

BRONZE PAINTING.

FOR decorative work that aims at producing effect with the least amount of labour and effort, bronze painting, or painting with metallic colours, is excellent. It is a system of painting solely intended for ornamental purposes, and from the nature of the pigments used it is not designed for closely imitating the exact colouring of natural objects; but its brilliant colouring, sparkling with gold and silver, and with greens, blues, and purples of metallic lustre, brightens the objects so decorated, without throwing them into glaring prominence.

The present age is one that decorates every object that comes before the eyes—ceilings, friezes, wall-papers, door-panels, and mantelboards are turned into works of art; and with objects so ornamented it is almost necessary to carry out the same idea in the smaller details of furniture and to give these a distinct decorative character—but a character that neither clashes nor is out of harmony with the larger works. For delicate ornament upon

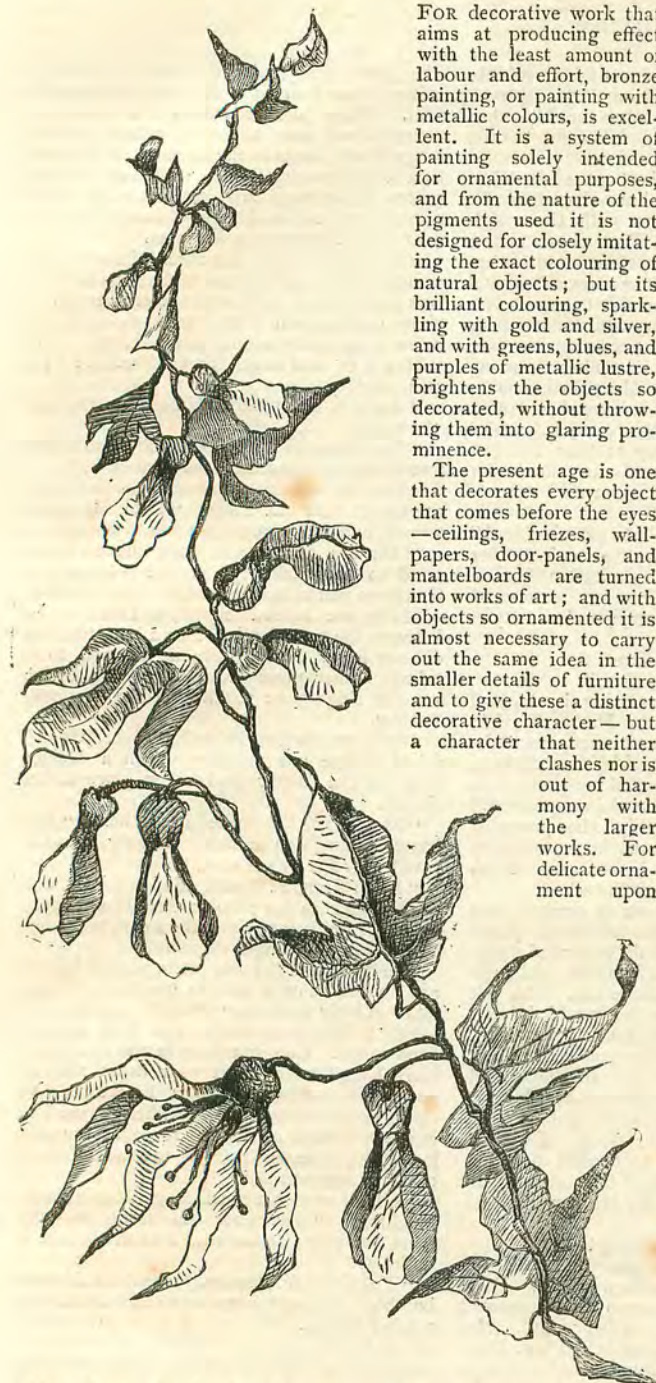
as Lardeur's patent. These patterns are less crowded than many, and the natural flowers, although conventionally treated, are well drawn, and follow the curves of the design without distortion. Amongst them we noticed, for fire-screens, a beautiful group of arum lilies, growing upwards from a single root, and a purple clematis arranged to fall as trailing branches down and across the screen from the upper side. To decorate the small squares of cabinets Lardeur's designs are drawn so that they branch out from two of the sides, and by so doing are more effective. A flag blossom, with grass-heads and buttercups, a spray of quince blossom, and a well-arranged group of daffodils are all suitable for the purpose. For mantel borders and bracket valances, continuous sprays of the large white or lavender clematis, wide open poppies, showing their black and green centres, and arrangements of yellow daisies, are all attractive. For portières, if only the border of them is painted, or the design is taken across them in straight bands, a straight but bold arrangement of fruit looks best, such as plums, oranges, apples, lemons in their green stage, or grapes, all growing upon their boughs and surrounded by their own foliage.

The treatment of this foliage is of the utmost importance in fruit designs—a simple mass of green would at once spoil the effect. Shades of orange yellow, tawny brown, red brown, and crimson are all necessary to introduce when a large prominent bordering is required. If the portière is to be covered with a design, a conventional arabesque, enclosed in an arabesque bordering, is generally selected; but should flowers be preferred, they are chosen of the stiff and upright kind, and either arranged in panels up the curtain at set distances, or sprays of them thrown upon the material like the powderings in church embroidery. Arums, hollyhocks, and gladiole are used for panel decoration, and the small single sunflower, the large blossomed clematis, poppies, pomegranates, and sprays of virginia creeper for the detached groups.

The materials used in bronze painting are the colours, medium, turpentine, slab with saucer-like holes, drawing-board, brushes of hog and camel's hair, and the textile. The colours are silver, green gold, bright gold, deep gold, copper, deep copper, crimson, steel blue, purple, deep violet, green, light green, mineral green, bronze black, and bright blue. The best textiles are the close velveteens, sold as gamekeeper's velveteen, and close made velvets, but satin sheeting, linen, and ribbed silk can be employed, although they do not produce so raised a painting as those first mentioned.

To work: If the pattern is a transfer design, stretch the material with drawing pins on to the board, and iron the pattern, placed face downwards upon it, with a warm, but not hot, iron. Lardeur's patterns are transferred by being rubbed over with spirits of wine, and not with the action of heat. Remove the pattern, and if the pile of the velvet or velveteen has become flattened and rubbed, it must be raised again before being painted. To do this, take a hot iron, a thin handkerchief, and some cold water. Hold the iron in the hand with its flatside uppermost, damp and wring out the handkerchief, and lay it flat on the iron, and while the steam is rising from the contact of cold and heat, rub the back of the velvet over the iron. As soon as the handkerchief dries, wet it again, and continue to rub the back of the material over the iron until the pile on the face rises. While the velvet is still moist from the steam passing through it, re-stretch it. To take off an impression from a pricked pattern, stretch the velvet and pin the pattern over it, then rub through the holes the powdered chalk, which keep in a small muslin bag. Remove the pattern so as not to disturb the little spots of chalk on the material, and obtain the design by making lines with their help. Fill a brush with white paint and gum water for a dark background, with Indian ink for a light material, and fill in the spaces between the dots, and make a firm, clean outline.

To paint in the colours: Shake some of the powder into the saucer and mix it with the brush with the medium. If the painting is on a velveteen or other rough surface, mix as much colour as will cover a sixpence with half a tea-spoonful of medium; if it is on satin or linen, mix half the colour with the same amount of the medium. As the colour is much heavier than the medium, it requires constant stirring while in use, while not more than enough for the morning's painting should be mixed, as it dries quickly and is not in good condition when dry. In using the medium and mixing the colours remember that too little of the former will give a gritty, uneven surface to the painting, and too much will look poor, the medium sinking into the background and leaving but stray specks of colour, instead of a brilliant surface of paint of an even consistency. One of the faults to be avoided is painting in streaks of colour, another is in laying too much colour, or shades of colour, on one spot, and a third is the mixing of colours improperly. Gold and blue will not make green in bronze colours, but steel blue, silver, and green gold, when either of them are mixed with green, will give a new shade; violet mixed with green will make a suitable shade for stems, and is used for them with deep copper. Small touches of mineral green with light green are used for bright light or veins only. Violet



cabinet doors, bracket-hangings, portières, and fire-screens, bronze painting colours are well adapted, as they are best seen when applied upon such handsome textiles as plush and velveteen of the dark rich colouring and good qualities that are required for the above purposes.

The subjects, or rather designs, required for the work are naturally somewhat conventionalised, and the suggestive designs of fruit, flowers, and birds that come from Japan are more suitable to the purpose than drawings from nature.

These Japanese designs are to be met with in the books of patterns used by the native Japanese to embroider from, and now sold in London. These traced out and transferred, either by pricking holes in the tracing-cloth and pouncing white chalk through to the material, or with the aid of carbonised cloth, will be found to give a clear and characteristic outline. Upon some velvets and plushes it is, however, almost impossible to obtain an outline by these means, and for these nothing is more suitable than the transfer designs known

to soften the shade is mixed with silver. Purple is shaded, not mixed, with gold. Gold and crimson mixed form good shades of cinnamon and deep red, and all shades of gold are used when painting a gold-coloured flower, but are laid on singly and not over each other. When painting upon dark velveteen, velvet, or satin sheeting, small hog's-hair brushes are used, and the shadows painted so thinly that the material shows through them and appears like the shadow; upon light materials this effect cannot be obtained, and the shadows must be painted like the rest of the work—that is to say, the leaf outlined with the selected shade, and the ground at once added. Leaves are never painted all of one shade, unless they are very small, a light shade is either taken down one side and separated from a darker by the centre vein (made by leaving a vacant space), or the tip of the leaf on both sides is painted lighter than the upper part, and the centre vein left unpainted, or put in afterwards in a different colour, and with a sable brush charged with a thinner mixture of colour than that used on the body of the leaf.

The laying of a colour over one already dry requires a good deal of care, and is only attempted as a few touches, not as a full colouring, except when using purple or blue, these colours requiring a background of silver to throw them up. Thus, flowers or fruit grounded with silver can have their highest lights brought out with streaks of white silver, or can have blue or purple shadows given them by being touched up with those colours. Flowers and fruits grounded with golds of any shade are shaded into crimson by the use of that colour over them; but all these after touches require judgment, and are only applied in small quantities. All large varieties of shade are made either by painting in separate and single colours close together, or by mixing the tint in the saucer and putting it on at once. To take a wrong colour out and paint the right colour over it, put a few drops of medium and a few of turpentine into the dry bronze colour, mix them up, and paint over the fault. If the mixed colours dry on the palette before they are used up, add to them a little turpentine, and also clean off any dirty marks on the material made by spilling colour with turpentine; but avoid its use in a general way except for cleaning brushes and palette.

Use small hog's-hair brushes for the rough materials and most of the work, and fine camel's-hair for the stems, branches, tendrils, etc., and minute parts of the painting. To stop the sinking in of colour upon satin sheeting, satin, etc., lay a coat of size, made by melting gelatine, over the chief flowers and leaves of the design. This coat will make the material more solid where it is laid on, and will save the constant recolouring that these textiles require if treated in the ordinary manner.

To paint the designs given in our illustration; the largest one is a trail of the crimson

Taxonia, only to be met with in English hot-houses. It is a very handsome flower, and looks well painted upon deep ruby, russet-brown, or deep purple velveteen, or upon cream or lemon-coloured satin sheeting. Use for this crimson and deep gold, mix each colour separately, and then mix some crimson and gold together as a third tint. Commence by painting in the high lights with the pure gold, the shade next to them with the pure crimson, and the deep shadows with the mixture; put on sufficient colour at once, blend together while working, and leave the painting for an hour to clear, as the mixed shade does not assume its right colour for some time; then retouch where necessary, and lay on a little pale gold as the very brightest light. Paint the stamens with light green and their little balls with light gold, the calyx with light gold and green. In painting the buds, use the same colours as for the flower, but make the small ones quite crimson, with no gold high lights, and the larger ones with deep gold high lights, not retouched with light gold; for the stem of the spray, use green shaded with purple. The leaves are very varied: the most prominent one paint as follows:—Mix together bright blue and green, and paint the side drawn light with this, avoiding the large vein shown; work in the shadow side with the darkest green and also avoid the vein. Mix some silver with green and paint the veins with this, and touch the turned-back parts of the leaf with purple and green mixed together. Paint the tiny leaves with different shades of green, either plain or mixed with blue; some of the smallest work in with bronze and slightly touch with crimson. Shade one of the big leaves that show their under side with bronze and dark green, the other with dark blue and greens, and with crimson veinings.

In bronze painting, endeavour to break up the colour as much as possible and use shades that would not be found in natural leaves as long as they are in harmony with each other and will produce good combinations of colouring. As the work can never be natural, this taking of the colouring out of the hands of nature is quite allowable, the object being to produce decorative and not realistic colouring.

The spray of crimson Taxonia illustrated is intended for the decoration of a blotting-book, work-bag, or small door-panel.

The little tailpiece is a Japanese design, and is very suitable for bronze painting. Painted the size given, it is used either to decorate a Bradshaw cover or an ornamental wall pocket; enlarged, it looks well when fitted into a square panel of a corner cupboard or overmantel. To colour the birds, paint the most prominent with silver, shading to blue. Paint on the silver over the breast, neck, head, and wings of the bird. Touch these places over with blue to imitate feathers, and work in blue over the back of the bird, and mark out the wing feathers with the blue for the upper part,

but with the dark green where they are drawn dark. Finish the bird with bronze beak and legs. Paint the other bird with gold of various tints, and shade these with crimson about the wings and top of head. Work in the beak with bronze, the legs with crimson. Colour the ground green; shade with purple and silver lines.

Clean the brushes during the painting by dipping them in turpentine and wiping on a rag whenever they are to be charged with a new colour. Before putting them away, clean with turpentine, and then wash out the turpentine by rubbing them on the palm of the hand and in soap suds. The medium that is used to liquify the powder colours is of a sticky nature, and soils the hands, and renders them unfit to touch the brushes if it sticks to them. To prevent this, either roll strips of calico round the bottle holding the medium, so that whatever falls from the bottle is soaked up before it comes in contact with the painter's fingers, or push a quill through a hole made in the cork and pour out the medium drop by drop through this quill.

When painting, be careful not to touch the textile with the hands, which are frequently soiled with colouring matter; use a mahl stick to rest the hand against for large work, and a china painter's rest for small pieces.

Prismatic painting is often alluded to as a separate colouring; it is, however, only a variety of bronze painting, the same colours, mediums, and brushes being employed. The difference between it and bronze painting is the textile ornamented, which is stamped velvet or plush well raised from its surface, and not the plain flat materials required for the more artistic work. The designs stamped on the velvet are brought out by the parts not raised being coloured with rich but unshaded tints, and the sole art consists in selecting a suitable stamped out design, and colouring it judiciously. No drawing of outline, transferring design, or artistic quality is called into requisition in this painting; it is only necessary to select a good pattern, and there are plenty of fruit, flower, and bird designs that have been stamped for embroidery that are suitable for this kind of decoration.

The depressed parts of the stamped design are the parts upon which the colour is applied; these colours are not much shaded, and are laid on as brilliant but light washes. The work is simple, as the artist merely indicates by colour the various leaves and flowers already stamped out; in fact, the work is easily accomplished, and differs only from bronze painting by being more quickly done, that it needs no description, and no extra knowledge of painting.

Bronze painting is far superior to it in all decorative and artistic point, as it is capable of being worked up to a high standard of merit, and allows of individual ideas and tastes being carried out, while prismatic must only follow a pattern that is repeated upon a hundred articles, and cannot therefore be influenced by the mind of the painter. B. C. SAWARD.

