

DESIGN FOR MANTEL-BOARD IN INDIAN EMBROIDERY.

## ON MAKING HOME BEAUTIFUL.

## FANCY ARTICLES.

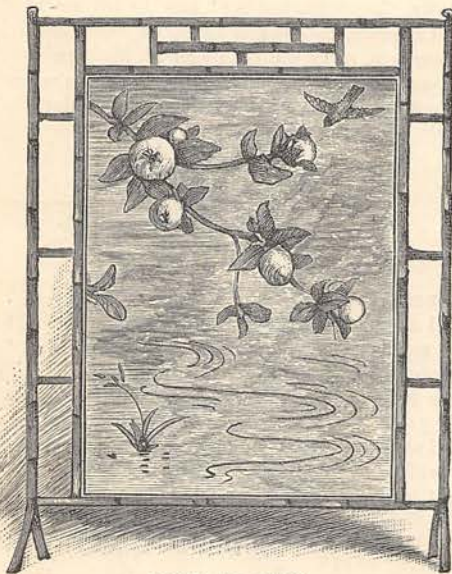
**T**HERE are so many ways in which a home can be made beautiful, that we wonder sometimes how it is that we ever see an ugly one. Especially where there are young girls about, the house should always look fresh and neat and bright. And it is so easy to make it so if we have some leisure time each day, some brains to use our time and materials advantageously, and deft fingers to carry out our ideas. Dainty knick-knacks, which to a great extent constitute the difference between a bare-looking bachelor's den, and a cosy home with a young mistress at the head of affairs, are within the reach of most of us—not at the ruination prices at which we can purchase

ideas, or in lieu of that can pick up the ideas of others readily. In fact, it is intelligence that is requisite—as requisite, in fair degree, in making home beautiful as it is for writing a novel or painting a picture.

Between overcrowding and bareness of aspect there is a happy medium. Space is necessary to our comfort. What comfort is there in having to move about in continual fear of knocking down ornaments, in having to everlastingly wend our way through a labyrinth of chairs, and kickshaw tables loaded with trumpery gewgaws?

Ornaments are to the house what bon-bons are to the children, they are good in moderation but it is possible to have too many of them. One house we remember where the drawing-room was a great deal more fit to form part of a museum, than to be a sitting-room in which the occupants could move about at their ease. On the other hand, a bare, cold-looking room, with never a hint of luxury to add enjoyment to the daily grind of life, is almost worse, we think, of the two. In the home that contains such a room we can fancy that the children will grow up hard, matter-of-fact; sensible, perhaps, but wanting in some of the refinements of chivalrous manhood, and in the charming graces of sweet womanhood. But to our work. Articles have already appeared in these pages on tapestry, china and glass painting, also on crystoleum and lustra painting, which are all pre-eminently suitable for house decoration; so of them we will have nothing to say here, but confine ourselves to describing some fancy articles that can be easily manufactured at home.

In houses where pictures are scarce the walls often look bald, especially if covered with a light-coloured paper. Brackets are a great help to the housewife in getting rid of this suggestion of baldness. Any carpenter will make deal brackets to a given shape, and it is easy work to cover the board and make a valance for it. The consideration of what material is best to use, and what should be the colour, and in what style the ornamentation should be carried out, are the main points on which success depends. Virginia creeper leaves look well on white, grey, and black grounds, and they are well adapted for the val-



DESIGN FOR SCREEN.

fancy articles at their weight in gold, but as the result of a few hours' work, added to a small outlay, and, above all, artistic taste and feeling. But we cannot do much in this way unless we are natty with our fingers, and can ply our needles quickly and well—unless we have an eye for colour, and some original

lance either of mantel-boards or of brackets; they can be massed together in bunches, or applied as a bordering, and are equally effective in both styles.

A charming screen can be made as follows:—A length of satin, of a delicate grey tint, is worked with shaded chenille. The design may be formed of flowers alone, or birds may be introduced. In one we have seen the design consists of water-plants; exquisitely-tinted flags, tall bulrushes of a red-brown hue, and various grasses are lightly arranged so as to leave much of the satin ground visible; a king-fisher, with its brilliant blue plumage, settles on some of the lower foliage, whilst his mate hovers above. The lovely blue feathers of the birds give the colour that is requisite to throw up the rest of the piece; while darting across the top of the panel is a dragon-fly. Various pieces of work could be carried out in shaded chenille, and the soft tints are suited to articles to be placed in a drawing-room. Banner-screens, hand-screens, work-bags, tea-cosies, may all be ornamented successfully in this manner. A tea-cosy may have a spray of wild roses branching across one side, on the other a few leaves rich in autumnal tints of gold, red, and brown. The cosies are made smaller than they used to be, which is certainly an improvement. If large, they take up too much room on the occasional tables used for five o'clock tea, and look rather clumsy; but when tastily made and well worked, or painted, they add to, rather than detract from, the pretty appearance of this fashionable and sociable repast.

An embroidered tea-cloth is a *sine qua non*, as many folks think. It may be either embroidered all over in a set pattern or merely bordered with crewel-work. Yellow jasmine or pink convolvulus is suitable for the latter purpose; they give sufficient colour without contrasting too strongly with the white ground. Vivid colours are objectionable, as the china generally affords all that is necessary; and we must study to have our cloth decoration harmonise with our cups and saucers, so that we may secure a good tone of colour throughout. On entering a room the tea-table, although it does not as formerly occupy the centre of the floor, is yet an object that invites attention, and we shall not be throwing away our time if we make it as attractive as we possibly can.

A somewhat novel fashion of utilising the Japanese fans for decoration is to trim them up to serve as pockets or bags to hang against a wall, and they are really ornamental if well done. The leaf of the fan is

first covered over smoothly with a plain piece of the material selected for the pocket, then a larger piece is cut to allow of the necessary fulness of the front of



NOVEL DESIGN FOR A CHAIR-BACK.

the pocket; in this a cord is run, or three gathering threads, a heading being left both at the top and bottom, the threads being lastly drawn up, and the piece sewn on to the front of the fan. The material may be embroidered, or painted, if the worker likes, but if this is done it should be afterwards stiffened over cardboard that the pattern may be seen; in this

case there will be no fulness, but it will be cut out to shape. Yet another plan is to box-plait the material, leaving headings at the top and bottom as before. Soft balls of silk are fastened at intervals round the bottom edge, and are much prettier than a ball-fringe.

To hear of a new style of chair-back is always interesting to ladies. Here is one appropriate for a bedroom. Grey or buff satin sheeting is cut to the required size, and is ornamented with a pattern in red Turkey twill, which is carried out after the following fashion:—Draw upon paper a design of some large simple flowers. The pattern should measure about a quarter of a yard or more across, and should terminate

with whole flowers or leaves at either end. It does not look well to cut through a flower, for if this is done it gives the idea that the pattern is bought by the yard and laid on, whereas it should be specially designed for the chair-back. Prick holes through the



A PAINTED MIRROR.

paper pattern at short distances apart along all the outlines. A strip of Turkey twill rather wider than the pattern is next tacked on the sheeting a few inches from the end; on this again the paper pattern is laid and kept in place by weights at the corners. White chalk powdered is pounced thoroughly on, and as it sifts through the holes it leaves a faint indication of the outlines, which is apparent when the drawing is removed. The chalk guide would be effaced by friction, consequently it is necessary to go over it with Chinese white so that the pattern may be clearly defined. All the outlines are now worked with chain stitch, or button-holed over with brown crewels, or indeed in any stitch and with any thread that the worker pleases; it is only indispensable that the work should be strong enough, so that when the Turkey twill which intervenes between the blossoms and foliage is cut away the edges may not fray. The pattern may be enriched in various ways, as any one accustomed to fancy work will at once understand.

Painted mirrors are very fashionable just now. Flowers, birds, figures, and landscapes are all executed on the clear surface, but we are inclined to think it is as well to keep to the two first subjects. One example we may mention as being the prettiest we have seen. The mirror was, as they all are, bevelled at the edge, and it was mounted in unpolished

black wood. No carving or pattern of any kind ornamented the frame, consequently the artist had the opportunity of carrying his flower design over it—an opportunity that he had improved with a charming result. The design was composed of passion-flowers. The sprays commenced at the right-hand top corner of the frame and trailed over the glass most gracefully, the lovely tints of the blossoms contrasting with the golden fruit and dark green leaves.

Before closing we wish to describe a mantel-board, vallance, and curtains, that we feel sure our readers would admire could they see them. The material is velvet of a rich dark green, but it is the ornamentation that is so pretty and novel. From pieces of Turkish embroidery the flower-sprigs are cut out, and these are appliqué'd on the velvet here and there to form a border, but not in a continuous pattern, regular spaces being left between each sprig. They are outlined with gold thread, which shows well on the dark ground. The vallance is plain at the edge, not scalloped. On the curtains there is a small running pattern arranged from flowers also cut from the Turkish embroidered squares.

Our space is filled, but we trust these few words will induce some of our readers to look to their home decorations, that this year they may be prettier and more tasteful than ever.

## SWEET CHRISTABEL.

By ARABELLA M. HOPKINSON, Author of "The Probation of Dorothy Travers," "Pardoned," "In a Minor Key," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER THE SEVENTH. MATRIMONY.



MRS. GORE sat in her pretty drawing-room, in her tiny but perfectly arranged house in Mayfair, thinking.

Only three more days of liberty, and then she would become Mrs. Vanstone! Was the prospect enchanting? What if it meant life with a cynical, irritable invalid? for, alas! the truth was out, only yesterday Myles had admitted to her that he had

not good health. It had weighed on her ever since, so much so that she had not the heart to have any one with her, having given orders to the servant to admit no one but Mr. Vanstone. For he had promised to come and lunch with her, and it was now four o'clock. What did he mean by keeping her waiting like this, without note or word of explanation? She rang the bell.

"I am at home to any one who calls," she said to the servant who answered her summons. Myles should be punished for his faithlessness. He detested most of her visitors: subalterns in the Guards; clerks in the Foreign Office or Treasury; smart men about town, "without an idea in their empty brains," as he would say when he had sat out one of the retinue that worshipped at her shrine. To-day there were several come for a last adieu of Sylvia, before her wings were clipped by "that surly fellow Myles Vanstone."

The tea came up and went down again, and still there was no Myles. Sylvia began to be seriously alarmed; something must have occurred, she had been so depressed all day; in one minute the talk and laughter languished, then fell altogether, and she was left alone. She looked at the clock; it was nearly seven. Just as she was leaving the room to dress for dinner the door-bell was violently rung.

"It must be Myles," she said, and ran out on the landing. But it was not Myles. John Loftus it was who was coming up the stairs, with a face so unusually grave that she knew something must have happened.

"Mrs. Gore," he said, going straight to the point, "Myles is ill, and therefore he could not come to you this afternoon. I went to see him, and found him

## HOW TO MAKE HOME BEAUTIFUL.

## SECOND PAPER.



HOW TO USE CUSHIONS.

Considering the question of making our homes beautiful we shall, as in duty bound, deal first with the drawing-room, which is the ladies' room *par excellence*. But we do not intend in these papers to limit ourselves to noticing one room only at a time, for it is the general aspect of the whole house to which we wish to call our readers' attention, as, in our opinion, it is fully as important that *that* should be attractive as that each separate apartment should be perfect after its kind. Unless the harmony be complete, we cannot hope to find that repose which satisfies the eye and secures the interest of all beholders. When the craze for the "Japanesque" first cropped up, it was odd to see the drawing-rooms, which received the housewife's first care, suddenly burst into full-blown Japanese chambers—but with a difference. Japanese papers covered the walls, inlaid cabinets teemed with rare old cups and saucers of fanciful design, quaint figures peeped out from the folds of the curtains, and the surfeit of Japanese fans was alarming. From this museum of curiosities it was a severe trial for the excited imagination to be confronted, when ushered into the dining-room, with the common-place flock paper and grained woodwork. If we want our houses to be pleasing to those of educated tastes, we must have unity of design, and even some unity of colouring.

A writer on decoration says that there should be one key-note of colour for the various apartments, and that one should lead up to another until the key-note is reached. Whilst we do not go so far, for to follow out this principle it would be needful in most houses to re-decorate the whole, yet we would enforce the rule that the several rooms should agree one with another; that there should be no clashing of colours and styles to strike us uncomfortably.

Those who have a clear understanding of the laws of chromatics will do well if they take such a key-note for each room, being careful that all blend; thus they will insure a pleasing interior that every comer must perforce admire. For others who have not made a study of chromatics, I give a second-hand piece of advice. Take a bird's plumage, and resolve that you will keep simply to the tints you find in it when decorating and furnishing your room; there will be no fear then of ugly contrasts, and the juxtaposition of inharmonious tints.

It is not our purpose now to enter into all the details of decorating and furnishing; we have rather to suggest some novel ideas for the embellishment of rooms which are already in use—the finishing touches as it were to the picture. The foregoing remarks, however, apply to the small as well as to the larger appointments of the rooms; a cushion, or a chair-covering, can be as complete a disfigurement as a carpet which does not accord with the wall-paper, or curtains which "kill" the soft tints of the "flatted" woodwork.

We are compelled, to a certain extent, to offer only general advice, which our readers must apply for themselves; but the description of some novelties will be useful. Here, then, we will mention a pair of curtains that are ornamented in a truly artistic style. When curtains are embroidered all over, much of the work must of necessity be hidden when they are drawn back; the latest mode, therefore, is to decorate only the upper portion, and to graduate off the pattern until it entirely ceases just above the curtain-band. For velvet curtains this style is especially appropriate, as the unornamented part is rich enough in its simple state to look handsome. When the



A PRETTY CORNER.

pattern is executed in crewels, and forms a sort of frieze at the top, it is admirable. This plan commends itself to ladies with whom, in these days of hurry and bustle, quick and effective work is at a premium. Madras muslin curtains are preferable to white lace; the soft colours in which the pattern is

wrought blend well with the fashionable shades of brocades and stuffs used for covering chairs and sofas. The Madras antimacassars are very inexpensive, and they look remarkably well on velvet chairs; but for a drawing-room we should choose the Oriental work; it is rich-looking and the soft muslin foundation drapes so gracefully. The oblong pieces are tied in a loose knot and fastened on to the top of the chair, the two embroidered ends falling down over the back. Although this is not a new fashion, there is no prettier one, so we cannot do better than to follow it still.

Ladies who have ample means at their disposal will doubtless cover their wall-spaces with exquisite bits of colour from the hands of our first aquarellists, but all are not in a position to indulge their taste in this respect, and to them we would say, Do not despair; you can make your home beautiful even although water-colour drawings are not attainable. Only set your mind against hanging up daubs to be an eyesore to your friends, and a blemish on your otherwise pretty interior. If there is a recess at one end of the room, you have ample scope for the display of your ingenuity. Let us suppose that a valuable cabinet forms a part of the furniture; there could be nothing more charming than to set this in a recess against an embroidered

wall-hanging executed in the following manner:—Take a piece of coarse linen of the requisite size—it must allow of a little fulness when hung—and trace on it a pattern of conventionalised flowers and leaves. The design must be bold, and we should advise that a running pattern should be selected rather than a set one in rows or stripes. Embroider the flowers in shades of terra-cotta, cream, and buff; the leaves in delicate yellowish-green tints and pale browns just warmed with red; the stems in rather stronger tints of green and brown. The ground of pale blue floss silk is to be entirely filled in with long darning stitches. The beauty of this piece will consist in the boldness of the design, and the soft tone of the colouring. Now standing in front of such a piece of work the cabinet will show to full advantage, whether it be composed of ebony inlaid with ivory, or of walnut enlivened with pietra dura, or of delicate satin-wood; whether it is Boule work, or comes from the master-hand of Riesener or Gouthière.

We have mentioned a cushion as a possible disfigurement to a room; here is one that, provided the colours agree with its surroundings, will be generally admired. The pattern covers the whole of the front side. It is composed of flowers on a linen ground; these are left white, being simply outlined and veined; the ground is darned with terra-cotta silk.

It is hardly possible to have too many cushions about a room at the present time; how long the fancy will last, no one can say, but now every lounge-chair is supplied with one: they are used as foot-stools, and set one upon another Oriental fashion to serve as extra seats.

Oriental work looks as well as anything for such purposes, and it is easily done. Some of our readers may have taken lessons in the art, an opportunity of learning having been lately offered in London; if so, they cannot do better than bring their knowledge into practical use in the embellishment of their rooms. It is effective, and some kinds are inexpensive, hence its popularity.

Those who intend to decorate on a rather extensive scale may be glad of the following suggestion:—It is a fashion, and a very pretty one, to paint the woodwork of a room white, and to have the furniture to correspond. A wall-paper of terra-cotta chimes in well with the



WHERE TO PUT A CABINET.

white paint, as it is a warm colour without the least hint of showiness. If we add to this a dado composed of a drapery of brocade of a darker shade than the walls, we shall have the foundation of a very charming interior that it will be difficult to out-rival. The brocade is treble-box-plaited at intervals of about a yard or so, and is cut in such wise that it appears looped up. It is edged with a handsome fringe, and surmounted with a wooden beading. A further improvement to the walls is a deep frieze; the colour of its ground must harmonise with the paper, but it may reasonably be more decided in tone. In its ornamentation, ladies who paint have a fine chance of showing their skill with the brush. A frieze having a gold ground will be found attractive, provided the rest of the decorations accord. A flight of swallows is good as the design on this ground, or butterflies, whose wings of vivid colour form a splendid contrast to the gold. A cream ground is appropriate with a pale blue wall-paper and deep blue

brocade; and apple-blossom or spring flowers do admirably for the ornamentation. The width of the frieze is a matter of taste; they vary from six inches to eighteen inches, according to the height of the room and the decorator's fancy.

It would almost seem, from the number that have been seen within the past few years, that the majority of houses must be fully furnished with screens, but "still they come," and apparently in as great numbers as ever. A handsome design can be arranged from the flowers, leaves, and fruit of pomegranates. The latter is imitated in velvet, in high relief from the ground; some in bursting show the seeds within, and these are represented in bright floss silks. The leaves of green velvet are veined with silk, and the whole pattern is outlined with thick gold cord. Gold cord and gold thread are much used in needlework, and as they throw up the pattern well, are likely to remain in favour for some time. The glittering tinsel is well adapted for work executed on dark grounds, as it helps to brighten and enrich such pieces.

All our decorations should be chosen with the view of making our drawing-rooms cheerful and pleasant to live in; the display of good taste should be everywhere noticeable, but comfort should be considered of the first importance. Books, papers, music,

and work-baskets will be present, but the latter should be natty in style.

The seats should be luxurious, for the drawing-room is a place of ease when our work for the day is over. Small tables may be placed about in convenient corners, by the side of arm-chairs and sofas; and curtains hung at the door, or a screen placed in front of it, in winter time, if there is any draught from beneath. We need ventilation above our heads, not draughts that chill our feet, and drive us to toast them upon the fender. In our leisure hours we are more fastidious, and notice all the little discomforts that in our busiest times we treat with contempt, or scarcely feel at all. In winter let us have a splendid fire that will look cheery when our visitors drop in of an evening: a pleasant contrast to the cold winds and snowy roads outside. In summer let us keep the windows shaded during the day-time, so that the room will be a cool and refreshing retreat after the heat of the day. All the year round let there be an abundance of flowers if possible—both cut flowers and growing plants and ferns. Nothing can vie as a decoration with the exquisite tints and the graceful forms of nature, and the plainest-furnished room possesses in their presence a charm which is wanting to the most magnificent when their beauty is absent.

---

## WHAT TO WEAR : CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



**I**F we have a hot summer, certainly no one will be able to complain that the new materials of the year have not been made on purpose for it; but if the sun refuses to shine, we can fall back upon velvets and the thicker woollen stuffs, which are also *à la mode*. Never was fashion so diverse; all and

everything would seem to be worn, and almost any style, so that individual taste has plenty of play. And yet, to my mind, it is by no means an easy matter to be well dressed. With so much to choose from, it is quite possible to choose wrongly, and it is not easy to have all the details so perfectly in accord as fashion dictates.

The tailors are doing their best to rival the dress-makers, and their work is so thorough that there is no wonder that they find many patrons. They are employing tweeds, homespuns, and plain cloths, and there is hardly a month in the year when a gown of this kind cannot be worn. Many of these dresses have no tunics; the skirts are simply plaited in front and gathered at the back; others have the tunic so fastened to the bodice that they indicate a return to the old polonaise, a style which, by-the-by, is second to none for old ladies. Do you know, as a

rule, how you may tell a dressmaker's from a tailor's gown? The former fastens over on the left side, the latter on the right. All these sort of dresses are purely English, and, though they find favour in Paris, they originate with English people; but we draw our inspiration from French sources sometimes, as I expect in the case of the cloak dress, which is a veritable plain ulster, with only a plaiting of check material showing beneath at the extreme edge; the fronts, which are allowed to fly open, are lined with silk, and the bodice and skirt are cross-cut check. It is suited to travelling; but Englishwomen, as a rule, do not change their dress like French ones for out of doors, and this would look *bizarre* at home. We take also the loose jacket, with only the fastening at the neck, from the French design. It requires to be well cut, and admits of a change of waistcoats.

Tailors are bringing in the Norfolk jacket again, but only with one box-plait on each side, and by no means full or loose, but closely plaited to the figure; it is, no doubt, more becoming, but it loses its original virtue of ease. If, however, you are bent on a long railway journey, let me recommend you an ulster just brought out, with a drawing-string at the back of the waist, an extra length formed into a sort of muff at the waist in front; perfectly easy, warm, and light, with few fastenings, so that it can be slipped on and off in a minute. The capote of cloth is still worn to match, otherwise