

The Cleaning of Carpets.

ONE of the complications peculiar to life in large cities is the difficulty that besets the householder when he desires to have his carpets cleaned. The old-fashioned way of shaking or beating them from windows is prohibited in most large cities, and the alternative of taking them to the fields is, for various reasons, cut off. Brushing will serve for a certain period, but in time a more effective treatment becomes imperative, and experience has long since shown that, unless the work is conducted with great care and method, the cleaning process may be as destructive as that of the Indian *dhobi* or washerman. The weight alone of many carpets renders the most careful handling necessary, and if the carpet be valuable as well as old, it may suffer serious deterioration in the process of cleaning. The original method of cleaning carpets was carried out with the aid of sticks handled by labourers, and lubricated with beer—for the job was a very thirsty one. It was carried out in the nearest convenient field; and if there was any wind, the dust went with it: if not, the beaters were enveloped in a very unwholesome cloud. Sticks would occasionally go through the carpet, and it generally returned from cleaning a good deal the worse for wear. The first attempt at mechanical dry cleaning was made with a machine something like that used for beating rough cocoon silk waste after washing. Next, a fan was added to carry off the dust. Then leather beaters superseded the sticks, and finally compressed air was employed in numerous fine streams, which without the least violence, seems to drive out every particle of dust in any carpet however dirty. A visit to the head-quarters of the Patent Steam Carpet Cleaning Works at York Road, King's Cross, London, will enable those who are interested in the subject to see the process in operation. The beating machine, by which the carpet is struck on the underside by revolving leather beaters will take in carpets 54 feet wide and of any length. They are passed forward and backward through the machine until they cease to give off any dust, all the dust being carried off by an exhausting fan and discharged into a chamber where it meets the exhaust steam from the engines. The effect of the steam as it condenses on the particles of dust is to increase the weight of the dust and cause it to fall to the ground. The workmen attending these machines pass their days in a clean atmosphere the current passing them to enter the machine. The compressed air machine is the latest improvement which as has already been stated dispenses altogether with beaters. A powerful pair of engines, capable of developing 200 horsepower, is used to drive the air compressors which provide the air supply at a pressure of 70 pounds per square inch. The air escapes from a row of jets in a pipe striking the surface of the carpet and dislodging all the dirt. The cleaning machine itself is a very simple affair. The carpet is passed over a long cylindrical roller built like a cage. Above this cage, at a distance of about 2 inches, is suspended the jet pipe, parallel with the roller. The pipe has a short back-and-forward movement communicated by the engine and the carpet passes slowly over the roller beneath the vibrating jets of air. An exhausting fan carries off all the dust and the air from the jets to a chamber where steam precipitates all the solid particles. The process is continued until when struck with a rod the carpet gives off no dust. In this manner the most valuable carpets may be cleansed without risk of injury to their texture.

The company have works at Manchester, Leeds, Dublin and Glasgow, as well as in London. This process has an interest which extends far beyond the business of carpet cleaning. It will doubtless find further application in the separation of dust and dirt from many materials, and it points to means for the reduction of the offensiveness and unwholesomeness of many trades

which at present have to be segregated. There is a distinct relationship between the carpet cleaning process and the more recent one for cleaning railway carriages with an *air brush*, which works with extraordinary rapidity, and neither wears the linings nor rubs dirt into them as is the case with the hair brush. Compressed air has, during the last few years, been recovering from a damaged reputation acquired through misuse. In many cases it was used at excessive pressures, at other times the pressure was too low. The methods of compressing it were also defective. It is now used successfully for a great variety of purposes, including the driving of underground machinery in mines, propelling tram cars, driving cranes and machine tools, rock boring in tunnels, pneumatic transport, cooling stores of perishable merchandise, etc. For the transmission of small powers in factories compressed air is most convenient. It needs no exhaust pipe and no covering on the conduits. Its efficiency is greatly augmented by being heated before use in motors, but the heat must be supplied immediately before use, as hot air cools very rapidly in pipes.

A Cotton Fabrics Glossary.

(Concluded from page 137.)

Scrim: A loose woven cotton material, often of fancy, lacy weave, its almost exclusive use being for drapery and window curtains.

Sheeting: A stout cotton cloth used for bed sheetings, shirts and underwear purposes, for men and women. Made and sold in the bleached and brown state. A standard sheeting weighs 2.85 yards to the lb., and the range is from 2½ to 4 yards.

Silesia: Originally a product of Silesia, being a fine holland, and having a glazed finish. Used for window curtains and household purposes.

Silesia: A rather thin twilled goods, used as linings for both men's and women's wear, and having a calendered finish. The cheaper grades have the most lustre.

Stripes or Hickory Stripes: Coarse yarn coloured goods, in twilled stripes, commonly blue and white, and brown and white; made largely into shirts and pants, in certain sections of the country.

Taffeta Silk Lining: Used entirely for ladies' wear. The stiffening in the goods produces a rustle effect. The goods are plain finished, and come in narrow and wide widths.

Tape: A plain or twilled, very narrow fabric which may be of cotton or linen, and in white or colours.

Tartan is coarser than **organdie**, and in the cheaper grades the meshes are so open as to be an approach to mosquito netting. The goods are made in colours, and are used for draping and decorating purposes.

Tartan Plaids or Scotch Plaids: Terms applied to high coloured plaided cotton dress fabrics.

Three Leaf Twill Dress Linings are twilled dress linings in the fabrication of which three threads and three heddles were used.

Ticks or Ticking: A stout, heavy coloured cloth, usually in blue and white stripes, herring bone weave, used for bed ticks.

Turkey Reds: Cotton cloths dyed red.

Umbrella Gingham: A gingham made expressly for the manufacture of umbrellas.

Union Linen Lawns are a combination of linen and cotton, usually having a cotton warp and weft of linen. There may be considerable variation in quality of yarns and closeness of the meshes.

Velour: A cotton fabric used for curtains. It is the same on both sides, dyed in solid colours, and is woven with a coarse stiff pile.

Velveteen: Similar to velvet, except that it is made of cotton. It is a cut pile fabric.

Victoria Lawn: The chief point of difference between this fabric and India linen is that the former is made of slightly heavier yarn, the goods weighing nine to ten yards to the lb.

Vigoureux differs from **beige** in that the yarns are printed before being spun, giving the goods an appearance like that produced by mixed yarns. Without close examination, it is difficult to distinguish whether the goods are dyed in the yarn or in the stock.

Wide Sheetings, so-called, range in width from 72 to 100 inches, and are used largely for bed sheetings.