1925

Changing a House Into a Home

R. M. Bailie
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker
Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol5/iss10/4

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Refinishing Your Personality

By THIRZA HULL

MARY! What are you doing?" Mrs. Jones raised her arms in amazement as she watched her daughter emerge from under a big chair and cried again, "Mary! Your hair!"

"It is just old dry paint, mother, and it will shake right out when I am through. I just couldn't stand living in this room another minute! Everything is so shiny and hard and nothing matches. And the curtains are so bright and harsh that they make the furniture all the worse. It's such old furniture that you don't mind, do you—my trying to take the shine off?"

Mary ran to the shiny oak dresser she hated so and came back with her hands full of printed material. "See, mother, bulletins from the Home Economics Extension Service at Ames on 'Refinishing Furniture'—so if I follow directions I really can't hurt the furniture much. And it will look so much better. I feel out of place in her as it is. See, it says here—"

Before.

"For refinishing walls, flat paint will be found more economical than water color. For refinishing walls, flat paint will be found more economical than water color."

Mary was an eighteen-year-old school girl with short brown hair and blue eyes; with the desire for dainty feminine things. She had a room planned out in her mind which was really lovely and excellent in taste—a color scheme of lavender and green with a touch of soft orange and dream furniture of walnut. When she thought of that room and then looked at her ugly black bedstead that vied with the golden oak dresser and nondescript chairs and tables she almost lost faith in herself for a moment. But now she had a fresh hope; her mother approved.

As she industriously scraped off paint from all the furniture she held the vision of her room before her, for refinishing furniture takes lots of time and plenty of strength and endurance. But Mary was young and strong and the paint came off easily under the combined instructions.

Changing a House Into a Home

By R. M. BAILIE

Associate Professor of Architectural Engineering.

In almost every city or town one sees old houses, or even comparatively new ones, which possess little architectural distinction, but which offer possibilities of improvement. In some cases the cost involved in making the desired changes might be too great; in others, much could be accomplished with moderate expenditure, or the cost might be lightened by extending the contemplated changes over a period of years.

In purchasing a house with remodeling in view, one should consider its structural condition, its general layout, and the possibilities of improvement. A thorough examination of the foundation, walls, floors, windows, doors, etc., is the most important, since only good construction would justify the additional expenditure.

As an example of how a "house" may be changed into a "home," the accompanying illustrations are submitted. Inspection of the plans will show that no exterior openings except those in the living room have been changed, and no bearing walls have been removed. On the other hand, a few windows have been added, and some partitions taken away. The most radical change consists in the removal of the front porch and the extension of one side of the front gable to enclose a sheltered approach, vestibule and coat closet; three essentials of any house planned for this climate. By the change, additional closet space is gained in the two principal bed rooms on the second floor.

The original front porch was too narrow to be practicable, and its place could be filled by the addition of an enclosed porch at the rear of the house, where privacy and a view of the garden may be obtained. This addition may be made at some future date when the budget will permit. The floor space of the living room has been increased and the room brightened by the addition of a large bay window, which in turn adds character to the exterior.

The closets and built-in wardrobes in the bed rooms have been removed or changed to increase the floor space and to reduce the number of breaks in the walls of the rooms. Windows have been added to secure cross ventilation.

The broad overhang of the eaves has been cut back and replaced with a close cornice of modest character. The application of stucco, which may be had in a variety of textures and colors, increases the beauty of the exterior, forms additional insulation against heat and cold, and greatly reduces the cost of upkeep.

Replacement of the plain glass windows by divided glass might not prove economical or necessary, but would go far toward increasing external charm. Some of the windows might be further dressed by means of blinds with plain panels or shutters.

The interior of the house may be brightened by refinishing the walls, trim and floors in the order given. It is not necessary to do this all at once, but as permitted by the budget.

For refinishing walls, flat paint will be found more economical than water color. While its first cost is greater, it permits cleaning, and will retain its fresh appearance longer than water color. If the latter has been used, it is desirable to remove it by washing before applying size and paint. Adjoining rooms, such as the living room, dining room and vestibule, should be treated with the same color. Bed rooms may receive individual treatment. The kitchen and bath room should be finished with flat wall enamel or some similar finish which will stand many washings.

The wood trim may be stained and waxed or stained and varnished or enameled. If enameled finish is desired in place of either of the other two finishes, it will be necessary to apply varnish remover before proceeding. A coat of flat paint, a coat of half and half, and a coat of enamel gives a satisfactory result over old woodwork.

If the floors are in bad condition, they should be re-sanded, stained and filled, shellaced, and waxed or varnished. If they are not in bad condition, a light sanding before applying wax or varnish may suffice. Linoleum makes an economical covering for kitchen and bath room floors, and its life is greatly increased if it is properly cemented to the wood floor.

Continued on page 15.