



Lighting the Living Room

This is the first of our series of five articles on home lighting. In June, ideal illumination for dining rooms and breakfast nooks will be discussed.

WERE the mythical Aladdin's lamp within the reach of Mrs. Average Homemaker, what more could she ask than a simple, controllable, decorative medium to weave her own patterns, set her own stage, indulge her own moods! And truly, she has it, though not by rubbing a lamp, but ever so much more assuredly by merely pressing a switch. To our grandmothers unthinkable magic, ourselves—we have light for a song!

To our living room we give more serious thought perhaps than to any other single room in the home, as we should indeed, for this room must

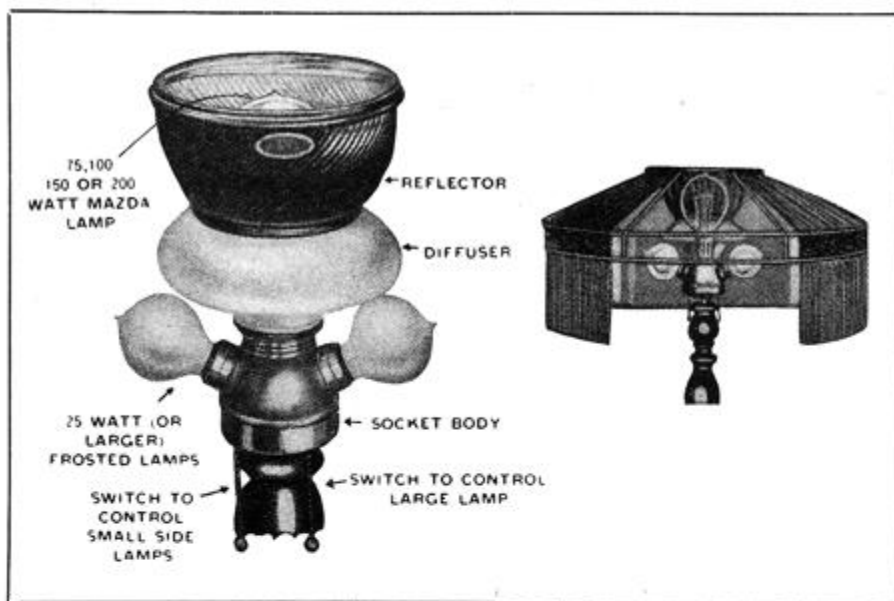
meet demands which range from those of a quiet reading atmosphere to the brilliance of the social occasion, between which are all the moods incidental to this everyday business of living.

What matter if we lavish time and thought and a goodly portion of the family budget on lovely drapes, good furniture, our favorite pictures, a relic or two, if by omitting the proper lighting effect, these furnishings fade into insignificance? Infinitely better to give that final touch the right kind of a light, properly placed—the light source itself a bit of furnishing invaluable to the general scheme.

There are times when it is desirable to flood the

room with light; times when card tables are set or when a group of people are chatting or the younger family members entertain at dancing. No type of lighting has proved so successful as the overhead light for a flood effect. We may, however, use a variety of light sources with equal success. There is the type

of drop fixture which, through a diffusing glass, permits a small quantity of light to escape downward, the remainder of the light from concealed bulbs being reflected to the ceiling and thence to the entire room. This type gives a pleasant comfortable, livable light and



eliminates harsh shadows. Its effect is dependent upon the wattage of the lamps supplied and also upon the color of the ceiling, the lighter colors reflecting a higher percentage of light. Where the quality of light is a major consideration, this type is excellent.

There are other types which are more decorative. The shower fixture accommodating four or five lights of 40—50—60 watts are available in good designs and add a real note to the decorative scheme. Unfortunately, for a long time the design of most of these was such that it was not possible to shade the lamp itself, but this condition is rapidly being overcome as the importance of the lamp shade, both for its aesthetic

value and for its ability to eliminate the glare of the lamp filament, impresses itself upon the public mind. Two overhead light sources are sometimes desirable in a room which is particularly long, keeping said light source well up to the ceiling. Dropping the fixture too low interrupts our line of vision and gives the effect of cutting the room in half. On the other hand, hanging it nearer the ceiling permits a lovely ceiling expanse and makes for spaciousness.

In keeping with our quiet moods, we find another



type of light-adapting it-
An even diffusion of light.
 ing peculiarly self. This is the wall or bracket light. Placed at an agreeable height, these lights, when properly shaded, add a very distinctive note to the decorative scheme. An attempt has been made to provide these in sufficient number to give rather an even distribution of light around the room—thereby eliminating the necessity of the overhead light for the flood effect. This is rather hazardous. Unless very carefully handled, an abundance of side lights are bound to interfere with valuable picture spaces, besides jeopardizing furniture arrangement. Again they do not look well when crowded too near a doorway or window, for an important part of their beauty is the soft circle of surrounding light and the consequent shadows.

On the other hand, given the proper spacing, they may enhance a window value, considering the draped window and harmonizing shaded lamps as a balanced unit, forming a very attractive background for a group of furniture. In the same way a pair of bracket lights may be placed to accommodate a favorite picture or tapestry, permitting its full enjoyment, but bringing out the lovely natural colors at night.

How easy it is to add interest to the fireplace arrangement by the ingenious use of lamps! This treatment of course is largely a matter of personal taste and depends upon the design and scale of the fireplace. Frequently in the smaller home, a pair of bracket lights are used only over the fireplace, focusing attention at the hearth. One may escape the possibility of monotony however by supplying the mantel with two

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single convenience outlets, this arrangement permitting the use of electrified candelabra, colorful vases in which may be wired a low wattage lamp, torchiers and unlimited other decorative objects.

By no means, must one adhere to perfect symmetry by placing pairs of lamps opposite, for a balance of light distribution which is *felt* rather than *seen* is far more interesting. It is well to plan panels or other features before the wiring is begun so that a poorly placed bracket light will not impair the decorative scheme. By placing the side lights or groups of side lights on switch control at the main entrance, one has access to any desired decorative atmosphere upon entering the room.

It must be remembered that bracket lights are for a subdued effect only and the wattage of the accompanying lamps should be kept as low as possible—never to exceed 25 watts. The new inside frosted lamps adapt themselves nicely to this type of lighting since they soften the surrounding shadows. One may give warmth to an otherwise cold room by using a lamp which is tinted. Only the delicate tints, however, are livable and even these must be shaded, the type of shade or shield depending upon the bracket design. So much for the bracket light; it is dignified, ornamental.

The widespread popularity of the portable lamp is surely justified in its adaptability to every conceivable purpose, for by means of clever devising of concealed reflectors and diffusing media, one may have several intensities and qualities of light itself and the shade may be an integral part of a particular furniture group. Their placement is largely governed by utilitarian demand except where the necessity for color or animation is evident, and here a lamp may be used which is ornamental only. This placement is dependant solely upon grouping of furniture, such a group determining whether it be a table lamp, bridge or floor lamp. In any case, the distribution of light should be such as to be comfortable for one who is seated to read or sew, and the light shade of a shape which will obscure the lamp filament from the line of vision.

The device pictured may be attached to any standard lamp. The cup shaped reflector containing a high wattage lamp sends the light to the ceiling from where it is distributed to the room, the same principle as the ceiling device. It is this type of portable lamp which makes the elimination of an overhead light possible in some instances. Too much care cannot be given to the adequate supplying of convenience outlets. At least every twelve or fifteen feet of wall space should have its duplex outlet—the baseboard being the best location for these in the living room.

Besides these, are countless other ways of using light to adorn a room. A figurine may bathe in a pool of light in her niche in the wall, a stained glass pane in a French door arrangement may be illuminated, a bit of old pottery or a delicate vase may conceal a tiny bulb, a calcite bowl on a high standard may emit a flood of soap bubble consistency!

Because of its expressive power and its flexibility, clever hostesses are quick to adopt light for decoration. Frequently, for daytime festivities, shades are drawn and the entire scheme is a medley of lights and shadows. In this way it is possible to *shift the center of interest* in a single room, say from a fireplace group to perhaps an equally effective tea table group or again to a setting of light for a colorful painting.

To the small home owner this may sound rather far-fetched, but a little experimentation will be very well rewarded indeed. A little light on the subject may be responsible for the success of just the room your heart desires.