

ON THE DECORATION OF A BOUDOIR.

PRIVILEGED friends who are welcomed into a lady's boudoir have a right to expect that therein they shall find a clue to some of the features of her mind and character. An observant visitor will be quick to catch suggestions also as to her tastes and habits. The open piano, with its music on the stand, will betray at once whether merely pretty modern ballads or grand old symphonies are the delight of the occupant of the room; the pictures on the walls will readily divulge the secret as to the style of art appreciated by her; the books scattered about will reveal the bent of her mind, and prove whether in her studies she finds her friends amongst the great immortals or their shallow, pigmy successors of passing fame; the decorations will unflinchingly demonstrate whether she possesses that invaluable gift, an eye for colour; the very knick-knacks about the place will furnish a hint as to her love of the useful and ornamental combined, in contradistinction to the superficially beautiful, because utterly useless; whilst the general appearance of the whole will declare whether her habits may be classed under the head of orderliness or untidiness, of industry or indolence.

A boudoir successfully treated will be an expression of the owner's individuality—no mere transcript of another's ideas, but original in scheme and characteristic. That women hold much more pronounced opinions on all matters now than in the old time there can be little doubt; even in regard to decorating and furnishing their houses some of them have strong leanings to one or other of the prevailing fashions, though they may not actually mark out a line of their own. But to a certain extent there is necessarily a similarity of needs; we must have chairs and tables and floor coverings, and usually curtains are considered indispensable; so a short notice of the fashionable modes of decorating and furnishing a boudoir may be useful.

For the benefit of our readers who desire to create a really attractive interior, and for whom that foe, economy, has no terror, we offer a slight general plan of operation, leaving it to their judgment to carry it out artistically.

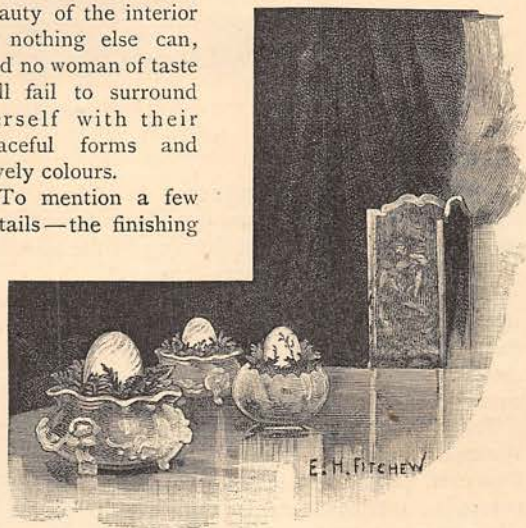
First, then, let there be no paper on walls or ceiling. Panel the room with wood up to the height of three feet; above this, let the wall-space be covered to within a foot of the ceiling with self-coloured satin or silk; a soft blue tint is likely to be much approved, but terra-cotta is equally effective, and so too is old gold. Presuming that the former is chosen, each of the panels may be decorated in the centre with a copy of a Bartolozzi print done in light red on a white ground; around these medallions a simple appropriate border should be painted on the blue satin, but it must be kept subordinate to the design. A somewhat more elabo-

rate border, but akin to the other in theme, will edge the panels, which are set in frames of wood. The remaining wall-space is ornamented with a frieze, the ground colour being a delicate primrose-yellow; upon this is painted a design arranged after Bartolozzi, and executed in red.

It should be remembered that highly-finished work and elaboration of detail is quite out of place on a frieze; not only is it labour wasted to work up paintings destined to be placed close to the ceiling, but the needful strong effect is lost. With such a wall decoration the ceiling can only be painted; to paper or to white-wash it would be a barbarism from which any one with a grain of artistic feeling would recoil. A creamy-white panelled ceiling, each division framing a subject in keeping with those introduced on panels and frieze, would be charming.

The furniture, *par excellence*, for a boudoir decorated in this style is real old Chippendale, or Sheraton, upholstered in brocaded silk. It is preferable that the coverings of the chairs should not match; the ground colours may be varied and the patterns also, but the latter should agree in respect to size: that is to say, one pattern should not be composed of flowers in miniature if another displays full-sized blossoms. A luxuriously soft couch will be placed in a cosy corner, a lounge chair near the fire-place, behind that a screen, and a dainty Chippendale writing-table will stand in front of the oriel window, which is furnished with a window-seat. The curtains of brocaded silk will hang from a brass rod, and be caught back with a band of rich embroidery. Silk scarves of terra-cotta colour will secure the Madras curtains, which are arranged on a rod fixed to the window-sash where it opens. A number of growing plants in flourishing condition and posies of freshly-culled flowers will enhance the beauty of the interior as nothing else can, and no woman of taste will fail to surround herself with their graceful forms and lovely colours.

To mention a few details—the finishing



FAIRY LIGHTS.

touches to rooms, as the high lights are to pictures : in the small grandfathers' clocks which are so well suited to a boudoir, the most exquisite workmanship is now to be found. Those made of mahogany, or rosewood, and inlaid with delicate festoons of foliage, are samples of modern work which will bear comparison with that of olden days. The shape takes us insensibly back to the houses of our grandfathers and

past on handsome Oriental anti-macassars. It is arranged in such a manner that little, if any, of the plain muslin ground appears, and we see only the exquisitely blended colours, with shimmerings of interwoven tinsels, and the result is rich and pleasing. The same work is applied to photo-frames and photo-screens.

Three-fold screens are made now of large dimensions ; they hold two rows of cabinet portraits, one



HOW A BOUDOIR SHOULD BE ARRANGED.

grandmothers, where we looked at the old clock on the stairs that towered many feet above us with feelings akin to awe, and waited listening for the booming of its " forever—never ! never—forever ! "

Cases of the same form, but executed in embossed steel and brass, are very beautiful, but it must be confessed that they are not as suggestive of old times as the dark wooden casings, and consequently do not accord as well with the design.

That all the articles on the writing-table should be spruce is considered, if possible, of more importance than ever. Some of the latest novelties are blotters covered in antique Oriental embroidery : the same as that with which we have been familiar for some time

above the other. Women who are clever with their fingers could easily make them, but they must be neatly done, and especial care would have to be taken in finishing off the fabric round the space left for the photo. A worn leather screen could enter on a second term of existence if so treated, and no one would guess but that it was the last new " thing."

Draping curtains is an art not to be learnt in a day. Some there are who seem intuitively to know just how the material should go that it may hang in graceful folds, and with a few seemingly careless touches the desired effect is gained ; but all are not thus gifted. Artists spend hours, nay, even days, over the cast of the drapery for their figures ; and we cannot think that

time spent on draping curtains well is time wasted, for it is attention to such minor particulars that goes far to secure the perfection of the whole interior.

Nothing is easier to manage than some of the artistic silks, which are so soft that they can be looped up, caught back, and festooned across without the slightest difficulty: indeed, an arrangement can hardly fail to be satisfactory when they are used. Another fabric which affords the heavier folds that are sometimes required is the printed velveteen, suitable for portières. Lovely bits of colouring may be introduced by its aid; warmth or depth of tone can be imparted to a cold or over-bright corner near which a door or window is situated, for to drape across either of these a length of reddish-tinted or peacock-green-hued velveteen is to gain harmony and repose.

Dhama muslin, Mysore silk, and fancy gauze will each lend themselves well to the ornamentation in various ways of an elegant boudoir, but they would be incongruous unless their surroundings were handsome and in keeping.

The flowers that are most used for boudoirs are small and delicate kinds, such as lilies of the valley, violets, clematis, jasmine, and forget-me-nots. Of the receptacles for these there is no end; we should advise chiefly the coloured glass bowls that are greatly in vogue. Gilded baskets, cornucopias, and lyres, the latter fitted with a basket in front to hold flowers, are all pretty and fashionable.

There are many little white china ornaments of fanciful form that look well on occasional tables, and tiny ferns last a long time in them, sending up vigorous fronds if kept sufficiently watered. Shells are again used for growing ferns; holes being bored in the sides, three chains are passed through by which the shell is suspended in front of a window; the larger sorts are best for this purpose, as the fern can then have plenty of mould, and it flourishes well.

We saw a lovely Japanese fern lately that would live

in a warm room. The roots were apparently trained to form, as it were, a hanging basket with the mould enclosed; above, the most delicate fronds spread out in rich luxuriance. But we were cautioned that this fern would not live in an atmosphere impregnated with gas. There are, however, few ladies we should imagine who would care to use gas in their boudoirs; the light is not the most becoming that could be found, neither is it advisable to employ it where the decorations are expensive, for it soon soils the top of the walls and the ceiling.

Now that the choice in lamps is large, and the majority of them are extremely pretty, gas is at a discount for small apartments. Lamp-shades, too, are made in such a variety of ways, silk, lace, and ribbon all being brought into requisition to turn out some smart affair whereby the unbecoming glare of the light may be subdued, that it is but natural that ladies should have recourse to them, for they add to the picturesqueness of the rooms.

One of the prettiest fancies for illuminating boudoirs are the "fairy lights." Enclosed in luminous tinted or shaded glass, they produce a subdued light that is truly agreeable, and the accessories are so charming. They are fitted into a deep glass bowl, shaded from the palest pink up to glowing ruby; in this are set growing ferns, and out of the midst of the wreath of green rises an egg-shaped glass of the same tint. A silver bowl lined with gold replaces the glass one where the desire is to have all appointments of a costly description, but this, we consider, is best adapted to a dinner-table.

Much depends on the lighting up of an interior, and we recommend ladies to see to it that the power of the light is not in excess of what is needful, that it is well distributed over the room, and that the shades diffuse a becoming hue, and thus they will score one point of vast importance, as it influences to a great extent all their arrangements for making their boudoirs sights worth seeing.

THE OLDEST SONG.

W'LL sing you a song, 'tis the oldest on earth;
It came down from heaven, the place of its birth;
The birds through the air, as they bore it along,
First warbled the notes of that rapturous song.

Then its music was caught on the wings of the breeze
That whispered it low through the leaves of the trees,
Till they trembled and sighed as the strange song they hear
With the rustling of joy and the tremor of fear.

And all that had life on the earth, in the sea,
Re-echoed the notes of that sweet melody;
With flower and fruit the glad world grew bright,
And the murmuring ocean laughed out in delight.

At last, in its holiest, heavenliest power,
It pierced the seclusion of Eden's fair bower,
And filled with a new, troublous joy from above
Two souls in that bower, and they called that song—
LOVE.

And still from that day, through all ages and climes,
That song which is old and yet new ever chimes;
And so 'twill be sung until time shall be o'er,
When 'twill soar back to heaven to be sung evermore.

Beware, oh! beware how you sing that old song;
Breathe no note that is false, strike no chord that is
wrong;
Let each pulse of your heart, like a lute's well-tuned
string,
Be harmonious and true when that old song you sing.

J. F. WALLER.