

The Australian  
Women's Weekly presents . . .

# The Housewife's Companion

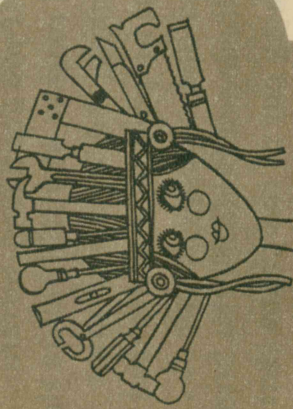
Condensed from the book by  
**BRIDGET NELSON-SULLIVAN**, pub-  
lished by **Thomas Nelson and Sons.**

● If you are a long-suffering wife and mother who still thinks that a breaking back is the price that must be paid for a contented husband and a happy family . . . or a disillusioned bride on the brink of walking out of the chaos that was to be the cosiest nest for miles around . . . or a career girl experiencing your first painful encounter with a bedsitter or flat life . . . take heart! Here is sane advice that will lead you gaily through many aspects of running a home with ease and efficiency.



# The HOUSEWIFE'S COMPANION

## or the next best thing to a man about the house



● Some husbands are born handy, others, less handy, occasionally can be cajoled into handiness. Then there are the rest who just can't be handy at all. Who then is to be the household's odd-jobber and fixer? Who indeed! It is to the hand that rocks the cradle that these handy tips and short-cuts to save time, trouble, and temper are dedicated.

### A

**Ablaze** it is, then. For a pots-and-pans fire (do keep a careful watch on shallow pans of boiling fat, because these are a hot favorite in the fire-starting stakes) quickly plonk a lid on. If you can find a long-handled fork to plonk with, use this and save the risk of burnt fingers. If you've neither fork nor lid, then out with the washing soda (or bath salts of the crystal variety) and throw this into the pan to smother the flames. If a fire *really* looks like getting out of control, grab a woollen blanket (even if it's your best one it's better to sacrifice this than your whole house) and throw it over the flames to smother them.

**Ammonia:** Now here's an amenable maid-of-all-work if ever there was! A bottle of this adaptable, inexpensive liquid will pay for itself ten times over if put to such domestic duties as these:

● On washdays, add a little to the soapy soaking water for "whites" — it will loosen dirt and restore whiteness to your wash. Add still more to the wash water of work clothes to soften and remove grease. A big advantage of ammonia is that it has nothing of the harsh effects of bleach.

● Upholstered furniture that has been buttered by the kids or soiled in some other way can be de-battered if sponged over with ammoniated water — as can carpets.

● When washing glassware, give it new sparkle by adding a few drops of ammonia to the rinsing water. Add a little ammonia to your window-washing water. And use still more (2 tablespoons to each quart of water) to put new shine on tiles.

● If, on the other hand, you want to take the shine *off* things like woollen and worsted garments and the seats of well-worn trousers, ammonia will oblige in this direction, too. Just sponge offending shiny areas with an ammonia-and-water solution, and then press with a damp cloth and a warm iron. Yet more of the solution can be applied to sponging down soiled clothes.

● Blend a little ammonia into glycerine to make a lotion that will whiten as well as soften your hands.

● Add a few drops of ammonia to the final rinse water after you've washed your hair — to help bring out the highlights.

● And, again on the subject of your crowning glory, try dunking your hair-brush up and down in warm ammoniated water — it helps clean it more quickly and thoroughly. And ditto your comb and clothes brush while you're at it.

● Finally, when you've just about finished hitting the ammonia bottle, add a few drops to your bath water — it makes a wonderful pecker-upper.

### B

**Beeswax** is something for which we should shower blessings on our busy little friend — the bee.

● Keep a lump of beeswax in your sewing basket. Rubbed along thread, it increases its strength and durability when used for such tough jobs as sewing on buttons and leather patches, and for mending bags, belts, and shoes. When sewing stiff and hard fabrics, a little wax rubbed along the thread will help it slide more easily through the material.

● Take a tip from French laundresses. Tie a small lump of beeswax in a square of flannel. When your iron is hot, run the bag quickly over its surface and then polish with a clean duster. You'll find it helps give a finer finish to your ironing.

● When you want to get a screw started in a hard-to-reach spot, rub the screw head across a lump of beeswax so that the slot is filled with wax — it will help hold the screwdriver blade in place until the screw gets started. You'll find,

too, that rubbing the threads of screws with beeswax makes them easier to get into walls or woodwork.

● And, finally, for the few minutes it takes to make, beeswax is still one of the best and most economical floor polishes. Grate an ounce of beeswax into a jam jar and pour on a teacup of turpentine (my grandmother used whisky, but excellent as her recipe is it hardly qualifies in today's economy stakes). Put the jar in a warm place or stand in a saucepan of water over low heat until the wax dissolves — and that's it.

**Blotting paper:** Use it in place of shelf paper in the kitchen — particularly on saucepan shelves. Its surface quickly blots up moisture or grease left on the pans and helps deaden the putting-away din. It's also commendable as lining for shelves holding bottles and jars with drippy or dribbly habits.

### C

**Candles** and their subsequent stubs are so handy about the house that they should be burnt down to their final flicker.

● Scent and other liquids can't spill when travelling if you seal the rim where the stopper and bottle join with a little melted

## HINTS FROM A TO Z, cont.

candle wax. Use it in the same way on scent bottles that have been opened but are not likely to be used for some time, to prevent the contents evaporating.

- Stop windows from rattling when the wind blows by easing melted candle wax (use a matchstick or a rounded knife blade) between the glass and frame where the putty has dried out or cracked.

- Speaking of lights, burn a candle when party-giving. It makes an attractive light (in Scandinavian countries a burning candle in the home is considered a sign of welcome), and also serves to disperse cigarette and pipe smoke.

- **Tip to make candles burn evenly and not drip: chill them in the refrigerator for 24 hours before using.**

**Cracks in walls.** Apart from looking none too pretty, these can also be psychologically disturbing if one stops to think about them. So when they start troubling the subconscious mind as well as the conscious one, something must be done about them. One way is to tackle the job like an expert.

See your hardware store friend (if he isn't your friend yet, he soon will be if you're taking this handywoman business at all seriously!). Tell him your problem, being sure to mention the type of wall that's cracked — e.g., whether it's a steamy kitchen or bathroom — so he can advise you on the best type of filler to use.

Then, in an old pudding basin, mix up your filler — alabastine, fibrous, or cellulose. But go easy on the liquid and keep the consistency fairly thick, for it is required to expand in the crack and won't do so if it's too runny. And, having eased the filler into the crack with a knife blade, curb your impatience to scrape away the excess mess too soon — it's best done when almost dry, for it reduces the risk of "pulling out" the filling.

When — and only when — the filling is completely dry, sandpaper it smooth and level with the rest of the surface. And, finally, finish off by decorating over the crack—that was to match the rest of your wall or room.

The other method (very decorative and

certainly easier provided you're the out-of-sight-out-of-mind type who won't get grey hairs about whether what's underneath is getting worse) is simply to cover your long, trailing crack with long, trailing ivy or some other equally obliging potted greenery.

## D

**Doors and drawers** that respectively squeak and stick can madden even the mildest of mankind. But doors can be soothed into silence by rubbing the hinges with any of the following: petroleum jelly, talcum powder, a moistened lead pencil, olive oil, or any other light oil.

Drawers can be similarly soothed by rubbing hard washing soap or kerosine on to the sticking surface — don't ever force them.

Spare a thought, too, for your locks and latches. Many a good lock has come to grief before its time for want of oil. And many a door has had to be banged unnecessarily hard for an unoiled latch to catch. And, while you're at it, what about a spot of oil on the garden gate?

## E

**Electrical ideas:** If a light bulb has broken to leave a jagged glass stub in the socket, this will be less dangerous to remove if you embed it in the corner of a bar of soap. Twist the soap and the stub will come away with it. Then cut off the affected corner of soap and discard it.

- To ensure maximum light and brightness from light bulbs, dust them regularly and throw away any that are blackened with use. Electricity bills are high enough without paying full rates for current and then getting poor light from discolored or worn-out bulbs.

- Two hooks screwed into the skirting-board near an electric point, two inches apart and facing outward, make a simple bracket round which to wind excess wire, which can be the cause of some of the nastiest accidents in the home.

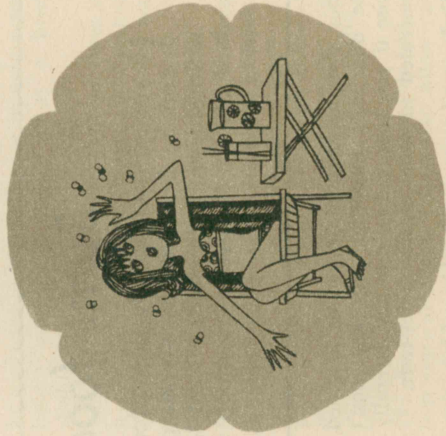
## F

**Flies:** Happily, these horrid creatures with their unhealthy habits buzz about our homes far less in these pressure-spray days. But it's as well to have a few supplementary shoo-fly ways up your sleeves.

One is to sprinkle oil of lavender (its powerful but pleasant odor is anathema to flies) on to a clean piece of rag and rub it over window- and doorframes, windowsills, and other places where flies enter and settle. Or you can rub a suspicion of kerosine on your windowglass and frames.

Another buzz-off tip is to tie a few cloves in a small piece of muslin and hang it on the light fixture. Try, too, having a pot of mint handy — flies don't care much for this.

If it's mosquitoes that bother you, place a pot of basil on your kitchen windowsill or outside on your terrace — what the mint does to flies and insects in general basil does to mosquitoes.



## G

**Garden:** As a handywoman, chances are you'll find yourself being handy out here in no time at all. Since the subject of weeds is bound to crop up sooner or later, it's comforting to know that a perished

hot-water bottle makes a marvellous kneeling pad.

Old laddered nylons (and who hasn't some of these?) can also be relegated to the garden — for storing bulbs. Slip a bulb into the stocking toe, tie a knot in the stocking just above it, add another bulb, tie another knot, and so on. Hung up in the shed or garage the stockings allow air to circulate through their mesh and keep each bulb in good condition.

- Plant night-scented stocks close to your windows and doors so that on summer nights everyone may be enchanted by their exotic scent.

- Add color and gaiety by ringing the base of a tree with pots of flowering plants such as geraniums. Hide the pots with a second, outer ring of large stones.

**Glass:** Stained glass is not attractive — anyway, not the kind that takes the form of discoloration inside bottles, decanters, and small-necked vases — and is maddeningly difficult to remove. But next time you look darkly through what should be a piece of clear glass, shake up (according to the ingredients currently available) one of the following kitchen cocktails:

1. Warm detergent suds and a couple of tablespoons of raw rice.
2. Warm water, 1 tablespoon of washing soda, and any egg-shells (crushed) left over from breakfast or baking.
3. Warm water, 1 tablespoon vinegar, and the tealeaves from your last brew.
4. Warm water with a small peeled and grated potato added.

Almost fill the glass with any of these concoctions, leave to stand for an hour, giving a brisk shake-up any time you're within shaking distance. Then empty, rinse out with warm, sudsy water, and follow with a final rinse of clean water before drying.

If you're in no special hurry to use the glassware (i.e., no flowers wilting for want of water in the vase, or guests for want of sherry in the decanter), try filling with water to which two teaspoons of ammonia have been added, and leave to stand overnight before rinsing as above.

**Continued overleaf**

## HINTS FROM A TO Z, cont.

**Glycerine:** Mr. Webster, in his dictionary, defines glycerine as "an odorless, colorless, syrupy liquid." To the handywoman, however, this is surely far too mundane a description of a wonderful commodity that she can — *inter alia* — drop into the rinse water of washable leather gloves to keep them supple; blend into the rinse water of woollens and blankets for fluffiness' sake; rub into stained materials to soften the stain and make it easier to rinse out afterwards with cold water; add to the bird bath in winter to keep it from freezing; and mix with rose-water to make a really excellent hand lotion.

## H

**Hair-dryers:** If you haven't already thought up a few ways in which your hair-dryer can work for you (like drying off the dog, for instance), here are a few starting suggestions.

- For quickly drying the inside of small-necked bottles and decanters and salt and pepper shakers (all of which take for ever and a day to dry if left to themselves), just direct the dryer nozzle inside them.
- When you wash or clean a small area of carpet or upholstered furniture, use your dryer to remove moisture quickly and so prevent its leaving a ring.
- To help defrost the freezing compartment of a refrigerator, direct the dryer nozzle on to the iced-up area for a few minutes.
- Speed up the drying of lingerie by placing garments on a plastic-covered hanger, covering with a large plastic bag sealed or tied up at the bottom, then putting the hair-dryer nozzle in the top and tying lightly around bag and nozzle.
- Dry wet shoes by placing the nozzle of the dryer inside each of them for a few minutes.
- When you're in a hurry to wash-and-help speed-up the process.
- After washing a fabric lampshade, pat off excess moisture with an old towel, and then use the dryer for a few minutes to

prevent the metal frame from rusting and staining the material.

## I

**Ice:** When setting a bowl on a mound of ice, stop it slipping by placing a rubber preserving jar ring under the bowl.

A block of ice melts less quickly when insulated by wrapping it in a piece of blanket or flannel and/or several thicknesses of newspaper.

## K

**Key notes:** There are only two ways to put a key into a spring lock, but the law of averages lets us down badly here by having us do fit upside down nine times out of ten. To alter this state of affairs, dab a spot of red nail polish on one edge of the round part of the key handle to show at a glance which side is "up."

The frustration of being locked out of

## Burnt food cover-up

If you've accidentally burnt food in a saucepan, the burnt taste can be banished by standing the offending saucepan in cold water to reach up to the food level and leaving it until the food is cool. Then salvage as much as you can and continue cooking in a clean pan.

your own house because you've slammed the door and forgotten your key won't arise if you keep a duplicate key carefully concealed in some outside hidey-hole.

**Kitchen scissors** (preferably of stainless steel) save time and are often far safer to use than knives. Apply them to snipping cores from grapefruit, preparing oranges for fruit salad, and cutting pineapple rings into small pieces. Or for snipping off fish fins, removing excess fat from meat, and cutting it into pieces, taking off bacon rinds, removing tough

membranes from liver and kidneys — and then for cutting the liver into pieces: it won't slither and slip out of your hands so easily.

When preparing vegetables, use scissors for cutting away discolored leaves from cabbages and similar vegetables, trimming cauliflowerers into flowerettes, chopping chives and parsley, and preparing garnishes of the right size and shape.

Other uses include cutting up bread for bread-and-butter puddings, and cutting up sticky foods such as dates, glace cherries, and marshmallows — for this, dip the scissors in water frequently so the foods won't stick to them.

**Knitting wool** that has previously been used can easily be straightened out by winding it round a piece of wood or stiff cardboard and dipping in lukewarm water. When dry, the wool will have lost its kinks.

When you want to wind a skein of wool into a ball and there's no second pair of hands around, slip the skein over a large lampshade, loosen the ring that holds it

in place, and wind away. The shade will turn easily and help you do the job in a flash.

For good measure when knitting, mark off one of the needles into inches with dabs of red nail polish — and avoid those constant searches for the tape measure.

Plastic knitting-needles that have bent out of shape can be restored by holding them in the steam of a boiling kettle (or dipping in very hot water) and straightening with the fingers. Plunge into cold water afterwards to "set." *Don't* hold them near an open flame.

**Log book:** Here's something no really efficient and well-organised homemaker should be without. So take a salty, sea-going tip and invest in a notebook that you keep up to date weekly or daily, like a ship's log book, with the hundred-and-one details of running a home, from dinner-party menus to gift-giving. It will save a lot of head-scratching when you can't remember just when the children had what injections; whether you served the Whittakers your special Boeuf Stroganoff last time they came; or whether that rather nasty pink bedjacket you think you can palm off on Aunt Emily for Christmas was the one sent you two years ago by Cousin Hilda or by dear old Aunt Emily herself. Your log book will neatly extricate you from all such quandaries and save you making social bloomers into the bargain. Use it, therefore, as an *aide-memoire* on all such matters as:

**Decorating:** After you're through with decorating a room, note in your log book how much paper and paint were used, together with details of color, pattern, number, and anything else you'll need to know if you have to re-order for patching-up purposes. List curtain yardage and widths, too, plus other decorative details you may wish to refer to later on.

**Entertaining:** After you've had friends to lunch, tea, or a dinner party, jot down who came and what foods you served — and avoid repeating the same menu to the same people. Note, too, any special diets and food dislikes as you hear about them.

**Family and friends:** Record all birthdays, anniversaries, and other red-letter days, plus details of presents given and received.

**Finance:** Itemise all tax payments, insurance policies, licences, and other major expenditures, together with the dates you paid out.

**Garden:** Note times of planting, months for taking plants indoors and moving them out again, dates of first and last frosts, how cold it got last winter, which plants

## HINTS FROM A TO Z, cont.

suffered most, and any other information liable to be helpful in the future.

**Health:** Section off a few pages for keeping account of visits to doctors and dentists, treatment given, medicines prescribed, dates, and details of injections.

**Maintenance:** Include details of any maintenance and repair work done on your home, plus such other useful incidental information as when chimneys were swept; when storage tanks or boilers were renewed or scaled; when new elements were installed in water heaters; when and what work was done on appliances, furniture, and other equipment, and how much was charged for it.

**Purchases:** As you make purchases for your home, list them in your log book with details of where you bought them and what you paid.

## M

**Moths:** We can't often detect the presence of those greedy little larvae until the damage is done — but once we see moths around the place we can be pretty sure that although they themselves are harmless the eggs already laid by them will be busily hatching out into harmful larvae, ready and waiting to devour our carpets, soft furnishings, and clothing.

There are many effective repellent sprays on the market, but if you haven't got a can at the ready in your cupboard, here's what grandma used to do when faced with a similar emergency.

If you discover them dining off *your* carpets, lightly press over the infested area with a hot iron and a damp cloth. Keep the cloth well dampened, because it's the resulting steam that kills the larvae.

If carpets and rugs are badly infested, soak with benzene, which will kill the moths without affecting the carpet's colors. You'll find that clean newspaper laid flat under the carpet, or between that and the underfelt, makes a good deterrent.

Larvae feed on animal substances such

as hair, wool, and fur (and that includes pets' pelts, too). They also like grease spots. In order, therefore, not to leave a banquet for them, good housekeeping is essential in the form of daily vacuuming, plenty of light and air, and thorough periodic cleaning of out-of-the-way spots.

To prevent moths from attacking clothing, see that all garments are clean before putting them away. Remove all spots and stains and traces of make-up, empty out all pockets, wipe small crummy ones over with benzene or soap and water, and dry well. If clothes have been attacked, remove them from their storage place and brush and air them thoroughly, paying special attention to the underside of coat collars and pocket flaps, turn-ups, and seams where eggs could be laid.

If knitting wool is to be wound but not to be used for some time, use a camphor ball as a core when winding the hank into a ball. Or, if bought in a ball, slip one into the centre.

## N

**Nail polish:** Aside from its excellent secondary uses of stopping stocking runs and covering over labels to keep them from smearing (apply it over prescription labels on bottles stored in the bathroom, and over those on parcels to be posted on wet days), colorless nail polish can also be applied to coat the eyelets of white shoes and help prevent discoloration of laces and tongues.

## P

**Pastry boards** tend to slip and slide about as one works. Put a firm stop to these slippery tricks by placing a rubber sink mat or damp cloth under the board, or by gluing a small rubber preserving jar ring under each of the four corners.

**Pictures:** (1) The height pictures should be hung is a matter of taste — the only golden rule being that it should permit easy examination of them.

Different-sized paintings can have a uniform bottom level, top level, or centre

## Make your own shampoo

**W**HEN you want to wash your hair but have no shampoo in the house, a cake of toilet soap can come to your rescue. Put it in a saucepan, pour on a pint of boiling water, and simmer until the soap dissolves. When cool, pour into a wide-mouthed jar, adding (if you like) a little bay rum or eau-de-cologne. When cold, the soap mixture will form a jelly that can be mixed as required with a little hot water and rubbed into the scalp like an ordinary shampoo.

line. In a low room it is perhaps preferable to align paintings along their bases, and in a high-ceilinged room a top alignment will often achieve a less "jumpy" look than a bottom or centre one.

(2) Nails are not to be trusted as picture bearers, for — particularly with large paintings — too big a strain is placed on one little article which at best has but a precarious hold on the wall. If you *must* use nails, then hang light pictures only on them — and give the nails greater purchase in a plaster wall by dipping in cold water before you knock them in at a head-slightly-pointing-upwards angle.

Better by far to hang light pictures on hooks held by blue steel pins and brackets, and heavier ones by plugging the wall first and *then* fitting a nail, hook, or screw into the plug.

(3) Ordinary picture cord is fine for hanging lightweight pictures — but shouldn't be asked to bear anything over ten pounds. If a picture tips the scales at more than this, use stranded copper wire instead. Except for *very* heavy pictures, which should —

(4) Be suspended from a picture rail on two vertical chains (these also allow easy up-and-down adjustments) hung from picture hooks and fitted over smaller hooks screwed into the back of the frame at a height which gives the painting a slight forward tilt. A neat way to ensure that pictures always hang level is to wind a very thin piece of wire round both the centre top of the cord (or wire) and the hook.

(5) The number and position of pictures in a room depend on the hanging space available after doors, windows, and back-to-the-wall furniture pieces have taken their whack. If there's room for only a few pictures, remember that these should really be worth looking at and not regarded as just a sort of glorified wall-paper frame-up.

(6) Avoid placing glass-fronted pictures opposite a window unless you use non-reflecting glass. Direct light causes ordinary glass to have mirror-like reflections.

**Pots and pans:** Earthenware casseroles with glazed interiors and unglazed exteriors that can be cooked in and carried to the table are almost as old as history — and yet as modern as the minute. But the age-old way to cure them of the clay taste and prevent them from cracking is still the best: rub the new dish over inside and out with the cut surface of a clove of garlic, then fill it with water, tossing in a handful of celery leaves, onion peelings, leek tops, and carrot scrapings; let the mixture simmer (an asbestos pad underneath is a must to prevent the utensil cracking with the direct heat) for two hours. Drain off the liquid, leave the pot to dry out thoroughly, and it's ready.

## R

**Recipes:** Cut-out recipes (and how many of us *don't* snip out the most appetising

*Continued overleaf*

## HINTS FROM A TO Z, cont.

and appealing ones from newspapers and magazines?) will stay free of food splashes and be easier to look at as you cook if you:

- Keep them high and dry by placing the handle of a dessert fork in a tumbler or small jar and then slipping the recipe between the upended prongs.

- Paste each recipe (or write it out clearly) on a postcard, and punch a small hole in the centre top of each card. When needed, hang on a cup hook or small nail placed in the wall at a convenient height over your work area. When not in use, file the cards away in a shoe box or drawer.

**Refrigerator:** To check whether the light really *does* go off when you close the door, you need only feel the light bulb when you first open up your fridge. If the bulb is cool, no need to worry; if it's hot, you'll be well advised to have it professionally inspected.

- When you want to reposition a fridge (or some similarly hefty appliance), here's a tip that's kind to your flooring and kinder still to you: find a strip of carpeting or a rug a few feet longer than the width of your fridge, and get a helping hand to ever-so-slightly lift one side of the appliance and then the other while you — quip as a tick — slip the upside-down carpet underneath. Then just tug on the overlapping ends, and you'll be surprised how easily you can move this particular mountain!

## S

**Smells:** These days the easiest way to freshen a room is to spray it with one of the excellent air deodorisers now on the market. But if you are on a tight budget, or it's not convenient to go shopping in a hurry, here are a few do-it-yourself methods:

To free a room from the smell of tobacco smoke, put a little soda in a jar and sprinkle it with a few drops of ammonia and three or four drops of oil of lavender. Add a few tablespoons of boiling water and leave uncovered in the room to give off a clean, refreshing odor. Or mix 2 tablespoons of ammonia in

water in an old cup or small bowl and leave to stand overnight. Freshen up stale-smelling cupboards in the same way.

Other good anti-smell tactics are to place a peeled onion in a bucket of cold water (good for removing paint smells and similarly pungent odors); placing an open dish of vinegar on the stove or on an adjacent counter top while cooking; adding a few drops of ammonia to a small saucepan of boiling water on the stove.

To rid your hands of those horribly haunting onion, garlic, and fish smells, run them under the cold tap for a minute after you've finished handling these foods, and then wash them with soap and water. Or else rub your hands with lemon juice or vinegar before washing with soap and water.

A quick, down-to-earth way to rid a knife blade of food smells is merely to thrust it into the nearest bit of soil — be it a potted plant indoors (mind the roots, though) or a patch of garden.

**String:** 1. Paint an old tin funnel with bright enamel and hang it on the kitchen wall. Pop a ball of string in the top and thread the end (always pulling it from the *middle* of the ball, mark you) through the tube so it can be cut off in lengths as desired.

2. Cover a large tin with adhesive plastic material and punch a hole somewhere just above the bottom rim. Put a ball of string in the tin (add, too, a small pair of scissors if you've any to spare) and thread the string end out through the hole.

3. Use a copper kettle, decorative teapot, or any spouted item that's attractive but no longer serviceable for its original purpose. Keep it handy on a shelf with a ball of string inside and the end pulled out through the spout.

## T

**Toolbox tips:** A time-saving tip for extricating a nail, bolt, or screw from a tin full of such maddeningly mixed items with the minimum of sorting, sifting, and nail-chipping is to turn the lot out (the way you do for buttons) on to a newspaper or the pages of an opened magazine. After you've found what you're looking for, grasp the edges of the paper and funnel the rest back down the fold into the tin.

- A further refinement for picking up small tacks, screws, and pins is to use a magnet. Put a piece of paper over the "magic" end of the magnet and pick up the items you want. Then turn the magnet upside down, remove the paper — and you'll have the required hardware handy.

- Another hard-on-the-hands job is screwing in cup hooks and other small hooks and eyes. Let a gimlet (a handy tool for boring holes) help you get a good start, and then use the slotted end of a penknife handle to get to grips with the hooks and eyes, making them easier to turn and tighten.

## V

**Vacuum cleaner variations:** Let your vacuum cleaner appendages help you with such domestic odd jobs as these: running over the fleecy lining of a sheepskin coat or the fur lining of boots to remove dust and smooth the fleece; cleaning out the inside of suitcases after a holiday (the upholstery attachment will quickly banish

## Hammer and nails

**FINGERS** — particularly feminine ones — hate coming under the hammer. One simple way, then, to protect the fingers is with a comb. Wedge the nail between two of its teeth and hold one end of the comb while you get the nail going. Once it's firmly started, remove the comb, and drive the nail home.

all remaining traces of sand, dust, and fluff): removing stray hairs from neck, shoulders, clothes, and floor after a home haircut; cleaning and fluffing up children's soft stuffed toys.

## W

**Wardrobe wrinkles:** Best way to keep the crease in slacks and trousers is to hang them by their turn-ups. If you're short of trouser-hangers, use spring-type clothes-pegs on ordinary hangers. If you're clean out of clothes-pegs, too (or if you're travelling), put the trouser turn-ups in the top drawer of a chest, then close the drawer almost shut. The trousers hang down and keep their crease far better than if draped over a chair back.

- A simple way to stop skirts slipping off the ends of wooden hangers is to carve a small V-shaped notch on the top of the hangers one inch from the end. The notches will then hold the skirt loops securely in position.

- To stop skirts and other garments slithering off wire coat-hangers, curve the hangers upwards at the ends to look rather like a Cheshire cat's grin.

## Z

**Zippers** will stay at their zippiest if you remember to close them before washing garments. If they tend to get stiff, rub a little soft soap on both sides when closed, unzip, and rub more soap over the teeth.

If a zip does get stuck when you're inside it, chances are that it has got its teeth into a bit of the placket. In this case it's better to pull the zip down, ease the material out of the way, and start again.

Back zips are difficult — often pretty well impossible — things to reach. For those occasions when there's no husband handy to zip you up, it's worth remembering that a longish piece of thin string threaded through the hole in the tab will help you pull up the zip without turning yourself into a contortionist.

# DOMESTIC BLESSINGS

● Such ordinary, everyday, everybody-has-them articles as plastic bags, adhesive tape, household foil, and foam rubber, are some of the happiest blessings of home life — and for many good reasons.

## PLASTIC BAGS

**T**HESSE take pride of place, since they are showered on us with practically everything we lay hands on these days, from carrots to cardigans, lettuces to lingerie.

There are endless ways in which plastic bags can be used to make domestic life more convenient. Try these few aids for a start:

- Plastic bags (free of holes and punctures) will speed up the process of thawing out frozen foods. Remove food from wrappings, put into a bag, fasten tightly with a rubber band, and place in a bowl of lukewarm water.
- Save room in your refrigerator or larder by keeping left-overs in bags. They'll protect the foods, make them easily identifiable, and keep strong odors in solitary confinement.
- Snip plastic bags into small circles to cover jars at your next jam session, and into larger circles to cover bowls and dishes so that foods inside *don't* pick up unwanted whiffs but *do* retain their own aromas and flavors.
- When extra ice-cubes are the order of the day (or evening), empty the ice-cube tray into a plastic bag and return this with the refilled tray to the freezing compartment. The bag will keep the cubes firmly frozen so that they *won't* stick together and *will* be handy for taking out in the quantity required.
- An easy way to make crumbs in a

hurry is to break a rusk into a small plastic bag and rub it between your palms.

- When away from home, potted plants will stay moist and lively for a few days if treated thus: give the plant and pot an extra-good soaking, allow excess moisture to drain away, and put a plastic bag over it. Fold the top of the bag down over the damp soil and tie loosely. Place the plant in a spot away from direct sunlight. The bag will prevent it from getting too dry while you're away.

- When knitting Fair Isle patterns, or things that call for several different-colored wools at once, avoid tangles by putting all into one transparent bag (the kind punctured with ventilation holes and given gratis at supermarkets), threading each ball through a separate hole, and tying the bag on top.
- When decorating a ceiling, a large plastic bag slipped over the light fixture and tied round the top will keep the fixture free from splashes and save the bother of dismantling and rehangng.
- Save small plastic bags that are roughly the size of luggage labels. Cut them carefully across the top and punch a hole in

## Care and storage tips

**B**EST way to dry plastic bags after washing is to stuff them with crumpled paper towelling or a tea-cloth and allow to drain. A neat and tidy way to store them is with a wooden, spring-type clothes-peg. Make a hole in one end of the peg, tie a loop of string through, and hang on a hook behind a kitchen cupboard door to keep a good grip on the bags.



the centre top of each. Hang them on a pegboard near your sewing-machine and use for buttons, hooks, tape, and other sewing supplies, so you'll be able to find what you need at a glance without having to rummage through your sewing kit every time.

- A good tip for getting lettuces and other salad vegetables crisp is to wash and drain them well, pop them into a plastic bag, and store them until required in the refrigerator—on the shelf just under the freezing compartment. Then all you need do at meal-time is to transfer them to a salad bowl and toss with a dressing.

- Tuck in a couple of extra-large bags when packing. Use one for bringing home dirty clothes, and the other for transporting beach clothes and towels that are not *quite* dry enough to be packed next to other things.

## TAPE TRICKS

**A** ROLL of adhesive tape is a sufficiently deserving home help to rate a prize with every modern housewife. As a general help around the house it will, for a start, star in the following ways:

- To hold up dress, skirt, and curtain hems for the time it takes you to get down to a proper needle-and-thread job.
- To help the pleated skirt of a loose-cover hang more evenly. Apply tape strips vertically to each fold at the back of the pleats. At laundering or cleaning time just remove tape, and then renew it when replacing cover.
- To end the domestic dilemma of salt and pepper corks that get lost — either out of or inside their shakers. The cure is as simple as sticking a piece of tape over the corkless hole!
- To place over the open end of yet other salt and pepper shakers and stop them seasoning a whole picnic basket.
- To facilitate flower arranging. Fix strips of tape criss-cross-fashion over the top of a wide-necked jar, with tape ends sticking firmly an inch or two down the sides. The squares thus formed over the top of the vase make flower arranging easy.

**Continued overleaf**

## DOMESTIC BLESSINGS, cont.

- To fasten the paper collar of a soufflé dish in position and keep its ends together while you get a piece of string tied round it (no easy feat singlehanded!).
- To prevent rough bases of ashtrays, lamps, and vases from damaging table tops. Stop such rough-house tricks by taping over all offending surfaces.
- To keep cracked eggs from deteriorating. Taping over the cracks before storing eggs away will keep them fresh until required.

● To exclude air from bottles and tins. The charge can be kept in bottled drinks that have been opened by replacing the cap on the bottle and taping round it. In the same way, tins (such as those containing fruit cakes that are to be stored away for a while) can be made airtight by sealing the lid joint with tape.

● To protect fingers when paring very hard fruits and vegetables. Tape the inside of your thumb and forefinger before you start.

● To apply to a broken fingernail and stop it from catching on everything.

● To contain liquids safely inside bottles when travelling. Fit the corks tightly and tape around bottle necks. Scent bottles not likely to be used for some time should be sealed in this way to prevent evaporation.

● To cover, strip-by-strip, medicine-bottle labels and prescriptions, and so prevent spots, splashes, and smears from making them illegible.

## VIRTUES OF FOIL

FOIL can be applied to all manner of food preparation, and even help with the cleaning up afterward. Its familiar uses such as for baking potatoes and wrapping food are well known, but here are a few other ideas, too:

● Make it into an egg poacher when you want to keep eggs separate but don't possess a proper poaching pan. Cut 4-in.-squares of double-thickness foil, and form them into hollow cup shapes. Put a nut of butter in each, and float in 1 inch of gently boiling water in a large pan. When the butter melts, break an egg into

each cup, cover, and simmer for 4 to 6 minutes, or until the whites are firm. Lift the cups carefully from the pan, slide the eggs out, and serve on buttered toast, or on a bed of spinach or creamed potatoes.

● Line the bottom of the freezer compartment of a refrigerator with foil to prevent ice cube trays and frozen-food packets from sticking.

● Cover the breast of a chicken or turkey loosely with foil during roasting. It will keep the meat moist and flavorsome, eliminate the need for basting, but at the same time allow enough direct heat to reach the breast and brown it. If you've stuffed the bird, cover this over with crumpled foil—it will keep the stuffing moist and save the bother of having to sew up the opening and undo it again at serving-time. Cover, too, the ends of drum-sticks with small pieces of foil crumpled over the extreme ends to prevent them from burning and spoiling the appearance of the bird.

● Pastry that is browning too fast in the oven can be retarded by covering with foil.

## Wrapping paper

ADMIRABLE and abundant as are the uses of sticky tape, it does also have an irritating aspect. And that's the way it ruins pretty wrapping paper when undoing a parcel. But running a warm iron lightly over the tape will soften its adhesive, and with a gentle pull it will come off easily without damaging the paper, which can then be used again.

● Placing a layer of foil over a cooked milk pudding such as rice or boiled custard will help prevent (or at least minimise) the formation of a skin.

● Prevent reheated left-overs such as rice, vegetables, and spaghetti from getting too dry, and help retain their firmness (and color, too, in the case of vegetables), by placing them in foil, cupping it round them, and simmering, covered, in a little

boiling water in a saucepan for 10 to 15 minutes.

● You can also cook fresh vegetables in foil—and be assured they'll retain their flavor, color, and vitamin content. Season them and wrap them with a nut of butter in foil packets. Place in boiling water until done. A big advantage of cooking vegetables this way is that you can cook several different kinds in the same pan, removing each kind as it is done, knowing that the flavors of one kind won't have transferred themselves to another.

● When baking a cake or sponge, cut a strip of foil, lay it across the centre of the tin and up the sides with the ends extending  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch or so over the top of the tin. When the cake is cooked, pulling the foil will automatically loosen the bottom—the one part we can't reach with a knife, and the part that so often seems to stick.

● Store silver in foil to cut down on cleaning time.

● Transform jars and other mundane kitchen accessories into glamorous flower vases with foil. If you haven't a jug of just the size and shape you need, then find a suitable jar, bottle, or other kitchen container, cover it with foil, and use this.

● Pretty up plain flowerpots with foil, too—they look surprisingly gay and glamorous coated in silver.

● Prevent drips of candle grease from spoiling your cloths or tables by cutting small circles of foil to fit over your candles and catch the drips.

## WELCOME SPONGE

THESE days the sponge has bounced out of the bathroom to become, both in its rubber and foam form, a maid-of-all-work in the home. To keep sponges fresh put them in the washing-machine with a load of clothes, or else put them out in a good heavy downpour of rain. Wring them out when the rain stops and leave them to dry in the fresh air.

For bedroom and beauty use.

● Make scented sachets for linen cupboards and lingerie drawers. Soak small pieces of sponge in toilet water or eau-de-cologne and tuck them between layers of linen or lingerie.

● When you've finished your make-up, help it remain perfect much longer by dampening a piece of sponge in cold water and patting it carefully and gently over your face.

● Apply home-permanent solution with a piece of sponge—it holds more liquid than cottonwool and thus won't drip so much.

● Use sponges as pin-holders—for brooches on your dressing table; for nappy pins in the nursery; and for ordinary pins in your sewing drawer or in the pocket of your sewing-machine.

● Ease the irritation of sore elbows for anyone confined to bed for a long time. Sew small pockets into pyjama or nightie sleeves and fit small pieces of sponge into them. They help take the pressure off elbows—and can easily be slipped out for laundering.

In the kitchen.

A clean, slightly dampened sponge rubbed lightly over the top of a sponge cake (or other cake) before spreading on the icing will prove a splendid crumb-remover. Ardent cake bakers might find it worth while to keep a special sponge for this purpose, drying it after use and keeping it in a plastic bag.

● A food mincer clamped to a table top or work-counter can leave maddeningly hard-to-get-rid-of marks. But these can be avoided by inserting small pads of sponge between the working surface and the mincer before tightening. Around the house.

A sponge can be very useful when decorating. Tacked firmly on to the end of a stick or an old ruler, it's ideal for painting those hard-to-get-at-spots such as behind and between radiator bars, under heavy furniture, and behind immovable appliances—and it's excellent for cleaning these areas, too.

● A damp sponge on your writing table when you've lots of letters to write and stamps to stick will save a lot of licking.

● A thin piece of rubber placed under the foot pedal of an electric sewing-machine prevents it from sliding around on an uncarpeted floor.

● Embroidery work can be given that desirable "raised" look after laundering if laid face-down on a piece of cloth placed



## DOMESTIC BLESSINGS, cont.

on top of a piece of foam rubber for ironing.

● A potted plant can be kept moist when you're away for a few days by soaking a sponge well in water and standing it on a saucer or plate with the plant on top. The moisture will gradually soak up to the plant through the hole in the bottom of the pot.

● Gardenias, orchids, and other such exotic flowers, will stay fresh and blooming several days longer if laid atop a piece of dampened sponge.

● Cut foam rubber into small "soft-spots" that can be stuck on to the bottoms of lamps, ashtrays, and so forth, to keep table tops free from scratches. Use these soft-spots also to keep pictures and mirror frames hanging straight, and as skidproof vibration protectors under glass table tops.



## FOR CHILDREN

A LARGISH square of foam-rubber to play on in a youngster's pen will save hurtful bumps and holey knees in garments.

● Little girls with fine hair usually have trouble with hair slides that slip. But a tiny, thin piece of rubber glued inside the slide will help it stay more firmly in place.

● Odd pieces of sponge cut into shapes make handy "paint-brushes" for children to dip in watercolors (or water tinted with food coloring) and make patterns on plain paper. (Bear in mind that this can also turn plain paper into gift paper at Christmas.) After the operation, the sponges are easily rinsed under the tap.

The Australian Women's Weekly — November 1, 1967

# GETTING DOWN TO WORK

● The big secret of keeping floors attractive is to give them a little attention at regular intervals. Here is some practical advice on how to get the best out of the various types.

## WOODEN FLOORS

DESPITE all the man-made marvels, wood still holds its own as one of the most satisfying and satisfactory of floorings. Its advantages are many—it adapts itself to all styles of decorating and makes the best-ever background for handsome rugs; it is resilient and possessed of excellent insulating qualities; it will not deteriorate if exposed to sunlight.

And if that's not enough, should its surface become mildly damaged, it can be renovated comparatively inexpensively by sanding down and polishing—a claim no other flooring can make.

We should give wooden floors regular daily care by sweeping them with a soft broom, mop, or the dusting tool of the vacuum-cleaner to remove surface dirt. See, though, that there's no oil on the brush or mop. Wood is absorbent, and water is its arch-enemy. Any spills should also be wiped up daily as they occur.

Put on the thinnest coat of wax, since an overwaxed floor, apart from being dangerous, will make heavy demands on your time and energy trying to bring up the polish and remove all traces of stickiness. Let the wax dry for 30 minutes and then polish.

Many wooden floors today are finished with lacquer, varnish, or shellac—or some other type of sealer—to protect them and show off their grain. Once the sealer has dried thoroughly it can be waxed and polished to provide an excellent finish that

will eliminate frequent waxings. Just give sealed floors the same daily treatment as ordinary wooden ones.

## LINOLEUM, RUBBER

THESE resilient floors pay off with better looks and longer wear if kept free from grit by cleaning daily with a cloth, mop, or soft broom, and washed as little as possible. When washing does become necessary, work quickly, a section at a time, with a piece of flannel or soft towel, wrung out of warm, mild suds (detergent suds are best for linoleum and soap-suds for rubber), rinsing each part with clear water and drying well before starting the next section—and remembering these four very important don'ts:

1. **Don't** use too strong a washing solution or you'll only need more clear water to remove it and may also cause color fading. 2. **Don't** let water seep through cracks or joints, as this causes rotting. 3. **Don't** use scouring powder or a stiff scrubbing brush for fear of scratching the surface. 4. **Don't** use very hot water—it causes rubber to perish and linoleum to become brittle.

If heel marks have badly scuffed these (or wood) floors, remove offending marks with soft steel-wool pad dipped in floor polish and rub gently over them. Then dry with a piece of soft towelling.

No matter how glossy they may be in their natural state, waxing is recommended for linoleum and rubber floors. The wax

serves to prevent dust and dirt scratching their finish, and gives greater lustre and depth to their colorings. But again be sparing—remembering that two well-polished light coats give better protection than one thick one which will harden only on top and leave a soft layer lurking underneath, waiting to absorb any ground-in grime.

Waxed floors should also be wiped over daily to remove whatever's going in the way of dust and dirt. And any spills should be wiped up pronto—or they may amalgamate with the wax as they harden and pull off some of that, too, when finally removed.

Never use oily mops or cloths on waxed floors—they'll streak the wax and leave a tacky surface particularly attractive to dirt. Here again, washing shouldn't be necessary too often—if you keep up with the daily dust-offs.

When too big a build-up of wax gives floors that tell-tale yellowish tinge, it's time to get down to ground level and use a reliable wax remover—a twice-a-year job in most households, best done at spring-cleaning time and again in the autumn.

One simple solution for removing old wax is to mix 4 tablespoons of detergent and 1 gill of ammonia with a gallon of warm water. Swab the floor sparingly with this, swirl it in with a soft brush and leave for a few minutes. Then mop it up, rinse with clean, cool water, and dry.

When the whole floor is quite dry again, apply a new coating of wax and polish.

## DOWN TO WORK, cont.

**Cork floors** (excellent noise-deadeners) should also be given a protective covering of two thin coats of wax, and then cleaned as for linoleums and rubber floorings.

## VINYL FLOORS

Vinyl and similar hard-surface plastic floors can be cleaned by scrubbing with warm detergent water and thoroughly rinsing and drying. These can also be waxed (preferably with a self-polishing liquid type)—but make sure that the floor is scrupulously clean first, or a dull finish will result.

## MASONRY FLOORS

This type of flooring, such as ceramic and mosaic tile, quarry tile, slate, marble, terrazzo, and brick, is extremely easy to maintain, and is, in point of fact, more frequently ruined by too-drastring cleaning than by plain hard wear. Except in the heaviest traffic areas, all the day-to-day care it requires is just a light swabbing with warm water and then mopping dry.

Once a week (or whenever more stringent measures are needed) scrub them with a stiff brush and hot, mild detergent, and thoroughly rinse and dry. This is by far the most effective way of "lifting" dirt and grease—and, in fact, most commercial cleaning firms employ this same method of cleaning masonry and other hard-surface floors, using powered rotating brushes. If you wish, you can run your vacuum cleaner over these floors first—this will capture rather than scatter dust and draw it out of corners and crannies.

Harsh scouring powders and cleansers aren't necessary on masonry floors and may do more harm than good. They're difficult to rinse away and can scratch and damage the surface, thus causing it to attract extra dirt, dull its finish, and ruin its appearance.

Here, once again, spills and stains should be wiped up immediately they occur, for although some of the foregoing materials are pretty well immune to stains, others are not, and in addition, any grout between joints could become discolored. While

masonry floors may be waxed if you wish, generally speaking this is both unnecessary and superfluous.

Waxing does nothing for glazed ceramic tiles, slate, or terrazzo, for instance, nor for marble, which it could either stain or make dangerously slippery.

Sealing is another treatment that is by no means essential, although some builders do recommend the sealing of new masonry floors to make them extra-repellent to dirt, dust, moisture, and accidents. However, if you want it done, sealing is a job best tackled by professionals.

**Terrazzo floors**, which are made up of marble chips set in cement and polished, should be cleaned with detergent and water. And, since these floors are composed of both porous and non-porous materials, be sure to wipe up spills and stains straight away.

## CARPET CARE

Do clean new carpets with a hand sweeper for the first six to eight weeks. A certain amount of "fuzzing" of loose pile is inevitable until it settles down, and a suction cleaner could remove this loose pile which should really settle into the carpet's base and lengthen its life expectation. However, if much dirt has been trodden in, it is better to remove it at once with a vacuum cleaner.

**Don't** apply a stiff whisk broom — or it will whisk away more than months of ordinary use.

**Don't** expose valuable carpets to glaring sunlight, or even the fastest colors will fade. So lower blinds or draw curtains whenever practicable.

Do distribute the wear of a carpet by changing it round occasionally, or by re-positioning your furniture to change "traffic lanes" so that these will not wear a path across the surface. Heavy furniture in particular should be moved from time to time—if only by an inch or so—to avoid permanent deep depressions in your carpet.

With wall-to-wall carpet, either change furniture arrangements occasionally to alter traffic flow, or place rugs or runners over the most trodden areas. But change

rug positions from time to time to allow the carpet to breathe.

Do, when furniture legs have made crush marks, fluff these up again by placing a dampened cloth over a hot iron, and holding this lightly over the spot for a few seconds (or you can hold a heated steam iron just above the marks). But remember, the idea is to steam up the pile, not iron it down. Afterwards, fluff it with the edge of a comb or with a comb, going against the direction of the pile. If you're not sure which way is "against," rub your fingers over the surface as you do with velvet, and feel which way the pile goes.

Do, if high heels or any other hazards

have snagged carpet loops or caused small tufts to rise above the pile of the carpet, snip—don't pull—these off level with the rest of the pile.

Do, if carpets curl up at the corners, place a damp cloth over them and run an iron lightly over the back and front for a minute. Weight the corners with books for a couple of days, then restore the pile by brushing or combing.

Do remember that overheated and over-dry rooms are bad for carpets and furnishings. Hot air causes fibres to dry out and become brittle. Fresh air, plus a certain amount of humidity, is necessary to prolong the life of carpets and other furnishings—and it's good for you, too!

# ON YOUR METAL

**M**ANY metals, ranging from shimmering, light aluminium and golden, gleaming brass to lustrous silver, have their places of honor in our homes today.

And, like any fine equipment, these "precious metals" also deserve their share of attention to help them lead a long and beautiful life.

The secret lies in knowing how to give them proper care without becoming a slave to them—and having to indulge in those long, restorative cleaning sessions so reminiscent of Grandmamma's day.

One basic important factor common to all metals is to keep them dust-free—for if dust is allowed to accumulate on them, it builds up into a greasy film which is not only hard to remove but can, in time, eat into the metal and cause pitting. Even pieces that are lacquered are affected by dust — so don't forget that duster.

**Aluminium** is a corrosion-resistant metal that has long been popular in the kitchen but is now appearing all over the house in all sorts of guises and sizes, from decorative accessories to furniture. Accessories such as jugs and trays are easy to keep

looking their best, for they need nothing more than regular dusting and periodic washing with soap or detergent and water and then just wiping. They need no polishing—and the only real caution called for is to avoid dropping or mishandling them as they do tend to dent. Aluminium furniture is cleaned in the same way, and if it's to be used out of doors, a light waxing is also recommended.

**Brass.** If this is not lacquered, clean it regularly by applying a brass-cleaner with a soft, dry cloth and polishing with a clean cloth. Lacquered brass should be cleaned only by dusting or by wiping with a barely damp cloth.

A good lacquer job should last indefinitely if the piece is handled with care, but once the lacquer begins to crack the surface will craze and air will get underneath and cause discoloration. Then all the lacquer must be removed—a job you can easily do yourself by soaking the piece for 10 minutes in a gallon of water in which  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of washing soda has been dissolved. The lacquer will peel off and the piece can then be repolished in the normal way and relacquered if you wish. This you can also do yourself, but if the piece is ornate or bulky you'd be wiser to leave it to a professional.

## DOWN TO WORK, cont.

Brass ashtrays that have become stained by use can be cleaned by brushing with an old, soft toothbrush, then washing in hot vinegar and salt and drying thoroughly before polishing in the normal way. Another tip for removing tarnish from brass surfaces is to rub them with the cut surface of a lemon dipped in salt, then rinse, dry, and polish.

**Chromium** is one of the wonder plate finishes with a hard, corrosion-resistant, unscratchable surface. Constant exposure to moisture has little effect on it, but it does tend to show fingerprints. However, all that's needed to retain its mirror-like finish are daily dustings and occasional washings or wipings with a damp cloth. If its finish does dull, the shine can be brought up again with a special chromium cleaner. But too-frequent shine-ups aren't recommended, as in time they can wear off the plating. **Never** use harsh abrasives on chromium, as these will certainly destroy its smooth, shiny surface—and quickly, too.

**Copper** should be cleaned with special copper polish applied with a damp cloth. Rub the polish on industriously until all the discoloration has gone, then rinse quickly and well under a running tap (cold water for rinsing helps keep copper bright longer) and dry immediately. Don't use scouring pads or an abrasive cleanser on copper—neither will budge the tarnish, but both will damage the metal. When copper is used for cooking, follow these rules:

1. Never put copper or copper-bottomed pans on the heat without fat or liquid.
2. If melting butter or fat in a copper pan, swirl it around well so that it quickly coats the bottom and sides of the pan.
3. Do not turn flames or heat up too high and just walk away and leave it. Wait until liquid inside comes to the boil and then turn down the heat.

4. Wash and dry pans as soon as possible after use. Never use abrasives on them—it's far better to soak copper pans in hot, soapy water for a few minutes.

**Pewter** is a tarnish-resistant alloy (about 90 percent pure tin) that gives little or no trouble to its owner. And our modern pewter is much harder than

the antique variety (pewter has a 2000-year-old history) and less likely to darken with age. Polishing and lacquering it is unnecessary, and it requires the absolute minimum of cleaning.

Regular dusting and an occasional tubbing in hot suds to remove any slight darkening and fingerprints are all that's needed. Use warm water with a mild soap or detergent and a soft cloth. If it's an ornate piece, use a soft, bristly brush to reach into intricate areas. Then rinse and dry immediately. If your pewter does get smudged use a little silver polish.

**Silver** is the queen of metals and calls for much use, a little care, and a few simple precautions. Firstly, it should be seen and not stored, for whether sterling or plated, the busy life is the best life for silver. Use it every day and at every meal and you'll find tarnishing problems practically non-existent. See that all pieces get used equally, and if you have more than one piece in turn. Secondly, wash and dry silver as soon as possible after using it. Always wash it separately and not in a bowl or sink full of dishes. Use hot soapy water and rinse well in hot clean water.

Finally, give it a rub with a specially treated silver cloth before storing carefully away in anti-tarnish bags or cloths, or baize-lined drawers or cupboards, or wrapped in plastic bags or foil—to exclude air and retard tarnishing.

You'll find that if you stick to the above methods, the need for polishing your silver will be almost eliminated. But if you do want to give it an occasional rub-up, then three or four times a year should be sufficient. Whichever type of polish you prefer (cream, liquid, or paste), apply it with a slightly damp cloth and rub until all the discoloration has disappeared, using long strokes in preference to circular ones.

For ornate and embossed pieces, use a soft brush (or a cloth over a soft brush) to reach into the pattern. After cleaning, rinse and dry well with a clean soft cloth. Never use any abrasive powder cleanser on silver.

Grandmamma probably told you that she

always boiled her silver with salt or soda (or both) and water in a large aluminium pan. This is fine, too—and doesn't harm the silver. But it does take away the lovely soft patina that gives silver much of its warmth and beauty.

Biggest enemy of silver is sulphur, which attacks unprotected pieces as enthusiastically as a small boy given a plate of cream puffs—and tarnishes them almost as fast as the cream does the boy. So keep silver away from wood, cardboard, gas burners, and coal fumes, and any atmosphere that is sooty, cold, damp, or foggy.

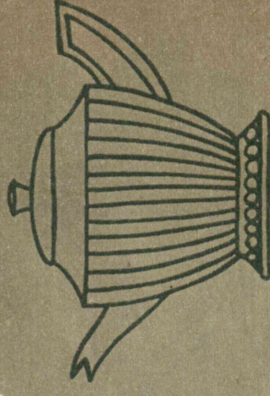
And remember that the foods that will tarnish it fastest are mustard, eggs, salt, lamb fat, lemon juice, and vinegar—so don't let your silver come into contact with these for any length of time.

When egg has caused stains on silver, you can usually remove them by dipping your finger in salt, rubbing it on the spot, and then quickly removing all traces of the salt. Stains caused by hot, sweaty hands will easily rub off with a soft cloth lightly dipped in ammonia—or by rubbing it with a piece of cut raw potato dipped in bicarbonate of soda. Afterward, wash the piece and rub it up with a soft cloth. But black "pitted" spots caused by the prolonged action of salt and lamb fat on silver can't be cured at home. These stains and other serious scratches should be dealt with by a silversmith or jeweller with the right tools and know-how.

**Stainless steel.** All that's needed to maintain the "cool" look of this strong, beautiful metal is routine dusting, an occasional wash with mild soap or detergent and water, and a buffing-up with a soft flannel cloth.

However, despite its name, it may, when used for cooking, discolor in time from heat—especially oven heat—or from impurities in the water, so when cooking with stainless steel, check these points:

1. Use over low or medium heat.
2. Pre-soaking will greatly facilitate washing-up, and with this treatment most foods will come away from its smooth surface in a matter of minutes. For heavily baked-on food, it's better to allow longer soaking time or to add a little bicarbonate of soda to the water.



3. Don't use harsh scouring pads or any abrasive cleaners. Cloths, sponges, and fibre pads are all recommended for cleaning the outside of stainless-steel utensils. Use soft scouring pads on the inside.

4. If heat has caused a dark, stained area, try rubbing it very gently and carefully with a mildly abrasive cleanser or have the piece re-buffed by the manufacturers or at a silver shop.

5. Rinse well and dry as quickly as possible after washing to prevent the formation of white water spots.

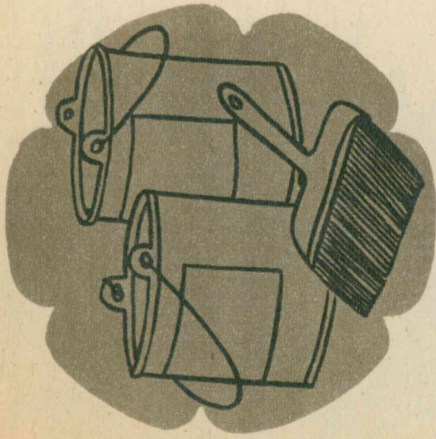
6. Store utensils separately (never all jumbled together) in a cupboard, or hang them decoratively on the wall.

Stainless-steel kitchen surfaces need nothing more than a regular washing with soap or detergent and water, followed by a wipe with a soft cloth. For furniture, routine dusting plus an occasional wash with mild soap or detergent and water and a polish-up with a flannel cloth are all that's required.

Should stainless steel begin to look dull or "leady" because of a build-up of cigarette smoke or grease film, polish it with special stainless-steel cleaner to restore the sheen. But before you do, try a brisk rub-up with a piece of soft flannel first—this nearly always works.

# BRUSH UP ON DECORATING

- Being your own decorator brings many advantages. For one thing, guiding a paintbrush banishes boredom. Having to concentrate makes time flash by. And at the end of a decorating day, although you'll feel tired, your nerves, temper, and patience will have improved immeasurably.



**F**ORGET any previous notions you had about a room having a mere four sides. From a decorating viewpoint, a room is really six-sided. What goes on the other two sides — the ceiling and the floor — is just as important as what goes on the walls. For the fact that all six surfaces touch each other makes close harmony essential.

Think of paint and paper as your own magic wand, and use them to alter the looks, feel, and character of any room you choose. Main sorcery tricks to remember here are that . . .

**Cool colors**, plain walls, and small patterns all help a room look larger; while warm colors and large patterns "reduce" its size.

A **high ceiling** can be "lowered" by several tricks-of-the-trade — by painting it a dark color; by covering walls and ceiling with a non-directional pattern; by sticking a frieze round the walls a foot or so from the ceiling. Conversely, a low ceiling can be "raised" by painting it white; by papering walls right up to the ceiling; by using a vertical-patterned paper, such as a stripe, on the walls.

A **long, narrow room** will look better proportioned if you paint the two long walls and cover the others with a patterned paper.

An **attic** looks less attic-y if walls and ceiling are papered with a non-directional, small-patterned paper. This treatment will also minimise architectural faults and make uneven plaster less apparent.

**Small, stifling rooms** seem cooler and more spacious with the lavish use of such colors as blue, grey, green, or lilac. On the other hand, chilly rooms can be warmed up if overhauled in tones of yellow—a good "sun" color.

**Tiny, uninteresting rooms** take on new stature and importance if a large-patterned paper is applied to just one wall.

## SHOP TALK

**BEST** time to shop for paints and papers is during daylight hours. Since color is strongly affected by others close to it, keep each color choice away from neighboring shades, and eye it against a plain white background. Remember, the larger the areas of color you see, the stronger it will appear, since it reflects from surface to surface and wall to wall.

**Tip to avoid disappointment:** Choose a color a shade or so paler than the final effect you want to achieve in your room.

The two main factors which govern the choice of what to paint on your walls are first, how much money you can spend

(naturally you should always buy the best you can afford, because, generally, the more you pay for paint, the better it will cover, look, and last); and, secondly, what the room will be used for and by whom.

In figuring out your cost, remember that if you intend painting ceiling and walls, a gallon of paint doesn't go very far, especially if you have to go over the surface twice. There's nothing more maddening than to run out of paint at the weekend, but if you are caught, do resist the temptation to thin out paint in order to complete the job, for almost certainly the skimping will show when the whole room is dry.

If you've set yourself a budget limit for doing a room, then measure the walls and ceiling and ask your supplier to tell you how much paint will be needed and how much it will cost all told. This will determine what forms of paint are within your reach.

If you prefer to do your own estimating, a general guide for the amount you'll need for walls is to multiply their height by their width — without subtracting window areas unless these are exceptionally large and numerous — and then multiply the resulting square footage by the number of coats you intend to apply.

Estimate that with latex paints, for example, you can cover around 750 square feet with a gallon of paint; with flat and semi-gloss alkyds between 500 and 600 square feet, and with gloss alkyds between 500 and 600 square feet. Allow extra paint when covering such irregular surfaces as stairs, cabinets, radiators, and so forth.

## DIFFERENT FINISHES

**ANY** special points and problems should also be taken into consideration and discussed with your dealer before making your final paint choice — there are so many different finishes specifically formulated for various jobs and conditions — and he'll be able to advise as to those best suited for your particular job.

But as a general guide when choosing paints, bear in mind that it's best to:

1. Apply high-gloss or semi-gloss alkyd or oil-based paint to such "problem" areas as kitchens, bathrooms, and anywhere else that's subject to the effects of heat and condensation and which because of spatters, splashes, cooking grease and odors must be washed down.

Avoid any suggestion of using a latex paint in any area where continual scrubbing is required or where steam and cooking fumes are present. All major paint com-

## BRUSH UP, cont.

panies recommend a semi-gloss or a full-gloss enamel for these areas.

2. Children's rooms even come into the category of an area which receives quite a lot of wear. While velvet flat plastic paints are recommended for these areas, a fre-guent choice is a semi-gloss enamel which gives complete serviceability for washing down all marks and spots which inevitably seem to appear in children's rooms.

All paints manufactured on the Australian market are made in accordance with health regulations and are lead-free and suitable for use in any area.

3. Use semi-gloss or high-gloss enamel on furniture.

4. Choose a heat-resistant paint in any area where the surface will be subjected to high temperatures such as behind combustion stoves, radiators and the like.

There are materials manufactured such as engine enamels which have a high resistance to heat.

If the surface has been painted before, clean the paint and prime any spots that have peeled or rusted. Avoid, too, the temptation to paint the inside of a worn enamelled bath. Results are never really satisfactory, and it's better to put up with its shabby state until such time as you can replace the bath.

With the choice of a quality brilliant gloss enamel it is possible to obtain a good result on refrigerators and washing machines and the like, if the surface is thoroughly cleaned down and the area is painted carefully.

5. When painting over any metal surface, see that it is spotlessly clean, with all dust, dirt, rust, and so forth completely removed with dry-cleaning fluid or some other similar spirit that will dissolve all oil and grease.

6. If you have acoustic tiles in your rooms, paint these lightly with thinned-down flat alkyd, so that the surface is only just covered. Never apply paint thickly or you'll fill up the holes designed to deaden sound and thus defeat the object of the tiles.

7. Ceramic tiles can be painted over, but as these areas normally appear in bath-

rooms and kitchens where they receive a great amount of wear, it is very difficult to achieve satisfactory results. It is far better to leave them in their original condition and plan to replace them in due course.

8. Select an attractive, highly protective high-gloss paint for all wood and metal surfaces exposed to the weather, especially strong sun and salt air.

Choose light-colored paints for exterior use, since these are more practical and durable than dark shades. Dark paints attract the heat and blister more quickly, so avoid them, especially on sunny, north facing walls.

9. Take the background shade of your wallpaper if in doubt over what color to use for the woodwork. Apart from often being the most restful color choice, it will also serve to disguise any unsightly and undecorative details.

If, on the other hand, you feel certain features are worth highlighting, then choose a brighter, more obvious color from the paper, and use this to bring the woodwork into greater prominence.

When you've whittled your wallpaper choice down to two or three top favorites, don't be in too great a hurry to make the final selection. Ask for sizable patterns of those you like best, and pin them up on the walls of the room to be decorated so you can spend a few days considering their merits.

## PAINT AIDS

A LONG painting job will be less tiring if you fit a sponge-rubber ball over your brush handle to give you a larger grip.

Paint bought in small quantities comes in tins without handles, and is difficult to carry, especially when working on steps. But if you put the tin inside an old breakfast or tea cup the cup handle will make it easy to carry, and the cup itself will catch stray drips of paint.

Another transportable tip for small tins is to fit them into children's seaside buckets or into larger empty tins with handles.

Another keep-the-tin-clean tip is to stretch a sturdy rubber band vertically around your opened paint tin and let this catch the excess from your loaded brush and keep the rim and sides of the tin clean.

Or cut a strip of aluminium foil about three inches wide and long enough to encircle the tin. Fold this over the top of the tin, pressing it well into the groove. Refit the lid to help fix the foil more securely in position. Crimp foil close to the tin on the outside and work the tip of your brush round the top inside edge of the tin to push it out of the way here.

Before storing used paint tins away, dip your brush in the paint and make a line around the outside at paint level—to show the color of the paint and just how much is left in the tin without having to open it.

When painting a room, and while the electric light switch-plate is off, jot down on the wall the amount of paint used, its color, make, and cost—before replacing the plate. The information will be hidden under the switch-plate, but can easily be consulted next time you want to decorate. Or write these details down on a piece of paper and keep safely in a drawer.

If you're working with aerosol spray paints, bear in mind that you'll get better

## Painting points

To keep the sides of paint canisters from getting into a mess, punch several holes (using a large nail and a hammer) in the inside of the groove around the top rim. When you dip your brush in the paint and press it against the rim, excess paint will run back into the tin and not stay clogged in the rim or dribble down the outside. Resealing the tin won't be affected as the rim of the lid will close over the holes.

results if you follow the manufacturer's instructions, and spray lightly to begin with. Let the paint set for 15 to 20 seconds and repeat. These paints go on better this way than if thickly applied, when the paint may run or look uneven.

## PAINT TINS

ALWAYS replace the lid on a tin of paint when not in use to keep it smooth and also, of course, to prevent accidents and spills.

If lumps do appear in paint, then it must be strained before use. An excellent method is to cut a circle of fine wire sieving just large enough to fit inside your tin. Stir your paint well and add the circle, which will settle down on top of the lumps and prevent them involving themselves with your brush.

Make sure lids are fitted as tightly as possible on to the tins to keep them airtight and prevent a skin forming on the paint.

An effective way to seal a lid more tightly is to place a piece of metal foil across the open top of the tin, add the lid, and then pound it down well with a hammer. Or seal the lid with masking tape after first hammering it well home.

A protective tip here is to cover the top of the tin with a piece of rag before applying the hammer, so that any spatters are absorbed by the rag and not by you.

If a skin does form on your paint, use an old knife to cut carefully round it and then lift it off completely. Never try to stir it back into the paint or you'll have the aggravation of tiny slivers on your brush and over the surface you're painting.

## BRUSH AIDS

TO shake out turpentine or water from a brush before use, lay some newspaper on the floor, cover a tin of paint (or any fairly heavy object) with a rag, and strike the brush sharply against it, keeping the bristles pointing downwards.

Remove stray bristles from brushes the second they show signs of straggling—your paint job will be neater and cleaner without them.

## BRUSH UP, cont.

Keep brushes and rollers moist during your tea break by wrapping them tightly in aluminium foil—it will exclude air, and prevent them from hardening and you from having to stop and soften them.

Or you can put them in plastic bags—a small one for each brush, a large one for each roller—and immerse in water. The air will be forced out of the bags, and brushes and rollers will stay soft.

Have old newspapers close at hand on which to work paint out of your brushes and rollers at the end of each day's painting, and before putting them to soak in turps, ready for use next day. Be especially particular about cleaning rollers—or you'll find them stiff and useless next morning.

**HEALTH NOTE:** Always keep the room well ventilated when working paint out of brushes and rollers. After these have been soaking in cleaning solution overnight, open the windows and give the room a good airing before starting work again next morning.

When brushes have become hardened with too much paint, it is necessary to choose a good-quality paint- and varnish-remover and allow the brushes to soak in this according to the manufacturers' instructions.

It is wise if when cleaning a brush in the recommended thinner, to complete the job by washing the brush in hot, soapy water followed by clean water before storing.

Shape the bristles carefully by drawing them through the fingers, or by combing them with a curry comb. Never stand brushes upright, or the bristles will splay out of shape. Better by far for them is to drill a hole in each brush handle to hang them by—they'll last much longer.

If brushes are likely to remain unused for some time, clean them as above, and when thoroughly dry, wrap in heavy paper, metal foil, or oilcloth, making sure the bristles aren't bent. Tie up with string or fasten with a rubber band, and hang the brushes, bristles downwards, to keep them in good condition.

# TO LOVE AND CHERISH

● A clean sweep and a full dustbin may be all very well for some, but if you are an incurable cherisher. (call it hoarder if you like), then you could have the kind of treasure that adds up to household wealth. Here are some ideas to try out — and possibly improve upon.

**Bags (paper).** Don't land yourself with doughy, hard-to-wash plates and dishes after flouring such foods as fish and chicken. Just put seasoned flour and food together into a clean paper bag and shake gently to coat the food.

● Bag more paper bags for cleaning house. Empty ashtrays into them and toss in all other rubbish as you go about your daily cleaning. Then simply jettison the bags on your return to the kitchen.

● Have a paper bag nearby when peeling or scraping vegetables, or doing any kitchen duty that spells scraps. Drop all peelings and other waste straight into the bag for easy disposal.

**Bags (string)** are worth nabbing to fill with onions, garlic, and other fruits and vegetables, and hang appetisingly and attractively about the kitchen.

Or open a string bag out at the top and swing it across the end of a little girl's bed (or on her wall) to make a dreamy doll's hammock.

**Boxes (cigar).** If among your circle of friends and acquaintances you happen across any cigar-smoking males, you'll find it well worth a little time and trouble training them to turn over their empty cigar boxes. These boxes are loaded with potentialities for you.

As quick as a wink, for example, you can transform them into handsome cigarette boxes by coating the outside with adhesive plastic material and the inside with paint. Or you can hike out some of your more exotic fabric remnants and glue these—together with a few bits of gold

braided—on to the outside, line the inside with felt, and you've a new jewel box.

Yet again, the boxes can be turned into pictures for a child's room by removing their lids, painting the outside of the box a bright color, sticking a colorful scene from an old calendar, magazine, or story book inside, and adding a length of braid or cord for hanging.

## Make a shadow box

If you're lucky enough to know a man-aging-director type who burns up large fat cigars, then the large, fat boxes he takes them from will furnish your home with beautiful shadow boxes. Remove the lid from each cigar box, paint the outside to tone with the color scheme of your room, line the inside with dark velvet, add a matching cord for hanging and some narrow gold braid around the rim to make a "frame." Set a small treasured ornament or a tiny vase of flowers inside your box — and it will look fabulous.

**Buckets.** If there's a hole in your bucket, don't be in too much of a hurry to kick it out. It can still do splendid second service as a colorful container that's just about the right size for holding a large jar or tin of autumn leaves, or as a stand for a large potted plant.

Even if it's a galvanised bucket, it can be attractively transformed with a coat of paint and the addition of a few strips of wallpaper border or some colorful cut-outs. Or turn buckets into toy tubs and wastepaper baskets. Remove the handle, paint the bucket all over, and when dry,

deck the outside with colorful figures, flowers or animals cut from a magazine and glued on. Top with a protecting coat of varnish — and finish off by adding a rope handle.

Small galvanised buckets (with any holes stopped up and a coat of bright paint) make practical summer ashtrays for out-of-doors use. Fill them seven-eighths full with sand, and encourage guests to stub out cigarettes in these instead of on your lawn or terrace floor.

**Brushes.** Old, soft toothbrushes are marvellous for polishing silver — for they'll reach into grooves where fingers can't. And ditto for cleaning jewellery — but brush carefully so as not to dislodge stones from their settings. Put another old toothbrush (or pastry brush) to work removing grated orange, lemon, and nutmeg from the tiny teeth of your grater.

Toothbrushes are also pretty efficient at getting into dust-catching crevices of lamps and elaborately carved furniture at cleaning time. And a very soft one can be dipped in detergent and used to clean a badly soiled lampshade.

## Uses for decanters

Old paintbrushes, too, are good in this furniture-cleaning respect. And also for such other small, intricate jobs as cleaning telephone dials and piano keys.

**Decanters.** Glass decanters that once glistened so proudly on the dinner tables of our forebears, but got banished to some backwater due to loss of stoppers, became beautiful candlesticks if grouped together with a pastel candle in each.

Old decanters (and never mind if the stopper is odd, or if it's just a cork) afford luxurious containers for bath oil.

**Furniture.** Ever consider turning on old-fashioned sewing machine base into a delightful Italian-type table for the dining-room, garden, or kitchen? The intricate ironwork looks wonderful given a coat of white, dark green, or black paint — and all that's needed then is a wooden top painted to match or covered with "marbled" adhesive plastic — or, if you've a marble top of a suitable size going begging from a large washstand, this would be a perfect partner to such a base.

Those fancifully fashioned, wrought-iron umbrella stands have many present potentialities. Paint one black or white, place it in a strategic corner of your hall or sitting-room, and fill with pots of bright flowers. Or paint it white and stand it in the bathroom with colorful soaps massed in the drip tray and the top rim serving as a towel rail.

If it's the kind that also has a hat-rack on top, use these pegs and hooks as towel-holders, too. Or paint it a pastel color, adding touches of gold or silver paint to the design and filigree bits, and have it in your bedroom as a pretty but practical stand, with your perkier hats on the knobs, plastic-covered shoe boxes stacked on the drip tray, and belts slung over the rail.

**Garden hose.** A length of this snipped off and fixed to the handle of a galvanised bucket (or any metal-handled pail) prevents the metal from cutting into your hands when the pail is heavily loaded.

**Jars,** both large and small, with screw-topped lids, line up well on food shelves as airtight, see-at-a-glance storage for dry goods. They're useful, too, in the refrigerator as containers of left-overs.

Small instant coffee jars with straight sides and well-fitting lids make effective spice racks. Wash and dry them well, label them, and fill with your favorite herbs and spices. Arrange along a kitchen shelf, or screw a row of the lids to the underside of a wall cabinet or shelf and twist on the jars. Either way, your "spice rack" will keep your favorite seasonings fresh and pungent, and in such a fashion that they're easily identifiable.

**Labels.** Luggage labels — the stick-on sort acquired from travel agents and hotels—set the mood for reminiscing and dreaming of faraway places when applied to plain lampshades, wastepaper baskets, trays, and screens.

**Medicine dropper.** When adding food colorings to dishes, avoid overdoing the dose and "killing" the dish by putting an old medicine dropper to this duty.

**Socks.** In their woolly way, his old socks will prove as useful as your laddered nylons. With a sock on each hand when polishing, you'll be able to apply the polish with one hand and the elbow-grease with the other.

**When children have worn out or just plain lost one of a pair of socks (or mittens), use the odd man out as a hand puppet.** Sew on bright buttons for eyes and nose, embroider a mouth and stitch on some wool or string for hair. The puppets are easy to make, will fit the hand of the small wearer and keep him amused.

**Stones,** also, should not be left unturned and unconsidered in your search for imaginative new occupations for ordinary, everyday objects. Interesting specimens you've perhaps picked up on a country walk or on a beach, and which have been polished by wind and weather, can shine like jewels in your home.

The largest will prove more than worth their weight as book-ends and door-stops. Several more mighty specimens from your rock pile can be white-washed, grouped on a terrace, and interspersed with potted plants.

Any stones with a semi-precious appearance (easily simulated with some gold or silver paint) can make paperweights or be incorporated into dining table centre-pieces.

A collection of white pebbles, put in water in a glass bowl, and with a few short-stemmed daisies or anemones stuck in among them, create a cool and charming arrangement. More white stones and pebbles can be amassed on a tray around small, white-painted pots of trailing greenery and/or red geraniums to add interest to a summer dining table.

## Gift paperweight

An apothecary jar filled with your prettiest stones and topped up with water tinted pale blue, green, or pink, makes a pleasing and decorative accent. And even though you may be broke at gift times, you needn't be stuck for an idea if you can lay your hands on a few large, smooth stones, velvet, and an oddment of braid.

**Cover each stone with velvet (make the covering in two halves) and stick gold rick-rack round the fabric join. Trim the top with rick-rack initials and distribute as Christmas gifts for luxurious-looking dcerstps and paperweights.**

**Tiles.** Old, glazed tiles make serviceable stands for teapots, plant pots, special objects of art, and bric-a-brac. When short of table mats for holding dishes, set a row of tiles down the centre of your dining table, mixing and matching plain and patterned tiles for their most dramatic effects. Or set several tiles into a piece of

thick wood to form an unusual and practical table top. Or align tiles along a windowsill, bookshelf, or desk top to show off a collection of antique cream pitchers, milk jugs, or sugar bowls — each one filled with a small trailing plant.

**Tin.** Such tin kitchenware as coffee pots, drinking mugs, and billycans that were firm family favorites a few decades back, can now hold clusters of simple flowers like daisies, poppies, marigolds, and violets to lend a homespun, sentimental charm to any room in the house.

**Toast racks.** Our modern breakfasts are generally far too "hurry-up-and-gulp-it-down" affairs to allow us to devote time or table room to those curvaceous toast racks that typified the more leisurely breakfasting of our grandparents. But many of these racks—particularly those of flower patterned china or swirly silver—are so pretty it's a shame to leave them to gather dust in some forgotten corner when they could be of service in such ways as these:

- To hold notepaper and envelopes on a desk or writing table.
- As a letter rack on a hall table.
- On a kitchen or dining table to hold folded napkins for the family — or on a buffet table to hold a supply of colorful paper napkins.

**Trunks** that no longer go travelling can make a hit in your home as storage pieces. Their capacious innards are without equal for storing blankets, linens, out-of-season clothes, toys, magazines, and sewing and hobby equipment. And they'll make handsome pieces of furniture, too, if restored to their former glory with paper and paint.

**Wallpaper** oddments, cut to shape with pinking shears, are a wonderful way to pretty-up trays and dinner tables. Cut lots to fit into all your trays and to use over cork mats on the dining table. Place them at the bottom of a drawer for a few days to flatten out—and then use as required. They cost nothing but a few minutes of your time to make, and in the long run they'll save hours of washing and ironing, since you just throw them away as they become spotted or stained.

## CHRISTMAS DECORATION

**B**URNT-OUT electric light bulbs will convert into sparkling trimmings for the Christmas tree. Brush them over with gold or silver paint, and while this is wet, scatter on such lustrous extras as colored glitter, sequins, odd jewels, and tiny shapes of foil. Add a length of thin gold cord round the socket of each bulb for hanging. And, if you still darn socks but haven't a "mushroom" to help you, don't forget that an electric light bulb will serve your purpose just as well.

# ON-THE-SPOT TREATMENT

● Spots and stains don't spell disaster — as long as we're equipped to deal with them. Here is a guide to the treatment of a few of the everyday stains.

STAIN	HOW TO REMOVE IT	STAIN	HOW TO REMOVE IT
<b>Alcohol</b>	Blot up excess liquid. Sponge stained area with methylated spirit or with the detergent and vinegar solution ( <i>see instruction bottom right</i> ). For alcohol stains on furniture, rub the area with your finger dipped in silver polish or linseed oil, or with a cloth very slightly dampened with ammonia. Then polish as usual.	<b>Ink</b>	Some ballpoint-ink stains can be washed out by rubbing a little detergent well into the stain and then rinsing in hot water. Others can be removed with methylated spirit, dry-cleaning fluid, or nail-polish remover (but don't use the latter on acetate materials). To remove writing-ink stains, blot with fuller's earth or any other absorbent white powder and brush up the powder as soon as it soaks up the ink. Or try soaking it overnight in milk or in cold water with a little salt added. Or squeeze a little lemon juice on to the stain before washing it.
<b>(Beer)</b>	Beer stains can often be removed from washable materials with warm soapy water to which a little ammonia has been added. Failing this, apply a weak hydrogen peroxide solution to the stained area and leave to dry in the sun. Then wash and rinse in the normal way. If the material is not washable, try soaking the stained area with methylated spirit and then working a little soap in with the fingers. Leave to dry, then brush out.	<b>Perspiration</b>	Soak or sponge affected areas with cold water to which a little vinegar has been added. Use a tablespoon of vinegar to each pint of water. Repeat several times until stain is removed, and then remove any remaining odor by soaking the affected part in borax water (1 tablespoon borax to 1 pint of water). Finally, wash with warm suds, then rinse.
<b>(Wine)</b>	Wine stains should be covered with salt immediately they occur to prevent them from spreading. A fresh stain can often be removed by stretching the stained area tightly over a basin and pouring boiling or very hot water on to it from a kettle, repeating this until the stain has disappeared. A dry stain should be soaked for half an hour in a borax solution (1 tablespoon of borax to 1 pint of water) and then washed and rinsed.	<b>Scorching</b>	Deep scorch marks cannot be removed, but light ones can. Try dampening the material, sprinkling it with salt, and leaving it in the sun before laundering. Or make a paste of glycerine and borax, spread this on the offending marks, and leave overnight before laundering in warm soapy water. Or sponge the scorched area with hydrogen peroxide, place a dry cloth over the spot, and apply warm iron.
<b>Blood</b>	Soak the stain in several changes of cold water, wash in cold soapy water and rinse in warm water. If a stain still remains, add a few drops of ammonia to the water, or swab with hydrogen peroxide or household bleach, and rinse well.	<b>Tea</b>	If stains are fresh, first soak in cold water and then in hot borax water (1 tablespoon borax to 1 pint of water). If stains are set, make a paste of a little borax and water, work this into the stained area, then stretch it over a large basin and pour on hot or boiling water from a kettle. Let the stained part soak in the solution while it cools. Afterwards, wash in the normal way. Treat non-washable materials by putting a clean pad underneath and rubbing the stained area with glycerine; leave this on for half an hour, then rub with a solvent.
<b>Coffee</b>	Swab with cold water, then rub detergent gently into the fabric and rinse well. Or pour boiling or very hot water through the stain as for wine, then wash in warm soapy water and rinse. If the stain has become set, loosen it first with glycerine, then cover it with borax, and again pour hot or boiling water through it. If any discoloration still remains, apply household bleach. On non-washable materials rub a little glycerine into the stain and leave for a few hours. Then place a clean cloth under the stain and rub with cleaning solvent.	● Shake up 1 teaspoon of detergent and 1 teaspoon of vinegar in a quart of warm water and bottle it — this simple solution is excellent for mopping up spills on carpets and upholstery.	