

THE HOUSEHOLD.

(For other Household Hints, see "Basket" pages.)

Hints on House-Cleaning.

BY "ROMAN."

A house-cleaning of the most thorough character at least once a year, is very essential, in a sanitary point of view, for the accumulated dust beneath the carpets and with which everything becomes in time interpenetrated, is not the innocent thing



A SAFE STEP-LADDER.

some consider it. Dust is a curious compound of minute fragments of almost everything in creation, mixed with spores and germs of vegetable and animal life, which need only favoring circumstances to bring them into activity, and they may produce effects injurious or destructive to human life. Therefore the first necessity in house-cleaning is not to raise a dust, but to gather it together in such a manner that it can be quietly removed and got rid of. Before the carpets are taken up, they should be sprinkled with a good coating of dampened material. The old-fashioned tea-leaves are good in their way, but can seldom be had in sufficient quantities. Clean sawdust, chaff, finely-cut hay or straw, or coarse bran washed free from flour and dust, are all good substitutes for the tea-leaves. A liberal coating of such matter, well dampened, but not wet, spread upon a carpet and brushed smartly over it, will keep dust from rising, and at any time will improve its appearance. The water used to dampen this material would be made a disinfectant by dissolving in it a small quantity of carbolic acid; one part in two or three hundred is efficient. The damp material may, when used for the carpets, be swept into one corner and afterwards spread over the bare floor, more water being sprinkled over it, and used to gather the thick dust generally found beneath the carpets.

House-cleaning should commence at the top of the house and work downwards. In this case it may be undertaken by spells, with intervening rests.

After the floors are cleared, the walls and ceilings claim attention. If no special cleaning is needed, a brush of soft hair is the best to use on them to remove dust. Here I will describe an improvement on the common step-ladder. This is usually made with legs of equal length, and therefore a person, when using a long one, can not get quite so close to the wall as may be desired, and is obliged to reach over and run the risk of falling. A step-ladder should be made with the back legs shorter than the front ones, so that the back will stand almost perpendicularly, as shown in the engraving. It may then be placed as close to a wall as may be desired. Any step-ladder may be altered by taking off an inch or two of the back legs. A ladder should never be mounted unless the iron hook or cord to keep it from spreading is used.

A very beautiful whitening for walls and ceilings may be made by slaking the best lime in hot water, covering up to keep in the steam, and straining the milk of lime through a fine sieve; add to a pailful half a pound of common alum, two pounds of

sugar, three pints of rice-flour made into a thin, well-boiled paste, and one pound of white glue dissolved slowly over the fire. It should be applied with a paint-brush when warm.

Paint should be cleaned by using only a little water at a time and changing often; a soft flannel cloth or sponge is better than cotton or a brush; a piece of pine wood with a sharp point should be used for the corners. Where the paint is stained with smoke, some ashes or potash-lye may be used. A soft linen towel should be used for wiping dry. Glass should not be cleaned with soap; a little paste of whiting and water should be rubbed over, and with another cloth it should be rinsed off, and the glass polished with a soft linen or old silk handkerchief. Alcohol or benzine is a good thing to clean glass, and clean paper is probably better than any cloth, sponge, or towel; dry paper leaves an excellent polish. Marble may be cleaned with a mixture of two parts of common soda, one part of pumice-stone, and one of chalk, finely powdered, and tied up in a fine muslin rag; the marble is wetted with water, the powder shaken over it, and it is rubbed with a soft cloth until clean, then washed in clean water and dried with a soft linen or silk handkerchief. No soap or potash should be allowed on marble. A good furniture polish is made by melting two ounces of beeswax, one ounce of turpentine, and one dram of powdered resin together, with a gentle heat, and rubbing on when cold, with a soft flannel cloth, and polishing with a soft linen or silk cloth. If for mahogany, a little Indian-red may be mixed in. Cracks in furniture may be filled with putty, mixed with Indian-red or burnt umber, to get the desired shade. When dry it will take an equal polish with the wood.

How to Paper a Room.

Old paper may be removed by wetting thoroughly with water, and when soaked, it will easily strip off. If lime-wash has been used on a wall on which it is desired to paper, the paper may be made to stick by washing the wall with vinegar, or water which has

this, creamy liquid is made; it should then be boiled, when it will thicken; if too thick, it may be thinned by adding boiling water. A little carbolic acid in the paste will keep it sweet and prevent mold. The paper should be cut to proper lengths, sufficient in quantity to finish the room, before pasting is commenced. Enough spare paper should be



Fig. 1.—PASTE-PAIL AND BRUSH.

left at top or bottom, to match the pattern evenly. These lengths should be laid evenly one over another, and the bench should be a little longer than the lengths of paper. The paste should be applied with a broad brush similar to the white-wash brushes, and should be laid on quickly, or the paper will soon become tender. If a piece of tin be fastened to the brush it can be hooked to the side of the pail and prevent much "messing" with the paste (see Figs. 1 and 2.) The cheap sorts of wall paper should be avoided, if possible. They contain generally twenty-five to forty per cent of clay, and a very common material for the pulp is cow-dung; only a very small proportion consists of fiber of rope, matting, or other coarse material of any strength, and in putting it on a wall it will often fall to pieces in the hands. Two persons are required to lay on paper with rapidity, one to paste and one to apply the paper. When the paper is pasted it should be handed to the person on the ladder, who holds it about a foot from the top end,



Fig. 2.—PASTE-BRUSH.



Fig. 3.—PASTING AND PUTTING ON WALL-PAPER.

been made sour by the admixture of sulphuric acid (oil of vitriol). Papering is very easily done by making a bench on which to paste, of boards placed on two empty flour-barrels. Common flour-paste is made by mixing smoothly in cold water wheat or rye flour (rye makes the strongest paste) until a

and lays it evenly against the wall at the top, allowing the upper end to hang over on the backs of the hands (Fig. 3). By looking down the wall it may be seen when it matches the previously-laid length, and should then be brought gently to the wall, the backs of the hands then pressed against the wall