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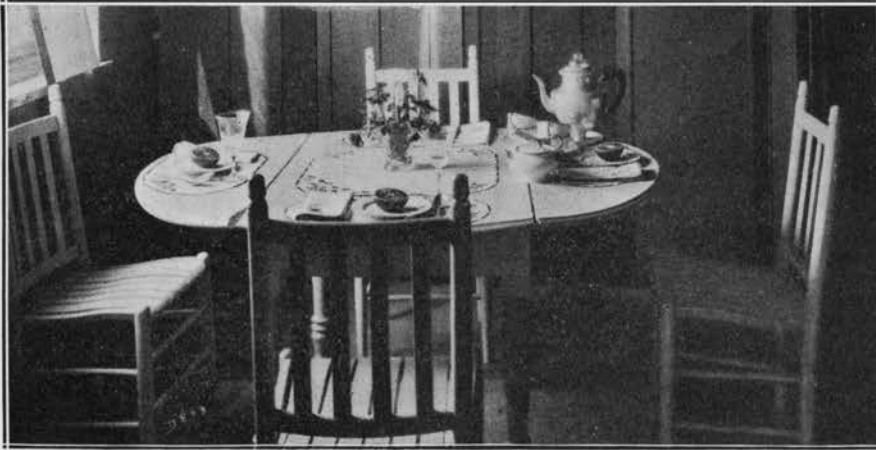
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Use Determines the Kind of Floors You Should Have

By MARY SIMONS



A floor suitable for the living room or a bed room might not be at all desirable for the kitchen or breakfast room where there is constant wear and frequent cleaning is necessary.

OUR grandmothers never had to worry about the kind of wood used to floor their homes as the floor was always entirely covered by an Ingrain, Brussels or Velvet Carpet, and never seen except at house-cleaning time when the carpet was taken up to be dusted. Now, during this reign of polished floors and removable rugs, the floor problem is very vital.

Both the kind and quality of flooring material is determined by the use or the wear of the floor in a particular room. For instance: A floor suitable for the living room or a bed-room might not be at all desirable for the kitchen where there is constant wear and frequent cleaning is necessary.

Wood is the most universal material used for floors in private houses. Some of the woods used for flooring are: oak, maple, birch, beech, pine, and fir. Of these oak is most used for floors, having an advantage over pine and fir in that it does not splinter, makes a durable and attractive floor, and being very hard it wears off evenly. To make a really beautiful oak floor the lumber must be quarter-sawed, this not only brings out the beauty of the grain in the wood, but also it has been found that it makes a more durable surface than plain-sawed lumber.

A sub-floor of inexpensive lumber should be laid as a foundation for higher grade flooring. This insures a level and tightly finished top floor, also a warmer room in winter.

Oak or any selected wood may be used for all the house, however many prefer more durable substances than wood for floors subject to hardest wear as in the kitchen, bath-room, laundry, and entries. Concrete, tile, or composition floors are quite satisfactory for flooring materials as they are durable, sanitary, and easily cleaned. Tile makes an especially attractive floor and is made in a variety of patterns and soft colors.

The finishing of the floors is an individual problem for each home, depending on preference, kind, of wood used, and the general tone of the furnishings

of the room. Since the floor is the foundation and primarily the background of the room it should be unobtrusive and as nearly neutral as possible in relation to its surroundings to harmonize with the rugs, walls, hangings, furniture, and pictures.

Various combinations of the following finishes may be used: oil, stain, filler, varnish, shellac, and wax. Take for example an oak floor: if natural finish is desired, the pores of the wood are filled with a colorless filler, shellaced with a white shellac, finished with clear varnish and waxed, or wax may be applied directly to shellac, the varnish being omitted.

Stains are used to bring out the grain of the wood and to make the floor darker in color, the latter method is used on soft woods to imitate hard woods. After a coat of stain dries, the floor must be

sand-papered before a second coat of stain is applied, as the stain raises the grain making the wood quite rough.

Waxing is the most preferred method of finishing floors as it enhances the beauty of the wood, is readily and comparatively easy to renew, and is protection to the wood. Wax is not expensive, neither does its application require a number of expensive tools. A long-handled weighted brush is the only tool necessary for waxing.

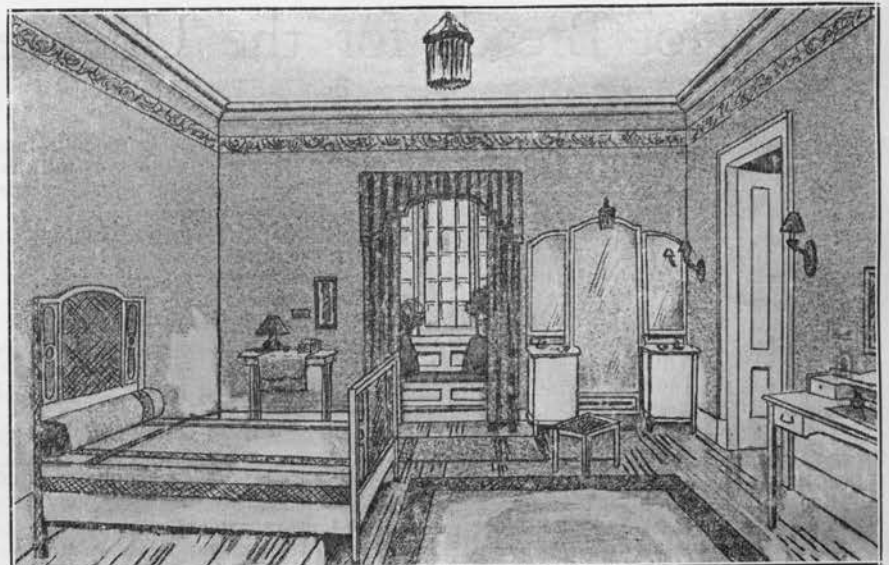
The secret of well-waxed floors is persistency when applying the first coats of wax. Put on a thin coat of wax and persistently rub this coat to a polish before applying another. It is said that if kept well-waxed the boards of a floor will wear thin but still retain their original finish and beauty. Floors should be re-waxed two or three times a year when subject to moderate use, otherwise the re-waxing depends on the amount of wear on the floor.

Oiling makes a satisfactory finish for kitchen and bathroom floors. It fills the pores of the wood and gives the floor a durable surface. Boiled linseed oil may be used or a mixture of linseed oil and turpentine.

Paint is another finish that should be mentioned as it is so helpful in refinishing old floors. It can be obtained in a wide range of colors making possible a floor that will carry out the color scheme of a room. Painted floors are easily cleaned and if waxed and well cared for, they will retain their original finish for a long time.

Though the methods of finishing floors are varied there is one general statement that can be made in regard to finishes. Always use the best materials obtainable as the expense of the original finish is hardly noticeable in comparison to its lasting qualities.

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Painted floors are quite popular for bed rooms, for here there is not enough wear to necessitate a sturdier finish.

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If the house-wife is to do her own work she should choose a finish that will be maintained with the least expenditure of time and energy. Wax must be renewed two or three times a year, but the finish will last as long as it is well cared for. Varnish will last for years with moderate use and good care. However if varnish becomes worn in spots it means refinishing all the floor.

Varnished floors are as easily cleaned as waxed floors. After cleaning with a soft brush, the varnish should be dusted with a mop on which there is a trace of floor oil. The oil aids the varnish in keeping its lustre. But oil must not be applied to wax floors, that is one of the important don'ts in caring for waxed sur-

faces. Wax is softened by the oil and the protective surface is soon destroyed. Either use an oil free mop or a mop wrung out of gasoline. There are oil-free mops on the market now that are chemically treated to take up the dust but do not injure the finish.

Oiled floors should be dusted with an oil mop and if soiled occasionally wiped up with a cloth wrung out of warm, soapy water, always using soap and water sparingly as they are a detriment to oil surfaces.

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