

Comfort in Reading and Holding Reference Books

On a closer inspection do we get well acquainted with that in which we are interested, but how disinclined are we to go after information which most usually is stored up in large volumes; for after nightfall most of us feel too luxuriously indolent to hold up a book of reference, much less take notes therefrom. There is truly some effort in the use of dictionaries and encyclopedias on account of their unusual size and weight, and whatever facilities frequent inspection of them and a regular habit of reading varied literature, while occupying a comfortable chair at a restful angle, will, I am sure, impel our craftsmen friends to prepare plans for the making of a reading table after the suggestion shown in Figs. 152 and 153. I am a little inclined to think that the main parts of some of these tables which are sold are built entirely too light, for while they are intended to draw easily toward you and adjust to the distance and angle of one's vision, yet they should have at least the four posts strong enough that they would not break or part company with base or top.

Care then should be given to the joinery to make the construction firm, but as light and graceful as consistent, and it may be that some of our readers may desire to put in turned posts instead of those indicated. Mortising the long rails into the posts, and using dowels for securing the end rails into the posts will lock one into the other and also save the strength of the posts.

Personal requirements should be considered as to not only the fixed height, but the extreme width inside between posts.

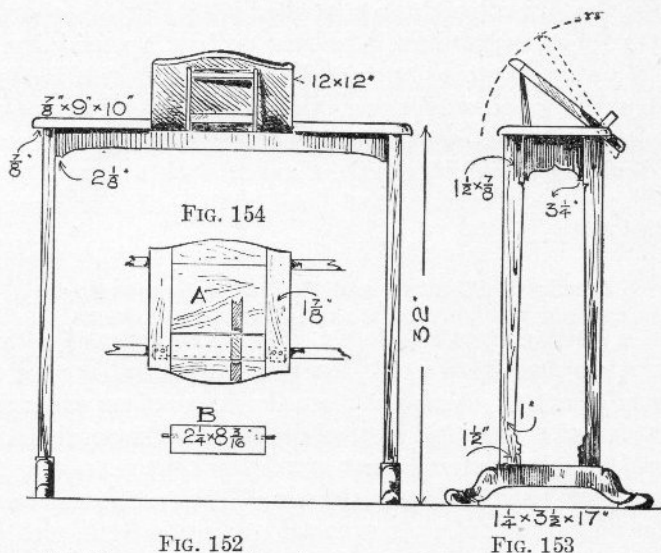


FIG. 152, 153 and 154.—Elevations and Details of a Reading Table.

Some particularly restful armchair or rocker would determine this. The width should be sufficient to allow of the table being drawn readily over the arms, which frequently are more than 30 in. over all, in a Morris chair for instance.

It will be seen that the three parts of the table rest upon the framing of the rails to the posts, the two outside portions of the top being securely held thereto by screws counterbored through rails, while glued corner blocks may give the framing greater stiffness.

The center of the table is a frame filled with a larger fixed panel shown at *A* in Fig. 154, and the smaller, shown at *B* is loose and swivels on steel pins properly located so that it may be swung up at right angles when needed to rest the book upon. The fitting and adjusting of this swing piece is done in connection with fitting up the frame, and when ready to glue up, the steel pins are inserted with a very thin washer between to insure

free action. The larger panel is also set in, being fastened permanently with glue, and the entire frame glued together and held in clamps until dry. By the exercise of a little care the swing book support *B* may be so fitted that only a very slight crack will show on the surface of the table; for detail of this see Fig. 154, *A* and *B*. By experimenting you will find that the edges of movable and fixed parts will have to be treated from underneath as indicated in the section shown. After framed-up panel has been fully completed it is fitted in between the two tops, trimming just sufficiently to avoid binding. Then locate and mark places for two hinges on one side and after these have been fitted to allow all tops to be flush, proceed to arrange for a swinging adjustable support. This is shown in the drawing, but many other ideas may be suggested while you proceed with the work. The scheming and creation of simple devices is a great part in the pleasure in making furniture. It may be that a small drawer or compartment would be desirable, sufficient to hold pencils and note paper, and the supporting device would have to be such as to not interfere—think it out. That is one of the privileges and the joys of a craftsman, to scheme and create simple devices that add to the utility or aid in the economy of space. Recently the writer dealt with an armchair designed for the private car of a president of a large railway. His desire was to have a tablet drawer for paper under the seat; and in the roll arm, his mechanic had secreted a brass tube to contain pencils, one tube working within another and controlled by a secret spring. That chair, personally, was gratifying and he always knew where to find his writing material.