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Have for Your "Shrine" a Mirror
By ELEANOR MURRAY

One of the most charming rooms I was ever in, was a long, low, darkly finished living room in which the most interesting effect was a mirrored reflection of Gainsborough’s Blue Boy hung over a grand piano at the opposite end of the room. It was late afternoon on a cloudy day and my hostess had drawn the shades and lighted the candles. That soft mirrored reflection in the candlelight stands out in my memory with some of the loveliest pictures painted there—a cloud curtain drawn from across the moon one June night—a clear deep lake on a sunny windy morning.

The Japanese have what they call a "shrine of beauty"—at least one absolutely beautiful spot in a room even though the rest of the room is much less beautiful or artistic. Mirrors may well be used for creating a "shrine of beauty" in our own American homes. One such spot of beauty was created by a friend of mine who hung a long mirror just above a low console table. On the table an old blue bowl was placed. The mirrored reflection I thought perfect until one spring day I stepped into the room and in the bowl were some sprigs of pink apple blossoms. The effect was utterly delicious, like the flash of a bluebird’s wing or the smell of plum blossoms.

A mirror hung in the hall to enable one to get one’s hat on straight is quite a necessary adjunct, but no prosaic. Why not hang it to reflect a bit of color, a painting, a tapestry or bright spots of light or color? Usually such an arrangement will not spoil the light for seeing the hat.

If you have a dark room and wish to brighten it up hang a mirror to catch the light from a door or window. In addition to actually making the room lighter, the light from the mirror is soft and decorative. There is no lovelier mirror reflection than that of candles and candlelight.

Use mirrors mainly for reflection of beautiful things.

Perhaps you have a mirror in your possession like one which used to be in our family, “such a good clear glass, but the frame is dreadful.” We had an old walnut drop leaf table which we had refinished with the hinges of one leaf changed so that the leaf always remained upright making a back to the table. The other leaf was left movable but usually hung down in front. There were a few extra pieces of walnut in addition to the table and someone had the idea to have a new frame made for “the mirror.” The result was two beautiful pieces which could be readily used together in either a hall or living room. If you don’t want the frame changed entirely it can be refinished with enamel to match other pieces of furniture or merely stained and waxed. I once saw a rather difficult small reception hall fixed very attractively. Quite a heterogenous group of furniture was allotted to this room, a small wicker and wood book or magazine rack, a coat rack and a rather large, long mirror. All three were black enameled (though it is not necessary to use black—any desired color may be used) with a little design of frosted flowers fixed on the mirror and the coat rack. The decorated mirror hung above the small magazine rack and with two black silk cords made both the room and furniture lose their air of impossibility.

Panel mirrors with a picture at the top can be purchased complete, or a panel mirror and a picture may be so hung that they give practically the same effect. A college girl with quite an artistic nature had a panel mirror and a small framed print of the “Garden of Allah.” For a long time they were hung on opposite sides of her dormitory room. At last she conceived the idea of hanging the picture just above the mirror. Being impetuous she didn’t think to measure before taking down the picture, but whatever fairy it is who looks after the impetuous was on the job and the mirror and picture were exactly the same width. The combined effect was lovely. It so happened also that the frames were enough alike to not cause too much irritation but had they been absolutely unlike both could have been refinished. Panel mirrors are also very attractive if hung between two panel pictures.

They may be used for both service and beauty, to reflect a print of “Whistler’s Mother” or to adjust a hat, they are much better if used for both service and beauty.

Use mirrors mainly for reflection of beautiful things—a charming corner of an opposite room, a grass-and-tree-and-skies view from an opposite window or a low bowl of spring violets or a brass bowl of winter bittersweet or perhaps a brass Turkish coffee urn on the serving table of the dining room across—veritable “shrines of beauty.”

The Experimental Laboratory of the University of Michigan they discovered that it costs more to heat radiators painted with bronze paints than those painted with ordinary paint. In a bulletin from that institution a bare radiator is taken at 100 per cent. Radiators painted three coats of black or green are listed at 101 per cent, white enamel 102 per cent, those painted aluminum bronze 78 per cent and copper bronze 89 per cent.

In heating efficiency as compared with the bare cast iron radiator, the author states further that, “It might be said in general that bronzes reduce the heating effect of the radiator about 25 per cent, while lead paints and enamels give off the same amount of heat as bare iron. The number of coats of paint on the radiator makes no difference. The last coat is always the determining factor in heat transmission.”

RADIATORS—LESS GILT AND MORE HEAT

DO YOU know, Mrs. Housekeeper and Mr. Money Earner, that it costs more to heat radiators that are bronze or gilt or aluminum colored than it does radiators painted with ordinary paint or enamel?

It must be that this fact is not generally known or we would not see so many bright and shining radiators or do people gild their radiators because they think gilded radiators are more beautiful than painted ones? We are always willing to pay for beauty in the home but is a gilded radiator beautiful? To begin with, the radiator itself is anything but beautiful so why make it more conspicuous with gilt paint? If it is painted near the color of the wall back of it, the radiator loses itself and becomes part of the background. That is as it should be.

Of course the important thing in regard to a radiator is that it is there to heat the room. Anything which interferes with a satisfactory working out of this function will bear investigation.

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