Home Art and Home Comfort.

Practical Decorative Art.

PAINTING ON TEXTILES.

TAPESTRY DYES.

ALTHOUGH it is more than a score of years since the first specimens of tapestry painting were placed before the public, it is only within a very short time that they have begun to attract general attention. Pieces of work of this sort, of more or less excellence, have from time to time been produced in Paris and London, each season's efforts giving evidence of progress in many ways, until recently the materials, designs, and general artistic excellence have placed them in the front rank of decorative art productions. It is to the French that we are indebted for this beautiful idea; and the various Dresden china and figure patterns, the foliage colors in the lawn and forest pieces, as well as the arrangement of the subjects are characteristic of the tasteful and ingenious originators.

The materials usually employed for this purpose are soft pliable fabrics of various sorts. That which is in most general use is a heavy corded goods having somewhat the appearance of the ordinary repped furniture goods, only softer and finer. It comes in wool and cotton, and there is a special grade in silk which is very rich and handsome, but too costly for ordinary work. Akin to this repped goods is very fine, closely ribbed corduroy, and the same in heavier grades has been employed with decided success. Moleskin is another admirable material for taking tapestry colors. It is a velvet-surfaced goods, but the pile is so thick and firm that it cannot be broken or crushed except by great pressure and moisture. Linen of various sorts has also been used, notably a heavy grade of twilled linen, but this does not give as good results as either the cotton or wool corded fabrics. Undoubtedly the most satisfactory of all foundation materials are the medium to fine woolen goods with firm, closely woven, cord-like surface. These more closely resemble the old-time Gobelin tapestries, and when covered with a well-executed design are such perfect imitations of the antique, that any one but a connoisseur might easily be deceived thereby.

The colors employed, technically known as "Tapestry Dyes," are in liquid form, and their application is more like a process of staining in than of regular painting. These colors are used in connection with a preparation called a fixing medium, by means of which, it is said, the colors are made indelible and indestructible.

Painted tapestries have many uses. As borders or bands for portières, curtains or draperies, as a decorative finish for lambrequins, screens, piano or table covers, or for any one of the hundred uses to which ingenious amateurs can apply such charming work, they are especially appropriate. They are also quite as well adapted for furniture coverings; and the artistic dame or demoiselle who can occupy her leisure moments in making elegant tapestries to adorn her drawing-room, may have something of which she can justly be proud.

In addition to its beauty and usefulness for home decoration, this art has the additional advantage that it can be worked almost continuously, not being subject to the delays attendant upon oil or distemper colors, which must be allowed to dry thoroughly before the work can proceed. Tapestry painting is also profitable as a business. Many of the leading decorative artists are employing sections of it in finishing public buildings of various sorts, as well as in the mansions of the wealthy.

Tapestry dyes are without doubt the most effective and easily managed of any of the great mass of artistic materials now obtainable by amateurs. They are productive of the most satisfactory results with the least labor, and are the most durable of all art decorations. When properly made, the painted tapestries may be washed without danger of disturbing the colors, and will bear any amount of rough usage.

In artistic hands, specimens have been made of such rare beauty that they have commanded higher prices than the old-time Gobelins from which they were copied. Even some of our best professionals have found time to experiment with these dyes, and the results so far justify the time devoted to them that more painstaking effort and more elaborate designs are promised.

The first experiments of this kind were tried upon various sorts of canvas, crash, and linen. Every season has brought out more appropriate and manageable materials, and finer, more softly blended, and more permanent colors. What novelties the coming year will produce it is impossible to say; but from present indications, it would be difficult to prepare anything more adaptable, effective, and labor-saving than the dyes already in the market, and the textile materials that are now obtainable.

Tapestry dye colors can be obtained in boxes of various sizes or by the bottle, as one chooses. The inexperienced and ambitious worker will no doubt produce more satisfactory results with ready mixed colors. The practical artist can select a few shades and mix colors or lay on in complementary tints, at will. It is said that some of the best specimens of this art have been made by the use of primary colors put on very thin and shaded up with tints made by dipping the brush into weak dyes of the necessary shades. This, however, should be attempted only by an experienced and artistic colorist, as deep or incorrect tints cannot well be washed out, but remain to destroy the beauty of the work.

Almost any firm, thick material can be used with these colors, but some care is necessary in the preparation in order that the fabric may take the color easily. If there is dressing in the material selected, and the piece is small, it is well to dip it in rather strong, hot suds, or rinse it for some seconds in hot water to which a little fine soap and a few drops of ammonia have been added. If large pieces are to be done, it is necessary, first of all, to prepare a strong and convenient stretcher or frame made of strips of dressed pine. The strips should be about three inches wide and one and a half inches thick, and the length of the strips will depend on the size of the piece of work to be done. It is well, however, to make a single set with quite long side-strips; the ends may be shorter, or two sets of ends, one long and one short may be made. Holes should be bored about two inches apart in the strips, and metal pins or keys may be used, or pins of hard wood. The old-fashioned quilting-frame will furnish the correct idea.

To the inner edge of each piece of the frame, a strip of heavy cotton or linen cloth should be fastened with tacks. See that this cloth is strong, and firmly attached to the frame. Then with a needle and heavy thread, or, what is better, a cord of medium size, sew the tapestry material over and over to the cloth on the frame.

Do the sides first, beginning in the middle and working each way. The greatest care is necessary in order to have the grain of the cloth perfectly straight, as upon this much of the finest effect depends. When the edge is sewed all around, straighten the frame and put in the pins. In this way any size of tapestry or cloth may be used in the same frame.

The cloth is sometimes fastened to the frame with tacks; but this is not a practical way, as after a time the wood becomes too full of holes to hold the tacks, and besides the goods is liable to be torn and disfigured. Tapestry if tacked is almost certain to be stretched in lines, which will entirely destroy the symmetry of the pattern when the piece is made up and the grain gradually straightens by use. Particular stress is laid upon this part of the work, as upon its proper execution depends much of the beauty of the finished design.

The fabric being mounted, it may then be washed with the soap-suds and ammonia (previously described). If there are conveniences for such work, the frame may be set up and the entire back of the cloth scrubbed with the hot suds and an ordinary brush. It may be rinsed with light suds and left to drain until dry, but under no circumstances should wool tapestry cloth be wet with clear water after the scrubbing. Moleskin and corduroy should be wet from the back. They may be saturated without injury if no pressure be allowed on the surface. Expert artists will find the work much easier if the goods be kept slightly damp, not wet,—as that would cause the colors to run,—but in that almost dry state that makes fabrics of all sorts especially soft, pliable, and receptive. This dampness is best secured by keeping a dish of soap-suds at hand, and frequently passing a sponge, squeezed quite dry, over the back of the tapestry. The novice will do well to select small pieces of tapestry, and not attempt to experiment with large work until a considerable degree of skill is assured.

To draw or outline the pattern on the material is the next step. There are various ways of doing this, and almost every experienced artist has some special method. The simplest way is to lay a piece of transfer-paper over the pattern desired, and trace it with a fine pen or pencil, being careful that every outline is accurately followed. When finished, lay the paper over a piece of thick flannel, and pierce holes with a pin, following the outline of the pattern with exactness. If this part of the work be well done, the pattern will serve many purposes. Where large establishments are accessible, ready-made patterns may be had with less trouble; for the tracing and perforating process is very tedious, and much time and labor and possible discouragements may be saved by having the work done by professionals. Any stamping process may be used with equally good results, but the amateur distant from such conveniences can do very well by following these directions.

The best pounce or stamping-powder is made of the very finest powdered charcoal, with a very little rosin ground to dust and sifted through muslin. Half a tea-spoonful of rosin to six tea-spoonfuls of charcoal will be about the correct proportion. A little of this, after being thoroughly mixed by shaking in a bottle, should be put into a piece of very fine, sheer cotton-cloth tied loosely to form a little bag. The material, if fixed in the stretcher, should be laid over a table or board, and the pattern put in place and held down by heavy weights. Do not fasten the pattern with pins. It cannot be made as smooth, and the pins may disfigure the cloth. Besides, it destroys the pattern to fill it full of pin-holes at the edges. Begin at the middle of the design, place a weight there, then smooth from this point in all directions and weight the corners. Remove the middle weight, pat the perforated design with the powder-bag until it is all covered, then remove the paper carefully. If there is too much powder blow it off. Then lay a clean cloth over it and press with a warm iron. This fixes the pattern more firmly on the surface of the cloth, but is not absolutely necessary. On corduroy and moleskin the design may be sketched if preferred.

There are two kinds of tapestry dyes. One is used with a fixing preparation that must be heated or steamed in. This is the kind in general use, and the one which can be had at any first-class store where artists' materials are sold. The other is of later date, and has thus far been used only by a few eminent artists. It is much more effective as to color, needs no fixing preparation, but requires more patience and skill in applying. Its use and nature will be explained in another article. The colors at present under discussion are to be diluted with water, to which a small portion of the fixing preparation is added. This "medium," as it is called, is in the form of a powder, a teaspoonful of which is dissolved in about two-thirds of a tea-cupful of warm (not hot) water. Put it in a bottle and shake until thoroughly dissolved. Use this liquid for diluting *all* of the colors.

Small cups or tiny tumblers are excellent for holding the colors. A dozen or more, as required, may be set into a block in which large holes have been bored. In the absence of this, fill a pan partly full of wet plaster of Paris, press the tumblers in and let them remain, occasionally moving them a little to prevent sticking, until the plaster is set. In this way perfectly solid forms may be obtained, which is important as it is often necessary to wipe the brush on the edge of the cup, and these cannot be upset.

It will be well for the inexperienced amateur to work from a colored design and to follow the copy as closely as possible. It is also of the utmost importance that very weak colors be used by beginners. No amount of time, pains or labor will remove too deep shades. Short and stiff bristle brushes are used. A small quantity of color is taken at first and thoroughly rubbed or scrubbed into the fabric. This is for grounding. Then add a darker color for shadows, and leave the high lights undisturbed until the work is nearly done, or wash them over with a very pale shade of the color desired. Have some small pieces of the cloth tacked to the edge of the frame to try the colors on. This will be of great assistance in determining the shade required.

Flesh-tints should have a little olive and gray washed into the shadows. Study colors. Hang a bit of the plain cloth in the light and see what tints and shades enter into its composition. For figures, use a little brown-red for the shadows in the ears, the corners of the eyes, and the dark line between the lips. It will be highly profitable to get a few good studies as guides. Those published by Raphael Tuck & Co., of New York, are admirable. Descriptive catalogues will be sent on application to them. Studies cost from 30 cents each to $3 or more.

Brushes cost 10 to 25 cents each. About one dozen will be required, although, with care and frequent washing, half that number might answer. Colors cost 20 cents per bottle, or they may be bought in cases of various sizes. The colors are very strong and will go a great way, as they must be diluted, especially for figure pieces, flowers, and light landscape work. The fixing medium costs 25 cents per bottle, and lasts a long time. The colors, brushes, and the printed tapestries mentioned below can be obtained of F. W. Devoe & Co., New York.

Tapestry cloth is furnished in various qualities of silk, wool, and cotton. The latter is desirable for beginners or for large pieces, as it looks well and is comparatively inexpensive. Silk tapestry cloth costs $8 to $12 per yard, and usually comes fifty inches wide. All-wool goods comes from fifty-four inches to one hundred and twenty-two inches in width, and costs from $6 to $12. Cotton tapestry of the same width as the woolen costs $3 to $8. Moleskin comes in white, gray, and pearl-color, is twenty-seven inches wide, and costs about $2.50 per yard. Corduroy is about the same width, and costs about $1.25 per yard, but comes in a greater variety of colors.

When the painting is done, take the tapestry to a dyer and ask that it be steamed for an hour. This dissolves the fix-

ing preparation, and renders the colors indelible when dry. If there is no dyer in the vicinity, lay an old cloth over the flat top of the kitchen range in which there is a low or moderate fire. Wet this cloth thoroughly, and when the steam is rising rapidly lay the painted tapestry (painting upward) over it, fold a blanket and cover it, and allow it to remain for some time. Wet the cloth under the picture with boiling water from the tea-kettle as fast as it dries out. When the tapestry is wet through, remove it and allow it to dry slowly. It is an advantage to put it back into the frame to dry, as it makes it much smoother.

These directions for setting the colors after the painting is done must not be confounded with those for preparing the material. In the steaming process after the work is done, the tapestry is not to be wet other than by steam; but the water is applied to the cloth on which the tapestry is placed for the purpose of generating steam to set the colors.

A novelty in decorative material is printed tapestry. The design as seen on the cloth resembles a wood-cut or lithograph. With this for a guide, the veriest amateur can do the most admirable work, as it is only necessary to wash in the colors. Care must be taken that they are not too dark at first. The pattern is all done in shades of black and white, and only requires shading up. Such pieces cost from $3 to $10, according to size and pattern.

Another tapestry has the printed outlines, the drawing of the pattern, and looks like material already stamped. This is very convenient, but the design must of necessity be conventional. Such pieces are however quite desirable for amateurs and others who are far from conveniences for patterns and stamping, and who do not like the trouble of doing the work themselves. There is but little danger that such designs will become sufficiently common to be monotonous, therefore they can be commended for general use. This style costs $3 to $7, according to size. Very large designs are more expensive.

Ladies can send a design of any size to a first-class city dealer and have it enlarged to any dimensions and stamped upon the material at a moderate cost. Medium-sized patterns would be done for from $1 to $3. Those who can do their own patterns and color them are sure of something that will always be a pleasure in its originality, at least, and it is well worth an effort to prepare them.

Moleskin and corduroy make exquisite upholsteries and draperies when done in handsome designs in the regular tapestry colors. In another number directions will be given for making up some of these admirable decorative articles.

NELLIE S. STOWELL.

Chair-Scarf Decorated with Painting and Embroidery.

THIS class of decoration is extremely popular at present, and not at all difficult of execution. The material may be any goods which is adapted to water-color painting, such as silk, satin, scrim, or bolting-cloth. The decoration is admirably adapted for bolting-cloth, for with as much embroidery as is required for a good effect, the delicate fabric is overweighted.

No. 2 shows an unmounted piece of bolting-cloth for a screen or chair-scarf, decorated with water-color painting and silk embroidery of scarlet poppies. The background is put in in gray and neutral tints, the leaves and branches in browns and greens, and the flowers in scarlet, gold and black. No. 1 gives a flower in actual size, which with trifling

POPPY OF ACTUAL SIZE.

DESIGN OF POPPIES.

CHAIR-SCARF.

alterations in position, etc., will serve as a model for all the poppies in the group.

No. 3 is a completed chair-scarf of écru scrim, one yard long and eleven inches wide between the drawn-work stripes, which space is decorated similarly, although the illustration shows a little different pattern. The flowers are embroidered, and the olive-brown branches have leaves of dark bluish green, and the birds are painted in gay water-colors. Each end of the scarf is finished with a hem half an inch deep, and then with a fringe of écru crochet cotton, No. 40. An edge is first crocheted on the hem made in loops of three chain-stitches each. Each strand of the fringe is made of five threads twenty inches long, doubled and drawn through a crocheted loop, then tied in a knot and finished with three similar knots at equal distances apart. The fringe when finished will be about eight inches deep.

Sanitarian.

Sins Against the Stomach.

III.

PHYSICAL SINS.—EXCESS AND HASTE.

VERY oddly indeed, in ordinary conversation the word intemperance has come to mean, almost universally, over-indulgence in drink; no doubt because this vice is more rapidly proclaimed by results, and so fearful in its consequences. But those who are most energetic in decrying it, who are indeed among the noblest workers in the field of temperance, often sin to an equal extent, morally and physically, by excess in eating. Moralists, nowadays, rarely launch their thunders against gluttony, and social reformers appear to forget that it was included by St. Paul in his condemnatory epistles. But quite apart from its moral aspects, intemperance in food is a very prolific source of disease, and is in itself a decided sin against the stomach.

It is very difficult to lay down any definite rules with regard to quantity, in the matter of food, for the reason that so very much depends upon individual requirement; and then, moreover, the question of comparative nourishments in edible articles is quite a difficult one, and the subject of dietetics forms in itself a distinct branch of study. Without trespassing upon the ground of the teacher, however, we may be permitted to speak with strong warning against over-indulgence in eating.

Appetite is one thing, while hunger is another. In a perfectly healthy condition of stomach, hunger with three meals a day is an impossibility: a gentle appetite leading to enjoyment of food at certain hours of the day, a readiness for meal-time, is all that is neccessary or desirable. The leading question put by the family doctor, when called in for consultation, has so long been, "How is the appetite?" that parents have a vague sort of idea that unless all the children eat with equal zest and enjoyment, there must be something radically wrong. They ignore the fact that there are as many grades of appetite as there are individuals, and that the healthful condition is that in which