

Home Art and Home Comfort.

HAMMERING FOR BOYS.

IF you give a small boy a hammer and something to pound, satisfaction and contentment seem to be the certain result. But if this liberty of pounding is not somewhat restricted it will result in anything but satisfaction and contentment to every one else in the household except the small boy.

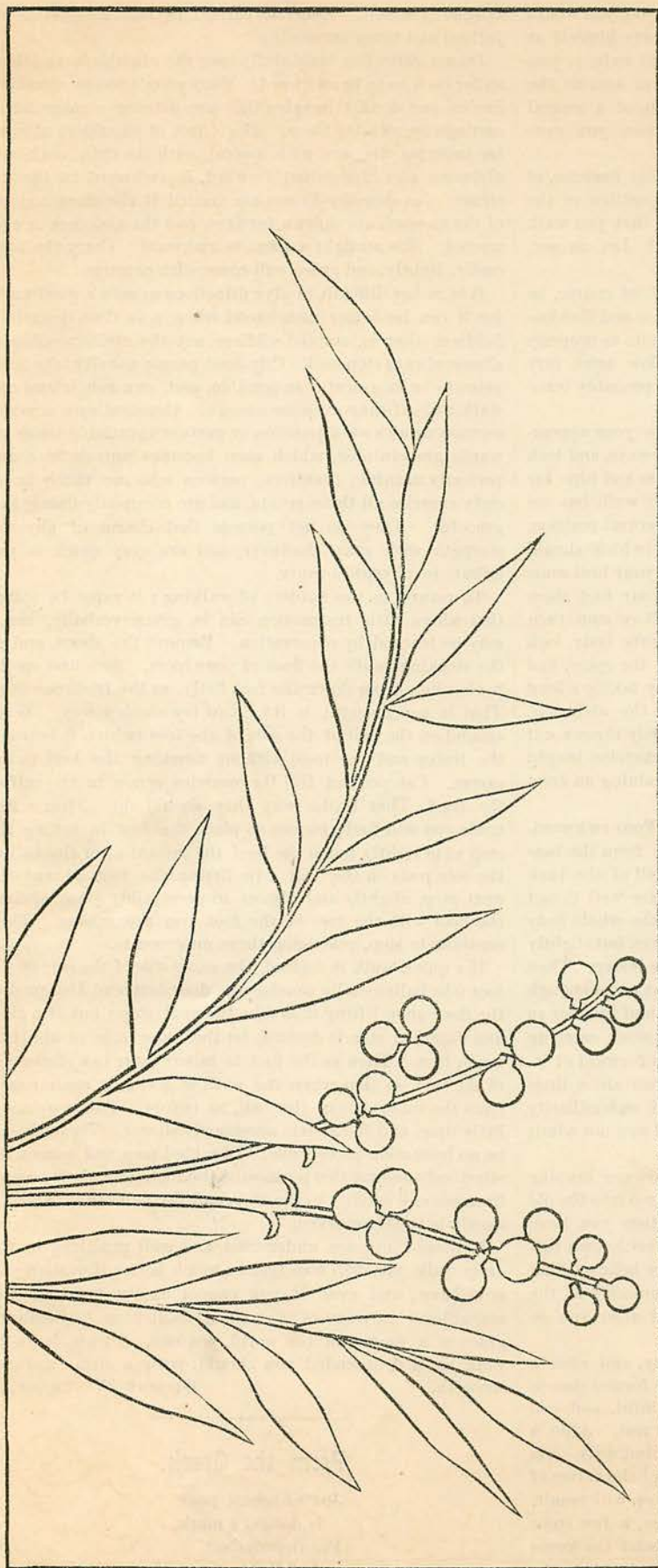
I once knew an over-indulgent mamma who could not find it in her heart to deny her two-year-old boy the free use of a good-sized hammer. "He could not cut himself with that; it surely was a harmless plaything." The destruction the young man managed to accomplish during one day in a new house was something appalling. A wiser person than the mother conveniently lost that hammer; so the house was saved from destruction before all the plastering was battered down.

Now, as this instinct seems to be born in boys, why not turn disadvantages to advantages, and if boys must hammer, why not give them something harmless, if not useful, to hammer at? If boys are old enough and careful enough, there are few things prettier, for the same amount of work, than stamped leather. Still, there is considerable expense connected with this work.

Last winter, in a club that was busy at work for a charity, there were a number of boys from nine to thirteen years old. They were all eager for work and wanted to learn how to stamp leather. I wished to teach them; but I soon learned that all boys are not careful and accurate—one could hardly expect that at once—and that leather is too expensive to experiment upon.

Just at this time I found that it was possible to use many of these same leather tools with very pretty decorative effect on heavy blotting paper. A few experiments soon showed that one need not confine one's self to the regular tools, but could turn almost anything into a tool to pound with; for example, a nail-head, a screw-head, the end of a key, the foliated handle of a key, small brass rings, the screw with eye used for the picture cord in a frame. All these became at once delightful tools for boys, partly because they were so very cheap. Indeed, it grew exciting. One took to pounding with everything, to see if it would not make a good tool for a border or for a conventional flower.

Each of the boys had a cheap hammer, and a folded newspaper was put before him on which was laid a sheet of blotting-paper of the shape given in the design. A new-comer began with a nail-head border, or little hammered clouds of nail or



DESIGN NUMBER 1.

screw-heads irregularly put above and below, leaving a space for a motto in the middle, after round nail-heads were put between the screw-heads. As the boys grew more careful, designs were planned using various tools; and then these hammered designs were colored with various colored bronze paints. We used gold, silver, copper, and blue-green. The use of the bronze paints must be trusted to the more careful ones.

When the cover was finished it was fastened with an eyelet to other blank sheets below, and a ribbon was drawn through and tied in a tidy bow, and there was a pretty blotter made by a boy of nine or twelve. I assure you, if he was not proud of it, I was. The boy had gained some knowledge of the use of tools, and a habit of work; and no house or furniture had been marred with the dangerous hammer. If there was not the highest "home art" in this work, still there might be some "home comfort" gained from it; and it was a step nearer good leather-work, later.

The designs given this month explain themselves. The leaves in No. 1 can be drawn in with an ivory stiletto from the work-basket, or a fine steel crochet hook, or a hard-pointed stick of any kind. The flowers and buds can be made with two sizes of keys. The arrow-head leaf could be drawn with this flower, only it is not so easy for a young boy to do. The leaves can be colored with the blue-green bronze paint. The flower may be silver with a gold center.

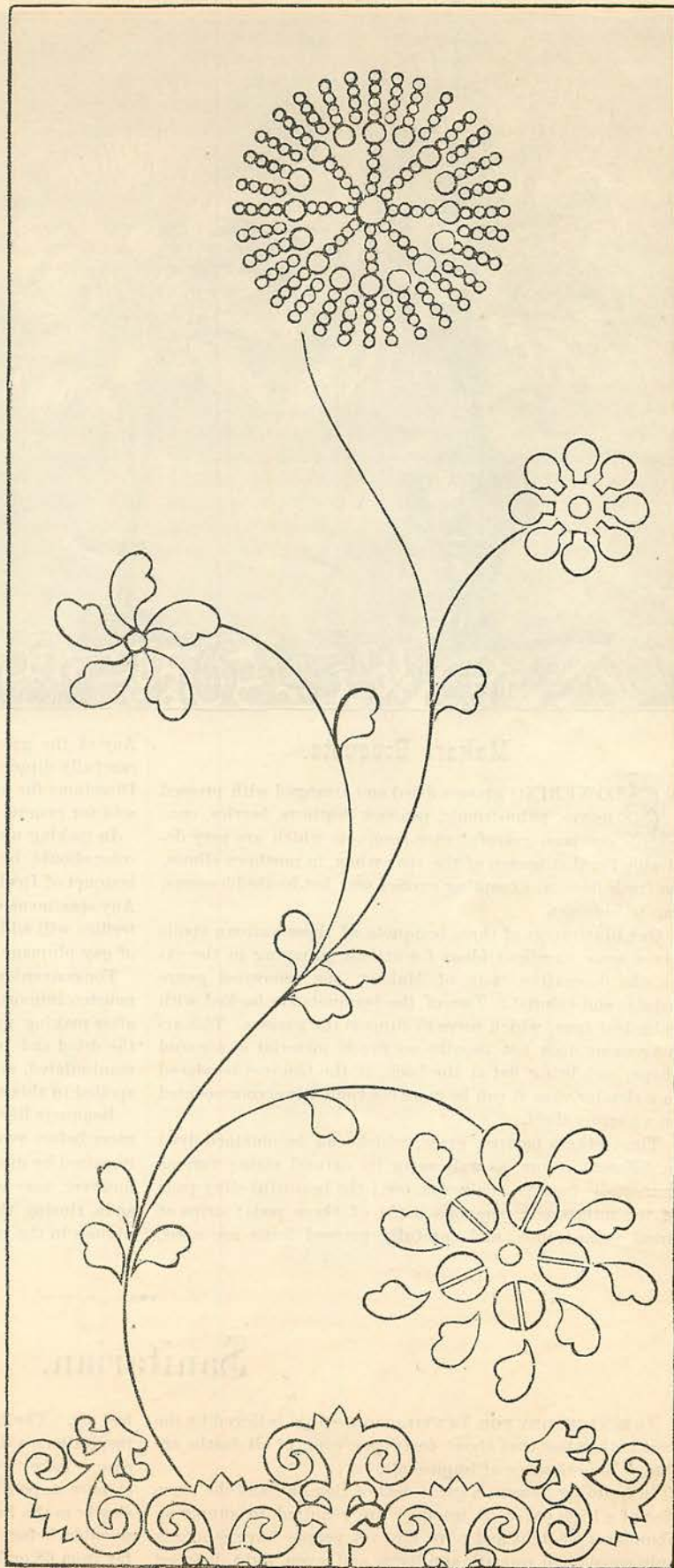
There are three leather tools used in the design No. 2. Two are the leaf tools, of which a pair is needed for the opposite sides of the leaf. The small dots are done with a background tool. The rest is done with a key, a screw, and a round nail-head. The foliated handle of a key is used at the end. It is all very simple; but when the bronze paints are used it has a very pretty decorative effect.

You can, if you wish, dye your blotting paper. Take any water-color, in a flat dish, with plenty of water, wet the paper quickly on both sides, and lay it on a flat surface to dry. In this way you can plan your own background color. This decoration can be used for little frames for photographs, or calendars for birthday or Christmas gifts. Use everything you can think of for tools.

If this be done by children, let them put as much time and labor as they will on the paper, for it is good practice, and a free use of tools is gained; but skilled workers must remember that paper is a frail material, and elaborate work should be used only on leather, which is durable.

HETTA L. H. WARD.

MANTEL lambrequins are made of green and gold shaded plush, which is exceedingly effective.



DESIGN NUMBER 2.