

The House Beautiful

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SITTING ROOM WITH PICTURE WINDOW

WELL DRAPED WINDOWS

REFINED ELEGANCE

A WELL FURNISHED ROOM

A PRETTY SITTING ROOM

THE ADAPTATION OF FOREIGN IDEAS—To furnish a room as the Japanese would furnish it is one thing and to furnish it in American-Japanese style is quite another. There are many people in the United States whose conception of Japanese interiors and effects tallies with that of the stage setters of Sullivan's opera of "The Mikado." Indeed, I think that the prevalence of Japanese operettas produced the rage for Japanese furnishing in our staid American houses a few years ago. While the finest touches of Japanese art lie in their use of grays, of black and white and absolutely neutral tones—and in reality the interiors of their homes are marked by an absence of furniture which to the American taste is actually painful—the embodiment of a Japanese idea in this country usually means a glittering confusion of colors and of objects of art. A lady writing from Santa Barbara asks my advice in fitting up a Japanese room.

A JAPANESE ROOM—As I do not know just what Japanese furniture you may have it is difficult for me to give you any precise information; however, I think the first thing to do in furnishing up to any particular period or foreign nationality is to realize in your own mind the salient points, the leading characteristics which lend the most potent charm to that period or nationality. We know that to embody a Japanese idea is to produce an effect of simplicity and grace almost beyond that of any other nation. There must be much vivid color delicately sprinkled about and constantly outlined and intermingled with black. There must be the pale pink of the cherry bloom, the varied tints of chrysanthemums and the rich glitter of emeralds.

There should be swinging lights in lantern shapes and always glowing through colored glass or silk, and there may be

rich bronzes, rare carvings, cabinets, etc., though these latter are not necessary to give a Japanese effect and may be accumulated at leisure when one has arranged a setting for them.

First, by all means have your paint as black as ebony or teakwood, your floor must be stained dark and highly polished or (if you prefer it so) covered with fine Japanese matting. Curtain your windows with stripes in widths of stuff unsewed together of blue and white cotton crepe, Japanese. Do not use white muslin with them. You will find that the blue and white against the black work of your window casing is beautiful, and I would hang several strips at each window. If you can procure for your doorway one of the Japanese curtains which come in strips of embroidery on colored silk you will be fortunate. Have your pots of plants (dwarf cypress trees, etc.) set near the floor on the little square teakwood stands which lend such foreign look. Place a flowering azalea, or small rose tree in full bloom in a pot on a high shelf.

A dado of fine matting running up to the black candle shelf around the walls is beautiful, and above that the walls should be colored a dull blue. For a frieze above your black picture molding you may be able to find a paper which represents Japanese figures and trees, in blue on a white ground. I found it once and used it several years ago. The effect was exquisite and Japanese to a degree. The cotton crepe would also make a good frieze. As for furniture I would use only bamboo and teakwood. You will find also that one of their vivid scarlet panels of embroidery add much life and beauty to your room.

THE DRAPING OF WINDOWS AND DOORWAYS—In window drapery it is often merely a matter of taste whether the curtains hang to the floor or are cut off at the sill, but it is also sometimes a matter of construction. For a casement window there is seldom a question—the curtain should fall only to the sill. Casement windows are meant to look wide, and short curtains strengthen this effect. These short curtains may be caught back midway with cords and tassels, if straight muslin curtains next the panes are underneath them; or, all colored and white, may be left to hang straight and full together. In hanging muslin, or net, or silk at casement windows do not sew any of the breadths together. They are much more artistic and airy looking if left hanging selvage to selvage. The fashion of trimming with fringes and tassels has fortunately been abandoned. The outer curtain, therefore, you understand, may be caught back and the under ones left straight or vice versa. These are all rather cottage effects. If your windows are medium long and you wish to give more height and a statelier look, hang heavy outside curtains to the floor. These curtains may be only of cretonne and yet will look very rich, if lined with plain colors in raw silk or saten. They should be caught back just above the sill line.

A very commonplace window may be metamorphosed into a picturesque and noticeable feature of your room by means of its drapery. If, for instance, you have two plain, mill-made windows which are placed not more than a foot apart, you can so curtain them that they will look

like one large window. This is done by hanging a valance from the top casing, over both windows, and letting the breadths of goods hang from this. One on either side of the outside edge and one to cover the wall space between the two windows. Suppose this goods to be pretty shored chintz, and that you have white muslin caught back against the panes, and suppose you go still further and have a broad shelf made and fastened to your sill, so that you can set flower-pots on it with blooming plants in them; have you not thus created an effect which will be a constant pleasure to you and to your friends?

On the other hand you might, if you choose to do so, merely hang green paper blinds at these windows and leave them undraped to stare at you in characterless stupidity. For curtaining doorways I would merely advise hanging all drapery straight from rods. It is seldom pretty caught back. A handsome Kiskillim rug should be thrown over a pole and one end left to hang over straight. They can be fastened invisibly to the pole with safety pins and push back easily. In buying a handsome Kiskillim rip the seam which runs down the middle and hang them with the borders facing one another. L. M. P.—You ask about the fireplace woodwork is yellow and your paper yellow and white, would have any other white. Indeed, it is a very safe plan when you wish to keep a room light and to give it a particularly dainty look to have white tiling. It is far better than a color

which is slightly off shade from the rest of the room.

M. P. G.—By all means set the large mirror into the wall of your hall. As you say, it will in this way exactly face the front door, and as your hall is not large it will be a great acquisition, for it will apparently add much depth and certainly much elegance to the apartment. I would place some sort of light pedestal with a growing fern or delicate little palm in it in front of the mirror if I were you.

INEXPENSIVE DEVICES THAT LEND LUXURY.

B. M. G.—You ask me for some general advice about lending to a simple room that air of luxury which I have several times referred to. I have no doubt you have smiled over this expression as being rather strong when used in connection with really economical arrangements, but I promise you sincerely, if you will carry out practically some of the hints I am now going to give you, you will smile with satisfaction over the result of your work. You must feel that lack that air of invitation to restful ease which, after all, lends the real charm to an interior. It is more desirable to invest a room with this quality than to be able to spend an unlimited amount of money on it. There is nothing which gives

row of brass-headed tacks driven into the wood so closely as to look like a beading; a piece of dark blue denim was then doubled and stitched together (to give it sufficient firmness to serve as a seat) and stretched over the chair. In this were cushions of orange-colored silk, a long one tied to the back, a square one in the seat, which almost hid the blue denim. Thus it was one of the prettiest things in a room which held many that were far more expensive and intrinsically valuable.

A hassock or large cushion placed on the floor can be made of Japanese matting. Put two pieces, a square of the width of matting, together and bind them with wool braid. You will find that you can readily stitch this on the machine. Make a firmly stuffed cushion first of white cotton or canvas, filling it with excelsior and cotton wool, then slip your matting cover over it. Use this cushion to throw on the floor and on top of it lay a softer one covered with cotton or silk. This will give you a bit of bright color just when some dingy corner of the room seems to call for it.

A DINING ROOM IN VENETIAN RED—L. T. V. I agree with you that Venetian red is very rich and handsome for a dining room. As your woodwork has been painted and you cannot use the Flemish oak stain, I would paint my

a more comfortably inhabited look than low, easy chairs, hassocks and footstools, rich sofa cushions and brocade-covered room which bears the impress of refined, intelligent living there should also be at least one broad, substantial table at which to write and on which lie the latest magazines or the last popular novel, etc. This table, to be complete, should hold a shaded light, either an electric light brought up from the floor or down by a cord from the ceiling (it can be so shaded and arranged as to represent a handsome reading lamp) or one of the tall lamps in standards called banquet lamps. This lamp can be so decorated with an artistic shade as to be one of the features of your room.

One thinks of an easy chair as necessarily an expensive piece of furniture, but a determined and energetic woman can get around this obstacle by searching the second-hand shops for a large, comfortable, stuffed chair, the glory of whose covering has departed. It may once have been covered with brocade, but she can rejuvenate it with some of the art denims which are brought in such soft shades of old blue, dark blue, green, old rose, dark brownish red and clear wine color that it will affiliate much more congenially with its inexpensively artistic surroundings than if clad in brocade. The striped canvas, cross-legged chair which is bought for porches and which costs from \$1.50 to \$2.00, with taste and very little trouble, be transformed into something handsome enough for a room of this character. While not made on the precise principle of the Morris chair, it can be let down to any angle of extension one requires. Therefore if rubbed down and painted to look like ebony and stretched with tapestry or velours instead of awning goods, then filled with cushions of alderdown covered with silks or rich brocades, it is transformed into an extremely handsome article of furniture. A tiny brass beading let into the wood of the pieces which come down the sides makes a still prettier finish. More cheaply still, I have seen one of these chairs ebullient and having a

woodwork painted in Venetian red and having your paper in a softer shade of red. It will look well between the crossbeams of black wood, and you will find the effect excellent, especially if your electric light of old brass comes up close against it. Have your chairs made to order in some pretty quaint designs. Any thoroughly artistic architect can do this for you. As you would do well to keep a hint of Venetian art to the fore in this room, I would have the back pieces run up in some long twisted effect, and then have them stained in the very dark Flemish oak, set the seats be covered with dark red morocco and finished with old brass nails. Have a Flemish oak table made with twisted seats, and have an impression that to have furniture made to order by any special design is an enormously expensive fancy I wish to undeceive you. You will be agreeably surprised to find that chairs of your own design frequently can be made for less than the more commonplace patterns found in the shops.

Use a heavy white lace scarf across the middle of your table and have for a centerpiece a Venetian glass bowl set in silver and slightly over shade of red. It will gleam out with extreme beauty in this room. I like a buffet built into the wall with doors here and there of brilliant glass leaded in. Curtain your windows first with net which has a heavy white lace border. Let this border run across the window, showing heavily against the glass. If you are fortunate enough to possess any old Italian ecclesiastical lace this is the place to use it. From the top of the window to the window seat hang full draped curtains of some rich Oriental stuff which has some blue in it.

As you have not a hardwood floor, cover it with dark red filling and lay a Turkish rug under the table. It would be well if this rug also had some blue in it. Certainly there is nothing more beautiful for a dining room than handsome Kiskillim. The large windows you speak of and the

heavy white lace in this room will prevent all possibility of its looking dark; it will be exceedingly rich, but not gloomy. And now for the mantel, which you consider so hopelessly commonplace. Paint it black and make a lambrequin for it coming down in a straight line across the front—do not be tempted to drape it—of a piece of old red brocade, somewhat faded if you can get it. Border this with gold galloon, and if you can find a tall Venetian bottle with a twisted neck, or a huge Venetian candlestick, it will pay you to place it there, as it will lift your mantel at once out of the commonplace. Your firelogs should be of brass and selected to accord with your electric light fixtures.

PAINT FOR BEDROOMS—You ask my advice about painting the woodwork for bed chambers. In a bedroom I prefer the paint to hardwood. It seems to me to tone in more softly and beautifully with the papers. If your paper has a white ground with yellow roses on it, paint all of your wood the exact shade of some yellow tone in the roses. I would select a medium tone, but be very careful that your painter catches it exactly. Your yellow mantelpiece will look very attractive with white hearth and tiling.