



HOME IMPROVEMENTS

IN FURNISHED ROOMS

Independence has its attractions in spite of its drawbacks, and the "old campaigner" soon learns to carry certain odds and ends with her that mitigate to some extent the unattractive surroundings and lack of home comforts inseparable from life in lodgings. A trunk should be devoted to these unconsidered trifles, so that they can be packed last of all when leaving old quarters, and when settling down into new ones, everything can be found ready to hand without the necessity of a wearisome search through half a dozen trunks. This special box should certainly contain a couple of soft down-cushions in pretty, but plain silk or cretonne cover, and one or two serge cloths in some subdued tone—dull brown, dark Indian red, for instance—

in the center there was a distorted and out-of-proportion photograph of a pug's head, encircled by a wreath of huge pink dog-roses, worked in the brightest and crudest of pink and green cretels.

My own lamp always accompanies me on my wanderings, and as it is one of the few brass ones with a metal oil-container, it is as easily, and without danger of breakage. The wire shade-supporter folds flat, and pretty shades of crinkled paper can be easily made as required. A silver torch candle-lamp is nice for the bedroom, and does away with the tiresome "extra" for gas. I generally find room in my box for a couple of cheap art vases for flowers, a pair of brass and wood letter-racks—flat ones, that hang against the wall—two or three good Spanish and Japanese fans for decorative purposes, plenty of

For one's bedroom, four or five fine linen pillow cases are desirable, if one is particular about such things, and a couple of large Turkish towels, a few flax ones, and a small bath-blanket will be found blessings. I invariably take a cheap Japanese comb-tray, a couple of smaller trays for "oddments," and a substantial cushion. These add considerably to the tidiness of the toilet-table, as it is very rare to find either one or the other in apartments. I generally keep one of my trunks, a flat-topped one, in the bedroom, relegating the rest to the landing or store room; and this I cover, first with a thick folded rug, and then with a cretonne cover made to fit, thus forming a decidedly comfortable and far from unsightly seat.

A spirit-lamp, with kettle and saucepan, is invaluable, as hot water at short notice is often difficult to obtain, and when out of health, or very tired, it is a great thing to be able to get a cup of beef-tea quickly, which is easily so-

easily that they need considerably care in packing. I generally pack mine with my bonnets.

Capital folding newspaper-racks can be bought unpainted for 1s 6d each, and they look wonderfully well enamelled white, and adorned with a scarf of puce, lemon, willow-green, or shrimp-pink, twisted in and out of the strips of wood composing the sides.

A fashionable color for picture frames is a dull olive green, a color produced by enamelling hardwood and rubbing it down to a smooth surface with pumice stone. Frames of this kind are effective on sepia-colored pictures. There is usually a roccoco band in gold inside the frame, next to the picture. There are some water colors which may be attractively mounted in this way, but it requires the judgment of an artist to use the mounting properly. A dull green frame cannot be as generally used as the white and gold frame has been.



A QUAIN SITTING ROOM

a yard and a half square, and edged with half fringe, will be found useful for concealing hideous "gipsy" tables with wicker borders, or worse still, aggressively shiny ones that must not be scratched. For very small tables, some of the cheap enameled African or Indian cloths are effective, and an Indian cover in rich, but subdued, tints to throw over the sofa—generally upholstered in deep pink and gaudy tapestry or ugly cretonne—will make the room look vastly better. A strip of art serge, about twelve inches longer and wider than an average-sized mantelshelf, edged with fringe and the corners lined with puce, is often wanted to drape an unusually ugly or stained mantelshelf; and, although anti-macassars are now unobtainable, two or three of the cheap, but artistic, Turkish ones are invaluable for the concealment of shabby or painted gaudy chairs, and Indian home antimacassars are thought of shabby at the entrance of some houses on this day. It saved many blue anters,

photographs, in flat leather screens and frames; a length of dull gold-colored Pezzer silk with which to drape any very obtrusively ugly mirror, and a set of short blinds or curtains. The latter are made of cream chamois, edged with fringe, and are made to suit the ordinary four-window so often seen in lodging-houses; but being amply full, they can be arranged to fit almost any kind of window, with a little ingenuity in running a wooden bath-rope, or a few pieces through the top hem of each curtain; loops of the rope are then put through hooks bored in the eaves of the bath, and fastened to tiny brass hooks screwed into the window-sill. I find this plan answers quite as well for temporary purposes as any more elaborate arrangement. A pretty tea-tray takes up very little room at the bottom of the box, and a nice hem-stitched and embroidered tea-cloth and a little tea-caddy, with a lock, are both desirable articles.

complished with the aid of a bottle of Borax or a tiny pot of Liebig. Among other minor articles may be mentioned a couple of dusters, a chamois leather for the lamp-chimney, etc., two or three of the patent lock-up stoppers for wine and spirit bottles, serviettes and their rings with tassels on them, and a little clock in a leather case. If one does not possess an orthodox traveling time-piece.

A good-sized work-bag, and one of the leather writing-pads, fairly filled, are always useful, but especially so in lodgings, where there is probably neither work-table nor dressing-table, and if a pain is to be had, a piece of drapery—something that will not crush easily is best, such as striped tapestry or Chinese cloth—should be at hand, with which to conceal the back. This can be easily fixed up by means of drawing-pin, without marks or injury to the woodwork. Cardboard covers for fern or flower pots, covered with soft silk and embroidered, are easily made, and are light, but they crush so

"Burning off" old paint is one of the tedious and expensive items in the painting business. An improvement in this process, now recently, is probably new to most of our readers. A down town Philadelphia painter was seen to take a large wooden sign, perhaps two feet wide and seven feet long, lay it flat on the ground and sprinkle it liberally with kerosene oil about three or four feet.

The kerosene, lighted, about a barrel short of flame over the part of the sign on which it had been spread.

Waiting a second or two, until the paint had softened, the painter in a few quick sweeps of a flat knife removed to a hamper, removed the paint from that portion of the board on which the oil was burning. The rest of the board was cleaned in the same way, a small portion being treated at a time.

The method appeared to be somewhat quick and efficient, but there is much to be said for it.