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Margaret E. Davidson
Iowa State College

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Personality in a "Dorm" Room

By Margaret E. Davidson

"I'VE had the best time fixing up my 'dorm' room this fall," said the girl with the smart red hat pulled low over her eyes. "I hope I can get a few things to finish it up in the city."

"I wanted to have a nice room this year, too," her seat companion said, "but mother said she simply couldn't spare the cash."



A pottery jar lends itself well to informal arrangement.

"Money! Why, Ellen, my room all fixed didn't cost more than you'll spend for that new hat you are going to buy today. Of course, it took some time, but you know, I like it all the better for that. Mother helped me with some of the fixin's before I left home."

I was intrigued!

I sat behind them in the huge bus running from the small college town to the city a few miles away. The girls' dress and conversation indicated that they had come from the college in the small town we had just left.

Several weeks later I was visiting in the college town, and had a chance to peek into the dormitory room where the owner of the red hat lived. I was not surprised at the charming, yet comfortable and livable atmosphere which had been achieved with the expenditure of so few dollars. From the conversation on the bus about that room, I had learned that the secret of its success lay in the expression of its owner. It was evidently an expression of her own individual self.

The same vivaciousness shown by the red hat was also expressed in the gay and vivid colors used in furnish-

ing the room. Yet these colors were so skillfully used and carefully combined that they did not offend the harmony nor destroy the homelike feeling of the room.

After looking around the room, I began to notice objects which had been subjects of that conversation on the bus. That lamp shade—made from wrapping paper and wax, she had said. The bright colored design had been painted on the paper before it was dipped into the wax, then ironed and pleated. The top of the shade was held in place by a heavy colored cord. The base for this lamp had come to her house filled with olive oil, but now it was wired and filled with a greenish colored water which emphasized the colors of the shade.

"Just one and a half yards of print."

"Just one and a half yards of print, bought at the remnant counter." This had been the characterization of the unusual wall hanging over the bed, the charm of which lay in the bright gold, yellow and green, and certainly not in the cost. The little batik behind the table was one she had made in a design class the previous year, especially to fit into her room.

The window curtains, hanging straight from the rods, were of plain cream material with bands of bright colored designs, whether of contrasting material, of hand block, also made in the design class, I could not tell from where I stood. Yet this color in the curtains made the sunshine coming through the window seem twice as bright as that coming through the window of the "blue room" next door. The couch, covered with a spread similar to that of the curtains, was heaped with pillows, oblong, square, round and oval orange, yellow, gold and green. Even the calico cat and the gingham dog were there to lend a domestic touch to the room. I wished for time to sink down among those pillows to read the latest *College Humor*.

Under the lamp was the chair from the second hand store. One dollar it had cost, I had heard the owner of the room say, but that gave no idea of how charming it looked after her mother had made a colorful slip cover

and cushion for it. The study table and chair, old ones she had found, and the hanging book case which had been purchased unfinished, were painted, not with a brush, but with a pump. This apparatus made it possible for the quick drying paint to go on smoothly and much quicker than in the old way with a brush. "It was fun," she had said, "to just point the pump at the table and see it get done in just a minute."

On the table a basket of fruit, as tempting as if the basket were not of the cheapest, and on the window sill, a vase of autumn leaves, just as charming as if their container were not a painted jar from the ten cent store, added to the attractiveness of the room.

I was tempted to step inside the room and open the closet door to see the pockets of which I had heard in that bus conversation. Made of heavy canvas and fastened to the door, it provided a convenient and neat place for many things from shoes to clothes brush. On the shelf, above the rod for hangers, was a place for shoe pol-



Attractively arranged flowers make a room livable.

ish, formal slippers, school supplies and hats. There, too, was the "Treasure Chest" to hold the midnight feast until such a time when it could be safely disposed of.

The name of the girl in the red hat I have never known, nor have I seen her but for the short time of that ride to the city several years ago, yet her personality was expressed by her short conversation, but more by her charming room with its gay colors and quaint arrangements.