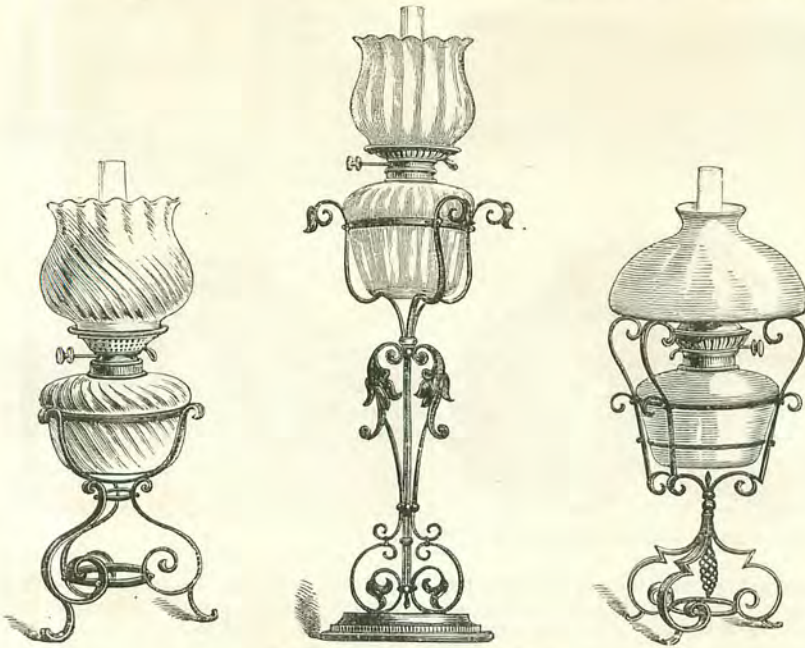


## LAMPIANA: AN IDYLL OF LAMPS AND SHADES.



LAMPS WITH IRON STANDS.

No discovery of this century, I fancy, has ever been of so much real value, or has so much added to the comfort of the lives of both rich and poor, as that of petroleum, or "rock oil;" and it seems difficult to realise that it was only in 1859 that American petroleum became an article of commerce, and that, even now, the best geological authorities are not agreed as to its origin. What is called "kerosene," or "petroleum" oil, is the natural product derived from American wells, as well as from the Baku region, in Russia, filtered, or what is called "refined," more or less well; and so prepared for burning purposes.

The extent to which it is used—as well for cooking as for illuminating our houses—is remarkable; and it is claimed for the oil-stove, that it will compete in a satisfactory manner, in the time required for and quality of cooking, with an ordinary kitchen range, and that it will be at less cost, combined with one great merit, *i.e.*, the power it accords to regulate the degree of heat at will. It is also a great saving to poor people, that they can use only just so much oil as is required for the amount of cooking, and, moreover, there is no waste; as the burner can be turned down directly that its work is finished.

Now that lamps are so very generally used by all classes of society, a little sensible chat over their care and management will probably be welcome. The comfort and enjoyment derived from a clear bright light cannot be too highly estimated, and the well-cared-for lamp adds, there is no manner of doubt, an extra charm to the whole evening's enjoyment, apart from the advantage to the eyes of a good steady light. All those who use lamps know the uncared-for article that appears at times, with its smoked chimney, badly-cut wick, and evil smell; not to speak of the unwiped stand, which covers the hands which touch it with oil.

Lamps are to be had of all kinds, shapes, and sizes; some of the new kinds, such as "La Lamp Belge," needing some special rules for putting in the wick, or for their filling with oil and ways of lighting. These non-explosive lamps are a very excellent "departure" in the history of lighting; and to my

mind, it would be well to prohibit the use of glass or china "plugs," or receptacles for oil, by law, for they are unquestionably dangerous. Any lamp, however, becomes a dangerous article in careless hands; and it is only fair to state that the two worst accidents—so called—with lamps, which both resulted in death, were caused by carelessness. One lady, indeed, was filling the lamp without having extinguished the flame, holding the wick portion in one hand while she re-filled from the oil-can with the other! Nor is this an uncommon occurrence, as I have heard of other people who were injured or killed from doing the same thing.

The care of lamps is, I must confess, a disagreeable duty, and for that reason it is too often shirked by the servants. But if certain rules and regulations were put in force, its unpleasantness would be much modified. For instance, a certain place, shelf, or table, with a drawer, if possible, should always be reserved upon which the lamp should stand, and on which the work of re-trimming, filling, and cleaning should be performed. The drawer will hold the cloths and scissors, and thus the smell will not affect nor touch anything else.

Do not put off the cleaning of the lamps till the afternoon or the evening, just before they are needed; but see that they are done in the morning, either before or after breakfast. The vapour or gas of the oil in a newly-filled lamp or in a lamp that is nearly empty, is considered explosive, and no lamp should be used which is not filled quite three-parts full with oil. No lamp should be filled to overflowing: not only have they a bad smell, and are uncleanly, but they soil everything with which they come in contact. This question of overfilling is the cause of half the prejudice against lamps that now exists. Another reason is the way in which the oil exudes out of a lamp, so that, as you may have noticed, a lamp that has been unused for a short time will not only be moist on the outside, but the oil will have affected the globe, which, if of ground or muffled glass, will be quite greasy and transparent from the oil which has been drawn up through the wick, which has, you may be sure, been left turned up. Nearly every one, after ex-

tinguishing or trimming a lamp, leaves the wick turned up; whereas, it should be carefully turned down as far as it will go, so that the lamp may remain clean and unsoiled by the oil, which is sure to be drawn up by what is called capillary attraction.

There are many differing opinions on the subject of the cutting of the wick, *i.e.*, with scissors, or the rubbing of it off with paper. I think, however, even if you only rub it off you must finish the work with a pair of lamp-scissors to make the surface quite smooth. Careless people in using scissors are very apt to cut the wick unevenly, and to waste a great deal of it in cutting it, so, for this reason, only the rubbing off of the charred portion is advisable. But this must be thoroughly done, as if any of the burnt part be left, the flame will be uneven, the oil not being able to penetrate through it to feed the flame. A new method is to take a match, or flat bit of wood, and turning down the wick to the edge of the charred portion, shave it off evenly, close to the edge. This, I think, seems an excellent plan to ensure an even flame, which is our great object, as without it we shall break numberless glasses, and constantly smoke when we do not break them.

Lamp wicks should be soaked in strong vinegar, and afterwards dried well. This will prevent their smoking when burnt, and improve the colour of the flame. When the lamp is lit, the wick should be turned down low at first, and afterwards raised, to avoid suddenly heating the lamp-glass. It is better to light the wick by means of a wax taper than with a match or paper, which sometimes drops into the inside funnel or chimney, within the wick.

The flickering of a lamp is often caused by these small pieces and bits of charred wick cut or rubbed off in trimming. It is said that strips of old cotton stockings, overcast at the edges to keep them even, make good lamp-wicks; and I have lately seen, in an American newspaper, that a piece of *fine flannel* or stocking material, tacked on to the end of a partially-burnt wick, will enable it to reach the oil, and thus feed the wick till the oil be burnt out. This is a good thing to know, especially if you live in the country, and are far from the shops of the country town.

The frequent breakage of chimneys is a great source of expense, and some of our servants seem really to have taken out a patent for breaking them. A very good way of toughening glass, whether funnels, dishes, tumblers, or wine-glasses, is to put them on the fire in cold water in a large fish-kettle or saucepan, which will hold three or four at once, and to let the water come gradually to boiling-point; then stand it aside to cool, and keep the kettle covered closely with the cover till the water has time to cool. After this process has been gone through, the chimneys should not see water again unless very dirty indeed, or much neglected, when they may be washed with warm water and soda, or perhaps a little ammonia. All chimneys may be quickly and easily cleaned by breathing down and upon them, and rubbing them with newspaper. The latter seems to have been discovered to be the best thing possible for cleaning either lamp-glasses or window-panes; and no glass that has to be looked through should be wetted with water excepting in a case of urgent necessity. A smoky appearance of a chimney may be cured by rubbing it with newspaper and dry salt; and generally dry soda will remove all discolourations. Soap-suds form the worst medium for washing glass, as they give it a muddy appearance. Lamp chimneys are frequently broken by being too tightly screwed on, thus



LAMP SHADES OF LACE, SILK, RIBBON, AND FLOWERS.

leaving no place for the expansion of the glass when heated by the flame. A draught is also a cause of many breakages.

The lamp itself will need a thorough cleansing from time to time, and should be washed out with soda and hot water to remove the grease and dirt. They must, however, be well dried when the cleansing process is over, or there will be a most alarming noise and spluttering when the lamp is again lighted. All the several portions of the lamp should also be cleaned with a leather, the burnt-looking portions well rubbed with soda, and everything done to restore that brightness to the lamp on which the light so much depends. Bronze lamps should be cleaned with oil alone; brass ones with oil and rotten-stone. When merely lacquered, they must be gently rubbed only with a soft brush.

It will be seen, from what I have said, that the chief secret of satisfactory light seems to be found in cleanliness; and I find that many mistresses have been driven into cleaning the lamp each morning themselves, armed with an old pair of kid gloves and an apron. And in educated hands the trouble, and consequent "mess," is reduced to a minimum; no oil is spilt carelessly, and no smell pervades the house.

The only thing to which I have not alluded thus far is the oil-can itself. The usual size is for one gallon; and where a quantity of oil is got in at once, it can be refilled when needed. This oil-can should be kept clean and bright always, as a dirty oil-can spoils any lamp. When dirty, it must be cleaned with a strong soap-lather of carbolic soap and very hot water. But before you use this, the can should be drained from oil, and wiped inside and out with an old cloth till dry. Then use the suds, and dry well after.

The strength and safety of oil may be tested by pouring a little oil into an old saucer, and standing it on the ground in the open air. Apply a light to it with a piece of twisted paper or a long taper. If bad oil it will flame up at once, but the properly refined oil will not ignite. The best refined petroleum is almost inodorous, has a specific gravity of 0.695, and a boiling point of Fahrenheit 340°, and this oil is practically a safe one. No economy is gained by the purchase of cheap oils, as a good oil really goes further in the end, besides giving a better light. There are few shops where you have not a choice of them.

For drawing-room use I consider the "duplex" burners the best, as the light given by them is abundant. They are easy to manage, but after all there is no real difficulty in lamp management. If they smell, you may be sure they have been over-filled; and the oil having been dropped on the

water, and boil them over the fire. When they come out, you can rub them clean very easily, and they will look like new.

There are some very pretty small brass lamps sold at 10s. 6d., and a smaller size at 7s. 6d. They are slender and graceful, and make very pretty table-lamps either for the dining-room or the drawing-room. Then there are some very beautiful and artistic beaten copper and beaten iron lamps, with shades of tinted glass; and several London makers supply exquisite lamps of china, glass, or silver, the latter forming very good presents to elderly people who like a small corner of their own.

The best "crystal oil," marked, I believe, "A 1," is sold at 10d. a gallon, and it is the most economical to burn, though perhaps the most expensive. Many housekeepers get a quantity at a time, on which there is, I believe, a reduction. This entails two oil-cans—a small one to be refilled from the larger quantity when needed. It is not necessary to impress on my readers, that all the lamps should be trimmed and the oil got by daylight. This should be made a stringent rule of every house where lamps are used.

In an article published some years ago in the *Leisure Hour* I called attention to the only way that kerosene or paraffin oil could be extinguished when it has caught fire. The recent destruction of the University of Toronto, by the upsetting of a tray-full of oil lamps carried by a careless hand, shows that no precautions had been taken to prevent this special and daily increasing danger, against which water is of no avail.

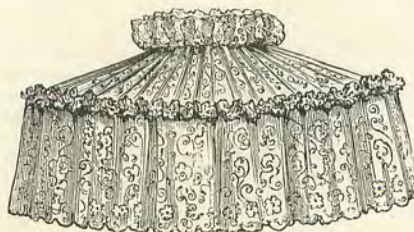
After a series of experiments it was found, some few years ago, that nothing but dry sand would extinguish the flame of petroleum oil, and it was recommended that in all houses where it was in daily use boxes of sand should be placed at hand, so that they could be reached on the first alarm. This recommendation has been but little attended to, as the recent sad experience at the University of Toronto shows; and there are few weeks which do not show a record of one or more fires caused by the upsetting of lamps in which this oil was burned.

The number of shades and their various kinds are verily legion; and certainly the lamp makers and sellers owe not a little to the present craze, for their rather uninteresting but very useful windows have developed into a perfect blaze of beauty; and round the



PAPER SHADE.

"plug" or receiver, when that gets hot the smell of course becomes dreadful. Many servants are so careless about the brass parts of the lamp that they become covered with sticky oil and a kind of burnt paste. When this happens, take them all out of the lamp, remove the wick, and put them into clean



TISSUE PAPER SHADES.

windows of the more fashionable shops of Regent Street and New Bond Street there is generally a small crowd of ladies who are "taking-in" ideas, or "posting themselves up," as the Americans have it, in the last "sweet thing" for the table or dining-room—"Harmonies" in yellow, "Symphonies" in red—the shade from the lamps being cast over the beautifully laid table, and carried out in silk or plush centres and flowers of all sorts.

The pretty lamp-shades in use just now, which are made on wire frames, add a great deal to the appearance of any lamp. They are easily made at home, and are much less expensive than those offered for sale. Red, although a beautiful colour and light, is not good for the eyes, nor is it desirable to read or work by it. Yellow is much better, and looks very pretty too. Green is, of course, the best for the sight, but though so good it is not a becoming nor a lively light in a room, being dull and rather heavy. For constant use yellow seems to offer the most advantages and the fewest objections.

The wire foundations are of several sizes and shapes—round, octagon, and square. The first thing to do with them is to cover the whole of the wire with the same material that you are to use for the lamp shade, cutting it into narrow strips and sewing it neatly over and over on the top side of the wires. Thus you have a perfectly neat under-side to your shade. When you have thus prepared it you should take a piece of your material and lay it over the entire top of the shade, and proceed to arrange it smoothly by means of pins and tacking threads at each point and along each wire, as well as round the top circle where it fits round the chimney. If these tackings be very neatly put in with fine cotton they will not have to be done again, and you may proceed to cut round the edges, and turn the edge under so as to make it neat everywhere. This done, you can trim it with a deep flounce of the material and one of lace. The former is generally pinked out with the scissors at the lower edge, and turned down at the upper, so as to make a heading at the top. The lace and the material flounce can be put on together, but you must not omit to quarter them, and to pin the quarters to the quarters of the shade with careful accuracy, or else you will have the fulness uneven. A small flat quilling is usually put round the top, and lace may be used or not, according to taste. If you have not made one before, the best plan is to copy one you may have seen and liked. The most expensive material is, of course, silk; but there is an imitation of silk—a kind of thin cotton pressed to look like silk—which costs about fourpence or fivepence a yard, which answers very well. The cheapest lace would cost about twopence halfpenny to fourpence a yard; and when you have decided on the size of your shade you must then take a yard measure and try to make out what you will require in the way of stuff to cover it.

The glass globes of lamps, as well as gas-lamps, are often covered with lace and silk to fit the globe exactly, and the lower part is left longer, like a flounce, and trimmed with lace and bows of ribbon. The lace in general use on these lamp-shades is a kind of darned net, which is very light and cheap.

Next on my list come a multitude of lamp and candle shades in tissue-paper, which are all pretty and cheap, and can nearly all be made by clever fingers at home. In the early days of the crimped tissue-paper it had to be crimped by hand by being drawn through the fingers until the crimp was fine enough—rather a tedious business; but now it can be purchased all ready crimped at sixpence or sevenpence a bundle, and made up into any of the shades we fancy. Two contrasting colours are the prettiest—dark blue outside, pink inside; sage-green and old gold.

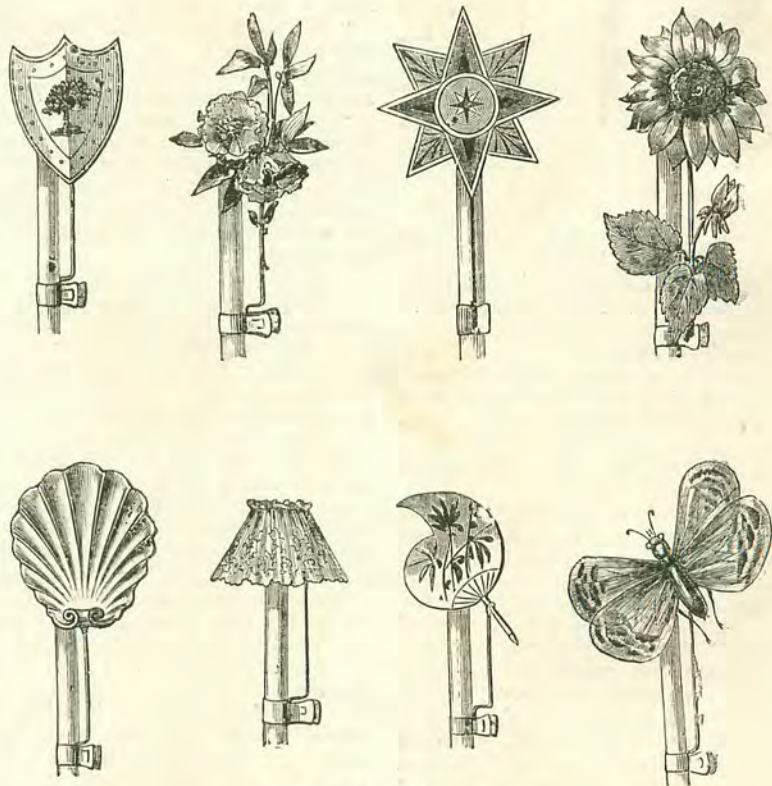
They must be tied round the top with ribbon, and enough of this must be used to make handsome bows and ends. It should match the darker tissue-paper in colour, and satin ribbon has a better effect than silk. Flower-pot covers are very pretty when made of tissue-paper in the manner I have described, the top edge being cut in points, making it look like a large flower. A lovely lamp-shade can be made of red tissue-paper on a wire frame, the centre being covered with tissue-paper arranged in evenly-laid white box-plaits. Round the top of the wire lay a border of red paper poppies, and the same along each rib, the poppies just touching each other. The lower edge should have a tissue-paper fringe, made with a full heading, and the poppies should, of course, match the tissue-paper in hue.

The next description of lamp shades that I must deal with are the *flat* ones. These are of

Some new non-inflammable shades for candles have been patented, which are of transparent paper, so washed in some non-combustible fluid as to smolder only, if they do catch fire, and make no blaze. The secret, of course, of making them is unknown; but in appearance they are very pretty in the transparent whiteness of their background contrasted with the dried ferns, sea-weeds, and flowers beautifully arranged on them. Of course much danger is obviated—and constant care only avoids it—in using the present style of candle shades.

In the selection of a colour for table shades it is necessary to be most careful to find one generally becoming to your guests, as some hues have a positively ghastly effect on both complexions and materials.

In conclusion to my tissue-paper fancies, as I have mentioned flower-pot covers I will stray still further away, and cut from an



FLAT CANDLE SHADES.

all kinds and shapes—banners, shields, and tambourines, as well as flowers of all kinds, with a few leaves and buds—which are placed at the side of a lamp on the wall, and look charming in that position. Those who know how to make paper flowers will find no difficulty in these. The prettiest and easiest to make is the poppy.

In the small round form, for candles and candle-lamps, we have those made in imitation of roses or sunflowers, with petals, drooping and curled, the material for them being tissue-paper or muslin, crimped in both cases, and generally gummed on the foundation, though they may be sewn in a slight and neat manner. An imitation of moss is also pretty, and so is a tiny shade of forget-me-nots in pale blue. The primrose is also used, and, indeed, any small flower; and for use at Christmas there were very pretty shades of green—holly or ivy leaves, with wreaths of berries.

American paper the following instructions for making a tissue paper shaving ball, which may be found useful to our girls:—

#### TISSUE SHAVING BALLS

Are almost too pretty to use for the purpose for which they are intended. Cut from seventy-five to one hundred circles of tissue, either pink or yellow, that shall be the size of a coffee saucer; take each circle by the centre and crimp slightly between the fingers. String these circles by the centre on a fine wire, having a small loop turned up at the end to prevent their slipping off. In threading them arrange them so that they will form an evenly-shaped ball; when perfectly round turn the other wire end in a loop through which a narrow satin ribbon is drawn and tied in a bow to hand it up by.

DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.