



## "GLORIFIED" WORKMEN'S DWELLINGS.

### PART II.

DEAR ELSIE, it was nice of you to write so promptly, and nicer still to find that my last letter had really been of service to you. I think you and Annie wise in choosing the two rooms and scullery, for the small weekly difference in cost is more than made up by the extra space and comfort.

You say you want more advice about furnishing, and that you want to do it cheaply. Well, dear, it is quite possible to do this, only you must spend brains, if not money, and you must not run away with the idea that any low-priced furniture will do. For your sitting room, which you say you will cover with matting, I should recommend some good bamboo furniture. This is light and pretty, and you can have almost everything now in bamboo. You will want a fair-sized table—but not too large—for meals. Then some strong, serviceable chairs, three or four, for table use, and at least two easy chairs; for you both will want to rest when the day's work is done. If you are sufficiently in funds, I should strongly recommend an ottoman couch, which you can often buy second-hand, and cover with a pretty chintz, and for this and your easy chairs you will want nice cushions. If you buy a couch, it will be found very handy for holding extra dresses, or for putting away winter clothes; which you must remember to pepper well and pack in brown paper. I think you most likely have a cupboard in the room, although you do not say so. Now I am going to give you a pet idea of mine and I think you may be able to carry it out without the aid of a carpenter. I take it for granted you have not lost your taste for carpentering? Well, then, with a screwdriver, carefully remove the cupboard door from its hinges, leaving the hinges fixed to the door. Place the door in safety in your scullery, so that you may be able to replace it safe and sound when—or if—you leave your rooms.

Now for the decoration of the cupboard! As you have not told me your prevailing colour, I am rather in the dark, but your taste will have to guide you in this. If the cupboard is shielved throughout, you had better enamel it all inside with any pretty shade which will harmonise with your curtains, and at the same time be dark enough to show up your bits of china, etc. Across the second shelf from the bottom fix a brass rod, and do the same at the top. Then make curtains, which ought to match your window hangings. The top ones should be short enough to just cover the rod below, and the lower ones reach the floor. On the bottom shelves you can keep your tea-cups and little et ceteras for your small tea-parties, which you will doubtless indulge in! These curtains may be kept closed. The top ones should be drawn aside, and the finish to the whole may be made in the shape of a Moorish arch which you can procure in white wood now, very cheaply. This should be enamelled like the inside of the cupboard, and fixed so as to allow of the curtains being freely drawn.

In all these recommendations, I am taking it for granted that you have invested in a step

ladder, and that you have sufficient tools "to carpenter a nail" as a friend of mine puts it. Should you have these, you will find it easy to fix up the bamboo poles for your window curtains, and to do many other "odd jobs" as well, or better, than a paid workman.

There is another way of utilising your cupboard, but in this I fear you will want the help of a practical carpenter. Instead of the curtained off lower shelves, get a shelf fixed at the right height for writing. This ought to be hinged to the cupboard shelf, and supported from below with folding arms, which can be pushed back when not wanted. Cover your shelf neatly with baize or cloth, and on the cupboard shelf to which it is fixed your inkstand, blotter, diary, etc., can stand. You will then have a commodious writing-table, always ready for use.

You do not tell me if you are keeping up your music, or if you have a piano? If so, you will want a music stool, and I remember you used to have an old croquet box at home. Curious mixture of ideas, is it not? However, it is not quite so queer after all. I made a lovely music seat and box out of a discarded croquet case, and it is so easy that I make you a present of my experience. If you have the box, get a sufficient quantity of Indian matting, with which you must cover top and sides. The edges can be finished off with split bamboo, the legs (which you must carefully arrange to have cut the right height for comfort) you can procure at any wood-turner's. Screw holes with a large gimlet down through the bottom of the box, at the four corners, right into the legs and then screw in large, strong screws, till the legs are absolutely firm. You may add castors, if you care, but these must in that case be allowed for in the height of the legs. When the outside is complete, paper the inside with some pretty scraps of wall paper, and you will then have a delightful receptacle for music. The advantage of such a stool is that you can use it for duets.

Now I really do not think I shall tell you any more of my "dodges" till I hear from you again, but I must grow practical and give you some more good advice on household matters.

First of all, be sure you have in your little scullery plenty of hooks and nails for hanging brooms and dustpans and so on. Then I should strongly advise having a thick piece of galvanised wire firmly placed across one corner, high enough to clear your heads, but not too high, to hang your tea-cloths, dusters, etc., on. Apropos of these, as you are going to do your own housework, I would recommend your washing out your tea-cloths at least every day. If greasy plates and knives are rubbed with paper before washing, there will be little risk of your cloths being very greasy, but "prevention is better than cure." You will find that a cake of sapolio and one of sunlight soap are invaluable aids, and they should live just by your sink. A "sink basket" placed just over the escape pipe is also a *sine qua non*. It makes a capital strainer when you want your tea-leaves washed for carpet-sweeping, and it also catches all scraps

which might choke up the sink. While on the subject of cleaning, let me give you another "wrinkle." You will not need a knife-board if you will try the following. Have a small piece of board, dust some knife powder on it, and with the smooth end of a dampened cork, rub the blade of the knife. The dirt disappears in a marvellous manner, and the wear and tear to the knife, or to the cleaner, is nil. Clean your knives as soon as possible after using, they will then give you half the trouble. For your spoons and forks—they should at least once a week have a special wash in ammonia and water. Dissolve a piece of rock ammonia in boiling water, and leave the spoons and forks, etc., in it for an hour. Then dry with a clean cloth thoroughly, and rub immediately with a soft wash-leather. Perhaps you are saying, "How horrid our hands will get over all this!" I can only say from experience that they need not. If you have gloves to clean, or rooms to do out, common-sense will prompt you to wear gloves, and it is a splendid way of using up old gloves, let me tell you! Then as to the "washing up." If you will have a kettle full of water on the stove to heat, while you wash the dishes, you can at once wash out your cloths, and there is no better way of thoroughly cleansing the hands than this. When you have used a saucepan for milk, or anything likely to stick, pour cold water into it at once and let it stand. It will then be easily cleaned with a birch brush; and if necessary be given a final rub with sapolio. Always use enamelled saucepans if you possibly can.

You will find it a very good way to leave your scullery window open during the day, from the top if possible. And if you bring your towel-horse in to the scullery, your towels will have a good chance of drying in your absence.

I hope you will not think this too personal a hint, for it is one that I feel very certain you will see the good of. As you and Annie are going to walk to and from your offices daily, I strongly recommend you not to wear the same stockings two days in succession. You will find this applies to almost all your underwear, but especially stockings. And another bit of experience! wash your stockings at home. They will wear twice as long, and the comfort is infinite. I was first indoctrinated into this idea during a hot summer in Paris, where the friend with whom I stayed told me she washed her stockings every night. They were dry by morning. This is very easy to do in your own rooms. Soap the stockings well with sunlight soap. Soak for fifteen or twenty minutes. Then squeeze them well; turn inside out, soap again and give a rub, to finally remove the dirt. Rinse in tepid water, squeeze very dry and hang them on your line to dry. You will soon find the comfort to your tired feet quite balances the slight bother of washing them.

Above all, do not neglect your food, and live as carefully as if you were at home. That is one of the secrets of good health, and one of the reasons why "working women" so often break down through neglect of it.