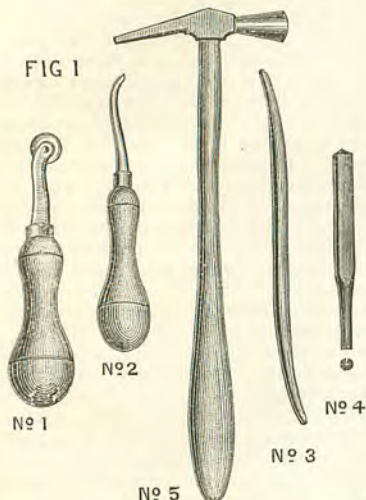


CUT LEATHER WORK.

Cut leather work is one of the most fascinating of minor arts, and has the great advantage of being open to amateurs as well as to skilled designers.

In this, as in every other pursuit, talent and originality produce an adequate result, but a



of great help in making little patterns over a leather background, to which it is held with the left hand, while with the right grasping the light hammer (No. 5) a sharp tap is given so that the pattern is transferred to the leather whereon it is used most commonly as a powdering.

There are many of these punches to be had, each, of course, made to stamp a different device.

A few specimens of punching are shown at Fig. 2, where sixteen punches have left as many impressions of crosses, stars, circles, trefoils, roses, triangles and other patterns.

Punching is easy and interesting, but the worker must not employ it too liberally, nor be tempted by the prettiness of the little patterns to invest too largely in these tools.

The next consideration is the leather. Of this there are two kinds which are more frequently used than others. There is cowhide and calfskin; the former thicker, stouter, suited for larger articles, and requiring greater firmness in handling than the latter.

They should be worked upon a flat board to which they can be fastened with drawing-pins, the cowhide being lightly but evenly sponged over the back before work is begun, and then, when dry and pinned down upon the board, should be again moistened with clean water over the face of it. Calfskin requires, if soft, no such preparation; but if firm, damping on the under surface only.

Whichever kind of leather is used will probably need a little rearrangement on the board before any pattern is marked upon it, as after being damped it is sure to stretch a little. The leather should be larger than is desired for the finished article, as the marks made by driving the pins through it can then be cut away.

It is to be supposed that the worker has from the first made up her mind what article she is going to make, and what design she means to emboss upon it. The pattern should be drawn upon paper and perfected, then this paper should be stretched over the leather, being fastened down with drawing-pins, and all the outlines gone over with a sharp boneknitting-needle, or even with a penknife, held so that only the point touches the paper.

The pressure exerted should be sufficient to mark the pattern clearly, but rather faintly upon the leather. When the paper is taken away any mistakes can, in this part of the work, be corrected

by rubbing out the erring line with any smooth and polished surface, as that of a knife-handle or agate burnisher. So far the surface of the leather has not been cut through, so judicious smoothing and, if necessary, damping, can thus be employed.

When the outlines are satisfactory, the wheel is the next tool required. Wheels are to be had in various sizes, but one only, of medium dimensions, is sufficient for a beginner.

The wheel is to be held in the right hand, firmly and upright, to be guided and assisted by the left hand.

The wheel passes over all the lines of the

good copyist who can transfer or adapt the patterns of more gifted artists, can turn out very creditable work.

The cutting of leather is not an expensive pursuit. Two or three shillings will provide an ample supply of material upon which to begin, while the same remark applies to the tools, which once bought wear for a long time.

As regards the tools there is a very large choice before the worker, but it is better to start only with those which are absolutely necessary, and to gradually add others to the collection as increasing proficiency seems to warrant the expenditure.

Five tools are here shown, and they are all sufficient for early attempts.

Cut leather-work being, as its name implies, a process by which certain outlines are incised upon the material, it follows that the first requisite is a tool which will mark curves and angles evenly. The wheel (Fig. 1, No. 1) accomplishes this satisfactorily if used as shall afterwards be described. The bent awl (No. 2) should be employed to more deeply mark certain points in the design and to trace corners and small curves which the coarser tool cannot reach.

No. 3 is a modelling tool, intended to help rub and soften down the edges of the cuts made by the tracing wheel and awl.

No. 4 shows a punch, at one end of which is a mould of a star or other design which is



FIG 3.

design and should dent through the leather for about half its thickness.

The wheeling done the bent awl is taken up, and the use of this is to cut, as did the wheel, but especially all those portions of the pattern which could not be reached by the larger tool. This may seem a small purpose to serve, but such is not the case, as a study of the bends and curves of even a simple pattern will show.

When the lines seem ready for its use the modelling tool is applied to them to rub or bend down the edges of the cuts so that they have a rounder and more gradual slope than when, as at first, gashed straightly down into the leather.

There are few patterns in which one or more punches are not used as a speedy and effective way of ornamenting either the background of the work, or of certain details of it which it is desirable should have some such distinction.

As hinted above, punching is done by holding the punch pattern downwards on the leather and striking the head of it a sharp tap with the hammer. Each stroke should be of similar force that the marks may be of equal depth and sharpness.

When the work is finished as far as the tooling is concerned, it can be released from the board and made up.

For a beginner a penwiper is a good thing to make, as this consists only of a circular or other shaped piece of leather glued on the top of a pile of sections of cloth. The pattern may



FIG 2.

be either simple or elaborate, but beyond it all should be marked the extreme limit of the finished work, outside of which boundary were the drawing pins. The leather is to be cut with scissors along this line when, for a pen-wiper, the making up alone remains to be done.

The mat shown in Fig. 3 is a sample of a handsome and rather uncommon way of using cut leather. In this all the skin beyond the outlines has been cut away to form a vandyked edge, and certain portions of the design have also been removed. This was, of course, done after the wheeling and beveling, in fact after the removal of the work from the board. In a small picture the details of the tooling cannot be fully seen. Suffice it that the corner sprays and inside of the edge are wheeled, while for the background of both centre and edge three differently patterned punches were employed. The leather when fully tooled was glued firmly down to a square base covered with brown velvet.

The fourth figure is of another variety of the work and is easier, more fit for a novice. The strip of leather is intended to be fastened into a circle for use as a serviette ring. The pattern is particularly easy, being all wheeled except the tiny rounds in it, which, if liked, can be punched. The special feature, which



FIG 4.

alone distinguishes it from previous examples, is its colouring.

Bright hues are not employed for this ring, black, brown and yellow alone being used. It is lined with a strip of leather and fastens with a stud and slit.

The last design is a heraldic one of special beauty and a typical specimen of one variety of the work. It is partly completed, the head and shield being both tooled and varnished. The tooling is somewhat elaborate in character, the outlines being not merely cut with a wheel or knife, but also undercut and modelled. Undercutting needs a little practice to accomplish satisfactorily, but is simple enough in theory, merely consisting, as its name implies, of raising the upper surface of the leather with a knife inside the outlines of the design so as to cast them into higher relief.

The modelling is done after the leather is taken from the board by laying it face downwards on some soft surface, and pushing and pressing out from the back with the modelling tool all the parts which are to be in relief. The leather may need damping to render it pliable.

Work intended to be in high relief is maintained in position by filling in the hollows at the back with modelling wax. Silver paper is laid over this to make a clean and level surface. The effect is naturally much richer than that of the plain cut leather work.

A coat of varnish is an improvement to some articles of leather-work and gives them a more professional and finished appearance.

Sometimes staining is applied, or staining and varnish are seen on the same piece of work, thus introducing two shades of colour. The varnish must be first laid on where it is to go, but not over the parts to be dyed. The varnish dry, the stain can be applied to the rest of the work; this will leave no mark on the portions already varnished. Varnish, staining and wax, are obtainable ready prepared.

Messrs. S. Hildesheimer & Co. are doing



FIG 5.

much to revive the art of leather work, and their tools, designs and commenced articles are to be had from any artists' colourman.

There is an endless choice of subjects for ornamenting: chair seats, cushion covers, panels, portfolios and desk-strips are for the skillful; caskets, book-covers, card-cases and blotters offer rather smaller fields.

Even scraps can be used up for mats, purses and other trifles.

A caution on the important subject of designing. In every case the patterns must be chosen with regard to the articles they are to decorate; bars of music (the notes punched) can be included in the design for a music-case and heraldic "beasties" on a panel, but not impossible flowers on a church hassock or a dog's head on a chair-seat for instance.

For a powdering on a large surface, such as a *fleur-de-lys* on a church curtain for example, a stencil plate is an assistance, as the pattern can be repeatedly traced round with wheel and knife and then tooled in the usual way.

LEIRION CLIFFORD.

## USEFUL RECIPES.

### ORIENTAL FACE CREAM.

Six grains of powdered tragacanth, six drams of pure glycerine, nine ounces of triple rose water. Mix well, and add two drams of simple tincture of benzoin. This makes a splendid white emulsion, which leaves no greasy stain upon the skin.

### HAIR RESTORER (IN POWDER).

Two drams of pure sugar of lead, three drams and a half of pure milk of sulphur, five grains of powdered cinnamon. Mix. To be added to twenty ounces of rose water.

### LAVENDER PERFUME FOR SMELLING SALTS.

Six drams of oil of lavender aug., five drops of oil of cloves aug., ten drops of oil of rose geranium, ten drops of attar of roses, one dram and a half of essence of ambergris, two drams of essence of bergamotte, one dram and a half of essence of musk. Mix and shake well before dropping on the salts.

### MACASSAR OIL.

Ten ounces of oil of sweet almonds, three drams of oil of bergamotte, two drams of oil of rose geranium, sufficient alkanet root to colour. Digest.

### COCA TOOTH PASTE.

Four ounces of powdered precipitated chalk, three ounces of powdered orris root, one ounce of powdered white soap, half an ounce of powdered cuttle fish, two drams of powdered carmine, half an ounce of tincture of coca leaves, thirty drops of oil of ligu alce, thirty drops of oil of peppermint, five drops of oil of castarilla, sufficient pure glycerine to make a paste.

### BLOOM OF ROSES.

One dram of pure carmine, one dram and a half of strong solution of ammonia, three drams of pure glycerine, one dram and a half of white rose triple perfume. Sufficient triple rose water to make up four ounces; rub up the carmine with the ammonia and glycerine, add an ounce of rose water, and heat to drive off traces of ammonia. When cold add the white rose, and make up to four ounces with rose water, and filter.

### FRECKLE LOTION.

One dram of sulpho-carbolate of lime, two ounces of pure glycerine, one ounce of spirits of wine, one ounce and a half of orange flower water, three ounces and a half of triple rose water. Mix well; to be applied morning and evening, and also after exposure.

### LIME-JUICE AND GLYCERINE.

Two drams of white curd-soap, two ounces of distilled water, eight ounces of fresh lime-water, eight ounces of oil of sweet almonds, one dram of oil of bergamotte, half a dram of oil of lemon-grasse, half an ounce of essence of lemon. Well mix the oil and the lime-water in a large bottle, dissolve the soap in the distilled water by aid of heat, add the solution to the emulsion, shake well, and, lastly, add the essential oils.

### MOUTH WASH.

Half an ounce of salts of tartar, four ounces of honey aug. opt., thirty drops of oil of peppermint, thirty drops of oil of wintergreen, two ounces of spirits of wine, ten ounces of triple rose water, sufficient liquid cochineal to colour. Mix well. To be used morning and evening.

### WHITE HELIOTROPE.

(A). One dram of heliotropin, one ounce of extract of jasmine, one ounce of extract of white rose, two ounces of extract of ambergris, sixteen ounces of spirits of wine. (B). Thirty drops of oil of bergamotte, three ounces of extract of neroly, three drops of essential oil of almonds. Mix. Allow (A and B) to stand separately for a week, then mix them and filter.