

A REMODELLED WARDROBE.

I WANTED a new wardrobe for my bedroom, and had only thirty shillings with which to supply the want. Everyone knows that only a very ordinary, small and commonplace wardrobe can be obtained for that sum, and I had set my heart on having something individual and artistic—something that should be distinctly ornamental, have a place for everything, and yet not take up too much space in a small and not very conveniently planned room.

Clearly it was a case for amateur carpentering, but amateur carpentering requires a good deal of planning and study or it is apt to become a most expensive luxury, and I was strictly limited to that thirty shillings.

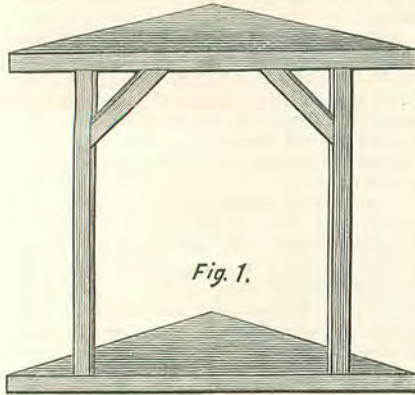


Fig. 1.

To begin with then; I bought an ordinary cheap wardrobe of the usual commonplace size and shape; it was secondhand, and old-fashioned, having one large door, a drawer at the bottom and a plain cornice round the top. It was painted and grained in the usual nondescript manner, that grocer's-paper-with-the-measles style, which the mind of the cheap furniture-maker possibly conceives to represent pine, and cost one pound two and six.

It measured 6 feet 4 inches high, 34 inches across, and 16 inches deep, and looked as these narrow wardrobes always do—like an overgrown servant's trunk set on end.

It was of course as big as my room would stand, but in a small room, even more than in a large one, the corners made by a wardrobe, and the door are always wasted. It was these corners, therefore, which I hoped to utilise.

The wardrobe, though it had the proper number of pegs, had also been fitted with two deep shelves such as are used for storing linen. I wished to use the pegs, so took the shelves out to use in the corners.

These shelves were of nice smooth board measuring $32\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 13. One of them sawed into four three-cornered pieces made as many strong corner shelves; these were to be fixed to the outside of the end of the wardrobe, and the wall forming an angle with it by means of the same strips of wood and screws as had kept them in place inside.

This was the rough work. For the ornamentation I bought five nine-foot lengths of white beading, such as is used for cheap picture-framing, at one and twopence a length; a yard and a quarter of Japanese embossed gold paper (a remnant) for half-a-crown, one pound of common white paint at fourpence, a tin of enamel at eightpence-halfpenny, and half a pound of inch and a quarter French nails at twopence-halfpenny. I also bought a mitre board for cutting

diagonals, which cost ninepence, but as that remains for future use in picture-framing, or window ornamenting, I do not count it among the expenses of the wardrobe.

The first thing to be done was to scrub every part of the wardrobe, inside and out, with Jones' Health Bath Salt, using it very much stronger than one does for a bath by way of thoroughly cleansing and disinfecting the wood, and doing away with the remotest chance of vermin. The next was to paint every part that was not to be covered with the embossed paper with a coat of common white paint. While that dried, I cut the pieces, mitred at the corners for the frame of the large panel on the door, and as many short pieces as were required for ornament—that is a matter of taste. Then the Japanese paper had to be cut to the size of the panel—very carefully—for I had bought a remnant, and every inch of it was needed. Then a second panel for the drawer, the ugly black handles of which I had removed and coated thickly with white paint. Then the frame for the drawer panel had to be cut and set aside by itself.

For the corner shelves strips of beading had to be cut, mitred at the edges to fit against the wall and wardrobe, and nailed on to the shelves. Then uprights had to be cut to fasten each pair of shelves together, and last two little mitred pieces to fit into the corners, Fig 1. Then the corner shelves had their first coat of paint and were set aside to dry.

The uprights of course had been nailed firmly—the corner pieces put in with glue.

Under the left-hand corner shelves I wanted a place for soiled linen. The second shelf taken from the wardrobe came in for that. A piece of the length cut off, and the ends fitted to the wall and the wardrobe made a sort of three-cornered well; two long uprights were to be fastened to this so as to project beyond it and meet the lower shelf. Two crossbars cut square formed a panel, to be fitted with embossed paper, Fig 2, into the well; a

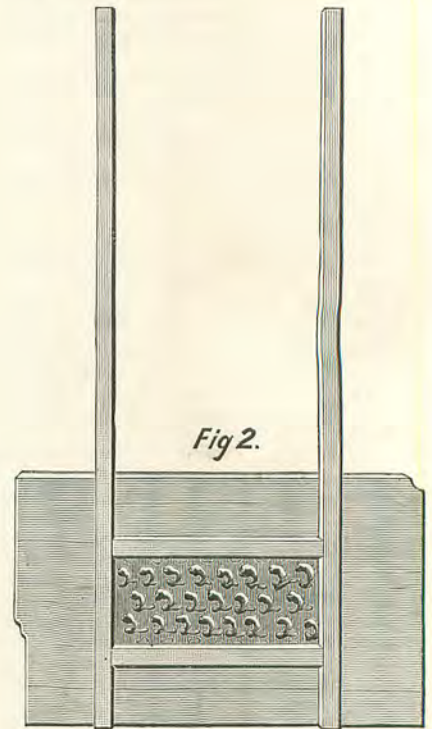


Fig. 2.

three-cornered bag made of some gold patterned chintz left over from the window and bed-hangings was to be fitted. It was to be longer than the well and the ends drawn up with a snap string of gold ribbon.

For the right-hand corner—under the two shelves—I simply put double bars of beading connected with ten-inch uprights at a few inches from the ground; and again double bars, shorter this time so that they would be further back, touching the floor. This was for an umbrella and sunshade stand, Fig 3. Behind each of the double bars a little strip of embossed paper was firmly glued.

So soon as the coat of common white paint was thoroughly dry the embossed paper panels could be pasted on, and the wood-work glued on with a nail here and there to strengthen it; a strip of paper went round the cornice and little pieces behind the corners of the corner shelves.

After that all the wood-work had to be very carefully coated with enamel, every little crevice or nail mark being filled in with putty and painted over and over again until it was invisible.

Then, as there were still a few pieces of the gold-coloured chintz left I made little curtains, ran them on cords, and hung them inside the wood-work of the corner shelves to keep out the dust, and below the corner shelf on the right to protect the umbrellas and sunshades; when the enamel was dry and the curtains put in their places with tin tacks the wardrobe was finished (Fig 3), not so well perhaps as a professional workman could have done it, but I had the satisfaction of making it myself. I had just the accommodation I wished for my clothes and nick-nacks; I had made the most of the limited space of my bedroom, and, above all, had only exceeded my limit of thirty shillings by one penny. V.

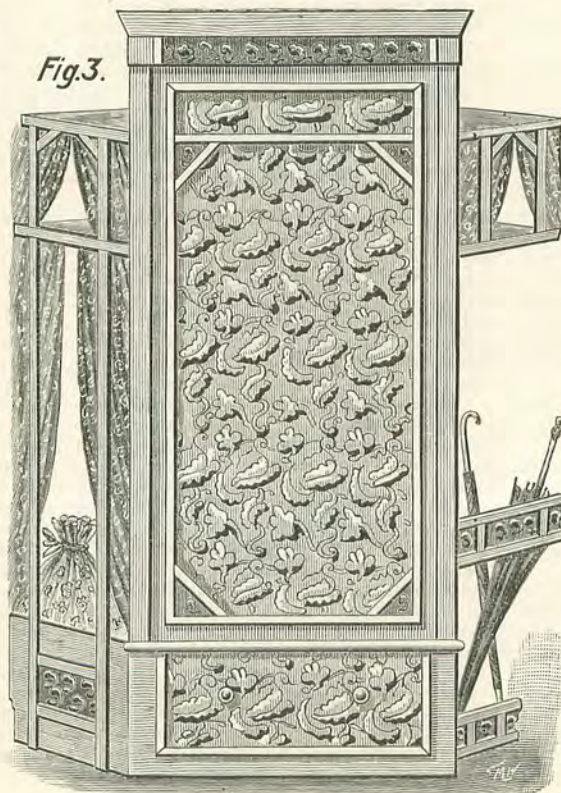


Fig. 3.