

DECLINE OF INGRAIN.

Why This Kind of Carpet Has Become "Old Fashioned."

Competition and Consequent Change of Prices Caused a Falling Off in Quality--Where This Line of Goods Still Finds Sale.

Why do we see so little ingrain carpet? Have the manufacturers gone out of business, and is there no demand for that class of goods? These questions were asked recently by a customer in the carpet department of one of the large stores, says the New York Tribune.

Your questions about," said the salesman, "that you are a New Yorker. If you lived in the country or 'out west' or 'down south' you would never have noticed that the demand for ingrain carpet had declined, for there the old-fashioned yard wide goods are still in use and are only a trifle less popular than they were before the day of the higher grade three-quarter goods."

Some ingrain carpet is made in New England, but about 90 per cent. of the product comes from Philadelphia. The tapestry, Brussels, velvet, Wilton and Axminster goods have been reduced in price, the patterns are more "sightly," and these facts, together with the demand for more artistic floor coverings, have caused the ingrain sales to shrink. The manufacturers have seen this condition grow, and many of them would have converted their factories into Brussels or tapestry mills if this could have been done at a reasonable outlay. But reconstruction means rebuilding, and the great expense has prevented the change.

Another element that has had a decided effect on the sale of ingrain carpets, said the salesman, "is the falling off in quality. Nearly all the manufacturers make stock on order, that is, they make the goods only after they have been sold. The competition has been so great that much cutting of prices is often done before sales can be effected, and when the order is finally booked the goods are made in keeping with the price. The merchant gets his carpet at a figure, but it is worth only what he pays for it. Of course, this is bad policy, but the men at the heads of many of these carpet concerns are not business men so much as they are carpet makers. They came from England, North of Ireland and Scotland, and began in this country with a loom or two. They were frugal, industrious and conservative, and many of them built up large concerns into which they introduced their old-time methods, but they made and sold great quantities of carpets, and made money as well. But they could not keep up with the procession, and the other styles, straw matting and rugs have played havoc with the ingrain carpet business."

A trade journal in an article on the subject of the decline in the ingrain carpet business says:

The present demoralized condition has been prophesied again and again. Now the people who have been guilty of skinning their goods are in a fix. They cannot offer any lower price than the market makers are doing and they cannot further cut the quality of their fabrics without making them too rank to be marketable. These men came dangerously near making the name of Philadelphia ingrain a term of reproach.

The depression in the ingrain carpet business has had no effect on the other branches of the business, which are generally good. The new possessions make few demands on the carpet manufacturers. Straw matting usually takes the place of carpets after these have been in use for a short time.

"The bugs and other insects," said a dealer, "would probably prefer the carpet, but for the people who live in the tropics there is little comfort in carpets."

Planking Fish.

Lovers of good things to eat realize the peculiarly palatable flavor imparted to shad, Spanish mackerel and other delicate fish by "planking." A newly sawed plank would never answer for so dainty a use. The wood chosen should be of cedar, ash or hickory, well-seasoned and freed by time from its too pronounced forest flavor. It must, moreover, be charred by usage and impregnated with the juices from frequent cookings. It requires months of care to fit a new board for permanent use, but once ready and properly cared for it will last a generation. Properly made by a fisherman who knows his business, a half-inch groove is run around the edge of the upper side or face in order to catch the juice of the fish when cooking. The plank should never be washed, but should be rubbed with a dry cloth after using and then sandpapered off. Some cooks always date the plank off with powdered lemon rind before setting away.—Washington Star.

New Use for Reebots.

"While I was over in the Arkansas mountains last winter on a hunting trip my guide and I came across a sugar maple orchard where two men were collecting and boiling down the sap," said a Memphis man.

"We sat around with the natives awhile and ate maple sugar. When we started to leave one of the men, who had been regarding my tie very closely, asked the guide, in a low voice, why I wore that rag around my neck.

"That's to keep his nose from bleeding," replied the guide, who was a man of some humor.

"As we walked away I heard the natives telling each other how sorry they felt for me on account of my affliction."—Memphis Scimitar.

FRILLS OF FASHION.

Latest Dress Hints for Those Who Are Interested in the Season's Costumes.

One report from Paris assures us that there is a touch of red on all the gowns and everything else in dress which will admit of it, says the New York Sun.

Tantily Crost is the name of one of the new neckties made of mercerized chevrot to wear with the outing shirt-waist.

Black velvet belts and stocks to match are worn with the colored silk shirt waists, and for summer use there are the prettiest little stitched white pique belts made with silver eyelets and plain buckle to fasten like a leather strap.

Bodices with the rounded, not the pointed, belt are the prevailing style in Paris. At least that is the rumor wafted over the sea. The extremely exaggerated long waist-line in front has never been generally favored by Parisian women, as they manage to find the happy medium in all matters of fashion. It is well to remember that long limbs are considered graceful, and if the length of the bodice takes away too much from that effect a woman loses by it.

Pompador effects are very evident among the new festoons of flowers hand painted or embroidered on silk, lace or mousseline, with gold or silver ribbon twined in and out. Painted medallions of mousseline scattered through a deep lace flounce pointing up into the skirt at intervals all around are the features of one white liberty satia gown. Applique flounces and leaves of velvets are also intertwined with gold or satin ribbon, and in many other modes of decoration there is a suggestion of the Louis Quinze days.

French and English chevrot are very popular for spring tailor-made gowns. Maitese and elny laces are still popular for dress trimming, and then there are all the other well-known heads which have lost some of their prestige. Laces of the applique order show a filling-in of gold thread between the flowers.

So much of the becomingness of any garment depends on the neck finish that it is well for a woman to give some thought to this special feature. Anything which makes the neck look large is strikingly unbecoming to the woman with a round, rather large face, and the stout woman should never try to make her neck look smaller by wearing her collar band too high or too tight. A little care will soon show you the things to avoid, and it is best to appreciate that what will suit one woman to perfection will make the next one appear at her very worst.

BEEF SUET FOR FRYING.

When Used in This Manner It Will Be Found a Good Thing in the Pantry.

A correspondent kindly contributes some useful suggestion concerning the use of beef suet for frying, says the New York Post. In her family the methods which she recommends have been in use for 25 years. In cold weather, when beef is at its best, 25 pounds of suet are bought. This is sliced and packed into kettles, and allowed to melt slowly. As it melts it is strained through a fine thin strainer into a stone jar, the amount stated filling a three-gallon crock and providing sufficient fat for a year's use. One day will finish its preparation. For frying, allow the fat to become hot enough to light a match. In this way doughnuts, fish, croquettes, etc., will be absolutely free from any fatty taste, if drained on soft paper, blotting or butchers' paper. After using the quantity of suet for frying, slice into the hot fat—a slice at a time, until the surface is covered—a raw potato. The slices should be as thin as a knife-blade. Allow this potato to fry brown. Then strain the whole through cheese-cloth or strainer-cloth, and let it stand over night. In the morning scrape the sediment from the bottom of the fat, and the suet is ready to be used again. Treated in this way after frying, the suet can be used many times. This method of clarifying is recommended for any fat. The correspondent further states that the suet as first prepared makes the best sort of pastry, and a kind, too, that a physician asserts "will not hurt a child." The pastry requires a pound of suet and a pound and a quarter of flour. In winter the suet should stand over night in a kitchen to soften; and in the morning, in a chopping-tray, beat the suet with a fork till it looks like beaten white of eggs. Add two or three teaspoonsful of salt and, little by little, the flour, and it is ready to be used.

Adopt a Distinctive Dress.

A modern writer advises all women who have passed their prime to adopt some distinctive costume which they need not vary, by copying some old picture—a Rembrandt, for instance, a Sir Joshua Reynolds or a Velasquez. This seems an excellent idea. How much more picturesque and attractive those who have no longer youthful figures and faces would appear if they wore habitually some adaptation of the rich and graceful draperies which the old artists have made so familiar to us, instead of making pathetic attempts to follow the ever changing fashions!—N. Y. Tribune.

Charm.

When one attempts to define what is the charm of a certain person it is almost something intangible, vague and elusive. The person may not be noted for beauty, for brilliancy in conversation, or for remarkable intelligence. The charm is really in a graciousness of manner and bearing, a kindly consideration and thoughtfulness, a lack of self-consciousness or egotism.—Delineator.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

The average person breathes in a gallon of air a minute. Walnuts came originally from Persia, almonds from Central Asia.

The center ward of Montreal comprises 41 acres and has 41 liquor licenses. That's a saloon for every seven wage earners in the ward.

There is only one fortress in the United States. It is Fortress Monroe, in Virginia. It is surrounded by a moat filled with water from 8 to 15 feet deep, and from 75 to 100 feet wide.

While cutting up a poplar at his sawmill in Lee county, Va., C. R. Kesterton found an auger hole plugged by a pin. On removing the pin he found in the hole five 328 gold pieces bearing dates between 1850 and 1880. The coins are supposed to have been hid here for safekeeping during the civil war.

An American musical instrument company has issued circulars broadcast in each district two free music lessons per week for 12 months. One of the conditions attached to this novel offer is that each pupil shall recommend the company's instruments to friends of the family.

Half a dozen leading artists in New York have planned a 12-story studio building, which is intended to be the center of bohemian art critics. There are to be a dozen studios with living apartments and two dozen with bachelor quarters attached. The project grows out of the difficulty in securing kitchen accommodations in connection with studios.

The work of tearing down the famous marble mansion of A. T. Stewart, Thirty-fourth street and Fifth avenue, New York, is in progress, to make room for a new business block. The workmen employed in the task of razing the building refer to it as the marble quarry. There is marble on every hand, and the pieces were put together, or rather in place, as though to remain where they were laid for all time. To loosen the pieces is as difficult almost as cutting, it is said, through a solid slab of marble.

ENGLISH LENTEN CUSTOMS.

Nothing Sadder—A Happy Day for Servant Girls—King Edward Sixth's Big Fish Bill.

Some people who went to church during Lent may have noticed that the altar cloth in use was of a different kind to that generally to be found in the church. There are, of course, hundreds of churches which do not possess Lenten altar cloths, and it cannot be said that the custom is universal, but nevertheless many churches have adopted it, says the London Mail.

These altar cloths are specially made, and it is getting quite the fashion for wealthy ladies to present the churches they attend with an article of this kind. They are worked by the fashionable needlework guilds, and are invariably adorned with scenes from the life of Christ. In some cases the illustrations deal solely with the Passion, and are thus eminently suitable for the season from the church point of view. Many of these Lenten altar cloths are very costly, and if worked by one person would represent the labor of months.

In London and the big towns "mothering Sunday" is almost unknown, but in the country districts the middle Sunday of Lent is a happy time for the servant girls. On that day they are allowed to go home and see their mothers, if distance does not prevent them from doing so, and the girl is expected to take home a cake. Many a girl cannot fulfill this condition, for the act, in strict accordance with old custom, necessitates the girl making the cake herself.

In big country houses, for example, the parlor maid would not dare to intrude in the special domain of the cook, and accordingly it is customary to take home a bought cake, and probably this pleases the mother just as well. In these days, however, of "Sundays out," the privilege of mothering Sunday are dying out, and the custom is hardly likely to live on the present century. Indeed, it is only in the very remote country districts that the custom holds good.

The cakes which the girls are supposed to take home are the simplest cakes familiar to all housekeepers. There is no need to give the recipe, for any cookery book gives this information. The home of simple cakes, or, rather, the place where they are made to perfection, is York shire, and the delicacies made down south by cooks do not compare with the cakes produced by the ladies of the kitchen in the county specified.

Lent was observed in the court of Edward VII. in a very different way to that of the king's predecessor of that name. One Lent King Edward VI. had to pay a record fish bill, for his household consumed 9,000 red herrings, 3,000 white herrings, two barrels of sturgeon, 1,300 codfish, 89 Conger eels, and 300 mulwells.

Tarred Down.

Jack Borroughs—For several months, sir, I have been paying attention to your daughter. It will, therefore, not surprise you—

Mr. Goldman (who knows him)—Ah! but it does. It surprises me to hear that you ever paid anything.—Philadelphia Press.

Perfectly Natural.

Mrs. Greene—Mrs. Kreecus is sick of her bargain already, it is plain to see, and probably wishes she had married young Hartley.

Mr. Greene—Kreecus, they say, is made of money, and naturally his wife wants to change him.—Boston Transcript.

PLAYS FOR HIRE.

A Branch of the Manager's Business That is Helped by the Cheap Theaters.

The existence of the cheap-priced stock company theaters has led to a constant demand nowadays for the use of plays which have ceased to be novelties but have an established success, says the New York Sun. The cost of hiring such a play varies.

The highest price ever paid for a play is said to be the \$1,000 given to Daniel Frohman for the use of "The Prisoner of Zenda" for one week. When there are two stock companies in a city, as in Boston and Chicago, their competition makes it possible for the owners of plays to demand more royalty than they can receive where there is only one theater of the kind.

Some of the plays are leased for a fixed sum for each performance, or they are disposed of for a percentage of the gross receipts, with the condition that a minimum be guaranteed.

Some of the prices paid for well-known dramas are as follows: "An American Citizen" costs for one week \$500. "The Great Ruby" costs ten per cent. of the gross receipts on the first \$1,000 and 21 per cent. on the next \$2,000, with a bonus of \$250 to \$500. "The Prisoner of Zenda" has brought as much as \$750 for a week, and one company paid \$1,000 for it. "The Charity Ball" averages from \$300 to \$500 a week; E. M. Royle's play, "Friends," \$150 a week.

It costs ten per cent. of the gross receipts to get "The Sporting Duchess" for a week, and the same for "Little Lord Fauntleroy." "Sweet Lavender" brings \$250 a week, and "Hoodman Blind" \$125. For "Liberty Hall" from ten to 15 per cent. of the gross receipts is asked, with a guarantee of at least \$400. "Trilby" can be procured for \$250 a week, while there are several versions of "Nell Gwynne" at about \$100 a week or less.

"The Butterflies" costs \$200, and "The Young Wife" \$150. A farce comedy like "Why Smith Left Home" usually goes at about \$200 a week.

"The Fatal Card" brings \$100. "The Moth and the Flame" wants ten per cent. of the gross receipts, with a guarantee of \$300; "A Gilded Fool" takes ten per cent. of the gross receipts.

Of some of the other plays: "Hazel Kirke" costs \$150; "Men and Women," \$300; "A Bachelor's Romance," \$300; "Jim the Penman," \$150; "The District Attorney," \$150; "Diplomacy," \$200; "The Countess Valeska," \$300; "Paul Kauvar," \$200, and "White Heather," ten per cent. of the receipts.

Unprotected and uncopyrighted plays like "East Lynne" and "Camille" cost nothing more than the price of the text.

EQUAL TO THE OCCASION.

How a Resourceful Arizona Sheriff Proved Himself Qualified for His Office.

From the earliest times the office of the sheriff of Maricopa county has been the lodgeroom of the Amalgamated Association of Prevaricators until an honorary membership and an ability to shine in it came to be regarded as a necessary qualification for a sheriff only a little less important than the ability to get enough votes at the convention and the polls. Sheriffs have usually been represented by proxy in the meeting of the association and the proxy has always been some deputy, generally Charley Slankard, who as a prevaricator has always successfully held his own against all comers, says the Arizona Republican.

There was some apprehension that Sheriff Stout would not fill the bill. He was supposed to be too matter of fact. Billy Moer and Billy Williams were not believed to be any more able liars than the sheriff, and Capt. Hi McDonald as an outside deputy could not be expected to attend meetings of the association. Still, in a pinch there was the ever-reliable Slankard to fall back upon. But Sheriff Stout yesterday proved that he didn't need any deputy prevaricator.

An old settler who had lived in the valley longer than anybody was telling of the sheriff's office yesterday of the driest season the valley had ever experienced. There had been nothing like it before and nothing since. None of his hearers had ever seen anything so dry. He couldn't tell them how dry it was, so they would comprehend.

Sheriff Stout was reminded of one very dry summer within his residence in the valley. He had just embarked in the cattle business and had a herd of yearling calves. There was a little water on his ranch, but no feed within ten miles. Every morning he used to turn the calves out so that they could go to the nearest range where there was some grass, but no water. He accordingly hung a canteen filled with water around the neck of each calf. One day he went out to the range to see the condition of the grass, which, he thought, must be getting short. When he got there the calves were feeding quietly on the bank of a dry water-course. All at once they were every direction, bellowing with fear. The sheriff went to see what was the cause of the commotion and found it to be a huge catfish which had climbed up the bank and got onto a fight with the calves over the water in the canteens.

Headquarters for "Koo" Stock.

Hamburg is headquarters for wild animals and zoo stock of all kinds.

THE QUEEN'S GIFT.

A Reminder of Governmental Felicitations Between England and the United States.

There is a desk in the private office of the president of the United States which has a remarkable history. It represents an exchange of governmental felicitations which not only lend a special interest to it as a piece of furniture, but recall, at this particular time, many tender memories, says Amelia W. Wells, in Success.

It occupies a position in the center of the large apartment which the president uses as his sanctum sanctorum. The desk was constructed from the timbers of the historic arctic ship Resolute, and was presented by Queen Victoria, through Sir Edward Thornton, the British minister at that time, to the president of the United States, through William M. Everts, then secretary of state.

The circumstance cannot help but revive the interest felt in that vessel, calling to mind a graceful act of this government. Congress, in 1858, passed a resolution authorizing her purchase from the sailors (Great Britain having relinquished all claim to her), directing that the vessel be fully repaired and equipped at one of our navy yards, with the request to her majesty's government that the United States be allowed to restore the Resolute to the service to which she had formerly belonged, and for which the sum of \$40,000 was appropriated. The formal transfer of the vessel to the queen of England took place on December 16, 1854, at Cowes.

It may be well to refer to the remarkable career of the Resolute, and the unique circumstances attending her rescue by the United States. She sailed from England in 1852, in search of the missing explorers composing the party of Sir John Franklin. Having been frozen up, her officers and crew were obliged to abandon her, seeking refuge on vessels more fortunately situated, which conveyed them in safety to England.

The vessel, then left to her fate, with not a soul on board to direct her movements, drifted a distance of 1,200 miles, and, though hard pressed by the ice, was when discovered, on September 15, 1855, by Capt. Buntington, of the American whaler George and Henry, found to be staunch and seaworthy.

The Resolute excited so much interest throughout England that the late queen expressed a desire to visit her, requesting that the ship be taken to Cowes for that purpose. The vessel, on that occasion, was dressed with flags, presenting a fine appearance; and what proved most pleasing to the eye, was the spectacle of the American and English ensigns flying side by side.

The desk sent to the president was made, by order of the queen, from the timbers of this historical vessel, when she was broken up.

WAYS OF HOTEL THIEVES.

The Kind Hardest to Detect—Why They Are Not Very Successful in Washington.

"Thieving in hotels," said the house detectives in one of Washington's large hotels, reports the Star, "like other branches of crime, has its epidemics, and cases reported in one large city are usually followed by similar reports in other cities. A few days ago the reports came from Chicago, and now they are from New York. Though Washington is filled with hotels, large and small, robberies are comparatively infrequent. In the first place, the local detective force is efficient, and, in the second, the hotel detectives and employees are on a constant lookout for these slick operators, especially during inaugurations and convention times, when the hotels are packed with guests.

"The hardest kind of hotel thieves to detect are the men and women who do not try the 'weak act' of slipping in the front entrance and going through the halls, changing an opportunity to enter a room, but are those who register and act and are treated like guests. They are well dressed and pass for ladies and gentlemen in any public gathering. Usually when they thus come to a hotel they are 'on to a lay,' which means that they have the wife of some rich man 'spotted,' because of her jewels.

"Her room is located by the thief or thieves, as they frequently travel in pairs, and she is carefully watched. It is observed whether she wears her jewels at dinner and on special occasions, and whether they are kept in the jewel safe or in her room. The thief will make an effort to enter her room if he discovers that she is out or down to dinner without her jewels on. An entry is made by means of a 'pick,' a slender, bent piece of stiff steel, made in different sizes, and which will open any hotel room lock. In case the maid or some one else is in the room suspicion is generally allayed by an apology and reference to the 'mistake' of the room or floor. The thief usually skips if he thinks his presence has aroused suspicion; otherwise he remains and tries it again.

"In New York the bellboys and employees are often caught in this degree of crime. The temptation is very great, the thieving easily performed and detection not easy. Most hotel employees are honest, and the police records of Washington show but few arrests of employees of bona fide hotels in this city in many years."

Penitentiary in New England.

At the beginning of the new century there were 57,000 army and navy penitentiaries in New England drawing their pay through the agency in Boston.

FLAGSTAFF DEALERS

Merchants Who Handle Nothing But the Tall Poles.

Interesting Features of an Odd Line of Business—The Makers Are Particular as to the Material They Use.

"Flagstaffs—Any Size." Such is the advertisement and such is the case. One can get them any size and of any kind of wood and with any kind of tackle and with other differences; in fact, there is everything in the flagstaff line to be purchased of the flagstaff dealer.

The singular fact about the flagstaff business is that the dealers in them handle no other articles. They will manufacture and put in place any kind of a flagstaff, but for the flag itself or for anything else in that line they will refer one politely to the dealer in flags, says the Chicago Chronicle. "We handle nothing but the staffs," they say, and no amount of persuasion can force them to tell why such is the case.

Why not handle flags? Why not handle tents or poles or ropes or any of the hundred things which are generally considered of this nature? The staff dealer will shake his head if you ask him and repeat: "We only handle staffs."

"And do you handle many staffs?" is the natural question. The dealer will laugh long and heartily at this, answering: "Oh, yes; many staffs."

When one comes to find out about it the flagstaff business is a very busy and successful one. Men who make flagstaffs and make them well make money also. To be sure, there is no reason why this should not always be the case, but one would not think it possible with nothing but a flagstaff. And yet flagstaffs, although apparently such small consequences, are expensive things, and when one views them from the point of the critic they are both graceful and dignified.

Standing alone in an open space, tall and slender and straight and white—such are its characteristics—the flagstaff is an imposing affair. There is not an imperfection about it, else it is a staff unworthy of its name. Nor in such a case is it a staff which the maker would claim with pride, as he will most of his work. Like an artist who has failed in his expression, the flagstaff-maker will be keenly disappointed in a staff which shows the slightest fault. As sometimes happens the wood may be poorly seasoned. Then the staff will bend before the elements and beneath the weight of the flag. It is never so decided a bend as to show in the body of the staff, but at the tip, where it should be most perfect and where the slightest curve is in bold outline against the sky.

Flagstaffs are fundamentally of marine significance, since they were first made by sailors and for ships, upon which they have always been a striking feature. While on land the flagstaff is an incidental, on sea it is the most important bit of wood aboard ship and is given the post of honor. The raising and lowering of the flag is the ceremony of the day and is conducted with considerable attention on ships of all classes.

It is probable that a sailor made the first flagstaff. At any rate, they have made the best ones since that time and there is a nautical precision in their cut that gives them an air of distinction. Like a ship's mast, they raise their straight shaft many feet without halt or turn. This shaft, broad at the base, tapers gracefully until at the top of the whole, where the golden ball is placed, the shaft is no larger than a silver half-dollar. To the top of the lower shaft, which after all is the mere support, is applied the second—the real shaft. This shaft, slenderer than the first and far more graceful, raises itself another 20 feet, or to such height as may be in keeping with its base. It overlaps the base and is spliced to it in true nautical fashion, having been blocked against it. At the top, just below the golden ball, is fastened the pulley through which the rope slips in pulling the flag into position.

This is all very simple and easy, for there is nothing complex about a flagstaff and nothing which is patented or which is not in plain sight of the seeing world. And there is nothing in its making which could not be done by the average person, provided that person had the faculty of doing things well. The secret of the flagstaff-maker's success lies in that one point of doing things well. So far as his work goes the flagstaff-maker is a perfect workman and his work in its line is perfect work. The line may be limited, but the maker does not pretend that it is otherwise; in fact, he is proud to say:

"We handle nothing but flagstaffs." The flagstaff-maker will see no point in all this.

"Why should anyone be interested in what I am doing, when I am just making flagstaffs?" he will ask.

And perhaps he is right. There is no reason for it except that people always wonder when they see a flagstaff because it is so beautifully made. There is nothing of it, yet it is impressive and unconsciously one wonders why—the reason is this one secret of the trade.

Strict Compliance.

"Now," said the doctor, "if you wish to escape a return of the grippe, you must take every precaution to avoid getting your feet wet."

"All right, doctor," said the grateful patient. "Shall I wear rubber shoes when I take a bath?"—Baltimore American.