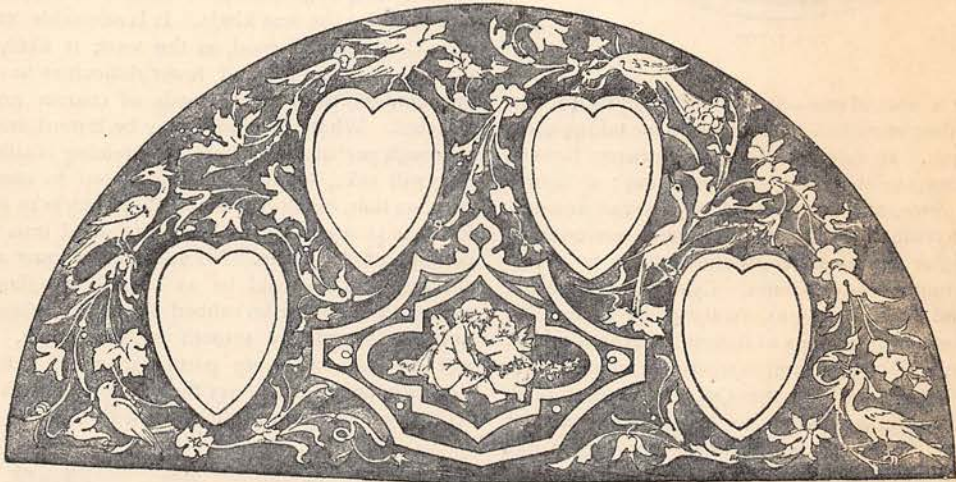


the penalty. Although the regular life which those subject to megrim ought to lead may be irksome at first, the relief from prostrating headaches is so intense that it more than counterbalances the temporary loss of enjoyment due to the self-denial of many pleasures, involving either undue excitement or interference with the routine of daily life. Heredity is an important factor in the predisposition to megrim, and many members of the same family may suffer. There are, however, two other causes, apparently trivial and frequently neglected, but which are, nevertheless, very

common. The first is an error of refraction, causing astigmatism, and the megrim disappears when suitable glasses are supplied. The second cause is any constant form of irritation, as a decaying tooth, and as long as the irritation is allowed to continue so long will attacks of megrim be frequent and severe.

One word of consolation : megrim is more frequent in youth, and as years roll on it diminishes in intensity and frequency. It has been said that it implies more than average ability—it is at least certain that many of our most distinguished men suffer from it.

MARQUETERIE WOOD STAINING.



DESIGN FOR A PHOTOGRAPH FRAME.

THE sensible fashion of taking up an art work which will enable us to improve the appearance of our homes, by decorating walls and wood-work of rooms, and by ornamenting articles of furniture and embellishing knick-knacks, is spreading quickly. It is a noticeable fact that ladies living in the country are eager to hear of all the work of this kind which is being done in town; and there is no doubt that many would be glad to try their hand at Marqueterie Wood Staining, if they could see the excellent specimens that are now being daily produced.

Although imitation marqueteries have been in for some time, it is only lately that examples which could fairly be called good have been shown in any number. Here and there we have seen well-executed pieces, but, as a rule, the colouring of the patterns has been garish, and the designs poor and often badly drawn.

All this is changed now. What may be termed truly artistic work is turned out by ladies, both professional and amateur. They excel in neatness of work, the outlining is firm and clear, and they choose designs which, though bold and free, yet display some of the fine details which play important parts in much of the old marqueterie.

Many artists object to the word "Imitation" being used in connection with modern art work, and I heartily feel with them that it has not an attractive sound. Mostly imitations are undesirable; often they are worthless. False gems are execrable, because they pretend to be the real things; they do their level best—poor as that is—to deceive; but marqueterie wood staining, though it resembles real marqueterie, can stand on its own merits; like tapestry painting, it is artistic work, not merely a mechanical copy of something else.

Almost any sort of decorative design may be selected, so that workers need not go out of their groove—if



TABLE-TOP.

they have a special one—and wander wildly in new paths, as they often feel they must do on taking up a fresh pursuit. If they are clever at drawing flowers, they can keep to that style of decoration; if figures are their *forte*, they can introduce *amorini* amongst scrolls intertwined with foliage. Should conventional floral designs appear easier to them, there is a vast hunting-ground ready to hand. Celtic, Scandinavian, Italian, and French designs, Arabesques, Louis XV. scrolls, bows and garlands of flowers, Sheraton inlays, all suggest styles of decorative treatment which cannot fail to delight. Perhaps the Celtic designs, though very popular, are least suited to the art if we consider the subject critically, but fashion goes far in the present day to reconcile us to what otherwise we might think slight anomalies. The Celts are responsible for the decorations of our “five o’clock” napery, carved oak-chests, leather chair seats, as well as marquetrie tables, and what not besides.

Granted that designs innumerable are to the fore, there remains a scarcely less important factor in the successful working out of our decorations to be considered. On good colouring so much depends. Excellent work may be quite spoilt by using bad stains, or stains which are too bright in colour. There is no excuse now for employing unsuitable ones, for professionals have learnt, by studying pieces of old marquetrie, and by continued experiments, to produce stains by means of which decorations of beautifully soft colouring can be executed. A dozen of these sets up a worker completely, but only three or four are used in some of the best pieces of work; indeed, the most charming effects are secured by the simplest colourings. To give an idea—a low-toned green combines delightfully with satin-wood shaded with brown for decorating a walnut panel, the outlines being done with ebony. Walnut, rosewood, mahogany, ebony and satin-wood stains are used for grounds. The remaining stains are yellow, red, blue, olive,

crimson, and grey. Outlines may be put in with ebony or walnut, according to the ground and colouring of the pattern. Marquetrie wood staining compares favourably with many other kinds of art work as regards expense. The price of each bottle of stain, medium, preparing solution and polish, is sixpence. Neat little boxes, containing the three latter requisites and seven stains, are prepared for five shillings. These are quite sufficient for making a start.

Three or four soft brushes are required: either sable or camel-hair; they should be of medium size; also an outlining brush and a flat camel-hair. The latter will be wanted for applying the preparation, which is sold with the stains, to the wood to prevent the colours spreading. Continuing the list of requisites, we come to saucers for holding the stains; glass-paper of two qualities (the finest that is made is used for finishing the rubbing down processes), methylated spirits, and some linen.

There is a large choice of woods: holly, sycamore, and lime are the best kinds. It is advisable to begin on a close-grained wood, as the work is likely to be far more satisfactory, and fewer difficulties have to be encountered than when woods of coarser grain are selected. Whatever kind it may be, it must undergo a thorough preparation before any staining is attempted. We will take, let us say, a table-top to commence with, as that, being flat, is an easy article to manage. First, it is necessary to bring the wood into a good condition for working. No unevenness must mar its surface, which should be as smooth as glass. To secure this, it must be rubbed down with glass-paper until it is perfectly smooth to the touch. Some workers who are very particular about getting an irreproachable surface wet the wood next with water, let it dry, and again rub it down with the glass-paper.



COVER FOR A BLOTTER-BOOK.

Not the tiniest particle of grit or powder from the wood must be left on the surface when the preparing solution is to be applied. With a piece of linen remove all such grit and dust, then lay on a coat of the solution with the flat camel-hair brush, passing this swiftly over the table-top, and being careful not to let any part of the surface remain untouched. After it has dried, rub the table down with the finest glass-paper, and give a second coating of the solution.

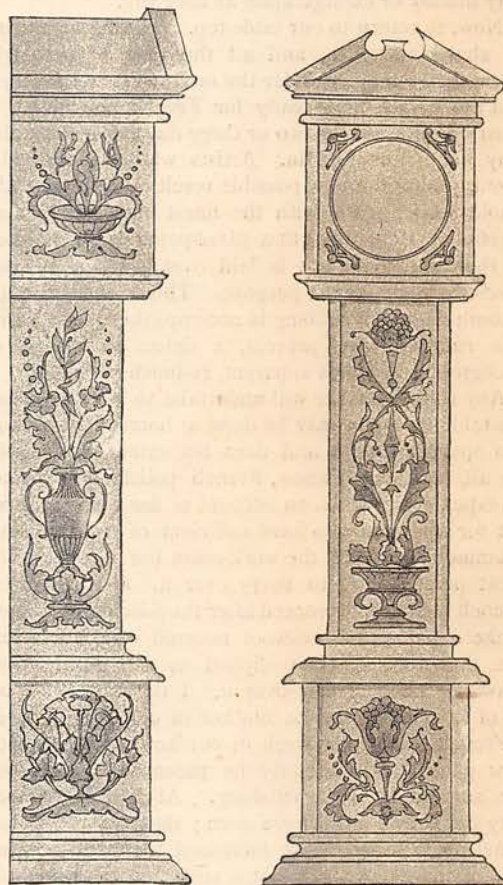
Now that the drudgery is over, we come to the decoration. Those who are inexperienced in art work may be disposed to say that too much has been made of the necessity of having a smooth surface. "What can it matter if a few little specks are left here and there, if the wood is a trifle rough, or even slightly scored with lines?" Well, it matters just this much: that the specks will show dark when the staining is done, and the lines will appear as a legion of scratches.

A rough sketch of the design is first made; this is either original or adapted. It would be most inadvisable for a beginner to draw direct on the table-top; this is not done generally even by professionals. A drawing must be executed next, so that the design may be of the right size, and that it may be such as will best accord with the shape of the article to be decorated. This is done on drawing-paper. When quite correct and complete, a tracing of it is taken by laying a sheet of tracing-paper over the drawing, and going over all the outlines (which are easily seen through the semi-transparent tracing-paper) with a sharply-pointed hard pencil. The tracing is then laid on the table-top in exact position, a sheet of black-lead transfer-paper is carefully slipped beneath it without disturbing its position, and, lastly, the outlines of the tracing are gone over with a style, or with the hard pencil if a style is not at hand. Remove the papers, and the impression of the drawing will be found on the table-top.

In marqueterie wood staining artists work somewhat differently. Some stain the design first and then stain the ground; others reverse this order, and stain the ground first, then stain the design, and finish by outlining it. The latter is decidedly the better plan, and for this reason: on the natural light wood ground a stained design will look very different from what it would if the ground were dark. So if we mean to have a rosewood ground, that should be stained *before* the design, otherwise we shall be unable to judge of the effect the stained design will produce when the table is finished. With a satinwood background a strongly-stained design will present too harsh a contrast, whilst a deep-toned design may be admirable on a dark background.

The stains work better if they are mixed some time before they are used. A small quantity of stain is turned out into one of the saucers, and to this is added one-third part of medium. Mix all the stains in different saucers before commencing the decoration. If we say mahogany or walnut will be wanted for the ground: well, put sufficient out to do the whole of that. Then for the design satinwood and olive may

be used. Put some of each in two saucers, and in yet another put some ebony, which will be required for the outlines. Now fill a brush with the mahogany or walnut stain, and go over the ground with it, following the grain of the wood, and getting as level a coat as possible. When this is done the brush can be washed in water. Next stain the design in the same way with olive and satinwood, and shade it where necessary.



DESIGN FOR MINIATURE GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK.

Satinwood may be shaded with walnut or mahogany. To give relief, fine shading lines are often put in with the point of a fine brush. For figures these lines are indispensable, and they need to be very carefully put in. They are as fine as the lines of an etching, and should almost look as if done with a pen. To deepen a tint already laid that may have proved too light, a second application of stain may be given. If a light tint is desired, the stain must be diluted sufficiently to make it so; for stronger shades the stains are used in a dryer state. Ebony for outlines must be allowed to dry up in the saucer after mixing with medium, and be slightly moistened with the brush when needed for use. Walnut is also treated so when it is employed for outlines.

Ebony and ivory marqueterie is done with ebony stained background and white enamel design. All the markings or the design—like the centres of flowers,

for instance, and the veining of leaves and the shading of the cherubs—are done sharply and clearly with the point of a fine brush which is dipped in ebony stain.

All workers would do well to obtain a piece of old inlay; it will be such a help to them in executing a design to have a good example to refer to: not necessarily to reproduce exactly, either as regards pattern or colouring, but to gain ideas which they may modify or enlarge upon as they will.

Now, to return to our table-top. The outlines being all sharp and firm, and all the tints of the right strength, we may consider the ornamentation finished, and the work is now ready for French polishing. It must be set aside for two or three days, that the stains may get quite dried in. Artists who are particular about getting the best possible result now go over the whole work again with the finest glass-paper very carefully. Remember that glass-paper is never used in the hand alone; it is laid over a block of wood specially made for the purpose. This keeps it flat and smooth while the rubbing is accomplished. If, during this rubbing-down process, a defect in design or background becomes apparent, re-touch with stain.

Any cabinet-maker will undertake to French polish the table-top, or it may be done at home if the worker can spare the time and does not mind the trouble. As all housewives know, French polishing is rather an expensive process, on account of the time it takes; but for amateurs who have sufficient of that valuable commodity to spare, the work costs but a trifle. The great point is not to hurry over it. Get colourless French polish, and proceed after the following manner. Make a pad of cotton-wool covered with fine linen. Let the wool be first dipped in the polish, then draw the linen tightly over it. I dare say we have all of us at some time or another in our lives watched a French polisher at work in our homes, and noticed how gently and regularly he passed the pad over the surface he was polishing. At first he rubbed very lightly, we may have seen; then, as the polish penetrated the wood, he increased the pressure and rubbed more quickly. Just a suspicion of linseed-oil, not more than a drop or two, is applied to the face of the pad. Now pass the pad gently over the table-top, and to avoid injuring the stains by too early rubbing, leave the work for a while until the polish has been absorbed by the wood. Rubbing should not be continued too long at a time, but the worker must return to it again and again throughout the day until a good, brilliant surface is secured. Next a second pad is wanted, but now the wool is slightly damped with methylated spirit before being covered with the linen. Touch the pad with oil, and go over the table-top carefully with this. With the polish pad again rub the surface, and then complete the work by using the spirit pad encased in three layers of linen. All furniture can be improved in this way, but it is a rather monotonous task.

Our readers will, doubtless, value the original designs for marqueterie which Miss Turck, a well-known artist, has kindly placed at our disposal for their benefit.

Briefly to mention how the designs may be carried out in marqueterie wood staining. The photo frame may be ebony with ivory design; the veining of foliage and the shading being also done with ebony.

The round table-top is extremely pretty and effective; the ground should be of walnut and all the design of satinwood, whilst the outlines may be given with ebony.

The blotter, which is of holly-wood, is left the natural white as far as the ground is concerned. This throws up the quaint design in which the dragon is done with olive green shading to walnut, and the flowers and foliage with various subdued colours.

The grandfather's clock is a most dainty little article, and the fine patterns require care in reproduction. It is worth taking some time over, as it has an exceeding good effect when well executed. The design of varied colours contrasts well with a rosewood ground. Green, walnut, and mahogany should be the principal stains employed.

I have left the most charming, and certainly the most difficult, design until last. This is a panel for furniture; for instance, it could be suitably used for the door of a high narrow cabinet or the back of one of the fashionable spinners' seats. The design is to be entirely of satinwood, delicately shaded with brown and the ground of walnut.

We must glance just for a moment at the articles suited for marqueterie staining. Almost any piece of furniture which is of light dainty design may be chosen. Occasional chairs, five o'clock tea-tables, cabinets, small bookcases, brackets, Victoria stools, Hamlet and Louis XV. seats, and the quaint spinners' chairs can all be charmingly decorated in this style.

We may decorate a drawing-room or boudoir most attractively by executing a series of panels for the dado, which will be arranged with plain wooden mouldings between each. Above these could be a frieze, with quiet toned floral design of stained marqueterie, and the filling-in of "brocade" paper.

E. CROSSLEY.



PANEL OF A CABINET.