

STAR DRIFT WORK.



THIS is a simple and effective way to decorate shabby furniture, old boxes, and picture frames. Chairs should be treated thus. First scrub them thoroughly all over with strong soda water.

When quite dry, lay on smoothly a coat of enamel, but, if the chairs are not entirely free from all moisture whatsoever, the paint will not adhere satisfactorily. Great care must be taken to slash the brush quickly backwards and forwards as a house painter works, then the enamel flows well together and dries with an even surface. It is also important that no drops should be allowed to stray to the edges and dry there, or the work will have the appearance of an old sun-blistered barn door. While the enamel is still wet, sprinkle it lightly with gold-dust, such as is sold by Italian warehousemen in packets at 4½d each. The best way to distribute this gold-dust evenly is to fill a small dry camel's hair brush with the powder and shake it lightly over the wet surface of the enamel. This process, if performed delicately and quickly, is very effective, and entirely dispenses with the common look which spoils most enamelled furniture. Autumn green enamel looks very well with the gold; white, also, is charming, but would soon look tawdry after a few days of fog.

This kind of decoration would appeal especially to a girl who, arriving perhaps at the end of a large family, has to use in her special sanctum the furniture which has stood the storms of all her predecessors. All that is

necessary in such a case to procure a pretty room, is the permission of the head of the household and the really modest sum of 1s. 3d.

Many a girl suffers from an antiquated looking-glass which is apparently spending its last years of life in her bedroom. These, though possibly ugly, may be quickly converted into something pleasant to the eye by being painted with enamel and sprinkled with gold as above. If it be a large glass, or is cracked, or is deficient in quicksilver in parts, it might be draped over the offending part with a little cheap silk or real art muslin. And let no one think here that I am advocating dust traps, those horrors of good housekeepers, for frequent shakings and occasional washings of the offending drapery will remove all cause of complaint, or better still, prevent it. Any girl may do this much of a laundry maid's work without difficulty by washing out the drapery in her bedroom basin, rolling it smoothly in a towel, and, when nearly dry, passing a hot iron over it. Neither soda nor starch are required for this very simple operation, as the first would remove too much colour, and the other that softness which is essential to all good drapery. The cheapest Pongee silk, that at 1s. 0½d. the yard, even, washes very well, and, in the opinion of some folk, is more silky after the washing than before. It certainly drapes better.

A PRETTY GLOVE AND HANDKERCHIEF BOX.

Star drift work is novel and pretty applied in the following way:—Take a cigar box in the shape of a double cube, strip all paper off it, detach the lid, and thoroughly scrub the whole thing with soda water as in the case of

the chairs and looking-glass. Then paint it all over, inside and out, sprinkling the outside with gold-dust; but on the outside of the lid guide the brush carefully in sprinkling, so that the powder in falling forms the word "Gloves." It is preferable (and easier) that the word should be in a flowing round hand. Then, and this, to my thinking, is the chief beauty of the whole performance, fasten the detached lid to the body of the box with ribbon of a colour to suit the paint, or, preferably, with gold braid. This should be affixed by means of fancy brass nails, at a penny the dozen, and the end of the braid which comes on the top of the lid should be brought to a point with three nails, thus—



Two of these hinges are sufficient, but if three be preferred, a longer one may be placed in the middle, the two others, as before, of equal length and situated about an inch from the end. These hinges, especially in the gold braid, give the box an archaic appearance which is highly pleasing. If the braid be a little tarnished, this effect is much enhanced.

A handkerchief box to match would be done the same way, the shape of the box being a shallow square, with "Kerchiefs" written upon it.

Of course, if preferred, the initials of the person for whom the boxes are intended may be substituted for both "Gloves" and "Kerchiefs."

PAMELA BULLOCK.

BARMAIDS AND WAITRESSES IN RESTAURANTS, THEIR WORK AND TEMPTATIONS.



to the character of the work itself, and the area in which it is performed.

People who would not hesitate to go into the foulest London slums, if, by so doing, they could render help or expose a wrong, would draw a line at entering public-houses or restaurants, and even if they overcame this objection, and went in with a desire to understand the true condition of the girls who serve in them, they would probably accept their first impression and come away with the idea that such nice-looking, well-dressed, cheerful girls needed none of their help and sympathy, nor any improvement in their condition. We need hardly say that this first impression would be quite wrong.

At all events, be the cause what it may, these girls and their work have not partici-

pated in any of the benefits which have been showered upon other classes of girl-bread-winners during the last few years.

Yet of all occupations undertaken by girls for a living, there is none more difficult and dangerous than that of serving at the "bar," and waiting in restaurants, nor any that calls out less the sympathy of outsiders.

Strangely enough all other classes of girl-workers have their friends, advisers and helpers among the good and kind of the "upper ten thousand," as well as their clubs and associations for mental improvement and recreation; these girls, on the contrary, who need them most, are of all bread-winners the most lonely and friendless, and were it not for one or two ladies who devote their lives to their service, I do not know to whom they could turn for sympathy and advice in their many and serious difficulties.

We do not doubt in the very least that work is honourable, but we do see that work differs widely in character; some of it being quite simple and demanding only ordinary industry, time and attention, while other, on the contrary, is so complex, so exhausting, so beset with difficulties, and exposed to temptation, that we wonder sometimes where the honour comes in.

Such is the work of barmaids and waitresses, and the marvel is that girls can be found to do it, yet there are many thousands so engaged, not because they like it, but because they know no other way of gaining a living, not only for themselves, but for those

depending on them. Many of them come from the country, having been brought up in country inns kept by their parents; a large number are farmers' daughters, and some have even been governesses, while not a few are the daughters of clergymen and solicitors.

Some of them pathetically said to me, "The lives we live were never meant for girls to endure; we are regarded as mere machines for bringing money to the firms, not as living creatures with feelings that can be hurt and bodies that can be worn-out."

One girl with whom I spoke said with tears in her eyes, "The modest, well-behaved ones among us suffer most; their lives are one long torture."

The condition of barmaids and waitresses varies according to the houses or firms by whom they are engaged, some of whom feed and lodge the girls well, and allow them sufficient leisure for the exercise of mind and body, and still more, by their careful supervision they minimise the temptations to which the girls are exposed. Naturally, these employers form a very small minority. There are certain temperance restaurants in which the girls are fairly fed, paid, and housed, and where they are less exposed to temptation than those engaged in restaurants that sell alcohol.

But there are conditions and serious evils which belong to all houses alike, whether they be licensed houses, temperance restaurants, railway station restaurants, or hotel restaurants, and when we learn what these are, we

shall think it an honour to give the hand of friendship to those girls, who, in the midst of such surroundings, lead good, honest lives, and we thank God there are many such.

We will take the time and wages first. In all cases the hours are too long; twelve to fourteen being the daily average, though often girls are kept working seventeen hours out of the twenty-four. In some of the railway-station restaurants, barmaids on one day begin work at seven in the morning and continue till eight o'clock at night; they go to bed and remain there till midnight, when they rise and continue up till five. This finishes their work until eleven o'clock in the morning, which is the beginning of the second day; they work until eleven at night, and are free to sleep till seven next morning, and so the days repeat themselves.

In many other houses the hours are from nine in the morning till half-past twelve or a quarter to one at night.

Time for dinner thirty minutes, for tea twenty, and for supper the same. This goes on day by day, except from eleven to midnight once a month.

The pay for these long hours of service varies from five to ten shillings a week, subject to a charge of from seven to ninepence a week for breakages.

A barmaid of great experience told me that her shortest day was twelve hours, and frequently it was seventeen; her pay was ten shillings a week, subject to breakage-reduction, which two weeks running had amounted to three shillings and fourpence, and which has never been less than a shilling a week; not that she had broken anything herself, but that each had to pay a share of what is broken in the bar. Another sum which is deducted weekly from her wage is two shillings for washing and getting up her cap, apron, collar, and cuffs. The girls are obliged to dress well and make themselves attractive, and must always have a smiling face and courteous word for every customer.

A speaker at a meeting of waitresses, held a week or two since at St. Andrew's Restaurant, Bride Street, declared that what with stoppages, charges for washing and price of costume, she sometimes had no wages at all at the end of the week. Another said that her total earnings, commission and tips ranged from five to ten shillings a week, though she could not remember the day when they reached the latter sum. A third said, "I reach home at a quarter past eleven, and after the long day's work I frequently find myself positively out of pocket."

Sometimes the girls have no settled wages, but have simply what they make; this arrangement is intended to incite them to be very agreeable, and its effect is to make it still harder for them to lead a respectable life.

A custom obtains in many houses which, in the interest of the girls, should be put a stop to, it is the allowance of tenpence a day in drink; it holds out a premium to drunkenness, and ruins many a life.

Again, the board and lodging of those who live in the house are often so bad that many have to buy food out of their small earnings, and the places they are required to sleep in are frequently less comfortable even than cellars. One girl told me that she slept in a room with eight others, with the spirit-tanks over their heads, and with no locks to the door, and that their house was by no means the worst of its kind. As to locks, she said very few of the sleeping-rooms had fastenings.

It cannot be regarded as a slight evil, that those who are not lodged in the house have to walk home after midnight through some of the worst streets of London, when trains and omnibuses have ceased running.

The following is the experience of a young waitress: "In answer to an advertisement I

went to a *café* in the City, wages two shillings a week, tips not guaranteed, with prospective rise to three shillings.

"Another restaurant expected me to run about from eight o'clock in the morning till twelve at night, one hour a day for meals, no time allowed for rest; wages five shillings a week, pay for all breakages, and no tips guaranteed.

"Another large firm sent me a printed circular to fill up, stating name, age, height, and what languages I could speak, together with my photograph, name of previous employers, and two tradesmen's references; wages seven shillings a week." She asks: "Is it possible that a girl can live and keep herself respectfully upon such a small wage, putting on one side the hours she has to work for it?"

There are also many evils beside those of long hours and low wages which barmaids and waitresses have to submit to. For example the power of a manager to send a girl adrift at any hour of day or night without funds or belongings, more often than not because she is trying her best to keep a good girl; such a state of things is permissible because they work under short notice agreements.

In one large public-house in the West End of London the girls are bound to give their services free for three months with a promise of good pay at the end of that time, but it is made so uncomfortable for them that they are compelled to leave at the end of the free service period and so the landlord gets his work done for nothing. One of these girls was, as I know, turned out at the end of two months at eleven o'clock at night without home or money. Is it surprising that occasionally one finds paragraphs in the daily papers like the following?*

"Suicide of a young, well-educated French girl, barmaid in a tavern at Notting Hill. She was suddenly dismissed with the words, 'she did not suit,' and being without friends or relatives took carbolic acid."

Another evil which seems inseparable from this particular occupation is that men, in the presence of these girls, think it no crime to use language, jests and oaths that make the ears of all who hear to tingle with shame, and would be a disgrace in the mouths of savages; how much more disgraceful when uttered by men in a Christian land and who in a majority of cases are married men and fathers of families.

It seems to me that this is one of the greatest degradations to which this class of bread-winners is subject. The girls have no redress; for if they resent it or complain of it they are dismissed as unsuited to their position; and the consequence is they must bear it or starve.

Sunday is not at all what it should be for them; for example, those on duty are not allowed to make use of the hours in which the houses are closed either for taking fresh air or for going to church, but are in fact prisoners until the time of reopening after church; while those off duty, if they are strangers and friendless, must tramp the streets till eight o'clock or in many cases till midnight, until which time they must not return. For these Sunday, instead of being a blessed and a restful day, is one of extra peril and temptation.

The fact is that the long hours, low wages, weariness of mind and body scarcely permit any opportunity for religious services, and certainly no leisure for development as intellectual beings. Is it wonderful that some of these weary lonely girls yield occasionally to the temptation of drink hoping by it to drown or brighten their lives, they care not which, while others, on the contrary, are so terrified at the curse of drink and so afraid of yielding to it that they take the pledge, and with God's blessing keep it. Barmaids and waitresses suffer extremely from varicose veins and other

evils which result from much standing; also they suffer from stiff fingers and injuries to the side from drawing corks and beer; their constitutions are injured from the foul air reeking of spirits and bad tobacco in which they work, and they are subject to alcoholic poisoning.

Is it wonderful that in order, as they hope and believe, to get out of all this they choose an easy living in another and more terrible way so common in our cities?

Few and far between the condition of barmaids and waitresses is extremely good and comfortable; they are well fed and housed, have time to do their own needlework and opportunity of going to church or chapel. Why cannot these benefits be extended to all? Surely it would be so if this special work was looked into as other work has been, and the strong penetrating light of public opinion be brought to bear on it.

If ignorance of the condition under which these girls earn their daily bread has hitherto prevailed let it be so no longer. If we find it impossible to go in and out among them ourselves, let us strengthen the hands of the few who, for the last ten years have devoted their lives and means to bringing something like sunshine and brightness into their lives, who have taught them the meaning of love and sympathy and given them some experience of the blessing of home life. This and much more has been done by the Morley Rooms and its enthusiastic secretary, Miss Charlotte Gough. Go and see her at 14, John Street, Bedford Row, and she will show you how you can take part in improving the condition of these girls.

This house was started by Mr. Samuel Morley and his two sons and daughter. Nine members can live in the house, paying three to four shillings a week for lodging, and eight shillings for board.

Members pay half-a-crown a year, which admits them to the rooms for reading, writing, conversation, and rest. Seven thousand have passed through since the home was opened.

It is impossible to overrate the blessing Miss Charlotte Gough has been to the barmaids and waitresses, who come to her in their need of all kinds, and to many this home on Sundays is a haven of rest and comfort.

I heard a most pathetic story from the lips of one who had been a barmaid, and who had yielded to the temptation of drink, and had sunk very low indeed, so low that there was scarcely a degradation through which she had not passed. Miss Charlotte Gough found her, and would never let her go, working on through all discouragements, and the result is that she is now an honoured and valuable servant, and has been so for some years.

While we have been idle, this devoted woman with a few friends has been working for the good of these girls, both in body and soul, not only here, but wherever they need her. She was their friend and helper in Paris at the Exhibition, where so many barmaids and waitresses were stationed.

Last Tuesday I was invited to spend an hour at 14, John Street, with a large number of these girls, who, like myself, were guests. On arriving I found about sixty, most of them young, good-looking, and neatly but tastefully dressed, as a rule, in black, with white lace about the throat.

What struck me about them was the absence of frivolity and giggling; their manner was quiet and reposeful, and gave one the impression that here in this atmosphere of love and sympathy, they had put off their armour for the moment, though the daily habit of being on guard had left its mark on them. As I looked round I wondered how men could be so base and cruel as to intensify the hardships and temptations which beset their occupation.