



"The Sluggard's Lure"



"The Pilgrim's Quest"

DECORATIVE VALUE OF WOVEN CANE CHAIRS

ILLUSTRATED BY EXAMPLES OF THE DRYAD
FURNITURE COMBINING COMFORT AND GRACE

By ROGER CAYE

BODILY comfort, at almost any price and under all circumstances, is one of the darling obsessions of our luxury loving age. Now, as most people spend a considerable portion of their time sitting down, chair comfort is a matter of no little moment to those of us who are willing to own up to their fair share in the amiable failings of our day and generation. Even so noted a personage as the philosopher Herbert Spencer, who might popularly be supposed to have his mind far otherwise occupied, found it not beneath his dignity nor foreign to his inclination to write about the measurements and proportions that would ensure the greatest comfort in chairs. In fact, he marshalled the depth of the seat, its height from the floor, its slant and the rake of the back in most philosophical array so that any profane, unthinking person would be duly impressed with the inherent majesty and importance of the meanest specimen of chairdom.

As well as bodily comfort, our age has also a mighty regard for appearances, and when they and comfort go hand in hand, we have an ideal combination indeed. The chair, therefore, that is both

thoroughly comfortable and agreeable to look upon, is sure of finding immediate and lasting favor. The woven cane furniture that forms the subject of present consideration seems to fill completely both the aforesaid desiderata and, in addition, possesses qualities that recommend it to all who have an eye for the amenities of interior decoration.

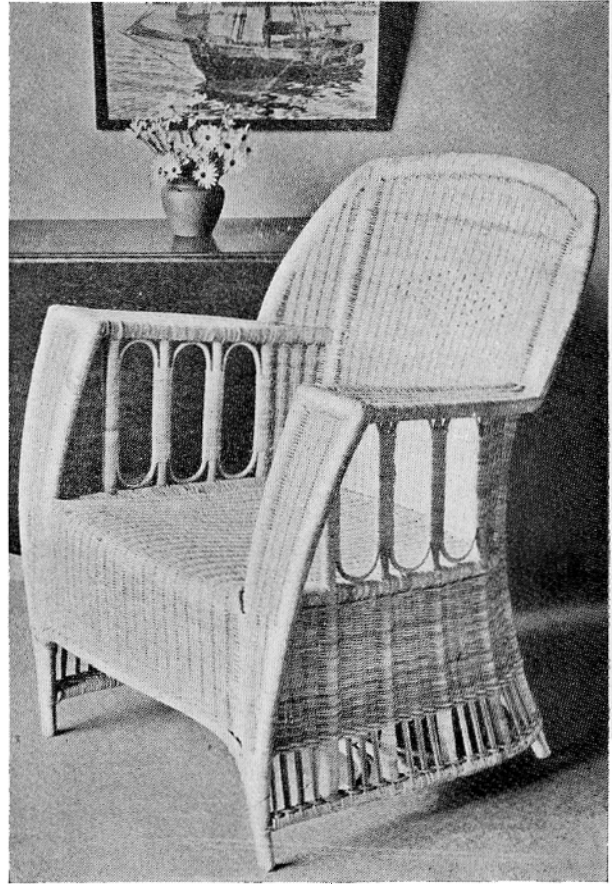
Taking it by and large, the informal living room, especially the informal living room of the summer home or bungalow, ordinarily demands one or two pieces of furniture of a somewhat "nondescript" or exotic character to impart a note of variety and lighten the substantial tone of the heavier and more permanent objects and break the effect of rigid formality sometimes caused by too strict adherence to single or combined period styles. For exactly this purpose, nothing comes nearer to the mark than various sorts of cane or woven wicker chairs, settees and tables.

Cane or woven wicker furniture owes its origin to oriental or tropical countries and it is the fact that it was evolved in response to a need of hot regions that gives it its particular suitability for

our own use in summer. It is because the people of warm countries originated it and, in so doing, may be credited with working out a satisfactory solution of furnishing demands, in a climate which our own weather conditions resemble at certain times in the year, that this woven furniture makes a direct appeal to us. Then, of course, there is a certain quality of glamour attaching to its foreign genesis, a bit of the charm of the "mystic East and glowing tropics."

The old woven furniture imported from the countries of its origin was not always strongly and durably made, nor was it always thoroughly comfortable, despite its attractive appearance. This latest development of Western made cane furniture, on the contrary, possesses all of these desirable qualifications in an eminent degree. The first makers have been beaten at their own game. The basic idea supplied by the originators has been adapted by English craftsmen to our own special and peculiar requirements.

Modern English furniture designers excel in contriving chairs that afford the occupant a maximum of bodily comfort and, in this most recent development of informal furniture creation, they have quite measured up to the standard that has so long been attributed to them. These chairs, besides being cool—or apparently so, which amounts to much the same thing—are both strong and yielding and,



"Sesame"



"John Peel"

furthermore, can be vastly freshened in appearance by an occasional washing when occasion seems to require it. They are planned with a tender regard for human anatomy and their contours compose admirably with the lines of the figure, giving support just where it is needed and falling away where space is preferable.

They are not at all like some chairs that are highly decorative to look at but distressing to sit upon as, for instance, some of the seventeenth century Spanish and Italian chairs, which seem devised on purpose to be offered to unwelcome guests whose parting you would gladly speed. On the contrary, these are so hospitable and enticing that their lure is finally convincing if you are trying to persuade a caller to stop for tea.

Their decorative capacity is very considerable for they go well with any other kind of furniture. Being shapely and well-proportioned, they do not need the addition of cushions to render them attractive unless, of course, the cushion is thrown in merely for the bright dash of color it can impart. After all, however, the most cogent recommendation of the Dryad furniture lies in its quality of supreme comfort which does not belie the suggestive names bestowed on the particular types, such as "The Traveller's Joy" or "The Sluggard's Lure."