

HOME-MADE CHRISTMAS GIFTS.



SCISSORS-SHEATH AND BAG FOR OPERA GLASSES.

"CHRISTMAS comes but once a year"; but when November has come and all but gone—to those who have lots of presents to make—it seems to be drawing near with alarming strides. Many girls are now anxiously trying to solve a problem that has been a worry for centuries—that is, how to make five shillings do the work of ten shillings, and puzzling also to find what

painting them when finished with bronze or metallic paint would take away the country-fair look shell boxes and frames have. An American lady sent President Harrison lately a handsome-looking ornament made of a large ginger-jar that had been covered with putty, then on it had been placed all sorts of incongruous odds and ends: a little doll, several small shells of different kinds, a tiny dagger, a coin or two, a diminutive ring, besides innumerable other minute articles. The whole had then been painted. There are many common jars and bottles, but of good shapes, to be found in most households, that could be turned to good account in this way.

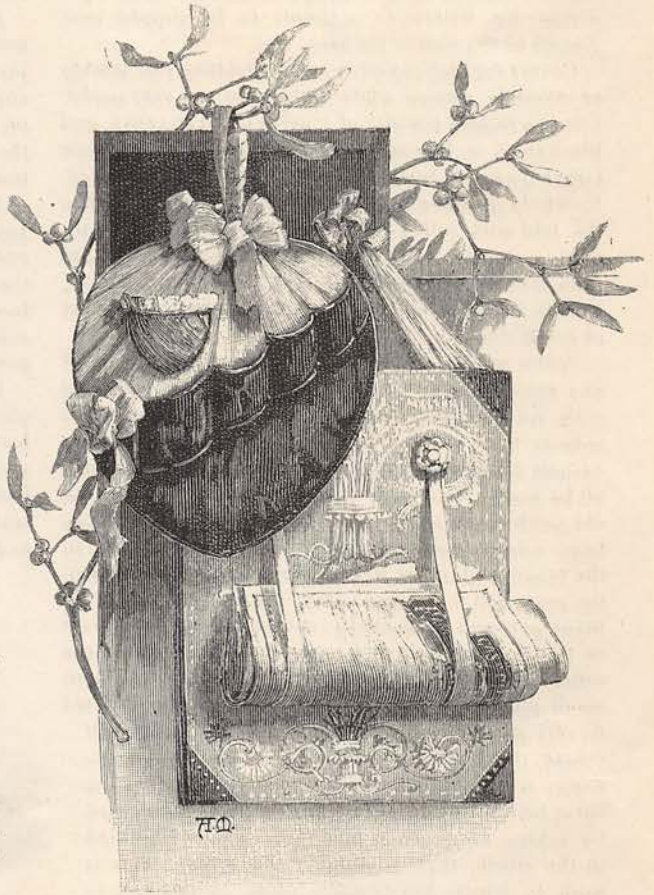
A new shape of newspaper rack is an oblong of wood shaped at the top, painted a bronze-green, with sprays of flowers at the top and bottom. Two straps of ribbon are passed through from the back to hold the papers. It is apparently tied to the wall with loops and ends of ribbon. If wood is not forthcoming, it could be made in strong cardboard (the boxes dresses are sent home in would

they could possibly make with the limited sums at their command. Fortunately, if they have a little industry and good taste, there are many things they can make that will cost little more than some work or trouble—presents that will be more highly esteemed by their friends because they are entirely their own manufacture.

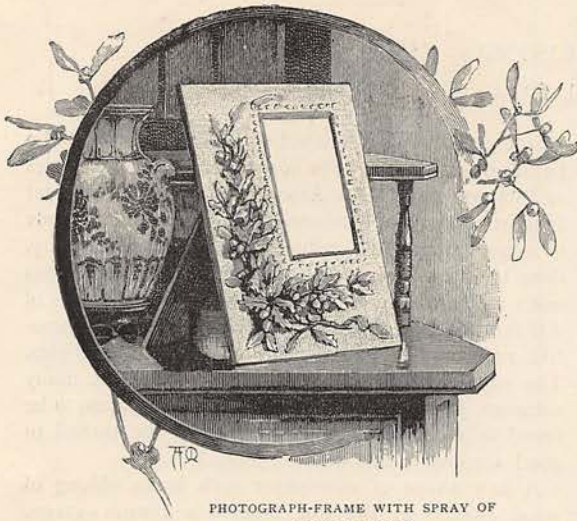
Mirrors, for instance, which, large or small, are always welcome additions to our rooms, can be handsomely framed by materials that have been gathered in a country ramble, and when finished look like finely carved oak.

Get some handy man (if there is no brother able to do so) to make a frame of common wood $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide—oval is by far the prettiest shape. Take the flakes of a large cone, and glue them side by side on both edges, the points outwards. In the centre place cones of all kinds, walnuts, beech-nuts, acorns, twigs, anything of the nut kind that comes handy, glueing them firmly to the frame and to each other, heaping them in the centre. When finished give a coat of size, and when dry, one of copal varnish. The mirror glass, with painted back, is not expensive, and stands well. Each spring a coat of varnish or weak glue makes the frames like new. Another style of frame newer than the above is made of all kinds of cereals. The foundation frame is the same, but it must be covered with putty laid on evenly while quite soft. Lay a row of broad beans round the outer edge, haricot round the inner. On the space between make a pretty pattern of maize; then strew rice thickly wherever the putty shows between or around, the pattern. Paint with bronze paint.

The same idea could be carried out in shells;



NEWSPAPER AND PIPE RACKS.



PHOTOGRAPH-FRAME WITH SPRAY OF LEATHER WORK.

do), covered with some pretty material, embroidered or not, and surrounded by cord or gimp. Glue the straps for the papers securely to the back, and add the bunch of ribbons. To correspond, another could be made with a pocket a few inches deep at the foot; above this, one or two straps of ribbon taken tight across for letters or accounts to be slipped into. Fasten to the wall in the same way.

Covers for blotting-pads or for holding the weekly or monthly papers while being read are very useful. Cut two boards the size of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, and place them on brocade or plush after cutting it a little larger than the boards, with a small space between. Carefully glue over on the wrong side, and strengthen the fold with calico; then line and trim round with cord or gimp. If the name is written in pencil and then sewn in stem-stitch, it is a great improvement. Covers for music should be made the size of the sheet of music doubled.

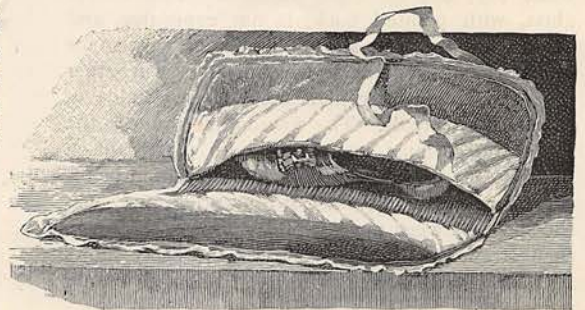
White wood articles, muslin, sateen, paper, almost any material, may be quickly and prettily decorated with spray work. Sepia or Vandyke brown water-colours look well on most things, but inks, dyes of various colours, marking ink for washing things, may all be used. The tools required for the work are an old tooth-brush and a fine comb. After the paint has been rubbed down—making it rather liquid—dip in the brush and draw it gently along the comb, when the paint will fall in fine spray. A design suitable for many purposes is made by cutting out a monogram or initial letter, and placing it in the centre of the article you are decorating, tacking it close with small pins if necessary. Arrange a wreath of dried flowers or ferns round it, then use the spray. Of course, the surface under the letters and flowers remains white, while over the uncovered portions the spray falls in tiny drops. Light and shade is obtained by taking away when half done what is wanted in the shade, then continuing the spray. This is work in which boy-brothers often condescend to assist their sisters.

Bedspreads are rather large pieces of work to commence now to be ready for Christmas, but many effective ones are made with not very much work. Cretonne, made the size of the bed, with a deep flounce of the same, both lined with sateen in the dominant shade in the cretonne, looks well; or one made of Bolton sheeting embroidered—more or less—and bordered with a broad band of serge, satin sheeting, plush, or velveteen. Or a still prettier is sateen or linen in pale blue or pink, embroidered with flourishing thread and edged with écru lace quite a quarter of a yard deep. I saw one lately made of white linen embroidered with gold silk and deep lace; it was very lovely. Transfer patterns pressed with a hot iron do very well. Powdered designs are much used just now, and the patterns could be cut in detached sprays, then used. Autograph quilts make acceptable presents to a bride, made in squares of four, five, or six inches, each square bearing the name of a friend written by herself in pencil (of course large), then sewn in stem-stitch; the squares united by bands of insertion, the whole surrounded by a wide lace to match. Odds and ends of wool crocheted in squares, then joined, make a comfortable quilt for the poor; if the colours are pretty, they make a nice cover for a child's cot. The splasher, toilet-covers, doyleys, brush and comb bag, should all be made to match.

A cover for the brushes lying on the table is much more useful than the bag. Cut the material in two pieces, the under half 13 inches by 11½ wide, the upper cover 16 inches wide by 9 deep; pleat this up, and put on as a pocket and trim. This lies on the table with the brushes in the pockets, the handles resting on the material beyond, ready for use.

A good pipe-rack can be made by covering a Japanese fan with plush. A band of the plush stiffened with buckram (or brown paper doubled) should then be taken across in loops to hold the pipes; the bows should be of ribbon. This band might be taken across slanting, with a pouch to hold matches or spills put in the spaces.

Photo-frames may be covered with brocade or plush, neatly glued down at the back, and a spray of leather work added at one corner. If you have a few acorns left over from the mirror-frame, cut out of basil leather some oak-leaves of different sizes. Take a leaf, or a paper copy of one, and lay it on the leather, and cut round it exactly; steep the leaves in water till



BAG FOR DRESS-SLIPPERS.

quite soft, and mark the veining with the point of a knitting-needle; press them into curves, and lay them aside to dry. When quite so, arrange the leaves and acorns on the frame, and glue them neatly.

Bags or sachets to hold dress-slippers are very useful presents, made in any material edged with gimp or cord, and with strings to tie; or bags to hold an opera-glass, made with a cardboard foundation covered with pongee silk, a band round it of embroidery, or brocade, or plush; then a bag of the pongee with a deep heading and draw-strings. Instead of the straight band, the brocade may be put on in deep vandykes or diagonally. A mere scrap of the brocade left can be made into a scissors-sheath or spectacle-case, cut out in cardboard, covered and lined, then joined with the ribbon bow, which should have a large hook sewn to the back to attach to the waistband.

Clothes-baskets Americans have turned to good account as "catch-alls." Gilt, bronzed, or enamelled, they are lined with silk or satin, ornamented with bows of ribbon, and used to hold all the odds and ends that accumulate in our rooms. Very large cushions are very fashionable just now, covered with black or coloured satin, worked with a scattered design in cream cotton or linen thread. A double frill of soft silk quite four inches deep surrounds them. The frill should match the embroidery in colour. A narrow fringe is used to edge smaller cushions. For a friend who travels much a useful present would be a cushion made of some strong material (chamois leather is suitable). On one side the cover should be double half-way, for papers or letters to be slipped into.

Two wrestling men that would afford endless amusement for the little ones can be made with four corks. Two make the bodies; the others are cut into a rough resemblance to heads, in which, with black pins passed through white beads, make "two



THE WRESTLING MEN.

lovely black eyes." Paint the lips red, and you may give a hectic glow to the cheeks. Fasten the heads to the trunks with pins or a nail. Cut two strips of cardboard with arms formed as if wrestling; four legs, each cut separately. Dress the men, one as a Highlander in a round bonnet, a white shirt, and tartan kilt; the other may be a Turk with muslin turban, white shirt, and a "divided skirt," but not coming below the knee. Put short sleeves on each of the arms, and fasten them to the shoulders with pins. The legs are fastened on in the same way, leaving all hanging quite easily. Pass a string through the hands, the least movement of which sets the figures wrestling frantically. Some figures require balancing, which is done by putting a tack or two into the body.

I have mentioned brocade or plush for most of the above articles, but cotton dress sateens, short lengths of which could be got now for the merest trifle, are many of them, both in colours and design, quite as pretty and quite as suitable as more expensive silks.

THE SECOND TIME OF ASKING.

AND is this she who was so gay
A year ago?—
Who laughed the light-winged hours away,
Said men were bores, and grew *au fait*
In saying "No"?

What ails her now? why does she stand
In such sweet thought?
Her wooer is not rich, nor grand;
And yet she takes not back the hand
Half fiercely caught.

Ah, no, for once she took it back—
A year ago!
And then she lost that golden track,
Her laugh grew false: she sighed, "Alack!
That I said 'No.'"

Now, self-mistrusting, wise, at last,
She scans Life's chart;
But wake, say "Yes"—the past is past,
And the refuge safe, and sweet, and vast,
Of a true man's heart.

WILFRED WOOLLAM.

