularity of blue tissue gives them a very unpleasant appearance. When this first operation is finished, one of the beautiful flowered furniture chintzes, the designs of which are so rich and varied, must be used. The chintz should not be too thick and its essential condition is that the design should be clear and very transparent. All the designs likely to furnish a pretty decoration should be cut out and gradually placed (without being fixed) on the muslin, which is placed horizontally. When the arrangement of the pieces appears satisfactory, they are held in place by means of two pins stuck in each piece; these pins being simply stuck through the muslin and pieces cut out in a vertical direction. When this is done, the pieces cut out are taken, one after the other, the backs covered with starch paste, and pasted on the muslin in the desired places, care being taken that they make no fold—an inconvenience that may be avoided by dividing the pieces in smaller parts. For instance, if a branch of roses has to be gummed on, it can be divided, for convenience' sake, into two or three pieces. To avoid the risk of unstretching the muslin by pressing too heavily the pieces to be gummed on, a length of cardboard must be held under the place being pasted. Starch paste should be used in sufficiently thin layers not to soak through the muslin.

When the chintz is all gummed on, the work is left to dry, and in order to increase the transparency of the muslin, and of the pieces cut out, the whole is varnished with white varnish, by means of a flat brush. Care must be taken not to overload the brush with varnish, and to lay it on very evenly. The varnish gives the muslin the transparency of gauze. The specimen of this work that we saw was on gauze, but the lady who did it encountered great difficulties by employing such a light fabric, and prefers to use varnished muslin for other similar decorations. When it is all finished, the stretcher is fixed to the window by means of four little hooks, which admit of its being taken away and replaced with the greatest facility.

Decorative Hints.

A VERY pretty bureau scarf of cream momie linen has an insertion of coarse-mesh linen, darned with pale blue, upon which is em-

broidered a design of lotus blossoms and gold-colored olive branches. On either side of this insertion is a band of blue plush. The knotted fringe has bunches of olive and blue silk intermingled with it.

The present fancy for hem-stitched bed linen affords ample scope for a variety of pretty designs. The initials or monograms are embroidered in the centre directly above the hem.

Divans.

Handsome and comfortable divans can be easily made by covering small mattresses and laying one upon the other (two); other small mattresses are placed upright against the wall. For a low, easy lounge these are comfortable. A pretty rich-looking cretonne is effective as a covering. Printed Indian-looking cottons are now used for draping the walls of bed-rooms or boudoirs. The bed and toilet usually match, but the chairs or sofa do not. In some houses where this style of upholstery is popular there are two sets of hangings, etc., and when one is dirty or tired of, the other is substituted. Some pretty new satinets, rich in appearance and light in weight, are much used now for drapery and small tablecloths, etc. Small campstools, with cretonne or plush bags attached to them, are novel work receptacles. They are nailed to the stool, and do not prevent its folding up, so the whole thing can be carried about, and is most useful. The bag has a square base to fit the camp-stool, and is about sixteen inches high, with a draw-string within three inches of the top; it has no lining. These camp stool work bags vary somewhat in size according to the size of the stool, which is stretched out as if for sitting on, and then a piece of pretty cretonne is cut to the size, to form the base of the bag. Another piece, long enough to sew around the square base, with a very little fulness at

the corners, measuring from fifteen to eighteen inches deep, is then cut out and sewn on. A draw-string of ribbon, run in double two yards in length, is placed at about three inches from the top. The cretonne is turned over, so as to look neat inside the neck of the bag. This is all. The whole can be carried out in plush, with a piece of satin to line the neck, and draw-strings of satin ribbon. If the plush is eighteen inches wide (as the cheaper kind is) one and one-quarter yards would be sufficient for a small stool and a good-sized bag. The base need not be plush. These are most useful for holding wools and scraps, and would be acceptable presents for any one. The prettiest size is a camp-stool that is about sixteen inches in the wooden legs and ten inches square in the seat. There should be no back to it. The legs will have to be painted black, brown, or red; sometimes they are gilded. Tidies for covering towel racks are generally of coarse linen, usually unbleached, with a deep border of Russian cross-stitch worked in red or navy blue (or both) ingrained thread. A length of Macramé is added, or a piece of coarse lace, worked over in red thread sewn on. I have seen this tidy in white Roman sheeting, with a deep border in two shades of gold knitting silk. A piece of tolerably coarse canvas is sewn on, and when the cross-stitch is done it is drawn away. The tidy is thrown over the towels, or fixed on an elastic, at the back of the rack.

AMONGST the pretty novelties for decorating are the hammered scroll plaques which have a rest at the back to support them. The brass tambourines are also very pretty. One twelve inches in diameter can be had for one dollar. There are also brass palettes for decorating, with plaque centers from four to eight inches in diameter, costing from eighty cents to one dollar.

TO KEEP LAMPS FROM SMOKING. — Soak the wicks before using in either strong vinegar or alum water; dry them thoroughly, and your lamp will give a clearer light and will not smoke or smell disagreeable.

To remove the stains of French shoe polish, either from woolen or cotton goods, wash the spot with tallow soap and let it stand an hour or so, then wash in clean water and afterward proceed as with any soiled article.