

them, and to those who take a real interest in their welfare, they are far more honest and truthful than they are accustomed to be to one another.

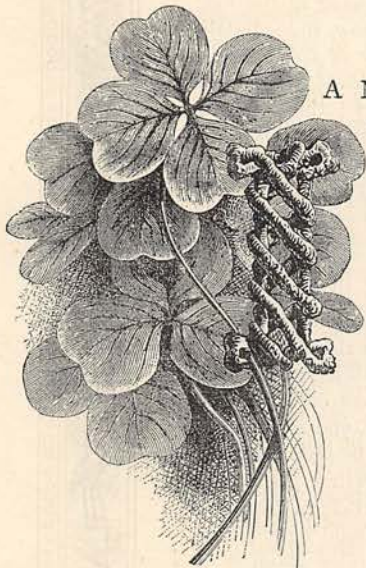
Their encampment usually consists of two or three vans and a rude tent, or wigwam, constructed of hoops and poles, and covered with stray pieces of old cloth or sacking to keep out the rain and snow. The tent is generally about sixteen feet long, seven or eight feet wide, and about five feet high in the central part. The opening which forms the doorway is sheltered by a kind of coverlet. The fire, if the weather be damp or cold, is placed within the tent, and at about the centre of the earthen floor. The smoke, or at least some portion of it, finds its way out through an opening left in the roof of about two feet in diameter. On the ground are scattered wood-chips and shavings, and the bed generally consists of a layer of straw placed upon the damp ground and covered with a piece of sacking or sheet.

There is but a scant supply of furniture and cooking utensils. An old soap-box or tea-chest usually acts as table, drawers, and clothes-box, and fingers

take precedence of absent knives and forks. Meals are taken and the washing done in a squatting posture; but the gipsies seldom indulge in much of the latter, especially as regards their bodies—possibly, as they sometimes naïvely state, “for fear of taking cold.”

The tents and vans are both often sadly overcrowded, and frequently the abodes of vice, ignorance, and disease. Indeed, their unfortunate tenants enjoy immunities in this direction withheld from other classes. The inspector of nuisances, the tax-gatherer, the rate-collector, the school-board officer, the representative of the Board of Health, all pass them by as beyond the range of their attentions. Few can either read or write, the extent of their education being a knowledge of crosses, cabalistic signs, and symbols, and of the full value of money. But we may hope, with George Smith, of Coalville, their benefactor and friend, that “gleams of a brighter day are beginning to manifest themselves upon our social horizon, which will elevate our gipsies and their children into a position that will reflect credit instead of disgrace upon us as a civilised and Christian nation.”

W. MAURICE ADAMS, F.A.S.



A NOVEL USE FOR CRESTS AND MONOGRAMS.

It has often been somewhat of a puzzle to me to discover what pleasure any one — except the most enthusiastic student of that forlorn science heraldry — could derive from the possession of a crest-album. Years sometimes elapse before the collector has sufficient materials to fill a book, no matter how in-

defatigable he may be in hunting for them, or how great a nuisance he may prove to all his friends by his ardour in the pursuit; and, after all, the trouble taken in acquiring them, and the care expended in “cutting out” and “pasting in,” are only too likely to be lost labour, at most rewarded by an occasional glance through the pages by some casual visitor. Except from that rare scientific point of view already mentioned, a collection of crests in a book yields none of the interest which is always attached to a stamp-album, but is simply curious according to the colouring or design of its contents.

For decorative purposes, however, crests and monograms are peculiarly suitable, and are capable of being employed with exceedingly pretty effect in certain purely ornamental connections. It is strange that, in this æsthetic age, they should hitherto have been

so seldom pressed into the art of decoration, since they are eminently adapted for doing good service therein. Postage stamps, both English and foreign, were long ago made use of to adorn all sorts of things, but it has been reserved for American girls to initiate a method of utilising the devices torn from old letters or envelopes for a similar purpose. They make *bed-quilts* of autograph signatures, embroidering these with crests and filling up the interspaces with monograms!

The idea of a crest-covered fan or plate certainly appears common-place enough after such a startling mode of arrangement as that afforded by a counterpane; but it will probably be equally new to most of the readers of this paper, and perhaps (to minds on this side of the Atlantic) equally pretty. Writing from experience, I can confidently recommend the experiment as likely to produce a highly satisfactory result. There is scope for the exercise of much taste and ingenuity, as well as neatness of execution; and while the value of the crest *as* a crest remains unaltered—so that a brother may even be induced to lend his cherished collection for the purpose—the article so treated acquires quite a South-Kensington-Museum appearance. Both the materials and the work are simple in the extreme.

Let us take the fan first. As to the kind to be used, a black one (such as may be obtained at almost any fancy shop for a shilling or thereabouts) is undoubtedly the best, as it shows up the colours to advantage. If you cannot get a plain black fan, you can easily remove the design from a painted one with a sponge and water. Bear particularly in mind that old, faded, or soiled ones can be made to look, not “as good as

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new," but a great deal better by the process which I am describing to you.

There is nothing like perfection in the smallest details when you are doing anything that is worth doing at all, and a hint as to the cutting out of monograms and crests may not be out of place. It is advisable to keep close to the lines of the cipher or device, leaving as little blank margin around it as possible—none at all if it can be helped; and I have found this most easily managed by placing the paper on the smooth lid of a cigar-box and using a sharp penknife. The wood, being soft and yielding, allows the "points" of the design to be fashioned out to a nicety. With clear strong gum then stick on your largest crests in a row at the top or edge of the fan, one over each blade and one between. The row next below this will consist of rather smaller ones, and the next of smaller still, and so on, decreasing proportionately to the narrowing of the fan, the smallest of all being kept for the last row immediately above the bare wood or ivory. The harmony of colours and general arrangement must be left to your individual taste. Let the fan remain open until it is thoroughly dry; then paint a coating of gum all over the crests, so as to keep the points and corners smooth and flat, and to give the whole the appearance of being varnished. There is no danger of its sticking, or of the crests becoming detached by its opening after the gum has quite dried in. Only one side of the fan should be decorated. If a little care and artistic discrimination have play, I think you will have reason to be pleased with your handiwork, and will be complimented on the result by all who see it. There is a sort of porcelain effect in it which rivets the attention at once. Of course, there is room for endless variety of design. An initial may be built up with crests all of one colour in the centre of the fan; or, if sufficiently dexterous, you may weave a monogram with two or more colours as may be required.

Another pleasing effect is obtained by covering a common white plate, previously cleansed from every particle of dust, and well dried with a soft cloth. A large crest should be gummed in the centre, and the others arranged in circles about it or radiating from it—not too closely together, however. As soon as the gum is perfectly dry (it will take longer in this case than it does with a fan), varnish the plate (with varnish, not gum) and hang it against the wall, high enough to be beyond the reach of inquisitive fingering. It has a wonderfully pretty, arabesque look. When dusty it should not be washed, but merely wiped with a damp sponge.

And now, having made these two simple suggestions, I leave to my readers the by no means difficult task of inventing for themselves a hundred other adaptations to decorative art of hitherto useless crests and monograms.

L. R.

