



HOW TO DECORATE FANS.

BY AN ARTIST.

NO one has yet been able definitely to prove when fans were first invented. There can be no doubt, however, of their existence three thousand years ago, for representations of these familiar articles have been discovered on the tombs at Thebes. The Chinese, according to one of their old legends, claim to have been the inventors, as, indeed, they claim to have first originated the manufacture of pottery, and of porcelain. Hebrews and Egyptians recognised the advantages of fans, which were common amongst them, but to the Grecians must be conceded the palm where grace and elegance of form are concerned. In the art of fan-making, as in everything else that demanded the presence of artistic taste, they excelled; awkward curves and ungainliness of outline were unknown. Naturally enough the custom of using these articles spread from one country to another, and was handed down from generation to generation.

All that is required by the fan-painter is a box

of water-colours, a bottle of Chinese white, some sable brushes, a china palette, a bottle of gum, a bottle of ox-gall, a firm drawing-board, and a table- easel for the copy, unless the painter is also the designer, in which case she will need no copy. But our advice to an amateur is to obtain, if possible, a fan executed by a well-known artist, and to reproduce it; more might thus be learned in a few hours, than if double the number were spent in making trials and experiments which often prove failures, for a good copy is as good as a lesson to any one who has acquired some knowledge of painting.

For fan-leaves, vellum, silk, satin, gauze, paper, and chicken's skin are all employed; and most of them require preparation—namely, sizing—before the colours are laid on.

The size is made as follows:—Half a pint of water is put into a jar, and to this is added half an ounce of isinglass; this is allowed to stand through the night to dissolve: the jar is then placed in a saucepan containing boiling water until the contents are perfectly clear. If gelatine is used instead of isinglass, double the quantity is needed.

All the necessary implements being at hand, the artist may now set to work. Put the material on a stretcher and apply the size, whilst still very warm, to both sides of it with a large flat brush. When sufficiently stretched leave it to dry thoroughly. Cut out in paper the shape of the fan-leaf; when laid on the material it will serve as a guide, but a margin must be left beyond all round. It has now to be stretched on a drawing-board ready for the painting process. Gum the edges a little way in, lay it on the board, and with a clean piece of soft linen smooth it out until it is quite level and adheres closely. Be careful to keep the shape perfect during the operation. Sketch the subject lightly on the mount. On vellum or paper, a fine hard pencil can be employed for this purpose; but on textile fabrics the brush will best indicate the outlines. As no faulty lines can be erased the amateur should not, unless an exceedingly good draughtsman, sketch direct on the mount. Make first a perfect drawing on paper; then copy or trace it off on to the leaf. Red transfer paper is preferable to black, as the marks show less, and can be the more readily hidden in the painting, but the latter is also used. Transfer paper needs to have the superfluous colour removed by a piece of rag; it is to be well rubbed over the surface, otherwise the delicate shades of lustrous silk and sheeny satin will be ruined.

All colours for fan-painting are mixed with Chinese white. Ordinary water-colours mixed with the white by the artist may be employed, or body-colours can be obtained ready for fan-painting. Satin mounts are general favourites, so we will mention them first.

The texture of satin, however rich, is somewhat coarse; in consequence of which it absorbs the colours, and renders a second and third layer of the tints often necessary. Put in the darkest shades first, then the lighter, finishing up with the palest and most delicate. When these are dry, touch up the first painting where requisite, wash in the softest tints, and, last

of all, put in the high lights. These last are never left, but are always put in with Chinese white. The admixture of white with all the colours enables the artist to blend the tints into the most exquisite harmonies, and such Lilliputian drawings need to be harmonious, or they are excruciating to an educated eye, and contrary to the canons of true art. Do not use too much white, or the colours will crack and peel off, to the great detriment of the painting. On textile mounts more white is wanted with the colours than for those designed for painting on paper. White or light-coloured satins are easiest to work on; dark colours requiring more frequent washes, require also more patience than the amateur may care to bestow. Place a sheet of writing-paper under the hand whilst painting; it prevents the mount becoming soiled and greasy.

A vellum mount is stretched in the same way as drawing-paper: sponge it well with cold water, gum the edges, and fix it on to the drawing-board, pressing it outwards in all directions with a clean piece of linen. It does not need to be sized. The vellum mount is that on which the artist will spend his best efforts; silk and satin may be sketchily decorated with good effect, but vellum cannot be thus summarily treated. Like ivory it requires to be elaborately painted. High finish and delicate stippling are inseparable attributes of this description of fan decoration. The smooth surface admits of the minutest details being as accurately represented as in a miniature. Our advice is to those who like to secure a showy effect with very little work, don't try to paint on vellum; no one who has not tried it can imagine how much time it takes to finish even the tiniest medallion in a satisfactory manner. When it is chosen as the ground on which to paint, the subject to be depicted is well worthy of our thoughtful consideration. A painting that will only interest for a time, or one that is simply taking because it sets forth some present fleeting fashion, is not a suitable object on which to bestow much labour. All the talent which the artist possesses should be pressed into the service. She should select as a copy a masterpiece of one of the French artists, or adapt from our own some striking design. Birds and flowers, pretty as they are for satin and silk mounts, are scarcely appropriate for vellum. Figures attired in graceful draperies or costumes of the olden time; Cupids resting on fleecy opal cloudlets that float in the amethyst sky; sea-nymphs laving their white feet in the crystal-clear ripples of the water of the bay, girt round with tawny rocks; shepherdesses reclining in the emerald meadow, listening, well content, to the rhapsodies breathed into their shell-pink ears by their devoted lovers; snug interiors warm with ruddy glow of firelight; hunting scenes with the hounds in full cry; boating on the calm surface of the translucent river, flooded with golden sunshine, the heavens of azure blue mirrored on its bosom, its brilliancy toned with purple cloud reflections and dusky green-brown shadows cast by overhanging foliage—these are all fit subjects to embellish with an artist's pencil the fan that may worthily rank with those nigh priceless

treasures of past times that bear the designs of Watteau and Boucher.

On black gauze it is obvious that no sketching or tracing can be done; the worker must, therefore, brush in the outlines, trusting to her ability to get them correct in the ultimate painting. We think that it might, however, be practicable for those to whom the former style presents a difficulty, through its unavoidable want of definiteness, to lay a sketch on paper underneath the fan-leaf, and then go over the outlines visible through the gauze with a brush filled with colour. If a painting is to be done, outline with colour; but if a simple grisaille, then use white only. The decoration of gauze with a grisaille is admirable; the whole design is carried out in grey and black, relieved by Chinese white, and is charming on the transparent ground. Landscapes, white with driven snow, figures careering along the frozen lake, the leafless trees frosted with sparkling crystals and pendent icicles, may be well rendered on the deep black gauze.

Silk is treated in the same way as satin; and of painting on paper little need be said but to remind our readers that it is necessary to use white with the colours.

Wooden fans need some ox-gall with the colours; this makes them work well.

Ivory fans should not be much decorated; painting seems almost out of place on the smooth polished

surface. If ornamented at all they should have only light, fanciful designs wrought on them, such as Cupids, roses, and feathery foliage. The colours for ivory-painting must all be mixed with the indispensable Chinese white. A list of colours would not be *à propos* here, but we will mention that lemon-yellow makes with vermilion and white a good flesh tint. Emerald-green, Hooker's green, bright chromium green, and sap-green; Payne's grey and cadmium yellow, Naples yellow and Indian yellow, are some among the colours that will be found useful; the blues, reds, and browns are those most generally found in the ordinary water-colour box. A pretty fancy gains favour now—that of bringing the foreground of the picture down over the mother-of-pearl sticks.

Feather fans are fashionable, but although we can do nothing in the way of decoration with the graceful ostrich, we can paint on the smooth black and white plumes. Birds swooping down on their prey, or flying swiftly along; dainty damsels engaged in a game of battledore and shuttlecock, show well on the deep opaque ground. Arrange those colours in the draperies that suit either ground best; brilliant hues of gorgeous crimson and rich gold will be relieved against the black, while delicate tints of soft azure, pale rose and subtle green, grey and brown will gratify artistic taste on the pure white ground.

CO - HEIRS.

A CORNISH STORY.

By JOHN BERWICK HARWOOD, Author of "Lady Flavia," "The Tenth Earl," &c.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE SEA HAS BROKEN IN.



ROBERT BARTON, in his pretty bachelor home, a fair white house that nestled amongst flowers and shrubs on the very edge of the tall and gleaming cliff in Tregunna Bay, but two miles from Gweltmouth, sat meditatively, after dinner, before the fire.

The month of May is usually, in Cornwall, a warm month, but even on the coast of the peninsula sudden frosts will set in after nightfall. There was a chill in the air, a white rime clung to the gorse and broom, and a fire was welcome. A pretty home, indeed, was that of Mr. Barton: too pretty, ladies would have said, for the dwelling of a man who lived alone. The bay was a landlocked cove, enclosed by the splintered crags

of two headlands, and in a sheltered semi-circle the trees grew luxuriantly on the slopes and platforms, dipping their feathery boughs into the salt water, as trees never do save in West Devon and Cornwall. Above, the hill-side blushed with flowers, and the only blot in the landscape was the shaft of the great Tregunna Mine, like a grim scar on Nature's face.

The table had been pushed near to the fire, and there Robert sat, sipping his coffee at intervals, and musing of many things: of Widow Nares, of his miserly half-brother, of humble friends in Gweltmouth, of the details of his own business life at Tregunna, perhaps a little, too, of himself and his future. He was twenty-seven. That is not a very venerable age, to be sure, but still there he was, unwedded and fancy-free. His brother, Jabez Sleuthby, was as a living warning of how solitary and selfish a man's existence can become. And—what was that? a sound of hurrying feet along the road and up the broad carriage-sweep, and then a confused clamour of voices, and a furious peal of the door-bell. "Something wrong!" exclaimed Robert, springing to his feet. There was a noise in the hall, and then the room door was opened, to give passage to five or six breathless men, who, in their excitement, had cast ceremony to the winds. The faces of the two