

When Upholstered Furniture Needs Repairing

Will You Do It Yourself As I Have Done?

By KATHERINE KYLE

THE casual, come-and-go relationship between my house and me, that existed during the happy days of summer, has ended. Most of the days are still fine enough to lure me out-of-doors, even when I must carry duties with me. But there is a rustle in the tree-tops, a tang in the air at evening, that warns me of the day not far distant when I must stay in my kitchen to prepare vegetables, and when my sunny living-room will once more know me, my chair drawn to the window and my sewing basket at my side.

Already there is a difference, even though I pass through my house hurriedly, dusting, putting to rights, the very little that has been disturbed (for it is the wide, shady porch that

supple, and a good brown tone to match my room. In case you, too, should feel the call to turn upholsterer, I shall tell you how it should be done.

First, the old seat must be stripped out. A sharp knife will do this work best, and any tacks must be carefully removed. With the point of the knife any tiny deposits of dust can be scraped out and crevices cleaned that have hitherto been inaccessible.

The requirements for each chair are: A veneer or fibre chair-seat, which may be bought for a few cents, and cut to fit the rabbet of the chair seat frame (A, in Fig. 1); a piece of heavy cotton, large enough to extend about 1½ inches on all sides beyond the fitted veneer seat; a piece of fabric cut the same as the cotton, and some flat-head-

Figure 1 shows the wooden chair-seat frame, figure 2 a fibre chair seat trimmed to fit it, figure 3 the covering for figure 2.

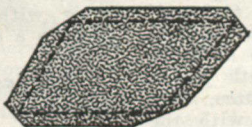


Fig. 3.

In figure 4 the cover has been glued on neatly and figure 5 shows the completed chair seat.

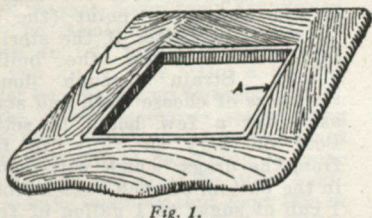


Fig. 1.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 2.

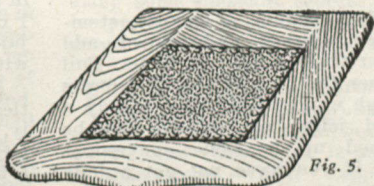


Fig. 5.

bears morning record of much occupation the previous day). There is a considering look in my eye, as it scrutinizes curtains, rugs and wood surfaces. Are they all ready to welcome back the family that has regarded them so lightly for almost a quarter of a year?

This chair: the edge of its covering is frayed; a month of steady use will see it out, an ugly fringe of threads hanging from it—

That deep, cushioned chair, such a favourite—but its popularity bears sad fruit. It sags dis-spiritedly—a broken spring—

I am glad the days are cooler. My house needs me. To-morrow I shall be ready to turn to it, strengthen and refresh it, restoring its weak places to their old strength, making it, too, ready for the long, happy intimacy of fall and winter.

A hammer, small and not unnecessarily heavy; tacks; longer nails, slender and sharp; a few small screws; some webbing; if there is a chair or sofa that needs it; also some padding, if the old padding is too flattened and lifeless to be renewed by pulling and

ed nails—leather or brass heads are chiefly used.

To cut the cotton, lay the fitted piece of veneer on it, and mark the size with a pencil, being sure to allow 1½ inches all around for the work. Mark off the corners just far enough beyond the corners of the veneer to let it fold over smoothly, and cut them as shown in Fig. 3. Cut the fabric just the same way, using the cotton as a pattern. Place the veneer squarely in the middle of the cotton, fold the margins of the cotton over neatly, and fasten with liquid glue. Place heavy weights on the glued portions for an hour or so, until the glue sets. Repeat the process, fitting and fastening the outer covering in just the same way. If a cloth fabric is used, it is necessary to apply the glue carefully, not allowing it near the inner edge of the margin, or it may run in the cloth and show on the finished chair seat.

When the glue has all set, the result looks like Fig. 4—the under side of the seat. It remains only to turn it over, fit it into the seat frame of the chair, and secure it with the broad-headed tacks. In order to get the tacks in

Figure 6—Method of weaving and fastening webbing.
Figure 7—Springs are tied to each other and to frame.

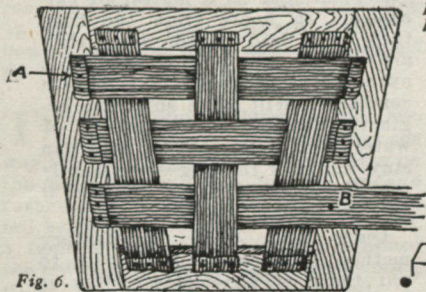


Fig. 6.

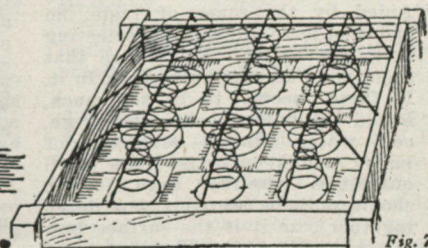


Fig. 7.

fluffing it out; such coverings as are required—leather, or the soft new fabrics that are so like it, with leather-headed tacks to match it, or burlap, tapestry or denim, whatever is chosen to make new coverings; strong cotton, to go on just beneath the outer covering, a sort of lining to make it look smoother and wear longer; a pot of glue, some strong upholsterer's needles and stout thread or string to sew with—then I am equipped to fix up a whole regiment of wounded furniture.

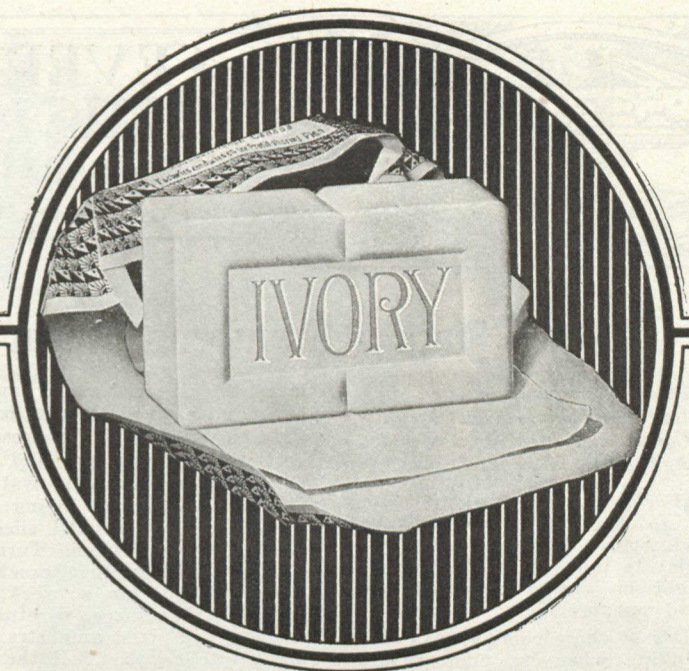
My dining-room chairs, seated with cane, have broken in several places. Once a cane-bottomed chair gives out there is no stopping it. I shall re-seat them all, five in number, using a leather-finished fabric that is soft and

straight, it is best to start each hole with an ordinary small wire nail. Place the tacks one inch apart, and near enough the edge to get a firm hold in the rabbet of the seat frame. Finished, it will look like Fig. 5.

Mending a Padded Seat

A PADDED seat, or one with springs, is more complicated, but not really more difficult to mend. If the webbing, which really supports the seat, has frayed or broken, it must be replaced. Old, frail webbing will only cause early trouble. Take off the old webbing, and measure it to see how much new stuff is required. Allow plenty to turn all

(Continued on page 41)



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