

THE DINING-ROOM AND DRAWING-ROOM.

THERE are two classes of people who rarely sit in their drawing-room. Those who live in castles, possessing libraries, studies and boudoirs, and the lower middle class who like to live in a dining-room. As one of my chief objects is to make our house thoroughly comfortable as well as artistic, I preface my description of the drawing-room by saying that no efforts can ever make it home-like unless we sit in it. I flatter myself that the dining-room is too severely simple to make anyone wish to spend their evenings there. It is, I am well aware, quite possible for the pendulum to swing too far the other way, and I should be very sorry to have cutting out, dressmaking, or any litter in the drawing-room. I am considering the furniture for the dining-room and drawing-room in one article for the following reason. If our rooms are small, it is an immense advantage to have them open out of each other. In this case they must be papered alike. Have a white dado of anaglypta or the new parquetry (thin wood panelling). If the room faces south or west, a plain grass green paper will look well. If north or east I would suggest cream coloured ground (a yellow paper has become too common) with bunches of yellow carnations and green leaves. The panelled dado should be painted white or brown. Rooms in small houses are already too low; it is therefore wiser to avoid a frieze. If money were no object, I would choose a soft, almost self-coloured pile carpet, but to us the price is prohibitive. A green Roman one with a conventional design is equally artistic, or a rich havana brown with unassertive pattern in green.

With regard to furniture, we must try to have a few good things (which can be handed on to our children as possessions), and we must avoid over-crowding. Nothing destroys the restfulness of a room more than a number of meaningless ornaments and small pictures. If you must keep frippery, stow it away in boxes. Have no pictures unless they are really good. The sum we have to spend is so limited that we must economise somewhere. The dining-room table, though covered with a self-coloured artistic cloth, has only a deal top; in a word, it is a kitchen-table with folding leaves which can be easily moved out at any time. If you can afford to pay £2, an old oak one with turned legs is, of course, more artistic. Our illustration shows you the kind I mean. It is not necessary to sketch one with a deal top.

Directly you can afford it buy an old oak Welsh dresser with shelves for china, or a Sheraton sideboard. For the present, the carved oak chest which I picked up for £2 (covered during meals with a sideboard cloth) must do. A low wooden cupboard fills up the recess on the right of the fireplace. This can be stained dark mahogany. Any clever boy who has learnt carving will for 10s. carve some artistic panels. The small writing-table with turned legs on the other side of the fireplace can be bought at most second-hand furniture shops for 4s. 9d. Covered with an Indian cloth which costs 1s. 0½d. (during the sales), with a brass in-stand, candlesticks, and green blotting-book, it answers every purpose. Directly we can afford to replace it with a better one it can be transferred to the spare room. It is only by strict economy that we can afford old Chippendale chairs. They are covered with remnants of quaint green tapestry which I need hardly say I bought during the July sales. For the present I have put some into the drawing-room, but for any occasions when we require more than six (including the two elbow chairs) we have two others to complete the set. It is a good plan to have castors put on to the dining-table.

It can then be more easily moved out on an "At Home" day.

The most important piece of furniture is a thoroughly comfortable sofa. Pretty looking ones can be had for £3 10s.; but I have committed the extravagance of choosing the very best pillow-seated Chesterfield. Go where you will, this particular kind is not to be had under £10, although I am well aware that they can often be picked up at a sale in a gentleman's house for £5. A good hair-seated one can be bought new for £7 10s., but ours will last a life-time, and comfort, to my mind, is beauty. Had you ever been, as I have, to an old furniture shop and seen the thin coating of hair covering, the hay and shavings which compose the seats of many chairs, you would realise that "stuffed with the best hair" is to be taken *cum grano salis*.

The most comfortable place for the sofa is on one side of the drawing-room fireplace, jutting out in a straight line with a screen behind it to keep away the draught from the door. In a large room a second Chesterfield sofa exactly facing the fireplace almost touching the rug, always looks cosy.

No room can be lovable without books, so, after many peregrinations to various second-hand shops, I found an ideal piece of furniture at an exceptionally reasonable dealer's, who really understands furniture. It is a Chippendale china cupboard and book-case combined, the latter is below, the china above. The doors have the unmistakable Chippendale woodwork dividing the irregular shaped panes of glass. If you have no old china, real self can be bought very cheaply nowadays. In any case blue china looks best with this particular wood. Fourteen pounds is a long price to pay, but it is a joy for ever, and no less than £22 was charged for a similar one (only less beautiful) in the West End. If you dislike the very cheap temporary writing-table in the drawing-room, a cupboard for china, like the one I have described, is to be had for the same price, with a bureau and drawers below.

Our next purchase shall be a revolving book-table. I was amazed to find I could get a very good one for 25s., and the top makes an excellent stand for a pot of ferns, and a framed photograph of a valued friend. A really good Chippendale screen costs from £10 to £20. The only way therefore is to order one to be made specially for you from a good design. A mahogany frame with glass above, and green tapestry (almost self-coloured) in the lower half can be made for £2. If you are content with a guinea one avoid the inartistic black Japanese screens with gold birds. I prefer the plainest wooden frame (even a light clothes horse) stained mahogany, and fitted in with a very lovely thick paper, yellow or green with purple irises; but I strongly advise the glass and tapestry, though the cost is 27s. more.

In the dining-room, the basket-work couch has good springs, and is thoroughly comfortable. The green mattress is covered with a remnant of tapestry. The cushions should be terra cotta or yellow silk, which depends on the paper you choose. If you are fortunate enough to find a really good Chesterfield sofa at a private sale you can afford two. The basket chair is upholstered in brown. It is treble the price usually given, and six times as comfortable. Without it we must have had a pillow-seated arm-chair costing £5, and dispensed with our Chippendale cabinet. Do you ask why I insist on a sofa in a dining-room. Simply because a young wife often has to rest where there is a fire, and visitors may be shown in at any moment into the drawing-room. Except on an "At Home" day the curtains between the two rooms will be drawn. A folding up tea-table is the most convenient. The estimate of cost together with our sketch will explain any further details.

The curtains are of artistic lettuce green Bolton sheeting with a design of fleur de lis (I have only seen this particular kind at one place in London), but blue or brown Friesland velvet would look quite as well.

I will only add one word of caution. Your furniture may be beautiful and well chosen, yet it is only too easy to spoil the effect by a variety of ornaments given by well-meaning friends. They must find a place elsewhere! I happen to like blue china best, but Devonshire ware, or any other artistic pottery looks well. Avoid multiplying photograph frames. One good copy of an Old Master—a "Morland" engraving, or two genuine Bartolozzi prints are enough pictures for the present. Miniatures, if you have any, always look well hung very low above the chimney-piece. Much is necessarily left unsaid, but I shall be delighted to answer any questions. We cannot yet afford a Chippendale glass, but it is just possible some kind friends may give you a cheque for a wedding-present. Taking this into consideration I have chosen a Chippendale glass to be hung above the chimney-piece.

ESTIMATE, DINING-ROOM.

	£	s.	d.
Four Chippendale chairs at 30s.	6	0	0
Panels for cupboard and staining	0	10	0
Roman carpet or green Brussels, with a nondescript pattern of a slightly darker shade	4	0	0
Writing-table 4s 9d., instand	0	10	7
1s. 11d., candlesticks 3s. 11d.	0	5	11½
Blotter 4s. 11d., cloth 1s. 0½d.	1	8	0
Basket chair with springs	2	10	0
Ditto sofa	0	5	11
Iron tripod oak scuttle 2s. 11d., tongs 3s.	0	14	6
Old brass fender 25s., fire-irons 10s. 6d.*	1	15	6
Table with wooden top	0	14	6
Four yards art sheeting for curtains, 1s. 11d.	0	7	8
Plain table-cloth in serge or cloth	0	8	0
Eight yards muslin, for curtains.	0	4	0
Brass rod	0	4	0
Four footstools at 10d.	0	3	4
Second-hand print	0	10	0
Blue china for chimney piece	0	6	0
Grandfather clock £2, or corner cupboard oak dresser £8 10s. (later)	2	0	0
Friesland velvet curtains between the two rooms, four yards at 3s. 11d., rod 4s.	0	19	8
	£23	3	1½

DRAWING-ROOM.

Two Chippendale elbow chairs	4	0	0
One Chesterfield sofa	10	0	0
One pillow-seated arm-chair	5	0	0
One Chippendale bureau and cabinet †	14	0	0
Three stained green chairs 3s. 6d.	0	10	6
One wicker arm-chair with springs	1	8	0
One carriage clock £1, china for chimney-piece 5s.	1	5	0
One Roman carpet	2	2	0
One Eastern rug	0	10	0
Two occasional Bavarian carved oak tables, 7s. 6d.	0	15	0
One tea-table with flaps	1	0	0
One screen to order	2	0	0
Brass fender 25s., fire-irons 10s.	1	15	0
Coal box 2s. 11d., rug 3s.	0	5	11
Revolving table for books	1	5	0
Window-seat (made by village carpenter) and upholstered	1	0	0

* At a favourite old furniture shop such as, no doubt, my readers have.

† I cannot include these in the estimate unless you are content with arm-chairs at 25s., which are comfortable and look much the same, but cannot last so long.