poor neighbourhoods closed, deserted, and useless. We want these, the people want them, and the want is increasing daily. Will you help us to get them? Will you who live amongst fields and hedges think of the poor children who never see the country, the men and women who have toiled year after year in the great city and have almost forgotten what it is to sit under the shade of a tree? The address of the association for providing public gardens and playgrounds is 83, Lancaster-gate, W., the chairman is Lord Brabazon, and any assistance that you can give will be most gratefully received. Ferns and flower-roots for planting in the gardens, a list of which will be forwarded on application to the honorary secretary, can be sent to any of the caretakers. We have given so much happiness already that we want to give more, and we want you to have a share in the giving, and to help to brighten the sad lives of those who dwell and toil in the greatest town the world has ever seen. Did you ever read the story of "Billy's Rose," in the "Dagonet Ballads"? Billy lay dying "in that vile and filthy alley," and his little sister was his only comforter:—

"Then she told some garbled story of a kind-eyed Saviour's love,
How He'd built for little children great big playgrounds up above,
Where they sang and played at hop-scotch and at horses all the day,
And where beadles and policemen never frightened them away.

"This was Nell's idea of Heaven—just a bit of what she'd heard,
With a little bit invented, and a little bit inferred.
But her brother lay and listened, and he seemed to understand,
For he closed his eyes and murmured he could see the Promised Land.

"'Yes,' he whispered, 'I can see it—I can see it, sister Nell;
Oh! the children look so happy, and they're all so strong and well;
I can see them there with Jesus—He is playing with them too!
Let us run away and join them, if there's room for me and you.'"

Is there no "room" for them here below? Are they to be always hunted by the beadles and policemen? No; if we are too late to give "Billy" and "his sister Nell" a taste of this delight, we can learn a lesson from their want, and do our best to give it to others of the vast army of city children of whom they are so faithful a representation.

ISABELLA M. GLADSTONE.

A LESSON IN DESIGN.

By FRED MILLER.

We have referred in former articles in the pages of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER to the need of our readers making their own designs for the work they undertake, if that work is to be as interesting to them as it should be, and stamped with their individuality and made an original work. If you merely carry out other people's ideas, your labour will lack that spontaneity and freedom so essential to good work. You may take it for granted that you cannot interpret other people's ideas as well as you can your own. Every stroke you put down has its own particular meaning, but a good many touches that are intelligible to the author are difficult of interpretation by anyone else. The chief excellence of art-work is the impress it should bear of the worker, and, as we are the best interpreters of our own ideas, our work will be stamped with our individuality in proportion as we are its author; and until we can originate as well as execute, we cannot take full rank as art-workers.

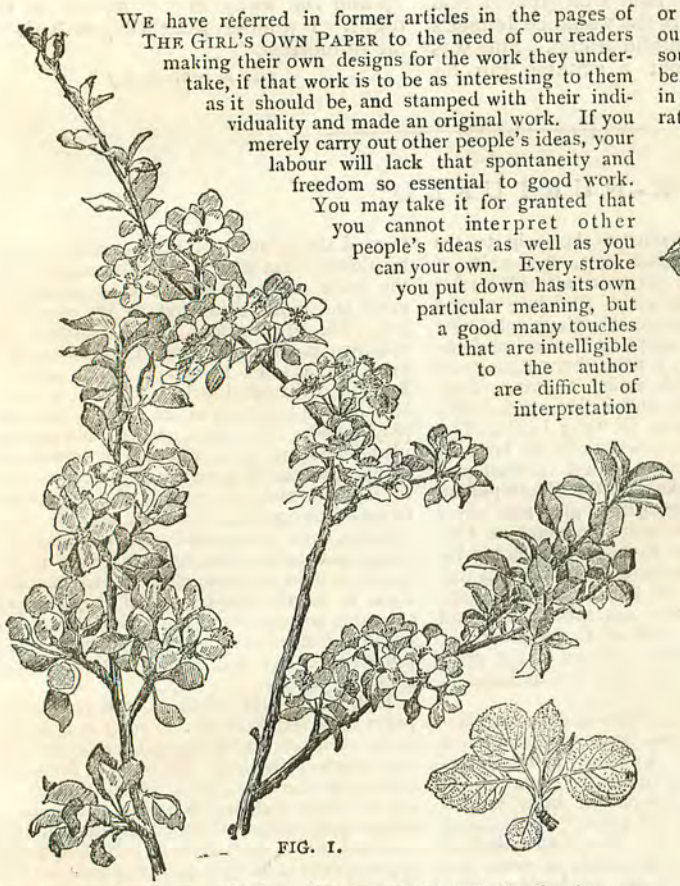

FIG. 1.

The principles of designing can be learnt as the grammar of a language can be learnt, for art as well as speech has its grammar, the rules of which we must become acquainted with before we can design. As grammar is the outcome of language, for language assuredly preceded grammar, so the principles of design are based upon a study of the works that have been produced at various times and by various people. But though design is governed by certain laws, we cannot learn these rules and expect to become designers forthwith. Design, from its very meaning, implies intention, and is the opposite of chance or accident, and therefore every line, curve, or form we introduce into our work should be the result of thought. All designs are based upon some distinct plan to which the details are subservient, and, therefore, before we put a line on paper, we should have a clear idea of what we, in our mind's eye, are endeavouring to produce, a scheme of the decoration, and not trust to our work coming right in the end.* Chance

FIG. 2

* Some people sit down with a clean piece of paper and pencil and trust to ideas coming to them in some occult way. Well and good if they come, but I generally find that that is the time they come not near one. An idea for a design may be suggested by some trivial thing—the accidental combination of flowers; the growth of certain leaves may assume a definite shape in the mind and suggest a design; and

FIG. 3.

should not enter into our calculations, and though an agreeable combination of lines may sometimes be the result of chance, this should not be relied upon at all times, for what may be pleasing by chance is just as likely to be disagreeable from the same cause. And even when we have combined lines in an agreeable manner to the eye, it is because we have unconsciously been guided by the very laws which it is our duty

FIG. 4.

to become acquainted with, so that what we have done once by chance can afterwards be repeated by design. If we combine lines agreeably at one time, we should contrast this happy effort with one not so successful, and see if we can tell why one effort is successful and the other a failure. There is perhaps to be learnt more in this way than any other, and what I want to do in this article is to set my readers thinking, and direct their thoughts into certain profitable channels, leaving them to follow these up for themselves. A designer requires long training and an extensive acquaintance with the works of other times and peoples. His eye becomes more and more critical, and is less and less satisfied in proportion as his knowledge increases; and he soon learns to reject what he previously accepted as good. He trusts to his eye rather than to his head, for art is intuitive, and one does right because one naturally rejects what is wrong. There is an old Latin proverb which says, "The highest art is to

FIG. 5.

conceal art," and some of the cleverest artists are least conscious of why they do such and such things. It comes natural to them to contrast and combine forms and colours pleasingly, and very likely if you asked them why they did so and so, they could not tell you, simply because they never thought about it. The best art is intuitive and unconscious, but when we are beginners we can only learn by asking ourselves why we do this or why we do not do that, until we have acquired

FIG. 6.

it is always well to make notes of these ideas that suggest themselves in this random way, so that when you sit down to design you start with an idea, and not wait for an idea to come to you when you particularly want it.

FIG. 7.

that unerring eye, the most valued of an artist's possessions. It is said that the Eastern women combined their coloured wools into those munificent glowing carpets we in this country are so glad to possess, without any thought or effort. The faculty for combining colours is handed down generation after generation, and it is left to us English to study these productions of the East, and to formulate those laws which seem to unconsciously direct the weavers in their work. Until we arrive at this state of excellence, we must design with much thought and labour.

The basis of ornamental design is plant form, and it is only by a careful study of plants that we can train ourselves to become designers, and the principle of design is consequently the result of a careful study of nature, added to a knowledge of the capabilities of the material we design for. The same plant may suggest different ideas to different people. One may look at a plant for its curved lines, another for its angular lines, for it must not be imagined that plants are, with slight modification, designs. We have at one end of the scale the plant as it grows, and we may modify that plant and eliminate its individuality until we have at the other end of the scale pure ornament. As an instance of this, take the Greek honeysuckle pattern and compare it with the plant itself; all that is left is the suggestion of the growth of the flowers before they open: all else has been eliminated, and the very source of the design may not even be traceable. So that we see between the plant, and the ornament that may be deduced from it, a very wide range of *motifs* is included.

In order to make this article as practicable as possible, we have taken a very familiar plant, the apple, and have shown various methods of treat-

FIG. 8.

ing it, and a few suggestions of ornament derived from it. The illustrations are merely given to help the letterpress, and not as showing the only or even the best way of adapting the apple to purposes of ornamental design. Our illustrations show, if they show anything, what very different ideas may be suggested by the same plant, and how distinctly opposite methods may be employed in adapting a plant to the purposes of ornament.

We first of all start with nature, and in Fig. 1 we have the drawing of a piece of wild apple. Nothing is altered from nature, and yet how full of suggestion is the main stem, with its angles, and the way the main stem is broken up by the blossoms! We might use such a piece as this to throw across a plaque, for very little modification would be necessary. You should always endeavour to select characteristic pieces of the plant you intend studying, and also to make sketches of the various growths, as in the upright piece at the side; and it is also advisable to make enlarged drawings of the details, such as the leaves, as shown in cut, and any other part of the plant that it may be necessary to dwell upon at some future time.

A word might be said about the importance of drawing plants from nature instead of using drawings made by other people. You cannot use a plant as effectively when drawn by another person as when you have drawn the plant yourself, for in the act of drawing from nature you are led to observe more closely than when you merely look at the plant casually, and the act of drawing tends to impress the form and characteristics of the plant upon your mind. I have drawn some plants many times from nature, and seem to find something fresh about them each time.

Fig. 2 is a drawing of the cultivated apple, showing terminal leaves, which are very beautiful in growth and deserve special study. Another rendering is shown in Figs. 3 and 4. These, again, are full of suggestions, and special attention should be paid to the angles the leaves make with the main stem, and the curves of the stems themselves, shown to particular advantage in Fig. 3.

We now come to our first adaptation of nature to decorative purposes. Fig. 5 is a panel decorated with apple-blossom, and nature is merely bent into the required shape and the various parts of the plant arranged in an effective manner. The flowers, being the most prominent objects, receive our first attention, and when the main or central stem has been put in the flowers should then be placed in their respective positions and the leaves "built" around them. In all designing you must "place" your most prominent objects before you trouble about details. If you get a few main points right, the filling in is quite easy. The difficulty is to place your prominent objects so that they combine agreeably and are not patchy or isolated, or too much together, but are well spread over the surface.

In Fig. 6 we enter into quite a different style of design, and we begin to let our fancy have play, and nature is made more subservient to our plan than in the last cut. Having settled in our own mind that our decoration is to assume the form of a festoon, we proceed to adapt the apple growth to suit this arbitrary arrangement. The main characteristics of growth are adhered to, such as blossoms growing in masses, and growth of leaves from stem. The lower border is a variation of the old egg and tongue moulding. In designs of this nature, where you start with an arbitrary or artificial arrangement of the stems, it must not be assumed that this arrangement is suggested by nature, though it is possible to imagine sprigs o apple-blossom being bent into any festoon shape. Just as you could use flowers tied up with ribbons into garlands or festoons and hung round a room, so you can employ flowers in decoration, and very many arrangements, such as this festoon, which have passed into the region of ornament, were suggested in the first instance by seeing natural flowers and plants arranged into artificial combinations.

FIG. 9.

In Figs. 7 and 8 the stems are made an important feature of the designs, and the flowers and leaves are made quite subservient to the stems. A large number of designs are based on a geometrical plan, and the plant form is employed to decorate these structural lines, as we might term the undulating stem in Fig. 7 or the circular one in Fig 8. These structural lines should be in keeping as far as possible with the plant. If we were using the honeysuckle, for instance, it would be more legitimate to base our design on the principle of a scroll than it would be to use the apple in this manner. Various plants suggest various treatments, and you should as far as possible employ the treatment that seems most in keeping with the plant.

FIG. 10.

FIG. 11.

FIG. 12.

In Fig. 9, the design is suggested by nature, the arbitrary arrangement of the stem being sufficient to emphasise its ornamental character.

In Figs. 10 and 11, the structural lines are yet more strongly marked, the various characteristics of the apple being employed in filling out the spaces made by the structural lines.

In Figs. 12 and 13, the terminal shoots are made an important feature, and might suggest a stencil or embroidery pattern. Variations of these two designs are shown in Figs. 12A and 13A; the flowers being framed off by structural lines, and made more decidedly ornamental, so that the foliage springs from a centre, and the whole design is by this means strengthened.

FIG. 12A.

It will be seen by a glance through the illustrations how advantage is taken first of the whole plant with only slight modifications of the natural growth, then of various parts of the plant, and of ideas suggested by the growth of stem, leaves, and flowers, and we could carry this on until we had eliminated all traces of the natural growth of the plant, and only use it to suggest ornamental accessories.

It greatly depends what we are designing for as to how we treat the plant we select for conventionalising. Thus Fig. 6 seems more suggestive of a stencil or needlework pattern; Figs. 7, 8 and 9, as ornamental tiles, while 10 and 11 might be adapted for wrought iron work.

If you were designing for embroidery you would have to give a different rendering of the apple than if you were going to paint a panel. And your method of reproduction would, to a great extent, influence you in selecting the plant itself, some plants seeming more adapted for one method of treatment than others.

FIG. 13.

FIG. 13A.

VARIETIES.

THE SENSE OF SMELL.—A remarkable circumstance connected with the sense of smell is the extremely minute state of diffusion in which the odoriferous substances of animal origin make themselves perceptible to our senses. A fragment of musk not only gives off a strong smell when it is first exposed to the air, but it continues to do so for an almost indefinite period of time. Yet the odour must be caused by particles of matter which are continually escaping from the musk so long as it continues exposed to the air. How inconceivably small in weight, how infinitely minute in size, the molecules must be of which this constantly flowing stream of matter consists.

THE MUSIC OF ROSSINI.—Rossini's music has been very differently estimated. Ingres, in whose view honesty in art held almost as high a place as genius or originality, has called it the music of a dishonest (*malhonnête*) man. Berlioz would gladly have burned it all and Rossini's followers with it. On the other hand, Schubert, though fully alive to his weaknesses, as his caricatures of Rossini's overtures show, and with every reason to dislike him from the fact that the Rossini *furore* kept Schubert's own works off the stage—contrasts his operas most favourably with the "rubbish" which filled the Vienna theatres at that time, and calls him emphatically "a rare genius." Mendelssohn, too, as is well known, would allow no one to depreciate Rossini. Even Schumann, so intolerant of the Italian school, is enthusiastic over one of his operas, and calls it real, exhilarating, clever music."—*Gustave Chouquet.*

THE DIFFICULTIES OF RELIGION.—Religion presents few difficulties to the humble, many to the proud, insuperable ones to the vain.

HARD CHEESE.—Skim milk cheese used to be made in very large quantities in Suffolk (being known by the name of "Suffolk bang"), where at one time it had such an unenviable reputation that it was asserted it used to be chopped up with a hatchet instead of being cut with a knife; or if a man wanted a bit of stick to fasten up a gate with, and could not find a piece of wood handy, he would cut a wedge off his luncheon cheese for the purpose, and make use of it. In old times, when the farm labourers lived partially or wholly in the house with the farmer, the quality of the cheese used often to become the bone of contention, being at times too hard to bite; so that it used humorously to be said the labourers in that part of the country having to "bolt" their cheese in blocks, by a long course of practice had acquired *square throats.*

OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES.—Those shall fare ill who seek their welfare in other people's houses.—*Elder Edda.*

A TALE ABOUT BRIGANDS.

"Strategy," says a writer in a contemporary, "is a thing to be admired when it is employed for the circumvention of rogues. While the French were in Mexico, stage robberies on the Monterey road became very frequent. The French commander resolved to put a stop to them, and this is how he did it:—

"He dressed up half a dozen Zouaves in ladies' attire, and sent them on in the next stage, their faces hidden by veils, their carbines hidden by their petticoats. The stage was stopped, the ladies, without waiting to be invited, left the vehicle and fell into line with the rest of the passengers. Suddenly a series of reports came from that line, and some dozen robbers lay dead; the rest discreetly disappeared. For a long while afterwards it was only requisite to display a shawl and bonnet conspicuously to secure a free passage for a stage on that road."

LOVING ACTS.—A loving act does more good than a fiery exhortation. What mankind needs is not more good talkers, but more good Samaritans.

A SCHOLAR'S WIFE.

Sibenkaes, an eminent German scholar, having finished reading one of his beautiful imaginings to his wife, who appeared to be listening with bated breath and eyelids cast down, closed the book with inward satisfaction at the completion of his labours, only to hear the sharer of his joys exclaim:—

"My dear, pray don't put on your left stocking to-morrow—I see there's a hole in it."

THE CURE FOR GOSSIP.—What is the cure for gossip? Simply culture. There is a great deal of gossip that has no malignity in it. Good-natured people talk about their neighbours because, and only because, they have nothing else to talk about. Gossip is always a personal confession either of malice or imbecility, and the young should not only shun it, but by the most thorough culture relieve themselves from all temptation to indulge in it. It is low, frivolous, and, too often, a dirty business. There are country neighbourhoods in which it rages like a pest. Churches are split in pieces by it; neighbours made enemies for life. In many persons it degenerates into a chronic disease, which is practically incurable. Let the young cure it while they may.

A VIOLIN-PLAYING MONARCH.

A King of Spain fancying that he had a taste for music, liked to take a part in Boccherini's quartets, but he never could succeed in keeping time. One day, when he was three or four bars behindhand, the other performers took fright at the confusion occasioned by the royal bow, and were about to wait for him.

"Fiddle away," shouted the enthusiastic monarch, "I shall very soon make up upon you."

THE POWER OF FORTUNE.—The power of fortune is confessed only by the miserable, for the happy impute all their success to prudence and merit.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF HAND-SHAKING.—There is nothing more characteristic than shakes of the hand. "I have classified them," says Sydney Smith. "There is the 'high official,' the body erect, and a rapid, short shake near the chin. There is the 'mortmain,' the flat hand introduced into your palm, and hardly conscious of its contiguity. The 'digital,' one finger held out—much used by the high clergy. Then there is the 'shakus rusticus,' when your hand is seized in an iron grasp betokening rude health, warm heart, and distance from the metropolis, but producing a strong sense of relief on your part when you find your hand released and your fingers unbroken. The next to this is the 'retentive shake,' one which, beginning with vigour, pauses, as it were, to take breath, but without relinquishing its prey, and before you are aware begins again, till you feel anxious as to the result, and have no shake left in you."

THE WEAPONS OF WOMEN.—Sweetness and submission are the most powerful weapons of women.