



HOW TO A MANTEL

BY FRED.

MANY of my readers, I daresay, have tried lustra painting, *i.e.*, the painting of velvet or silk with metallic colours or bronzes, and in giving a few hints on the carrying out of the design of mantel border accompanying these hints I thought I would take the opportunity of giving my readers the results of some experiments I have recently made in painting on velvet. I was never quite satisfied with the effect of these bronzes* on velvet, owing to a certain vulgarity and garishness that seemed to result from their use, and when one of my pupils at the Crystal Palace expressed a wish to paint a velvet mantel border, I determined to use the bronzes in connection with ordinary oil colours. It seems to me that metallic colours and metals should be used to give brilliancy and richness to decoration rather than to do the decoration itself; for the more sparingly metals are employed, providing they are used with judgment, the greater will be their value in the decorative scheme. An outline of gold round a design is very often more effective and in better taste than a mass of decoration executed entirely in gold. The fault of so much of the lustra painting one sees is that there is no repose about it; all is bright and metallic, and the various coloured bronzes seem to clash with each other. I advised my pupil to put in the whole of the design in ordinary oil colours, used very thinly and diluted with Adolphi medium. This Adolphi medium (sold by Messrs. Rowney, Windsor and Newton, and many artists' colourmen) makes the colour very elastic, and in paintings executed on silk or other textiles which have to be folded the use of this Adolphi medium will be found almost indispensable, as there is no danger of the colour cracking or peeling off. The Adolphi medium is very volatile, and quickly evaporates, so that it is advisable to pour out into a tin dipper only enough medium to wet the brush.

The first thing to be done, of course, is to make a pounce of the design when enlarged, by pricking it with a needle, and rubbing over the tracing some powdered chalk if the material be a dark one, or powdered charcoal if the material be a light one. It will be noticed that only half the design is given in the cuts, and it is not necessary to draw the whole design, as when half of it has been painted the tracing can be turned over and the other half pounced. The material my pupil used was a dark red plush, as short in the pile as it could be procured, for reasons

* The bronze or metallic colours are now sold by most artists' colourmen.

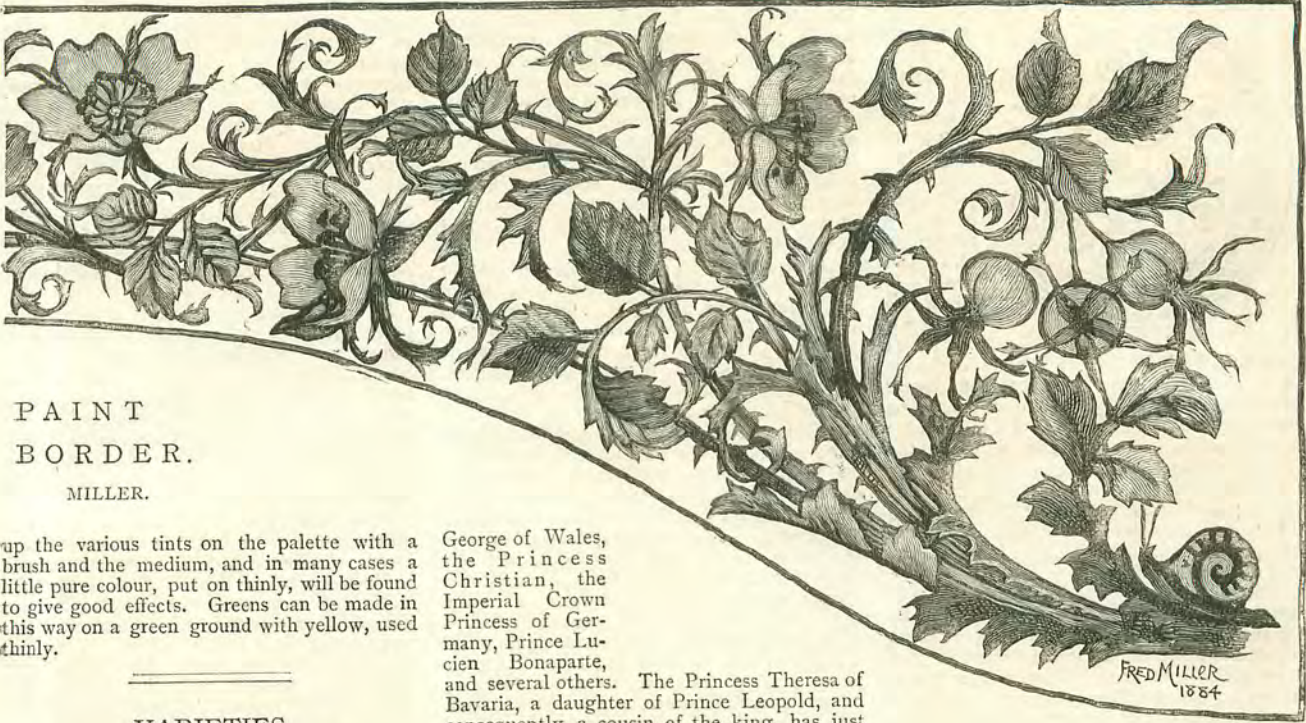
that will be evident later on. The plush was made long enough to go along the front and round the two ends, so that when fixed the design finished round each end, and in order to show it to the best advantage the corners of the mantel board were rounded instead of being left square. As soon as the design was pounced, it was carefully outlined in white, to prevent the design being obliterated should the pounce marks get brushed off. The whole of the stems were put in in burnt sienna and white, the leaves in warm greens, and wherever the back of the leaves showed, and also the ornamental bracts growing at base of leaf stalks, were put in a light grey green; flowers in a pinkish white. Now the secret of painting velvet or plush is to only tint the upper surface of the pile with colour, and not, as so many do, put the colour on quite thickly, and so completely obliterate the pile. Use the colour thinly, and just pass the brush lightly over the surface of the velvet, producing the shadows by letting the colour of the velvet show through the colour painted on it. In the case of the flowers, for instance, in the present design, the outer edges of petals were light, while the centre was quite dark, *i.e.*, the colour was painted on more thickly on the outer edges of petals than in centre. In the case of leaves, of course, some difference must be made in the colours used: thus in dark rich greens there must be more indigo or Antwerp blue and less white or yellow, in the greys an excess of white, and in the warm greens an excess of yellow.

The shorter the pile is the better does it take the colour, and for that reason velvet is better than plush, as the pile of velvet is more stubborn and is less likely to get stuck together with colour than plush. When the whole design had been treated in this way with oil colour, the bronzes were employed to complete the work. The whole design was, first of all, outlined in gold. This outline must be very carefully done, as so much of the effect depends upon this outline. The brilliant lights on the leaves were produced with some of the metallic greens, such as emerald for the light grey greens, and citron for the darker ones. The gold was also used for putting in the spines on stems and the stamens in the flowers, these latter being just dotted in almost on the plain plush, and, as I have before said, very little colour was painted on the centre of the flowers. Here and there the veining in the leaves was suggested by the metallic colours; and, in fact, the metals played, as it were, about the design, sometimes emphasising a form, some-

times indicating a light, and at other times being introduced to give richness and decorative completeness to the design, for I hold that, in executing such a design as that given in the cuts and on such a material as plush, the chief thing to be studied is decorative completeness, and anything that adds to the decorativeness of the design is not only admissible but desirable. You are not painting a spray of wild roses from nature, but decorating a piece of velvet with a design suggested by the wild rose.

One word in conclusion as to the design itself. The subject chosen is a very familiar one, and the treatment of it particularly simple. The first point to be considered is the direction and position of the main lines of the design, which, in the present case, were governed by the shape of the mantel border itself. These having been decided upon, the next thing is to clothe the skeleton with leaves, though previous to that the position of the flowers and fruit must be fixed; for, when these have been placed effectively, the leaves fall into their places almost of their own accord. It will be noticed that I have endeavoured to break up the stems as much as possible by bringing the leaves over the stems in the majority of cases. If the stems are not broken up in this way, they are very apt to look "wiry" and thin. In designing, always study the principal lines first, and don't do anything else until these have been fixed, as you think, pleasingly and effectively. Then distribute your spots of colour, formed in the present case by the flowers and fruits. See that these fall agreeably, and to this end avoid getting them in the same line, or too much in one place. Lastly, add the details, such as leaves, etc., and avail yourself of any ornamental suggestions, as I have done in the case of the stipules at base of leaf stalks, and the bracts at base of flower stalks. This design could be effectively worked in crewels and silk.

One word as to colour. Avoid crudity, and to this end study the ground. In painting on red grounds, for instance, the greens must be kept low in tone, as the red has a tendency to make the greens crude. It may be as well to say that colour is the result of contrast, and a colour that may look well on the palette may be very ineffective or harsh on the material to be painted. All the colours in a design should blend together, and have a certain unity—linked together, as an artist might say; and be very careful to avoid patches of colour. Where you use bronzes and metals, rely upon these for obtaining brilliancy, and keep the painting itself very subdued. It will be quite sufficient to mix



PAINT
BORDER.

MILLER.

up the various tints on the palette with a brush and the medium, and in many cases a little pure colour, put on thinly, will be found to give good effects. Greens can be made in this way on a green ground with yellow, used thinly.

VARIETIES.

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION.

A little before his death Locke, the great philosopher, was asked how a young man could "in the shortest and surest way attain a knowledge of the Christian religion in the full and just extent of it."

He answered, "Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter."

APPLAUSE.—Applause is the spur of noble minds, the end and aim of weak ones.

PETRIFIED WOMEN.—It is stated that five petrified women were recently found in a small village in Colorado. Their husbands gave them money for bonnets without grumbling, whereupon the women were petrified with astonishment.

UNHAPPY MARRIAGES.—The stags in the Greek epigram whose knees were clogged with frozen snow upon the mountains came down to the brooks of the valleys, hoping to thaw their joints with the waters of the stream, but there the frost overtook them and bound them fast in ice, till the young herdsmen overtook them in their stranger snares. It is the unhappy chance of many men, finding many inconveniences upon the mountains of single life, they descend into the valleys of marriage to refresh themselves; and there they enter into fetters and are bound by the cords of woman's peevishness.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

AMONG reigning sovereigns and their consorts who are authors may be counted Queen Victoria; King Oscar II., of Sweden; Dom Luis, of Portugal; the Shah Nasr-ed-Deen, of Persia; Queen Elizabeth, of Roumania; Prince Nicolas, of Montenegro; Don Pedro II., of Brazil; and, so, it is said, King Louis II., of Bavaria; and among other literary royalties are the Imperial Crown Prince Rudolph, of Austria; the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Albert Victor and Prince

George of Wales, the Princess Christian, the Imperial Crown Princess of Germany, Prince Lucien Bonaparte, and several others. The Princess Theresa of Bavaria, a daughter of Prince Leopold, and consequently a cousin of the king, has just published her "Sketches and Impressions of a Tour in Russia." There are also many royal artists, musicians, and priests. There is, probably, however, but one royal doctor. Duke Charles Theodore, of Bavaria, is in practice at Munich, and is a surgeon-oculist of high reputation in his own country.

A SOLITARY WEDDING TRIP.

Several years ago, in a well-known wholesale house in New York, an old bachelor book-keeper who had been years with the firm, suddenly announced that he was to be married. The partners gave him a week's holiday, and his fellow clerks raised a little purse and presented it to pay the expenses of his wedding trip.

A couple of days after the wedding, one of the members of the firm went down to Newport, and there, lounging about the "Ocean House," and apparently enjoying himself immensely, he saw his recently married old book-keeper, but alone.

"Where's your wife?"

"She's at home."

"But I thought you had money given you for a wedding trip?"

"So I had, but I didn't understand that it was intended to include her."

THE ADVANTAGE OF GOOD COMPANY.—No man can be provident of his time who is not prudent in the choice of his company.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

A GOOD LIFE MADE EASY.—Pitch upon the best course of life, and custom will render it the most easy.—*Tillotson.*

LASTING REMEMBRANCE.—Since the life we enjoy is short, let us make the remembrance of us as lasting as possible.—*Salust.*

HELP FROM ON HIGH.—It is impossible for anyone to despair who remembers that his Helper is Omnipotent.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

A PROFITABLE JOURNEY.—Rather go a hundred miles to speak with one wise man than five miles to see a fair town.—*Lord Essex.*

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

An empire, of which very little is known.
For 'tis jealously held 'gainst attempts to explore;
But her people have such ingenuity shown
In their arts, that our travellers would like to know more.
Her capital city, on wide sandy plain,
Between two large rivers conspicuously stands,
And though shattered by earthquakes, has risen again,
To be conquered and plundered by foreigners' hands.

1. The original market of old London Town
Before shop and emporium were found ev'rywhere;
But its rows of irregular booths up and down
Made it less like a market, perhaps, than a fair.

2. When the best of the gifts that the gods could bestow
Were allowed to escape from the grasp of mankind,
(Who were left, by their fleeing, to suffering and woe),
One last, only blessing was left them behind.

3. Embosom'd in mountains, a fair city lies,
And its picturesque beauty draws many that way;
From the fame of an Inn and an inn-keeper rise
Many int'rests that tourists feel during their stay.

4. A brave tribe, against whom Julius Cæsar made war,
When he sought to annex all the Belgian frontier.

5. A Scotch river that sparkles past boulder and scaur,
To the sea, as the Cumberland mountains are near.

XIMENA.