

HOW TO BEAUTIFY A HOME.

BY MARY TEMPLE BAYARD.

PRE-EMINENTLY this is an age when every woman is possessed of the decorative fad. And granted that out of broom-handles and bread-toasters she does create marvels, and that many an otherwise cheerless home has been brightened by the little patches of color with which she has dotted the walls and tied the furniture, yet is it not well to call a halt, while we consider the danger of over-doing, of our being surfeited with cheap splendor and the products of faulty taste and false luxury. From the time Eve commenced house-keeping, a beautiful house has been the most deeply grounded desire of every feminine soul (be it in its normal state), and is manifested as early as doll days, when we played "keep house."

Man builds the house, but it is woman who makes the house. That sounds more or less platitudinal, we know, but nevertheless it is full of the living truth. Next to the deep-seated love of home (which women still possess, the croaking of all pessimistic cranks to the contrary, notwithstanding), is the feminine characteristic—a desire to lavish time and money on its fitting adornment. Given a free hand to banish and replace, what can she not do to beautify and adorn the home—if only she knew how!

But there is the rub. How few seem to know how? There is a decorative sanity in choosing colors, styles and methods. To make a proper choice is not always intuitive, and in consequence mere display is too often substituted for beauty and good design, and we have a flimsy exhibit of interior ornament with which it is really degrading to live. Many women who have just "picked up" the decorative fad, think they have

grasped the whole idea when they have put petticoats on their lamps, flounces on foot-stools, trousers on the piano's legs, neckties on vases, and aprons on the radiators, and have swathed flower-pots in silk scarfs, until they look as if the intention was to prevent sore throat, and what with draperies, tidies, pillow-shams and "things," have made the whole place about as much of a bore to the man of the house as it could possibly be, and in the minds of all people with the insanity of the fad not yet upon them, furnished him with good and sufficient grounds for serious dissatisfaction.

In general, a man hates these things, but will make no fuss about them unless they interfere with his personal comfort. Artistically, they do not offend, for it seldom happens that he knows right from wrong in regard to general effect. He only notices, with commendable pride, that his wife has surrounded herself with as much "trumpery" as has Jones' wife, and is well pleased, until he falls over the same hassock a dozen times, because it is the exact shade of the carpet, and always in the only bit of space in the over-crowded room where a man could reasonably expect to get a foothold; or until the silken fringe of a "throw" sticks to his unlucky coat-sleeve and he drags it off, smashing the most costly bit of bric-a-brac in the room; or until he goes down town with a tidy on his back, or gets roundly "blown up" for desecrating the lace pillow-shams with his stupid head, "into which no idea of genteel living can be drilled." At such moments he feels fully qualified to give "pointers" in household decorations, and his verdict is: "To perdition with all such