



IMITATION BARBOTINE PAINTING UPON EARTHENWARE.



THERE can be no doubt that the desire for beautiful home decoration has largely increased during the last few years among the upper classes, and that many girls who at one time were content to leave the drawing-room to its old ornaments, bought, perhaps, upon their mother's marriage, and who confined their art aspirations to the production of indifferent water-colour or oil paintings, are now anxious to introduce lighter and prettier decorations about the house, which shall at the same time brighten up the more solid adornments and display the tastes of the designers.

The one drawback to their eagerness is the question of the expense. There are few girls living at home who have a very large amount of pocket money to devote to art fancies; they are willing enough to decorate, but they cannot afford to take the lessons necessary to become perfect in one or other of the many branches of china painting, glass painting, or tapestry painting, or even to buy the costly materials that are then necessary. It is therefore by no means to be wondered at that painting upon earthenware should have been introduced and eagerly taken up, as it combines cheapness of material with simplicity of execution and great decorative powers.

Painting upon earthenware has developed into two distinct branches, one being the simple decoration of pottery with flower or figure designs, thrown up with dark coloured and rich backgrounds, and the other, the imitation of the raised and moulded flower designs which have, during the last two years, attracted so much attention in real china ornaments. The groundwork of the two branches of earthenware painting is the same, also the pottery used, but there the likeness ends, the plain flat designs being painted in oil-colours like any ordinary oil-colour painting upon wood or canvas, and the raised imitation barbotine calling in the aid of either gutta-percha, leather, modelling clay, or putty.

The raised work is the most effective, and is the easiest, as it requires hardly any real study of the art of oil-painting, the coloured and raised flowers not being highly finished or shaded, and depending for their beauty upon their modelled petals and general boldness. On the other hand the plain oil-colour painting gives scope for the talent of the worker by bringing out the knowledge of colour and delicacy of finish that they may possess, and when the painting is slightly raised from the background, by being "lumped up" with successive layers of paint, the result is intrinsically better in an artist's point of view than the more striking modelling, and reminds the spectator of the true Limoges or barbotine painting.

The pottery used in both kinds of painting is the ordinary glazed earthenware made for common uses. This consists of the large handsome cream jars used in dairies, and to be had of many sizes, in prices ranging from

ninepence to seven-and-sixpence; the vinegar and tea bottles used by country labourers, worth a shilling; the sugar jars of house-keepers, small honey pots, pipkins, blackbirds' food receptacles, etc. The very large cream jars, when decorated, form extremely handsome hall ornaments; they are placed upon the floor, and large ferns or plants grown in them. The smaller sized cream jars are used to hold pots of flowers, and to decorate sitting-rooms. Another large hall ornament is made with a drain pipe; this is used as an umbrella stand; the base of the stand is made with the grooved end of the pipe, into which a wooden bottom is fitted, and which makes a good and solid stand. The flat end of the pipe requires no finishing, and the umbrellas are either put straight into the hollow or a tin lining is fitted into that space.

The honey jars, pipkins, and blackbirds' food receptacles are used for cut flowers, the vinegar jars merely as ornaments. As these common materials may seem to the inexperienced as totally impossible objects for decorative purposes, we illustrate the appearance of these articles when painted, merely cautioning intending buyers to see, when selecting them, that their rims and shape are perfect and glaze laid on evenly, as, being cheap, they are sometimes very carelessly made. In the country the articles will be more easily obtained than in London and the shapes will be better, while in Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and Devonshire, from local potteries, other and more curious shapes can be purchased, which, being of local manufacture, are never brought to London. One of Doulton's manufactures, sold at Salisbury but not obtainable in London, is shown in our illustrations; it resembles the tea bottles of the ancients.

The articles to be painted selected, to make the ground colour is the next proceeding. This in all large pieces of pottery would come expensive if the usual tube oil-colours were employed, and it is therefore made, when required in large quantities, as follows: Buy the powder colours used by ordinary house-painters, which cost from twopence to threepence an ounce, and half a pint of the very best jaspers' gold size, and some ordinary house painters' brushes, price from threepence to sixpence. These common brushes are quite good enough for laying on backgrounds, but they must be soaked for twenty-four hours before using, as their hairs are very loosely put in, and will drop out unless their wooden handles are swollen by being wet. It is just as well to wipe and leave them in a jar of water after every painting; they will not then require cleaning, and will be ready when wanted.

The paint should be well powdered and free from grit, when bought; the most useful colours are black, indigo, chrome yellow, burnt sienna, bone brown, vermilion, and white. Before mixing any of these colours lay them on a piece of glass and crush them well with a palette knife, so as to reduce them to a very

fine powder, the crushing of the dry paint being one of the chief requisites in the mixing. To mix put a tablespoonful of colour on a large palette, and work it up with sufficient gold size to make it like cream, then put another tablespoonful of colour on another part of the palette, and work that up with gold size and when it is smooth add it to the first made paint, but never add unmixed colour to made paint, as it is so liable then to come out gritty. The grounding of all earthenware painting is composed of different colours or shades of colours; it is never of one uniform tint throughout. Therefore, when preparing it, separate palettes of colour are required; three shades are generally enough, the blending of these together upon the pot forming the intermediate tints. Green, blue, or brown grounds are the ones usually selected. For a green ground mix black, Prussian blue, and yellow together; make three distinct shades, one entirely of black and yellow, another of blue and yellow, and a third of yellow with a very little blue in it. For a blue ground use black, blue, and white, the black leave plain and use very little of, then mix some plain blue, blue and white together, and pure white. It is generally best to buy a tube of flake white, and not to mix it at home, as it is very sparingly used and gritty to mix. In a brown ground use bone brown, burnt sienna, and vermilion, and mix them together in the same proportions as for a green ground. A perfectly black ground will look effective, if, when it is painted, streaks and blotches of pure white are dashed sparingly over it, but in all other cases work in the three shades of one colour, putting the darkest or the lightest at the top of the article; blend them one into the other, not all in a line, but one colour taken down one side almost to the bottom and another colour taken up to the edge of the pot in another part, and the three colours fairly graduated in a third place. The working in and blending up of the ground colours, so as to make an artistic background, will amply repay trouble by the effect so produced, some well executed backgrounds hardly needing any other decoration. Backgrounds can be painted over any number of times, but once is generally enough, especially if the colours close to the rim of the article are laid on with full brushes; the colours will then run down a little, and complete the effect of real china by the lines so made; however, in working with this object in view, take care not to overload the brushes or make too many runnings, as when the runnings are too close and overcharged with liquid their beauty is gone.

After the background has dried, the design should be sketched in white chalk upon it. The best designs for painted flowers are those of light coloured and single ones, of these jessamine, meadowsweet, magnolia, Japanese anemones, flags, waterlilies, pale blue columbines, winter roses, poppies, yellow and white daisies, and many of the orchids are suitable.

Double flowers will be more difficult to execute, but the double poppy and chrysanthemums of all shades are most handsome when their foremost petals are raised above the flat design by being worked up with layer upon layer of white paint, or if the raising is accomplished by mixing the plaster of Paris with glue size and laying this mixture upon the parts upon which the highest lights are thrown. The painting of the flat design is similar to ordinary oil-painting, the colours used being tube colours, the medium Robertson's or any other meglip. When it is finished the pot should be put on one side for a week, and then varnished over the whole surface with pale copal varnish.

For the raised process, paint in the background of the article in the same way as is used for the flat flower painting, and while the pot is drying draw the group of flowers, etc., that are to be painted, upon a sheet of paper as large as they are to be made, and keep that as a guide to arrange the group by. Make this group of bold decided leaves, flowers, fruit, or birds, and arrange it that there shall be little or no background of leaves or half-shown objects. Handsome and large pots, drain-pipes, etc., will allow of fine bold double poppies, iris, with their long straight leaves, bulrushes, leaves and rushes, with a few waterlilies, birds flying around or seated upon almond or apple trees in blossom, chrysanthemums of the Japanese kind, orange boughs with fruit and flowers, cactus with leaf and flower; while small pots and jars will look well with wild rose boughs, daffodils, and narcissus, quince flowers, big daisies, etc.

The four different methods of producing the raised work have all their particular devotees, and as so much depends upon individual liking that one artist can produce from one method good models and cannot manage another and equally simple kind, we will give a description of all, merely ourselves giving the balance in favour of the flower subjects being made in gutta-percha or leather, the fruit subjects in modelling clay or putty.

The method of using the modelling clay and the putty is similar; the putty must be fresh glaziers' putty, the modelling clay well-softened and rendered pliable by water, and then strengthened by being kneaded up with hot glue size, made by melting ordinary size in a saucepan over the fire and then straining it through muslin.

Have a basin of hot water, a flat smooth board, some pieces of stick cut to smooth points, or scooped out like small spoons, a small sharp knife, a glass bottle, and the clay or putty. Put a lump of this on the board (wet the board well), and roll it out with the help of the glass bottle until it is a quarter of an inch thick. Take the mass up and turn it on the other side, and roll it out flat upon that side, then shape the design—rose leaves, poppy petals, bulrush, and the prominent

leaves and other subjects cut out singly, and if possible from a natural leaf. Vein these leaves with the help of the pointed sticks, or curve them inwards or outwards with the various scooped-out instruments, and also manipulate them with the fingers, which keep thoroughly wet, or the clay or putty will adhere to them, and spoil the smoothness of the leaf. Prepare a good many petals, etc., then take a lump of material, shape it in a half circle to form the bowl of the flower, and stick it with a little size to the pot. Wet the clay petals with the size, and stick them round the bowl (the putty leaves will stick on without the size), and as soon as the petals are in place, press them in, draw one more forward than another, lay one drooping over the heart of the flower, another half turned back—in fact, model the flower as naturally as you can, and, while the clay or putty is still wet, vein in or touch in any small lines upon the petals that would improve them, being at all times particular to preserve a raised effect. Paint the flower over at once, while it is still wet, with a coat of white paint to which some gold size has been added, and then put in the leaves, the stalks, more flowers, etc., until the design is finished, working exactly as before, and giving each portion a coat of white paint as finished. The real painting and colouring of the flowers cannot be done until the raised surface is dry; this will take quite four days. The painting confine to high lights and depths, trusting to the shading by blending these tints together. Paint with ordinary oil-colours and with fine small brushes, and be careful to get into all the recesses of the flower and colour them, and also not to break the petals in so doing. When the colouring is dry, brush all over the jar and the raised work with a thin wash of pure well-strained glue, as this will serve to make the raised work firm, and will have the same effect as varnish upon the colours. Fruit modelled in clay or putty should be modelled by the fingers and rolled in the hand, not upon a board. In modelling it, remember that it is only required to shape out one half of it, the other side, that sticks to the pot, being quite flat; also that it is not necessary to make a solid mass of clay, but after the fruit is fairly shaped cut away a hollow in the centre, so as to leave a quarter of an inch of material all round. Small fruit, such as acorns, blackberries, cherries, nuts, chestnuts, can be made solid; it is only to decrease the weight that the clay is extracted. Coarse net laid over blackberries and pulled tight will give to the clay the peculiar shape of this fruit, and the spikes upon a chestnut husk are drawn out into shape by the use of scissor points.

The materials required for modelling in gutta-percha are more expensive than those used in clay or putty working. They are:—the gutta-percha, a quarter of a pound (costing about 1s. 6d.), a spirit lamp, methylated spirits, a porcelain-lined bath (or a tin saucer with a common china one inside), wire-scissors,

and large black-headed pins. The bath, spirit lamp, &c., can be dispensed with if the worker can keep a small tin pannikin filled with boiling water on a fire—it being necessary that the gutta-percha should always be kept hot and in boiling water.

The hands during the modelling should be quite wet, and dipped from time to time in hot water, or otherwise the material sticks to them. The gutta-percha is put into boiling water that covers it all over and the lamp kept burning, and in a few minutes the material becomes soft and can be pulled out to any shape. As much as is required for a petal is then drawn out, smoothed, manipulated, and shaped with the wet fingers, aided by the scissors, hollowed and rounded by being rolled in the palm of the hand and run over with the big pin-heads, veined with the pin-points, and then stuck to the jar by being warmed at one end in the flame of the spirit-lamp until the dry heat melts the gutta-percha into a fluid which sticks firmly to the earthenware. The modelling of each petal should be from nature, and any little blemishes, such as tears, insect holes, etc., in the petals, should be reproduced. A centre boss, on which to fix the detached leaves of flowers, should be stuck on the jar before any petals are made, and if stamens and other centres, stuck on it before the outer leaves. A number of stamens for a centre make of one piece of very thin gutta-percha, cut by a pair of scissors into long, thin spikes and just attached at their lower edge. The stalks of the flowers and leaves, and the tendrils, make with wire and cover with gutta-percha; take a piece of wire, cut it to the right length, pull out a small piece of gutta-percha very narrow and long, roll this round the wire and join it with the fingers, warm the end in the flame, also the end of the leaf or blossom to be attached, and stick the two together; smooth over the join by heating the point of a pin in the lamp and rubbing that backwards and forwards over the spot.

It is not necessary when modelling these flowers to finish their undersides and parts that do not show with any great accuracy; as long as the general shape of the plant is preserved, the petals put on with skill and grace, and leaves made to look light and airy, it is sufficient. As soon as the gutta-percha has hardened, it can be painted upon, but before putting on any colour lay on a coating of glue size, to prevent the colour becoming absorbed in the gutta-percha. Paint the flowers with tube oil-colours in the same way as in the clay modelling.

Leather Flowers.—These are made with odd pieces of sheepskin leather (sold at Messrs. Barnards, Edgware-road). Besides the leather, strong common glue, a glue-pot that can



be heated over the fire, salt, fine wire pins with large heads, and scissors are required. Select designs of such flowers as large single poppies, cactus, arums, and other well-defined blossoms, and cut the shape of their petals from the natural petals out in cardboard. Soak the thin bits of leather in a basin of warm water, in which a good handful of salt has been mixed. Let the leather soak for ten minutes, then take it out, dry it with a cloth, and cut out the petals and leaves, vein the leaves with the points of the scissors, curve and shape them with the palm of the hand and the knobs of the pins, and crinkle them with the blunt sides of the scissors. Make the tendrils and stalks by wrapping small strips of leather round the wire, and glue them with the hot strong glue to the pots they are to decorate before adjusting the flowers and leaves. For the leaves and flowers heat a lump of glue, stick it to the pot, and attach the necessary petal, flower, or leaf to it at once, and when it is attached shape and arrange it before the glue has dried. In stamens and small berries, and other round objects, mix a little plaster of Paris with the glue, shape the berry in the hand, and stick it to the pot with the glue, but use the leather, as being lighter and more pliable than the plaster, wherever it is possible. Lay a coating of size over all the raised work, and then a coat of flake white oil colour, and then paint the flowers in their natural tints, using the ordinary tube oil-colours. Finish with a coat of pale varnish applied a few days after the painting is finished, and not until it is perfectly dry.

B. C. SAWARD.

POULTRY AS FOOD, AND HOW TO COOK IT.

By PHILLIS BROWNE.



FANCY there are a good many people who never think of having poultry, because they are afraid of the cost. They believe in joints—good roasts and good boils—for they know

that these are substantial and thoroughly satisfactory. Meat is ever so much a pound, it is true, but then (they say) one knows how far it goes and what are the possibilities connected with it. Fowls, on the contrary, are troublesome to prepare, and when they are done there is scarcely anything on them. They may be very good for invalids, or for very small families, or for people of ample means; but for ordinary folks, who have to provide for numbers and consider the cost, they are altogether out of reach, and must be left alone entirely.

There is a good deal of truth in statements like the above. Poultry is, I am sorry to say, exceedingly dear; it is much dearer than it need be, if farmers' wives understood how easily it is reared and how profitable it might be made. Nevertheless, poultry is very agreeable food; it is very easy of digestion, and supplies a most welcome variety in the everyday fare when it can be obtained, so I think it is worth our while to get to know what we can about it, especially as it happens that if ever there is a time when it is more easily obtained than another, it is just now. Fowls, as we know, are never out of season—they are to be had all the year round by those who can pay the price. They are generally supposed to be most plentiful from May to October. In the

early part of the year they are, however, very expensive, and from one cause or another they keep a high price until the end of August or the beginning of September—then, if ever, they begin to go down a little, and they are at their cheapest in September, October, and November. As Christmas approaches they get dear once more, and rise far out of the region of economical marketers. The present, therefore, is a particularly favourable time for us to think about poultry.

I suppose that the reason why fowls are cheap just now is that people do not care to keep their poultry during the winter. They therefore take the opportunity to send to market all but their most valuable birds. In acting thus they are very sensible, but then it is evident that while they will most likely dispose of the superabundant young birds, they may also be tempted to send very old birds to market, and this constitutes a danger for the inexperienced purchaser, and makes it necessary that she should know how to make a judicious choice when laying out her money. Yet even persons of experience are sometimes taken in, in this matter. I am not one of those who think you can learn to go to market by reading a book. The way to learn how to lay out money to advantage is to make actual experiments, and even to make mistakes a few times. It is very easy to give hints, and to say that the legs of poultry should be smooth and pliant, the toes being easily broken when bent back, and that if they look hard and bony the bird is old and will be tough; that the skin should be clean, white, and finely grained, because in old birds the skin has a sort of knotted look, well known to the initiated; that the gristly parts should feel tender when pressed; that the neck should not be too thin; that fowls with white legs are best suited to boiling, and dark fowls are best for roasting; and that very large fowls should be avoided, because they are likely to be old, etc., etc. All this is true, and yet when novices come to buy, they generally take what the poulterer chooses to give them. Adepts in marketing, on the contrary, decide more by the general appearance than by any special details, and in this they are right, although, as I have already said, even they occasionally make mistakes, because certain poulterers are particularly clever in adopting little tricks for plumping up their poultry, and making them appear better than they are.

Chickens or young fowls are always tender, and there are many cooks who say that old fowls are good for nothing, and ought not to be eaten. I do not approve of this idea at all, because I do not believe in throwing away good food. A good cook is never an extravagant cook, and when so many people are wanting food all round us, we are not going to commit the wickedness of scorning valuable food. I should never think of buying an old fowl for preference, of course. Yet where people keep poultry they must occasionally be called upon to deal with old fowls, and if they will take a little trouble about the matter they may convert the birds into very satisfactory dishes. If an old fowl were roasted very quickly after it was killed it would be most unpleasantly tough. We read in one of the handbooks published in connection with the Health Exhibition that Mr. Gladstone owes his good health to the fact that he has always been careful to chew his meat thirty-two times before swallowing it. I should think that if he or anyone else were called upon to deal with the old roast fowl referred to he would have to chew it thrice thirty-two times before it was sufficiently masticated.

To treat a fowl thus, however, would be practically to throw it away, because no one could eat it. Nevertheless, an old fowl will be very palatable if it is hung for as long as it will keep sweet before being dressed, and then

is skinned, cut up into joints, and stewed slowly, gently, and for a considerable time. It will keep best if not drawn when hung, because, if drawn, the inside is likely to get musty. The crop, however, ought to be taken out, because the food might go sour, and that would affect the taste of the flesh. By rights, however, a fowl ought not to be fed for twelve hours before it is killed, and then there is no fear of an accident of this kind.

There is a way of making an old fowl tender which sounds absurd, but which is in my opinion quite worth trying. The recipe was published some years ago in the *Live Stock Journal*, and came from someone who seemed to know all about poultry. He advised that an old hen should be plucked as soon as killed, wrapped in vine leaves and a napkin, buried for twenty-four hours, then taken up and cooked slowly. This plan may be adopted when it is not convenient to let the bird hang for awhile. In either case, however, it should be cooked slowly, and long enough. All poultry should be thoroughly cooked, but old poultry should be cooked for a long time—three or four hours.

I am not sure that it is possible to write down with sufficient clearness to be understood instructions for trussing fowls. In towns this business is generally performed by the poulterer, and thus the cook is saved both time and trouble. It is, however, always an advantage to know how to do a thing for oneself, and therefore I will do my best to describe the operation. If I fail to make myself understood it will not be for want of trying.

To Truss a Fowl for Roasting.—Pluck the feathers out carefully, not to tear the skin, and singe off the hairs with lighted paper. Lay the bird on its breast and cut a nick down the neck three inches below the head. Put the finger in this and loosen the skin all round, then cut the neck off close to the head, and be careful not to cut through the outer skin, because it is wanted to fold over. Take out the crop, which lies in the front of the neck, and try to remove this whole. Unless this is done, and if the crop contains food, it may be scattered all about, which will be very unpleasant. Put the finger into the opening, and keeping quite close to the body of the bird, work round, and loosen in doing so everything with which the finger comes in contact. Turn the fowl round and cut a slit just above the rump, then put the finger in again and work round once more. Take hold of the gizzard with a cloth, draw out the inside, pressing the breast-bone to push out the giblets, and be very careful not to break the gall-bladder, which adheres to the liver. Its contents are very bitter, and will impart an unpleasant taste to anything they may touch. It must be taken from the liver at once and thrown away. Look through the fowl to be sure it is entirely cleared, and wipe it out with a clean cloth. The liver, heart, and gizzard must be put into a little salt and water; everything else may be thrown away. Cut off the claws and hold the legs in boiling water to loosen the skin, then peel off the latter as far as the first joint. Cut across the sinew which lies between the leg and the thigh, as this will help to keep the bird in good shape. If the bird is an old one, draw out these sinews by making an incision just above the claws, getting someone to hold the bird firmly and pulling it away. Old-fashioned cooks very often accomplish this business by putting the foot in the crevice of the kitchen-door, closing it to hold the foot firmly, and then pulling the fowl till the sinew comes away. In a young bird this would be quite unnecessary, but it is a great assistance to the carver of an old bird. (Professional trussers also break the breast-bone to "plump" the bird. To do this they put a knife between the breast-bone and the skin till the breast-bone can be felt, then knock it