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JAS. A. WILSON
Director and State Agent

FURNISHING THE HOME

BY BETH CROWLEY, HOME ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT

After the house has been decorated, or after one has been secured all built and decorated, the problem comes of furnishing it. The problems of decorating and furnishing a home are not separate ones because one must be considered in doing the other.

As in decorating, the work is started with the floor, so in furnishing, the floor covering is the first consideration. If the floor is not a very good one, or if a more comfortable floor is desired, such as in the kitchen, linoleum is a very good covering. One mistake that is often made is to put a good grade of linoleum on an old, rough floor. Even though the floor is not beautiful, it should be planed smooth or the rough places will soon wear through the linoleum. The different varieties are plain linoleum, often called battleship linoleum, printed linoleum, and inlaid linoleum. The printed linoleum is probably the least serviceable, for the design and coloring can be worn off. The inlaid linoleum has the pattern running through to the burlap and wears very well, as does the battleship linoleum. One thing to be remembered about linoleum is that it requires skill to place it, and the amateur should not attempt to do it. It swells and contracts, and the right amount of space must be left between the strips.

Matting was used to quite an extent a few years ago, especially in bedrooms. It makes a light covering for summer use, but is a very thorough dust-catcher unless a vacuum cleaner is used to clean it.

With good polished floors, the housewife has come to use rugs to display the floor and for convenience in cleaning. With rugs, the floor looks spotted, and that effect is not as good as it is with a carpet covering the entire floor. With the introduction of electric power into the farm home, the vacuum cleaner is being used by every one, and the carpet can be cared for as easily as the rugs. In some cases a rug which is the exact size of the room is used, giving the same appearance as a carpet.

The designs in floor coverings should be simple geometric ones, not

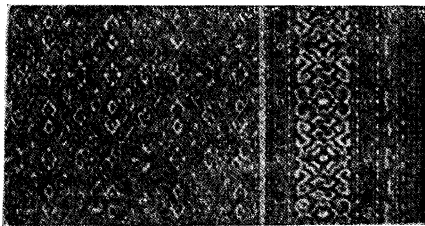


Figure 1—Good Rug Design

the animals or roses that are often found for sale. No one would like to walk on those things if they were real and so it is no more logical to walk on representations of them. Very vivid colorings are distracting in floor coverings, for the floor should be the darkest element of the room.

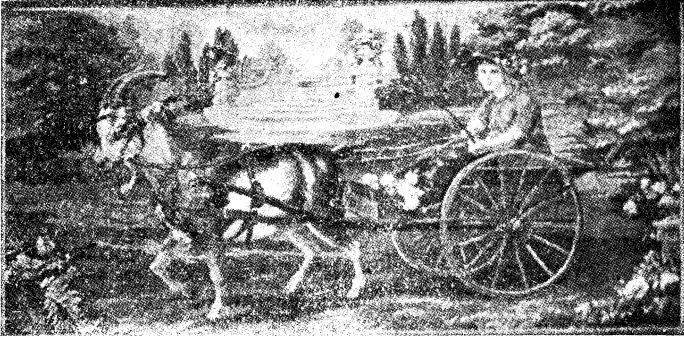


Figure 2—Poor Rug Design

Curtains and upholstery can be thought of together, for the same material is very often used for windows, doors and upholstery. There are two classes of curtains, glass curtains and overhangings. Quite often the glass curtain is the only one used, and that idea is quite good. The use of overhanging was originally practiced so that no shutters were necessary, and still privacy from the outside was secured. Now their use is continued to serve as a tie between the wall and the window. As a general rule the overhanging is not desirable as the only hanging at a window.

The glass curtains include scrim, net, voile, fishnet and very soft silks. The overhangings are linens, chintz, cretonne, ratine, muslin, gingham, crepe, heavy silks, tapestries and wool damasks.

The shades for a house are quite essential and are easily overlooked in planning artistic effects. They should not be kept drawn in the daytime unless very necessary, for sunlight should enter a house. There are many colors of shades at the present time to suit all places, and many of them are one color on one side and another on the other side, thus making it

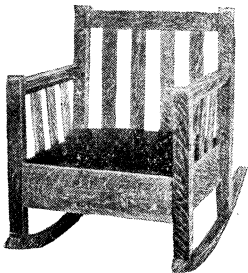


Figure 3—Good Selection

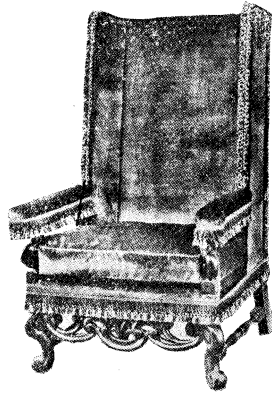


Figure 4—Clumsy and Inappropriate

possible to have a pleasing color on the outside as well as the inside.

There need not be an oversupply of furniture in a house, and many homes would look much better if some of the furniture had never been put into them. It is better to have a few good, comfortable chairs than many chairs that are a little uncomfortable. In the living room there should be one chair that is comfortable for each member of the family, and those should not be purchased when the buyer is all tired out, for almost any chair feels comfortable then.

If new furniture is to be chosen, straight lines are better than many curves. Judgment is essential in choosing pieces of furniture to decide whether the supports look as though they were right for the piece. It is no more ridiculous to see a heavy buffet on slender legs than to see a small chair on heavy rockers. The fad for animals' heads holding a chair up and the ball clasped in an animal's foot are, fortunately, dying out, but none too fast. A great amount of carving is to be avoided if for no other reason than to avoid cleaning it, but it gets tiresome after a time. The upholstering is used to make a chair or davenport comfortable, and for that purpose may be criticised. Even there it need not be too soft or it will soon lose its shape.

If old furniture is to be used, it may be all right as it is. Again it is found that the old finish has become scratched badly or the finish may not look well in the room that has been planned for it. In the latter case, some new finish may be put on by the homemaker, or a cabinetmaker may do it.

Stain cannot be removed unless the wood is scraped and planed down, but old varnish or paints may be removed. One of the easiest and most effective ways is to use alcohol. Lye, if moistened and put on the article, will soften the varnish so that it may be removed by rubbing. There are numerous solutions made commercially for this purpose, and most of them contain benzol, such as:

Benzol	1 gal.
Fusel oil	1 pt.
Acetone	1 pt.
Paraffin wax	1½ oz.

Mix in order given and apply to surface of article.

When thoroughly clean and dry, new varnish stain or paint may be applied and an old piece of furniture may be very good. Some people buy second-hand furniture and refinish it very satisfactorily. A new type of top for pieces like a dressing table is to cover with cretonne like the hangings and then put a piece of glass over that.

The arrangement of the furniture is comparatively simple, although it may be well to mention a few ideas about that. The heavy pieces of furniture should be scattered about the room so that no one part of the room seems to be heavier than any other part. For instance, if there is a fireplace in one end of the room, and there are chairs about it, the room will look better if there is a piano at the opposite end, or a table with chairs about it. Chairs are placed in a room to sit on so that several people may talk together. If this is the case, there is no real reason to place them against the wall individually. A dresser or dressing table is more useful if placed so that the light from the window or electric light falls on the face of the person rather than on the mirror.

Pictures are easily chosen, and the choice easily regretted. It is better to use good prints of the old masters' paintings than to use gaudy originals. Family portraits and calendars belong in bedrooms or rooms where only the family need to look at them. Wide gilt frames are suitable only

for very large oil paintings, and narrow wooden frames are far more suitable for the average home.

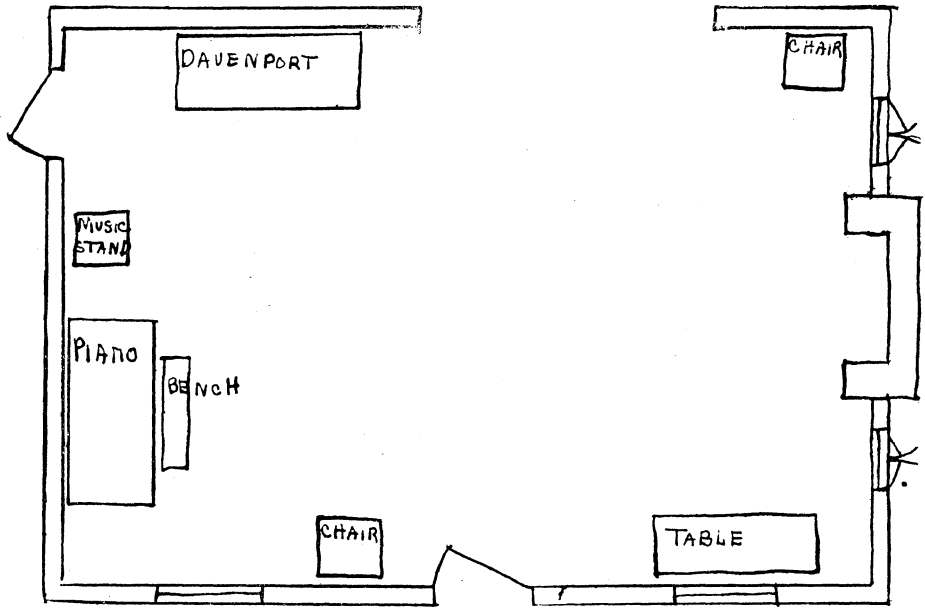


Figure 5—Stiff Arrangement of Furniture

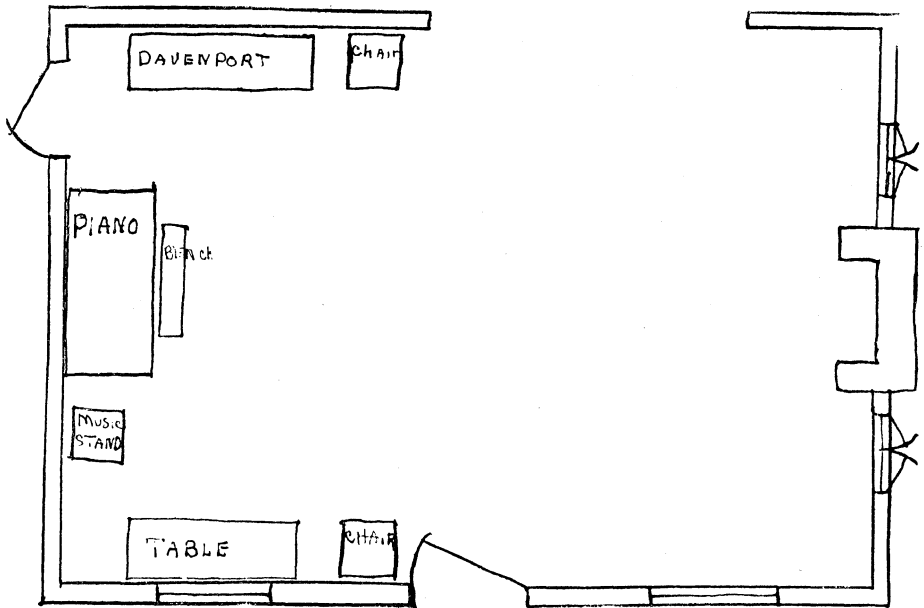


Figure 6—Unbalanced Arrangement of Furniture

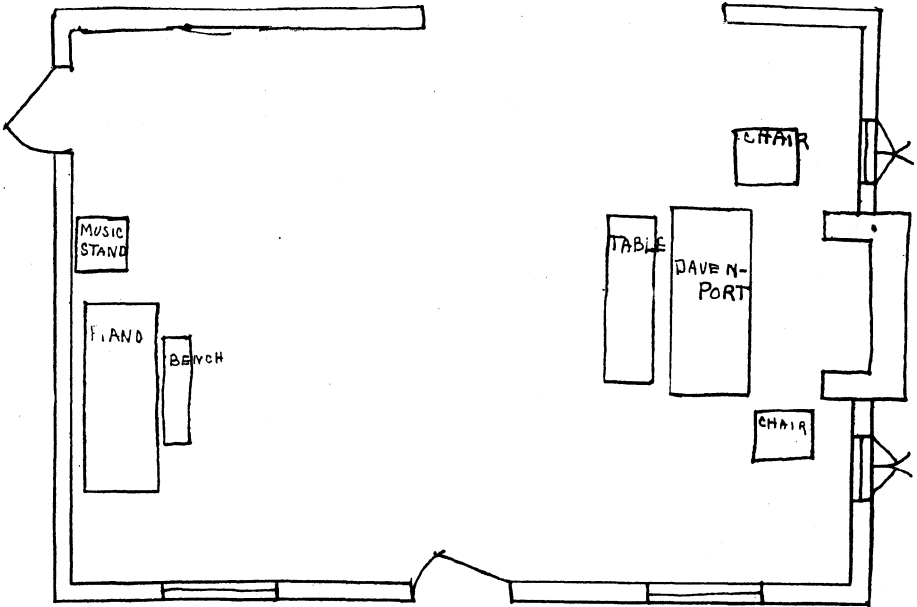


Figure 7—Interesting and Restful Arrangement of Furniture

Pictures look very much better when hung so that the wire forms a rectangle, not a triangle. If several are to be hung, a group looks more interesting than a graduated row like stairs. The center of the picture should be on a level with the eye.

One very unnecessary part of many homes is the useless bric-a-brac, such as plaster cats, dogs, tinsel cards, artificial wreaths, souvenirs and albums. Many people like them, and for them they may be kept in their bedrooms. A few good things, like a piece of pottery, a good fern dish, or a dish for cards or candy, are suitable in the living room.

William Morris has said: "Have nothing in your home which you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful."

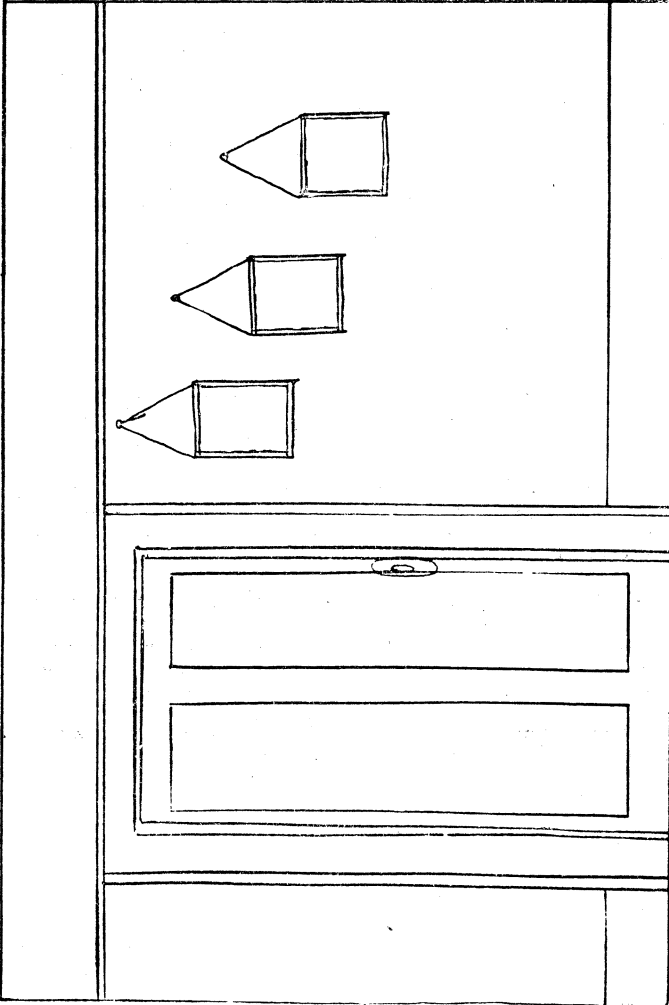


Figure 8—Poor Arrangement of Pictures

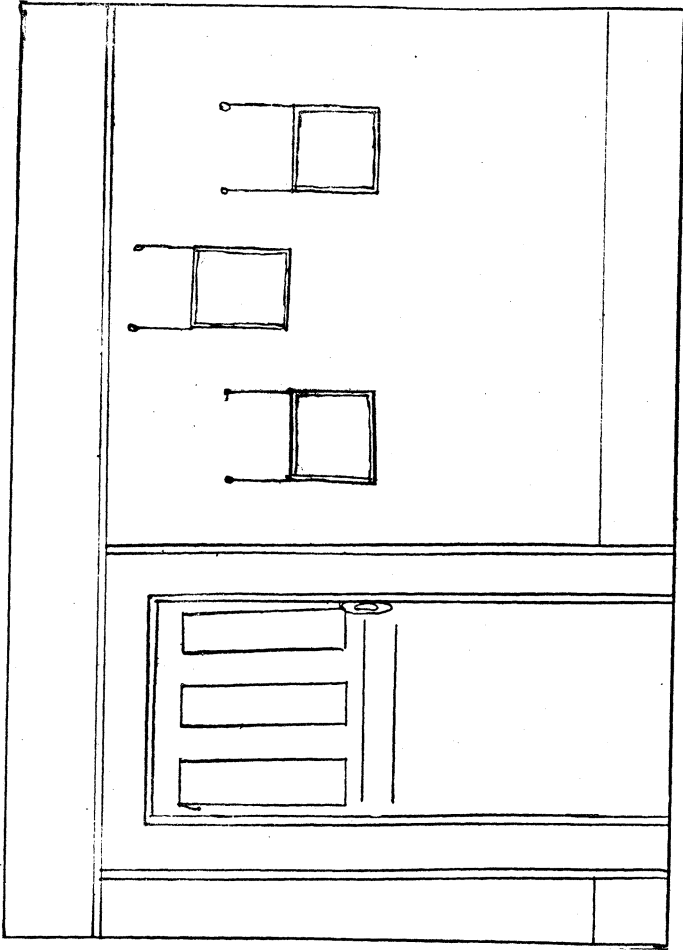


Figure 9—Good Effect in Picture Arrangement

