Busy Mother, Read This!

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How to Be Happy Without Oak Floors

By LILLIAN SHABEN

Were you ever obliged to move into an old dilapidated house and simply "make the best of things"? If you ever were, you have not yet forgotten the floors. If you were renting the house, your landlord probably thought the floors "good enough", and if the house were your own, you may not have decided that the old building was hardly worth the expense of new oak. "You sister and me last summer. Father ahead." So we started in.

Having experimented on a floor two years before with the best of success, we decided to give this floor a similar treatment. This consisted of cleaning, painting, and filling the cracks; then paint the floor, staining and waxing it.

Cleaning cracks is the least attractive part of the whole process. It is also the hardest part. An old, thin-bladed paring knife, and a stiff goose feather are the best tools to use. The knife cleans the cracks fairly well, and the goose quill brushes out the last bit of dust. It is important to get the cracks very clean, because a layer of crack-filler put on over a crack full of dust will soon crumble, and the whole floor will be spoiled.

When the cracks are clean, they are ready to be painted. Very little paint is needed for this. A pint of left-over wall or floor paint will do very well for a large floor. A small stiff-bristled mucilage brush works best in crack painting.

After the cracks are painted and dry, they are ready to be filled with putty. An old knife or a spatula that has been broken off about three inches from the handle is best for this. Work the putty solidly into the crack with the knife blade. You will be surprised to find how much putty a crack can hold, and how long it takes to fill a crack! It develops back bone, wrist, patience, and blisters, so wear old gloves.

We wadded exactly seventeen and one half pounds of putty into that one bedroom floor, but the result was worth the effort. Some people fill cracks with a commercial crack filler without painting the cracks first. They are thus saved the labor of painting, but the expensive filler you use at thirty-five cents per pound wears no better than putty at ten cents a pound. This I found by experiment two years ago. We were buying crack filler for a floor and the druggist suggested that we try painting the cracks and using putty instead of crack filler. We did this for part of the floor, and the putty and commercial crack filler have worn equally well for two years. One of our neighbors used putty for crack filler on unpainted cracks, but after one year, the putty crumbled and fell out. Whether this was due to having the cracks unpainted, or to poorly cleaned cracks, I do not know. At any rate, I can vouch for well cleaned, painted cracks that are solidly packed with putty.

When all the cracks have been put-tied and allowed to dry, the coat of "ground color" paint may be applied. This paint is not the color of dirt, as its name implies, but it is a light buff. It isn't the ordinary type of floor paint that wears well and should not be allowed to stand long before applying the final coat of stain.

The stain is a floor varnish stained (Continued on page 10)

Busy Mother, Read This!

By FRANCES THOMAS

Busy Mother, save your eyes, your stitches and your time by reading this article!

Miss Edna Armstrong, who has a degree from the State University at Iowa City, and who is now employed in the Iowa State College Nursery School, has just completed a study of "Motor Control in Young Children as Applied to Dressing." Her conclusions will be of great benefit to many busy mothers and seamstresses who make many children's clothes.

Miss Armstrong made a comparison of the various fasteners used on children's clothing, studying buttonholes and loops especially. To run the experiment, she made six brightly colored jackets fastened with various sizes of buttons and buttonholes, both horizontal and vertical, and loop fasteners. These fastenings were located both on the sides and fronts of the jackets.

The 30 children in the nursery school were subjects to the experiment. Each child tried on the jacket and was observed and timed as he fastened it. At the end of the experiment, Miss Armstrong concluded several things.

She observed that in general the children had less trouble with any fastener if it were slightly below the waistline and toward the front. In the fasteners on the front of the garments, no one button seemed easier than another, and the loops (composed of bias tape, stitched flat) did not seem more difficult than either vertical or horizontal buttonholes. On the side fasteners the larger buttons seemed easier for the children to manage, and here too, the loops seemed just as easy to fasten.

Thus Miss Armstrong concluded that the wise mother would save countless hours of labor formerly spent in making buttonholes, by now placing loop fasteners on her children's clothes. Her little tots will fasten them just as easily and quickly and she will save time and labor for other things.