

As the blushing buds from the apple-trees fall;
And the flaunting flag-flower, stately and tall,
With the water-lily, queen o' them all,
Bloom down by the reeds and the rushes.

The hawthorn scatters her petals fair,
The lilac sighs to the sleepy air,

The golden laburnums quiver;
The chestnut spreads out his stately arms,
Bending beneath his leafy charms,
And blossoms over the river;
And the waters murmur as they steal by,
And west winds whisper, and south winds sigh.
Oh! that the spring time could last for ever.

H.

A FEW HINTS ON THE ART OF PASTEL-PAINTING.



MORE pastel-painting promises to be a fashionable medium for portraits, landscapes, figure and animal subjects; for the latter it is especially suitable. The name pastel recalls to our minds the days of Louis XV., and his predecessor "Le Grand Monarque," when the stately alleys of Versailles were filled with court beauties in hoops, high red-heeled shoes, and patches; while the courtiers of that day were gorgeous to behold, in velvet coats, embroidered satin vests, and diamond-hilted swords. Early in the reign of Louis XIV., pastel-painting was introduced into France; it soon became the mania of the day. In the Louvre there are now to be seen paintings by Lebrun, Carriera Rosalba, Latour, Bouchet, Greuze, and many other great artists, fresh and vivid as the day they were taken, finished, from the painter's easel, though some are 200 years old; which proves that pastel is not so perishable as many people imagine it to be. Damp is its great enemy, but with a little care all chance of mildew may be prevented.

The face of Madame de Pompadour smiles down upon us in all the glories of paint, powder, and brocade, drawn by the skilful hand of Latour, who for a truthful likeness was unsurpassed. In the same gallery hangs the portrait of Rosalba, painted by herself; that also is much to be admired for colour and modelling. Carriera Rosalba was a native of Venice; she travelled a great deal, painting many portraits in the various courts where she was an honoured guest. Eventually she was made a member of the French "Académie," and ten years before the close of her industrious and charitable life, she suffered from the total loss of her sight. In the Dresden Gallery there are no less than 150 of her works to be seen. The famous "Chocolatière," also in pastels, hangs in the same room.

France is essentially the land of pastels. Every year in the Salon there are several works executed in this medium. Though for many years it has been but rarely seen in England, it is now gradually coming in with the taste for Queen Anne tea-pots, spindle-legged chairs and tables.

Paintings by the old masters can be faithfully copied in pastels, as well as the most delicate miniature. Female students may be seen in the public galleries of Paris reproducing the works of

the old Flemish school of painters with marvellous fidelity. Pastels are rapid of execution, brilliant in effect; there is no mixing of colours required as in oil or water-colour painting. The crayons lie ready for one's hand in an infinite variety of tints, from the deepest and richest greens and browns to the most tender and pearly sky and flesh hues. The materials necessary for an amateur are a box of "pastels tendres" (about forty different shades), a small box of "pastels demi-durs" (useful for putting in finishing touches), some sheets of "papier pumicif," and "papier ingros," which resembles a fine grey sand-paper mounted on calico; a few pieces of charcoal for sketching the outlines of your picture; a smooth deal drawing-board, and a box of drawing-pins. A standing easel is also necessary if engaged on a work of any size. One great advantage in working with these materials is that there is no disagreeable smell as in oil-painting: no waiting for your work to dry. The great thing to guard against is anything rubbing against your picture, as the pastel at once blurs and comes off. It is well to have your frame in readiness so that the instant your painting has arrived at "the last touch," it can be placed safe under its glass covering. Many attempts have been made to fix pastels by spreading a gummy preparation at the back, but each trial has been attended with failure; the downy look, which is their chief beauty, being utterly destroyed. One item I have omitted to mention in my list of necessaries for the lady amateur, namely, a large holland apron with bib to cover the whole front of the dress; a pair of half-sleeves, to pull up as far as the elbow, will also protect the cuffs.

To paint well in pastels, or in anything else, a knowledge of drawing is essential. A correct outline must first be drawn with charcoal on your "papier pumicif." When that is finished to your satisfaction, mark out the shape and position of the principal shadows with red chalk (sanguine); then put in the lights, reserving all details till the ground-work of your subject is completed. Do not rub with the finger till the paper is well covered with pastel, and then not more than is absolutely necessary to blend the tints. The third finger is to pastel what the badger-brush is to oils. The use of the stump is not encouraged by French artists. When a mistake is made, work one tint over another till the right effect is produced. When you wish to put in a fine

detail, such as the white light in an eye, a stray lock of hair, &c., break off a small piece of the "crayon tendre," and use the sharp edge. Good pastels will stand chipping without crumbling into powder—that is the sign of an inferior quality.

With pastels the texture of children's golden hair and the bloom of their rosy cheeks can be most successfully imitated. In order to paint animals well, some idea must first be gained of the anatomical structure of the animal you wish to represent. In a horse, every muscle must be shown in its proper position. When painting the skin, remember to work with the grain—that is to say, in the direction the hair grows naturally—and to place the high lights on the most rounded parts of the body, such as the hind quarters, arch of the neck, &c. When painting the portrait of any particular horse or dog, keep your background subdued in harmonious softly blended tints, so that nothing attracts the eye from the main object of the picture—no figure in the landscape, or anything of that sort. When depicting a Skye terrier, bear in mind that its hair is quite different from that of the Fox terrier or Pointer. The former animal has a rough wiry coat, which must be rendered by sharp spirited strokes; whereas the two latter have skins more resembling that of the horse, with a soft sheen on the more prominent muscles. Pay great attention to the drawing and colouring of the eye; on that, the nostrils, and the ears, depends the expression of an animal's face, which is as capable of expressing fear, anger, pleasure, or pain, as that of a human being; observe the difference in a horse's face in anger. The

ears are laid flat on the neck, the whites of the eyes are shown, the nostrils distended, and the lips drawn back from the teeth. For a beginner it is well to choose some bold subject, which will depend more upon good broad touches and judicious colouring than upon minuteness of detail. This can be studied later on, when greater freedom in the manipulation of the crayons has been acquired. A lion's head, or a tiger's, with a dark rich background will make a good sketch. A bison's head also, with light background to throw up the masses of black hair, will be effective.

Landscapes in pastels look particularly pretty. The distance can be made beautifully soft and hazy; but trees, unless very carefully drawn, are apt to look woolly. Water can be rendered with great transparency.

Of flowers and fruit I have seen charming studies by French lady artists. The bloom on plums, peaches, and grapes, was wonderfully true to nature, without the laborious "stippling" necessary in water-colours.

A few words as to frames. For animal and dark figure subjects in the style of the old masters, a handsome rather massive gilt frame is the best calculated to show your picture off; but for landscapes, lightly sketched portraits, flower-pieces, &c., a white mount with narrow gilt moulding looks best.

It is to be hoped we shall soon see many paintings in this charming medium decorating our homes; for to any lady with a knowledge of drawing, and a true sentiment for colour, the art of pastel-painting presents no difficulties.

PLAIN ADVICE TO BRAIN-WORKERS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



IN attempting to give a few words of plain and homely advice to brain-workers, I am really addressing a larger section of my readers than might at first be supposed. With an ever-increasing population, a gradual rise in the price to be paid for the bare necessities of life, and a consequent lessening of the value of money, the struggle for existence—in this country—is indeed a hard one, and becoming apparently year by year still more hard. In some measure, however, the fault is our own. We are not a contented

race, we seem constantly to forget the fact that a contented mind conduces to longevity. We are unwilling

to begin as our fathers began, in order to end as our fathers ended. The march is ever onward, the cry for ever "forward." Hence we harass our brains, weaken both heart and nerves, and thus age ourselves in the race for wealth or position, which very often we cannot enjoy when we obtain. It is often said, and with a great deal of truth too, that the abuse of vinous stimulants helps to fill our lunatic asylums; but the excitement inseparable from many forms of business, sends its thousands annually to fill the dreary cells and wards of those institutions; and it is sad to think that some of our most hard-working and successful men fall victims, at the very prime of their lives and height of their ambition, to some obscure form of brain-disease. So much for the wear-and-tear of life at the present day.

Now, before going on to mention any of the more common affections to which the brain is liable, let me say a word or two about the organ itself and the nervous system generally. The brain is situated within the skull, and is surrounded by and rests upon