

## BLEACHING

While touching upon "white" it might be in order to say that a picture (especially a light picture), if kept in a dark place for a long time (soon after it is painted), will sometimes "mellow" excessively; that is, it will appear slightly yellower when seen again in the light. In such a case, expose the picture for a day to strong light (not sunlight) in a north window, for instance, and it will be entirely purified and will never change again unless chemically impure colors were employed in its creation. The mellowing is usually the exudation of the linseed oil, or medium, to the surface of the paint. When a picture is kept in a dark place, it has no chance to bleach gradually as it is exuded. The above process is called "bleaching," and is a very valuable thing to remember.

It is well, before such bleaching, to wash the picture gently with a soft wet cloth and Ivory soap to remove any dust deposits. Use extreme care afterwards to remove every vestige of soap by repeated wipings with the cloth and *pure water*. Be careful even to wipe the tacked edges of the canvas with dry cloth to prevent the rusting of the tacks, with its consequent deterioration of adjacent canvas. Better still, use galvanized or non-rustable "tapestry tacks."

The above bleaching and cleaning process can be recommended as a restorative, in cases of old pictures hung for long periods in dark places. It will be surprising to see the color come back to pictures that have become "black" with age. After such cleaning and bleaching a very thin rub of varnish medium should be applied.