



PIANOFORTE FRONTS: AND HOW TO DECORATE THEM.

By FRED MILLER.

THERE are few places in a room that better repay the time spent upon beautifying them than pianoforte fronts, viz., that part which in many pianos is occupied by fretwork and pleated silk. It is a capital situation for putting in a little nice decoration, for whatever is placed there is seen to great advantage. The first thing to be done towards decorating this part of a piano is to carefully measure the opening that receives the fretwork, and it may be necessary to remove this fretwork to take the size accurately, though this is not often the case. The pleated silk is often stretched over a light framework of wood, and where this is

the case the old silk can be removed and the painted silk tacked on to the existing framework. In some cases the silk is tacked on to the framework of the piano, and it is perhaps hardly necessary to have a framework made, as the silk to replace the old front can likewise be tacked on the framework when finished. There must be sufficient silk to allow of its being turned over and round. Some of the fine coloured satins, such as those used for embroidering, will be found to be a very suitable material for painting on if you decide to paint the design. The Adolphi medium mentioned in my hints on painting a

mantel border is the vehicle I recommend for using with the ordinary oil colours in tubes. This medium dries quickly, and as it makes the colour elastic, there is little danger of the painting cracking or peeling off. You use the medium as you would turpentine to dilute the colours, and there is no necessity to use any other medium with the colours. The plan of painting the lights on thickly, and the darks on thinly, so that the material shows through, as I advocated in the case of plush or velvet, may be resorted to in the case of silk or satin. The colours need not in any case be painted on very thickly, as very little body of colour is



required to cover, and the less thickness of colour there is upon the silk the better chance there is of the colour standing. Peacock blues and greens, olive green, and old gold are effective colours for painting on, though I give the preference to dark colours, as the painting is so much more effective on a dark than on a light ground. Old gold is more difficult to treat, as certain tones of green are not effective upon it, and being, as it is, a sort of middle tint between dark and light, unless some care be exercised much of the work painted upon it is apt to be lost.

When the design has been painted the bronze colours may be employed to complete the effect, and an outline of gold would enrich the design. The festoon at back of flowers might be put in wholly in gold, so also might the lines which divide the space up into panels.

In addition to the gold outline, the flowers and leaves might be finished with touches of the bronze colours.

This design might also be effectively worked in crewels or silk, and a little gold thread might be introduced. The leaves should be worked in crewels of good substance, with good bold stitches, and the flowers in silk.

The festoon at back might be just outlined in gold-coloured silk, or with gold thread, together with the dividing lines, though, of course, there is no reason why these ornamental features should not be omitted should it be thought that the work is sufficiently effective without them.

The plants chosen—the daffodil, iris, poppy, and chrysanthemum—are so familiar to all my readers that I feel sure they will have little difficulty in enlarging and carrying out the design should they feel so disposed. The plants are slightly conventionalised, so as to simplify them for working, and by panelling out the space, and introducing the festoons at back of flowers, a certain "oneness" and completeness is given to the design, which perhaps would be lacking were the flowers merely placed on the silk at regular intervals with nothing to bind them together and make them one.

There are plenty of decorative schemes besides the one given that would make effective pianoforte fronts. A head of some great musician, supported on either side by foliage or cupids; or cupids holding a medallion of a musician; or, again, cupids playing on

musical instruments, with flowers and butterflies; or again, a field of flowers with birds and butterflies suggest themselves to everyone, and only want to be carried out to be effective.

The backs of cottage pianos are also capital places to decorate, more especially as it is the custom in many homes to have the piano standing in the room with the back exposed to view. With your Editor's kind permission, I shall give in another number a design for the back of a pianoforte, and shall then have something more to say about it.

Be careful to make the colours harmonise with the ground, especially in the case of paintings upon silk or satin. The darker the colour of the ground the greater the need of care to avoid crudity, as a comparatively low-toned colour on the palette will look quite crude and harsh on the dark silk. Make the greens of yellows toned with burnt and raw sienna, and use indigo for dark greens rather than Antwerp blue. Antwerp blue always requires toning with burnt sienna or other warm colour when mixed with yellow. Cobalt and yellow ochre make good grey greens with white.

AUNT DIANA.

By ROSA NOUCHETTE CAREY, Author of "Nellie's Memories," "Not Like Other Girls," "Esther," etc.

CHAPTER XV.

ROGER RESOLVES TO WATCH.



THANK you, Mabel dear, for what you have said to Anna," whispered Alison, gratefully, as they left the grounds of Maplewood.

Missie looked gratified.

"Oh, of course, I gave Eva a piece of my mind. She is always so reasonable and sweet-tempered, that I never have any difficulty.

Anna may come to The Holms as often as she likes." Then, with a perceptible effort to seem at her ease, she continued, hurriedly: "Eva is going to bring her cousin to afternoon tea to-morrow. I hope it will be fine, and then we can set the table under the lime trees; our drawing-room is such an ugly room."

"Do you mean Captain Harper is coming?" returned Alison, with a strong accent of disgust in her voice. "Oh, Mabel! how could you ask him? I am sure papa will not be pleased. I do not like him at all; his manners are so artificial and disagreeable."

Missie looked sulky in a moment.

"It is a pity you did not stop at Riverston," she returned, in an injured voice, "for none of our Chesterton folk, with the exception of that stupid little Anna, seem good enough for you. I think Captain Harper charming, and I am sure papa will be pleased with him, unless you set him against the poor fellow." And here Missie looked

decidedly cross. Her temper was rising under this unexpected opposition.

"You may be sure that I shall say nothing to papa," replied Alison, with so much dignity, that Missie was silenced; but she sulked so perceptibly all the evening that her father noticed it, and asked more than once what was the matter with Missie; but tale-telling was beneath Alison, and she said nothing.

But she was terribly annoyed, all the same, and took Roger into her confidence, exacting from him a promise that he would be present at all risks.

"Perhaps I am wrong," she remarked, candidly; "I am always so ready with my likes and dislikes. But I cannot bear Captain Harper, and it is odious to me to pour out his tea for him."

Alison's anxiety was soon set at rest. The party from Maplewood, including Anna, had not long been gathered under the lime trees before Mr. Merle made his appearance, greatly to her delight and Missie's discomfiture. Alison never found out if Roger had betrayed her trust and given his father warning of the expected guest. But there was no mistaking the coolness of his manner to Captain Harper. That unlucky individual was clearly not at his ease, and certainly no inducement was held out to him to repeat his visit.

As soon as the unwelcome visitor had departed Mr. Merle expressed himself as much displeased to find Captain Harper there; indeed, his severity quite overwhelmed Missie, and she retired in floods of tears.

"Papa is never angry with me," she sobbed; "this must be your fault, Alison. You have come home to stir up strife and turn papa against me."

"Don't be absurd, Mabel," returned Alison, a little crossly; "you have brought it all on yourself. Papa seems angry with me too, and yet you know I am not at all in fault. If you do wrong you must bear to be scolded. Papa says he is quite shocked at our forwardness. You see, he blames me, too. He says no one but himself or Roger ought to invite gentlemen to the house, and Miss Leigh says the same. He told me after you left the room that he would take care that Captain Harper should not repeat his visit, as he was not the sort of man whose acquaintance he could approve for his daughters."

Missie dissolved into fresh tears on hearing this. "She was sure it was not papa's real opinion," she persisted in saying. Roger had put him up to it to spite her and Eva. What would Eva say if she were forbidden to bring her cousin to The Holms? She wished Alison would go back to Aunt Diana, and not stop here to make her so wretched. She did not see the use of having a sister who hated and thwarted her.

"Oh, you silly child!" exclaimed Alison, kissing the wet, ill-tempered little face that still looked so pretty. "What a storm in a teacup! I don't hate you a bit. I am very fond of you, though you will quarrel with me about every trifle; but it takes two to quarrel properly, and I do not mean to take up the cudgels to please you!" And here she gave her a playful shake, that so astonished Missie that she speedily grew more amiable, for her tempers had never been so set aside before.

Alison consoled herself for her sister's variable moods by trying to make Anna happy. That little person came frequently to The Holms now, and she began to consider how these visits