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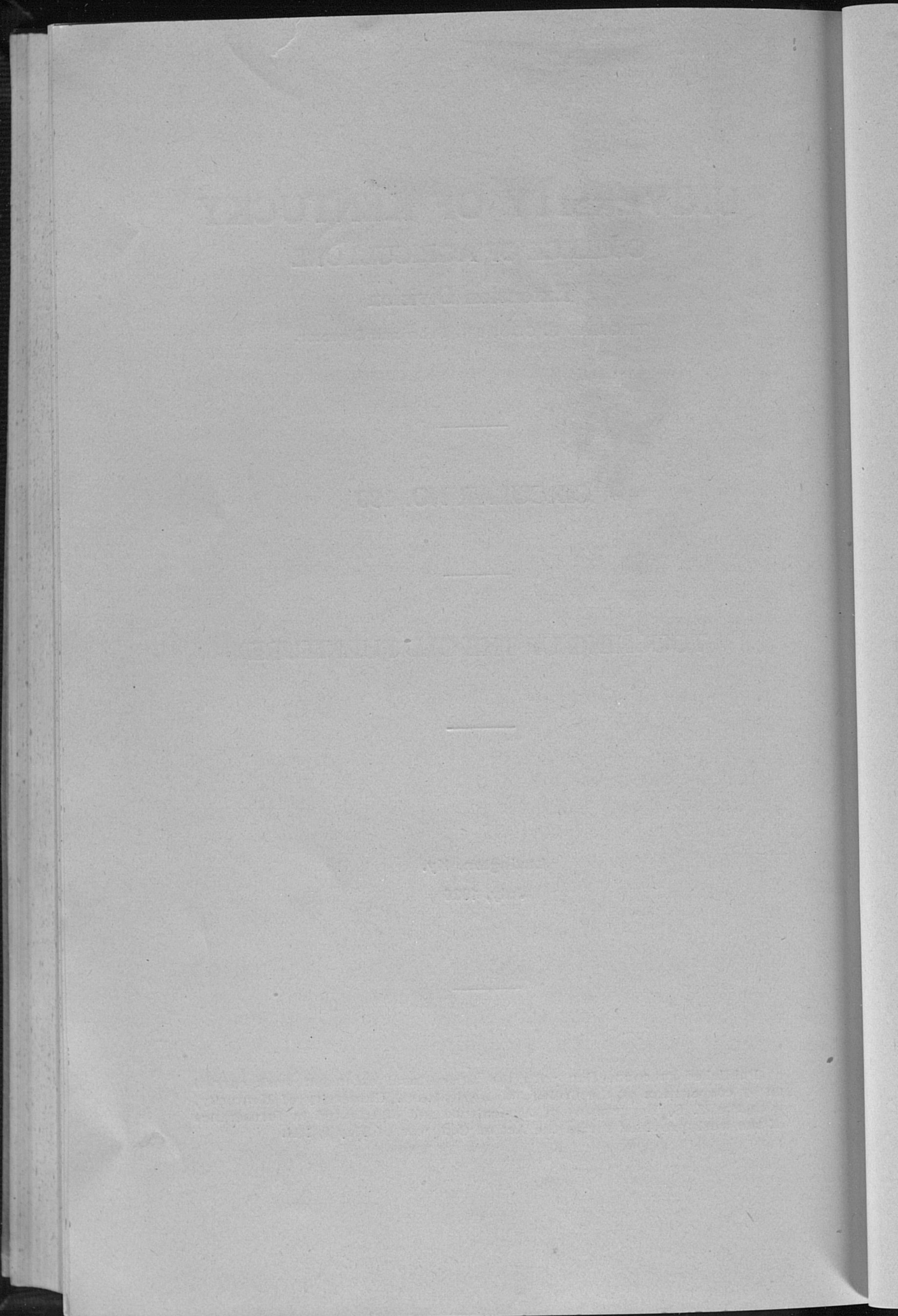
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TOUCHING UP THE OLD FURNITURE

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Touching Up the Old Furniture

By MARY MAY MILLER

In almost every home there is at least one piece of furniture that fails to contribute to the attractiveness of the room because its surface has become dulled and scarred. Fine pieces of furniture may be found stored in attics, cellars and outhouses which, if refinished, would enhance the beauty of almost any room in the house. A piece of furniture made of substantial material with good lines is worth the time and effort required for refinishing it. An old, shiny finish such as was the style during the "golden oak" period is not attractive. Such a finish should be replaced by a dull, satiny one.

A natural finish should be used for mahogany, cherry and walnut so that the beauty of the wood will not be concealed. Birch, pine, poplar and other plain woods are more attractive when painted and decorated with simple stencil designs. Usually it is desirable that the old coats be removed so that the furniture may be refinished from the wood up.

REPAIRS AND EQUIPMENT

All necessary repairs should be made before the new finish is applied. They should be made with care and only the simplest ones should be attempted at home. Loose parts may be fastened by the use of fine wire nails, screws or glue. All ornate glued-on pieces should be loosened and removed by the careful use of a thin knife blade and a chisel. Small pieces of veneer may be glued in place. Pieces of veneer, chair rounds, spindles, rockers and pulls may be purchased from furniture dealers or

cabinet makers. Wooden pulls should be refinished and put on after the piece of furniture has been done over. It is advisable that all work be done in an unused room where there will be as little dust as possible.

The following materials may be needed: Hammer, chisel, flake glue, nails, screws, cabinet maker's putty or stick shellac for holes, binding muslin, putty knife, scraper, varnish remover, gasoline, turpentine, alcohol, orange shellac, linseed oil, 00 sandpaper, fine pumice, paste wax, brushes, woolen cloths and a smooth block of wood.

Loose joints and wooden pulls can be fastened with glue that may be prepared and used as follows: To 1 part of carpenter's flake glue, add $1\frac{1}{2}$ parts hot water. Mix and melt over hot water. Use *hot*. All old glue must be scraped off. When surfaces are clean and dry, the hot glue may be applied and joints bound with narrow strips of muslin. Too much glue may prevent the parts from coming into contact, so that the joint will not hold well; the parts should be pressed together very firmly, so as to squeeze out as much glue as possible. Allow three or four hours for the glue to dry and then remove bindings and excess glue.

Cabinet-maker's putty may be made as follows: To some of the glue prepared as above, add enough whiting to make a stiff paste. When all holes and cracks are clean and dry they may be packed with this putty.

Deep holes and cracks may be filled with stick shellac that can be purchased in colors to match the wood. This shellac may be melted on a knife blade or by holding a piece of hot metal against the end of the stick shellac. The shellac as it melts should be held over the hole so that it will run into the opening. A paste made of dry Venetian red and thick gum arabic mucilage is considered satisfactory for deep scratches and fine cracks in mahogany. The necessary color may be substituted for other woods.

Surface scratches will usually disappear when rubbed with a mixture composed of equal parts of boiled linseed oil, vinegar and turpentine.

Dark stains may be bleached with an oxalic solution made in the proportion of 1 teaspoon of oxalic acid crystals to a pint of warm water. This solution may be rubbed on the stains with a soft cloth and after a few hours the spots should be washed thoroly to remove traces of the acid and then smoothed with sandpaper when dry.

TREATMENT FOR MAHOGANY, CHERRY, WALNUT, OAK

REMOVING THE OLD FINISH

Using a Steel Scraper. A thin, brittle finish may be removed by means of a steel scraper, fine steel wool or a piece of glass. The scraper is the safest one to use if the scraping edge is kept sharpened square with a file. The scraper should be held at an angle of 45° to 60° and the work done with the grain, and with care to avoid splintering the wood. Steel wool is preferable for use on delicate veneered surfaces. The fingers may be protected from the steel wool by old gloves or a piece of cloth. Fine steel wool or ammonia may be used for the turnings, cracks and corners. Ammonia should be used sparingly so as not to raise the grain or bleach the wood. It may be applied by means of a small stick wrapped in a cloth. Old coats of varnish or paint in deep creases may be removed by the use of 00 sandpaper folded over a thin, dull blade.

Using a Varnish Remover. When the old finish is thick and hard it is desirable to use a varnish remover which may be applied according to directions on the can. It will give very good service if applied over a clean, dry surface which has been broken with sandpaper or the steel scraper. The old finish will become soft in a few minutes and may be removed with old cloths and the steel scraper or a dull blade. It is sometimes necessary to apply two or three coats of the remover. All traces of the remover should be neutralized by thoro washing with gasoline, benzine or denatured alcohol so that the new finish will not be injured.

Sandpapering. When the old finish has been removed according to the above directions and the piece of furniture is clean

and dry, the surfaces may be rubbed until smooth with 00 sandpaper. The rubbing should be done with the grain of the wood. An even pressure can be exerted on flat surfaces such as table tops, if a smooth block of wood is wrapped in a piece of sandpaper. Fine steel wool should be used on small turnings. The surfaces should be dusted thoroly before the next step—oiling.

Oiling. The wood in old pieces of furniture usually is dry. A coat of raw linseed oil should be brushed into the wood and if, at the end of twelve hours, the wool still seems dry, another coat may be applied. The oil brings out the color and grain of the wood. All excess oil must be rubbed into or off from the wood. The surfaces are then ready for the stain, if stain is needed. If stain is not to be used, then the shellac or filler may be applied, as discussed in the next paragraph, after which the new finish may be applied.

Staining. Stain should not be used unless it is absolutely necessary. The stain, when needed, may be applied with a flat 1½ inch brush. When thoroly dry, the surfaces should be smoothed with 00 sandpaper and then dusted. A coat of orange shellac may then be applied to bind the stain and act as a filler in close-grained woods such as cherry. Open grained woods, such as oak, may require a paste filler, which may be applied before the shellac, according to the directions on the container. All surfaces, when dry, should be sandpapered until smooth, dusted and then treated with any of the finishes discussed in the following paragraphs.

SELECTING AND APPLYING THE FINISH

The Oil Finish. The oil finish is especially suitable for the top of a dining room table because it is not easily marred and the fine, glossy texture may be renewed by an occasional application of oil and repeated rubbings. The wood should be prepared according to the steps given above and then kettle-boiled linseed oil diluted one-half with turpentine, should be applied with a cloth and the excess oil wiped off. Clean carpeting wrapped around a warm brick should be used in polishing all of the large surfaces until a sheen appears. Mouldings, turnings and carv-

ings should be rubbed with a stiff but smooth cloth such as felt or flannel. The rubbing should be repeated for about fifteen minutes a day for about three weeks. A little oil should be applied and wiped off before each rubbing. This makes a very permanent and attractive finish. The surfaces may be rubbed with paste wax if desired.

The Wax Finish. The wax finish is perhaps the simplest and easiest one to apply of all finishes. The surfaces of the furniture should be prepared as given in previous paragraphs and then a paste wax brushed into the wood across the grain and then with the grain. This finish is especially good for open grained woods such as oak. The wax should be about the consistency of varnish. It may be thinned with turpentine when necessary. After an hour, when the wax has dried, the surface may be polished with a thick, non-linting woolen cloth, such as felt or flannel, first with a circular motion and then with straight strokes with the grain of the wood. A second coat may be applied and when dry may be rubbed into the wood with clean felt until a smooth finish is secured. The wax finish brings out the color and grain of the wood and can be renewed from time to time by the application of more wax.

The Shellac Finish. The shellac finish is attractive for most old pieces of mahogany, cherry and walnut. This finish is beautiful, but easily marred and usually must be repaired by a new finish from the wood up. When the piece of furniture has been oiled and sandpapered according to the steps outlined above, the several coats of orange shellac may be applied. Orange shellac does not conceal the natural color of the wood. It should be thinned one-third to one-half with alcohol to the consistency of thin cream. Several coats, properly sandpapered, will produce a very soft, satin finish, altho a satisfactory piece of work can be done with the application of two or three coats.

The shellac should be applied with the grain of the wood by means of a two-inch brush. About six hours should be allowed between coats of shellac. Each coat, when dry, should be smoothed and dulled with 00 sandpaper and dusted before the

application of a new coat. The smoothing should be done with the grain of the wood and should not penetrate the shellac, especially along the edges and turnings. The final coat should be polished, when dry, with raw linseed oil and fine pumice. This polishing may be done by dipping a piece of woolen cloth into the oil and then into the pumice and rubbing the surface with long, even strokes with the grain of the wood. For convenience, the oil and pumice may be put into saucers. The oil and pumice must be combined on the cloth to prevent scratching the surface of the wood. Excess oil should be removed so that the surfaces will not become gummy. A smooth, hard, satiny finish should be the result.

TREATMENT FOR ASH, POPLAR, PINE, WICKER

Woods to be Painted or Stained

REMOVING THE OLD FINISH

Removing Wax. Wax should be removed from the furniture by sponging the surface with turpentine and then washing with warm soapsuds followed by clear water. The surfaces should be wiped dry.

Removing Varnish and Paint. If the old finish is thick, hard and smooth, or is flaking off, a varnish remover may be applied according to the directions on the container. An inexpensive remover can be made by mixing 3 tablespoons of lye with a quart of boiled starch solution that has been made as for starching clothes. This paste may be applied to a piece of furniture which has been covered with several coats of paint or varnish. The work should be done on bare ground where there is no vegetation. For convenience, an old broom can be used when applying the paste. This paste is recommended for use on cheap woods only.

Preparing Surfaces for the Finish. A varnished or painted surface if intact or slightly rough may be washed, dried and sandpapered and the new finish of paint applied over the old.

A high, glossy finish such as golden oak, should be washed and broken by the use of sandpaper or by sponging with ammonia. The new finish will then stick without flaking off. Wicker furniture, whether it has been stained, painted or left natural, should be scrubbed with soda water (1 heaping tablespoon washing soda to a quart of warm water). It should be dried in the sun, if possible, and the new finish applied.

New pine furniture that is to be finished in a delicate tint, should be coated with white shellac to bind the pitch and prevent discoloration of the paint. Orange shellac, which is cheaper, may be used under dark finishes. It is desirable to shellac knotty and sappy places of all woods.

For best results, it usually is desirable to apply a paste filler or two or three coats of shellac to all open-grained woods, such as oak.

If the surfaces of the piece of furniture that is to be painted or stained are rubbed with 00 sandpaper, the new finish will be more permanent. The rubbing should be done with light, even strokes, first across then with the grain. All dust must be removed.

SELECTING AND APPLYING THE FINISH

Applying the Paint Finish. This finish should be used over woods that do not have beautiful grain and natural color. On the other hand, beautiful woods should be treated with a finish such as oil, shellac or wax, which will not conceal the natural grain and color. These woods should never be painted.

The paint should be thoroly mixed by shaking the can before opening and stirring the contents with a clean stick after opening. The foundation coats, two or three, should be applied in thin, smooth coats. Each coat should be brushed well into the wood and allowed to dry twenty-four hours and then sandpapered before the next one is applied. The paint may be thinned with turpentine if it does not flow freely.

Flat white is commonly used under all light-colored enamels. The worker should be careful to keep the paint from settling in the grooves because thick coats will not dry properly.

Each coat should be smoothed with 00 sandpaper to remove brush marks. The last undercoat may be a mixture of the flat paint and the enamel. If a large can of paint has been purchased, it is advisable to pour some of it, after mixing, into a small container. The paint can be replenished when necessary.

The finishing coats, one or two, of enamel should be mixed thoroly and applied without thinning, with a clean, two-inch brush. When enamel is applied without flat undercoats it is likely to flake off. A desired tone can be secured by mixing tube oil color with a can of the nearest match one can buy. Attractive grays can be secured by mixing a very small amount of lampblack with white paint. Chrome yellow may be added to make a warm gray.

Soft tones of gray, buff and blue are always satisfactory colors for furniture. The large surfaces should be done in soft tones, while the trims may be done in bright colors. Bands or stencils in bright colors will add character to painted furniture.

Applying the Stain Finish. This finish is satisfactory for cheap woods but is not as decorative as the paint finish. The stain should be thoroly mixed, then applied with a two-inch brush. The surplus stain should be wiped off as soon as the surface begins to look dull. Some woods will require two or three coats of the stain. A coat of white shellac may be applied after twenty-four hours. This shellac will bind the stain. The shiny finish, due to the shellac, should be rubbed down with pumice and oil.

SELECTION AND CARE OF BRUSHES

SELECTING THE BRUSHES

The brushes should be of good quality and made of proper material, size and shape for best results. A 2½ inch brush may be used for large, flat surfaces and a 1 inch brush for narrow portions. Soft, flat fitch brushes or very good bristle brushes are best for use in paint and varnish. The varnish brush should be used for varnish only.

CLEANING THE BRUSHES

Brushes should be kept in good condition. A new brush should be dipped into the liquid to be used and then worked back and forth on a piece of old board or heavy paper in order to remove loose bristles. If the work is to be continued the following day, the handle of the brush should be tied to a stick that has been laid across a small pail of water, and the brush hung in the pail with the bristles entirely immersed but not touching the bottom of the pail.

If the brushes are not to be used again for some time, they should be cleaned as soon as possible. Varnish and paint brushes should be cleaned in turpentine; the shellac brush should be cleaned in denatured alcohol. The brushes should then be washed in soap and warm, not hot, water and squeezed in a soft cloth. They may be shaken and hung up to dry in a place free from dust. When dry, they may be slipped into paper bags. They should be kept on a flat surface so that the ends of the bristles will not turn up.

CARE OF FURNITURE

USING FURNITURE POLISH

The direct application of any furniture polish will, in time, cause "bloom," a purplish cloudy film. This film can be removed from painted and varnished furniture by means of a polish made as follows: To 1 quart of hot water add 3 tablespoons linseed oil and 1 tablespoon turpentine. Pour into a bottle and shake to mix ingredients. Wipe off furniture with a piece of cheesecloth wrung dry as possible from this solution and then polish with a dry cloth. Liquid wax is very satisfactory for waxed surfaces.

CLEANING SURFACES

Dull, dingy surfaces may be brightened when rubbed with a kerosene cloth followed by a brisk rubbing with clean, soft material such as silk.

Pieces of furniture that have become dingy or marred may be improved by means of a good cleaning liquid. A liquid made with the following ingredients is recommended by Ray Balderson in her book, "Housewifery." These ingredients may be mixed by the druggist.

1 c. rotten stone or fine pumice	$\frac{1}{2}$ c. oxalic acid
$\frac{1}{2}$ c. linseed oil	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. alcohol
$\frac{1}{2}$ c. turpentine	1 Tb. sulfuric acid
$\frac{1}{2}$ c. cold water	

SURFACE SCRATCHES AND WHITE SPOTS

Surface scratches usually will disappear when rubbed with a mixture of equal parts of turpentine, strong vinegar and linseed oil.

White spots usually are caused by heat or water and usually can be removed as follows: Rub quickly over surface with a hot cloth wrung dry from 1 pint hot water that contains 1 tablespoon ammonia and then wipe off with a prepared dust cloth. The ammonia water removes the spot; the polish restores the finish.