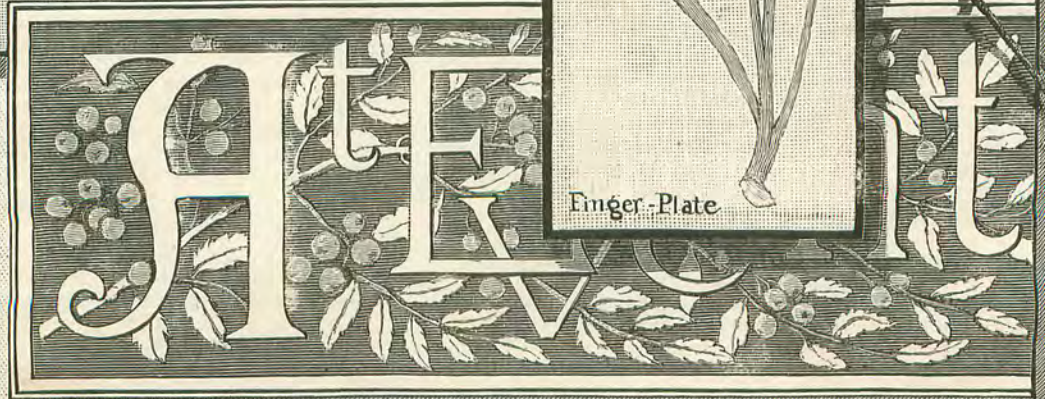
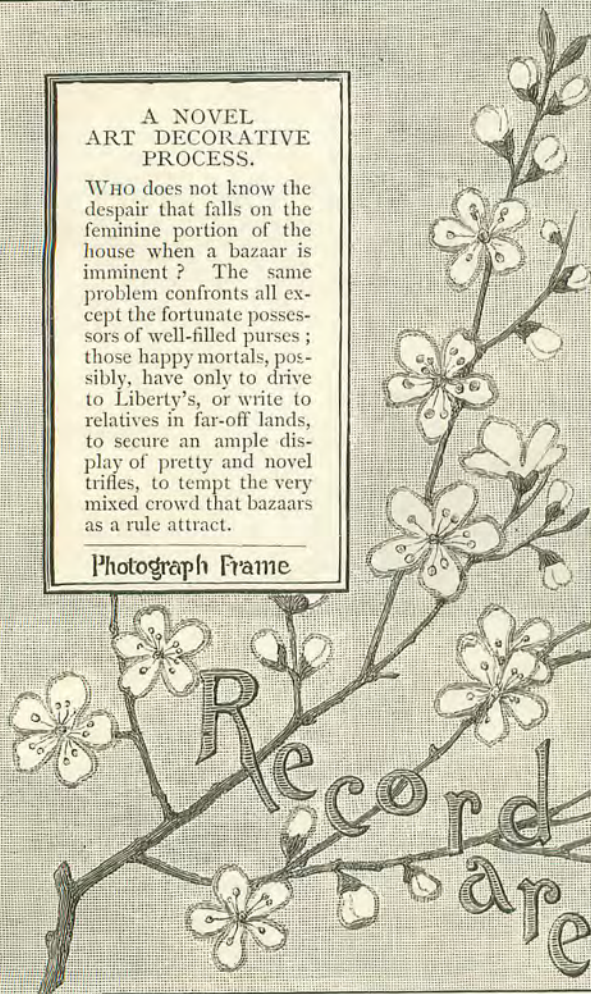


# VITREIAC

## A NOVEL ART DECORATIVE PROCESS.

WHO does not know the despair that falls on the feminine portion of the house when a bazaar is imminent? The same problem confronts all except the fortunate possessors of well-filled purses; those happy mortals, possibly, have only to drive to Liberty's, or write to relatives in far-off lands, to secure an ample display of pretty and novel trifles, to tempt the very mixed crowd that bazaars as a rule attract.

Photograph Frame



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But in ordinary families there is an eager search for novelties; the columns of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER are scanned for ideas; the more energetic write to the Editor for suggestions, as it is well known that an editor, having more spare time than any other mortal, is so likely to be full of ingenious devices with which, no doubt, he fills up his irksome waste hours. Then the clever people who are always up in the latest art craze are called upon, and the result, as a rule, is as free from novelty as a Queen's Speech. The inevitable terra-cotta plaque, crystoleum-painted photographs, crevel work and its kindred embroideries, fans made into wall pockets, fearful and wonderful devices upon unexpected materials for antimaccassars, but nothing very unlike what one has seen upon scores of previous stalls at fancy fairs for years past. Having thus shown, like every introducer of a novelty, the pressing need for it that exists, it will no doubt follow, as in similar cases elsewhere, that the novelty brought forward is not so very new nor so very attractive.

Some time since a German friend who was looking at various art handiwork in an English home, furnished in modern artistic style, said, "But you have no glass as we decorate it," and from a few minutes' hasty description the following process for decorating various fancy articles has been evolved, possibly very unlike the actual material that the foreigner described, but still in its way a sufficiently new style of fancy work, or as modern culture phrases it, art-handiwork. The aim is to decorate the back of common glass in black, gold, and silver, the result being not unlike Japanese lacquer, but adaptable to some purposes that the lacquer would not suit, and, it must be said, not suited to many surfaces that the lacquer would adorn. But we cannot make Japanese lacquer ourselves—that is an advantage of vitrelac; neither can we have our own designs on it—this is not an advantage in most cases, I readily admit. The exquisite art which our Eastern friends bestow on their commonest objects, is, alas that it be so! in spite of South Kensington, in spite of our best meant efforts, not for us at present; perhaps it never may be that we of the West shall beautify, simply and truly, all our belongings as those wonderful children of the East succeed in doing.

And here, when the thought of the real fitness and beauty of the best Japanese work comes to one's memory, it seems mockery to suggest anything worthy to be named by the side of their most ordinary decorations. Fortunately for us, however, life is not all "art for art's sake," as a certain school would like it to be thought; and dropping that much-abused word art—let us see if in our own homes new decorative adjuncts may be created,

to give some little pleasure to those who made and see them; and perhaps to assist in its way, feeble though it be, in earning a few pence for those who need not art alone, but the dreary necessities of everyday life. If by our work, which is really pastime, some little one of the poor children of the world has a care lightened, or a pain eased, never mind what may be the feebleness of the art displayed, or how small our efforts compared with the unreachable ideal, the end will be sterling good, although the means be paltry and evanescent.

To begin with the description of the process. We require pieces of common window glass, any size, some black varnish, a few sheets of gold and silver paper; these suffice for the first attempt. First cut the glass to be decorated to fit the required space—and here it may be as well to say that glass cutting is not an abstruse art; with a sixpenny American glass-cutter (corkscrew and a dozen other things beside) anybody may in a few minutes acquire the art of diminishing the size of a piece of glass to the required dimensions; that is the only thing that stops us. To diminish it to pieces not the required size is only too easy, while cutting one's fingers as well as the glass is also an art acquired without practice. But to drop flippancy, which the mere name of a bazaar unfortunately suggests too readily, the process of cutting glass is very simple. Choose a firm table to operate on; a straight-edge—be it a flat ruler, T square, or, if nothing better be at hand, the edge of a box; take a sheet of light colour paper on which is pencilled the outline of the size wanted, lay the glass on it, place the ruler a small distance inside the line, to allow of the little wheel of cutter tracing the line itself; press firmly, but not too heavily, taking care that the pressure is continuous for the whole cut, which must be from one edge of the glass to the other, in one operation; then, raising the glass, take it firmly at the corner outside the cut, and a quiet bend (here comes the only "knack" that is to be acquired) breaks off the piece—if the foregoing details have been carefully attended to—sharply and with a true edge.

Next coat the back of the glass, which should be thoroughly clean, with common black varnish; let it dry well, but not too long—say a day or two at most. If the varnish is too dry, the flakes chip off in a broken outline—destructive of good effect. Now, the glass being ready, the pattern may be lightly traced, either through perforated holes in the design with powdered chalk, or in any of the ways that an outline is transferred to a flat surface; then, with a penknife, scrape off the varnish from the spaces forming the pattern. If done quietly and carefully it is rapid compared with the effect; if

by chance more is removed than required, a touch of the varnish allowed to dry will make it all right for a second attempt. The design being finished, stick gold or silver paper (both blended in the same panel will often produce the better effect) over the scraped away pattern at the back of the glass. Coloured paper or scraps of bright satin will also be very effective, and the work is complete, and will be found, although so simple, yet pleasing in its way, with a certain novelty of effect that will be more or less successful according to the choice of the design and its fitness for the process.

A few words as to the choice of the design. The Japanese lacquer work and the native books of designs, which, although so easily obtainable, are not nearly enough used by amateurs, supply perhaps the best style of patterns for this work; but sprays of leaves and some flower forms, sufficiently conventional in their treatment, will be no less effective. Mottoes in quaint, clear lettering, such as Abbey and the American artists sprinkle on their decorative panels, suit this work admirably, and give it a certain character of its own, distinct from the real lacquer work, the lettering on which being Japanese, at first does not suggest words to an English mind.

The uses to which the panels of vitrelac can be applied may include all those where a tile of earthenware would be adopted; also finger-plates, five o'clock trays set in firm wooden rims with backing of wood, tops of small tables, borders for the glass in photograph frames, doors of cabinets, where the contents are wished hidden; in short, any place where a decorative panel set in wooden framework is available. Especially may mottoes or texts be wrought entirely in this material; for these a piece of cardboard the size of the glass, with rings fixed to it, should hide the back, a narrow border of gold paper binding it firmly to the vitrelac panel.

The advantage of being able to embody a favourite quotation, or a text specially dear to one, in a lasting decorative way, will be at once apparent. If any details that require further instruction should appear in working it out, a letter to the care of the Editor will ensure a reply with the needed information. In conclusion may I, as the sponsor for English use (to the best of my knowledge) of this foreign fancy work, hope that the little German bantling may be received with forbearance, as another trifle to pass away time in its preparation, and in no way a rival of true art work that more skilled brains and hands are able to produce, but an almost mechanical process that less gifted mortals may use with a certain amount of success and pleasure.

GLEESON WHITE.

## VARIETIES.

### LINES ON LINES.

Curved is the line of Beauty,  
Straight is the line of Duty;  
Walk by the last, and thou shalt see  
The former always follow thee.

"RELIEVED OF HIS WATCH."—"Soldiers must be fearfully dishonest," says Mrs. Partington, "as it seems to be a nightly occurrence for a sentry to be relieved of his watch."

FOR EVER AND AFTERWARDS.—A shopkeeper recommending a piece of silk for a gown said to his customer: "Madam, it will wear for ever, and make a petticoat afterwards."

WHAT IS THE BEST RECREATION?—The best recreation is to do good.

A GREAT WANT.—After all, our great want in social life is a deeper and wider sympathy. This it is which enables us to see with another's vision, and to appreciate another's instincts. Without merging a particle of our own individuality, we may so fairly put ourselves in the place of our friend as to feel how natural it is for her to speak and act as she does.

IN DOMESTIC QUARRELS.—No one but Mr. Verdant Green will interfere in a domestic quarrel, for the man, of course, resents it, and the lady, though suffering from many a blow, will say, "You leave my husband alone; he has a right to beat me if he likes."

WORTHY OF COMMAND.—No one is worthy of command who is not better than those who are to obey.—Cyrus.

THE COMING WOMAN.—After a woman's rights meeting it was remarked: The coming woman will not marry until she is able to support a husband in the style he has been accustomed to at home.

A TERRIBLE STORM.—In the published tour of a lady who was of some literary note in her day, we came upon the following amusing example of written bathos. Describing a storm to which she was exposed, when crossing in the steamboat from Dover to Calais, her ladyship says: "In spite of the most earnest solicitations to the contrary, in which the captain eagerly joined, I firmly persisted in remaining upon deck, although the tempest had now increased to such a frightful hurricane that it was not without great difficulty I could—hold up my parasol!"