

of your picture; in the other end you should keep a piece of black or red chalk, or a little charcoal which has been steeped in drying oil; either of these may be used for the careful drawing-in of the outline before commencing.

The palette should be as light as is compatible with strength, and should balance well upon the thumb, so as not to cause undue strain upon the muscles of that member. Though the colours may be allowed, for the sake of convenience, to remain upon the edge of the palette, where they are arranged as long as they will keep moist, and fresh portions be added from time to time as they become exhausted, yet the rest of the space upon the palette should be kept smooth and polished, so that the palette-knife will glide easily over the surface and remove the paint cleanly. It is well to moisten the face of the palette well with linseed oil, rubbing it in with rag from time to time for a day or two before beginning to use it. This prevents the paint from soaking in and staining the surface. Afterwards, the palette should always be cleaned when the day's work is over, first by scraping with the palette-knife, and then by rubbing with a rag and a little linseed oil or turpentine. A supply of clean rag should be kept in the paint-box for wiping the brushes or the palette, or for removing the paint, if necessary, from a part of the canvas where a mistake has been made.

Here my list of your tools and materials closes, for though there are other things in common use, they are not indispensable. Among them are a mahi-stick for resting the wrist upon while painting, a looking-glass or mirror for studying the accuracy of your drawing as it appears reversed in the reflection, a slab and muller for grinding up the colours, a T square, and a pair of compasses.

There are, however, three things which I have not yet mentioned: these are a paint-box, an easel, and a seat. Of convenient paint-boxes, many patterns may be seen at the artists' colourmen's, from which you may select the one which seems most calculated to meet your needs and your purse. It should be constructed to carry one or two canvases or panels in the lid without danger of smearing them while the painting is wet, and it should be provided with an arm or support to hold the lid firmly at a convenient angle while you are working on your sketch. You may thus dispense with an easel, by placing the box upon your knees, and painting your subject on the panel or canvas in the lid.

For my own use I have had a box constructed to hold canvases larger than can be contained in the boxes usually sold in the shops. It is made of thin soft pine wood, and is 24 inches in length and about 15 inches in breadth. In the back of the lid I fix, by means of drawing pins or tacks, a piece of loose canvas, and in front of this comes another canvas strained upon a thin, light stretcher, specially constructed to fit tightly into the lid. By this means I can carry with me two sketches about 14×22in. When packed they are face to face, and protect one another. The body of the box is divided into two main compartments, by a partition running from front to back in the centre. In one of these compartments are placed the oil colours, brushes, rag, turpentine, and oil bottles, etc., and these are kept in place by the palette, which is arranged face upwards to form a lid, and is fixed by means of small buttons or similar contrivances. In the other compartment may be placed small sketches or papers for chalk or pencil drawings, or, if you like, your water-colour box, with its water-bottle and a block sketch-book. The lid on this side is a piece of thin pine wood, clamped at the ends to prevent its warping, which forms a convenient

drawing-board. A sketch of this box appears in the initial.

If, however, you find it expedient to use an easel, as you must for pictures beyond a certain size, then, if it is to be used for-out-of-door work from Nature, see that the legs can be shortened or lengthened, to adjust the easel to any irregularities that may occur in the ground. The choice of a portable seat may be left to your own tastes and needs. If a square seat be chosen, I recommend those which fold quite flat, because they pack up with the canvases and the paint-box more neatly and securely, and form a protection for the former in travelling.

The last two drawing and painting competitions organised in THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER were very disappointing from the large proportion of childish and tasteless productions which were sent in. Though discouraged by this result, the Editor does not despair, and in the hope that the subscribers to THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER will prove that the great revival of artistic taste which has been growing and spreading in this country has reached and influenced them, he has kindly consented to arrange a new competition, which will shortly be announced in these pages.

RHUBARB.

By PHILLIS BROWNE, Author of "The Girl's Own Cookery Book."

IN all affairs of life, housekeeping and cookery affairs not excluded, it is a decided proof of wisdom to be able to make the most of what lies close to us, instead of wishing for something that is out of our reach. In the spring of the year, for instance, when apples are going out, and before fresh fruit comes in, rhubarb is plentiful enough; yet how many there are who scorn it!

It is a most excellent fruit, nevertheless, and may be converted into most delicious dishes. It serves to purify the blood better than almost any other fruit, so that it is valuable on this account. And as it possesses the quality of imbibing the flavour of other fruits with which it may be dressed, and imparting its own flavour very slightly, it is satisfactory to mix it with small portions of the first fruits of the year. Very good jam, too, may be made of it for ordinary use, although it is not advisable to attempt to keep this for any length of time, because rhubarb jam is not celebrated for its keeping qualities. Moreover, it should be remembered that rhubarb jam is best made late in the season, because when fully grown it contains less juice, and is firmer, and therefore less likely to ferment quickly.

If it is one sign of wisdom to make the most of the good things we have, it is a sign of strength of mind to overcome prejudice, and as I am convinced that it is not unfrequently prejudice which leads people to object to rhubarb, I beg to suggest that they should exert a little strength of mind, and try some of the ways of cooking rhubarb which I am about to describe. I will not give recipes for rhubarb pies, boiled puddings, tarts, or turnovers, because everyone knows how to make these dishes. I would merely suggest that in preparing rhubarb for people who say they do not like it, it will be well to put grated ginger with the fruit, or, if preferred, grated lemon rind and chopped almonds. This will slightly vary the flavour, and will perhaps be considered an improvement. Of these two additions I will confess that I am in favour of grated ginger.

The recipes which I am about to give are not very numerous, but they are very good.

They make up in quality what they want in quantity. I will set them down in the order of my own preference for them, putting the dishes I regard as most excellent first.

Compôte of Rhubarb, then, is a real delicacy, especially when made in the early spring, while the beautiful forced rhubarb, which is of a bright pink colour, is in the market. This dish is at its best when accompanied by cream, and its pretty appearance renders it a suitable dish either as a sweet for supper, or as a substitute for jam at breakfast or tea. The fruit should be laid in a glass dish. As everyone knows, old rhubarb must be peeled, because the skin is hard, but the forced rhubarb should on no account be skinned, because the pink of the outside constitutes its chief beauty.

Wipe the rhubarb carefully with a damp cloth. Cut it into lengths of four or five inches. Put as much water as is required for the size of the dish into an enamelled stewpan with loaf sugar to make a good syrup. Boil this till it is clear, then lay in the fruit, and simmer very gently till it is soft without falling. Watch it carefully, and as each length becomes soft throughout lift it out carefully with a spoon and fork and lay it in the glass dish. When the fruit is cooked, boil the syrup a few minutes longer, let it cool, add five or six drops of cochineal to deepen the colour, and pour it over the fruit. There should be plenty of syrup. Some people dissolve a spoonful of isinglass or gelatine in the syrup to thicken it. Serve with cream and sponge fingers. Rhubarb stewed in this way is much superior to rhubarb stewed in the ordinary way, where the whole is reduced to one sightless pulpy mass.

Rhubarb Mould also constitutes an excellent sweet dish. Wash and cut into inch lengths as much rhubarb as will fill a quart basin. Put it into a stewpan with a gill of water, and boil it gently until it falls; then add refined white sugar to sweeten it agreeably, together with the grated rind and strained juice of half a lemon. Stir it well, and pour it out. Put with it half an ounce of gelatine (which has already soaked for an hour in as much water as will cover it) and dissolve separately; and add also three or four drops of almond flavouring and five or six drops of cochineal. Beat the rhubarb briskly for a minute or two, and when well-mixed and cool turn it into a damp mould and leave it to set. Serve it on a glass dish with cream or milk.

Rhubarb Flummery.—Prepare the rhubarb as in the last recipe, omitting the lemon-juice and substituting a cupful of good cream. Mix thoroughly, and when cool mould. If preferred, the yolk of an egg mixed with half a cupful of milk can be used instead of cream; but, of course, the rhubarb must not boil after this is added.

Rhubarb Fool.—Cut the rhubarb into short lengths, and stew it gently with very little water till quite soft. Sweeten it agreeably, then rub it through a wire sieve and mix with it as much cream or milk as will make it as thick as custard. Serve it in custard glasses or in a punch bowl, with knobs of Devonshire cream, or of whipped cream, here and there upon it; or, if the cream cannot be had, make a little pink sugar by rubbing crushed loaf sugar in cochineal for a minute or two, and sprinkle this over the fool just before sending it to table.

Rhubarb Charlotte.—Skin and cut into short lengths rhubarb to fill a quart mould. Stew this gently with very little water, and when soft sweeten it, flavour with grated ginger, and beat it briskly over the fire till it is stiff. Pile it in the centre of a glass dish, and arrange round it crumb of bread which has been toasted, cut into fingers, and spread with jam; or, if preferred, with sponge fingers.