



A PAINTED SILK OR SATIN PIANOFORTE FRONT.

THE want of designs among amateur artists is so often felt that this one, which would do admirably for a pianoforte front, may be helpful to some readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

There are two ways you can enlarge it if you do not wish to do so merely by the eye. The first is by the "pentagraph," which can be purchased for a few shillings. This is entirely a mechanical method, and as the design is a long one, you would have to enlarge it in sections.

Another plan is to divide the design up into say one quarter or one third of an inch squares by drawing lines lengthways these distances apart and then crossways. If you want to enlarge it to say three or four times the size of the original, you have only to make corresponding squares on fine paper three or four times the size of those dividing the design and then fill these in with the corresponding portions in the original design. This method of "squaring" guides you in getting your proportions correct, but you must go over it afterwards, trusting more or less to your eye if you would avoid the "wooden" appearance the enlargement will have if you merely fill in the various squares purely mechanically.

Having obtained a drawing the size you wish to paint it, you must transfer it to the silk or satin, and as we propose to paint on a very delicate colour, this must be done carefully. The ordinary carbon paper would do provided you do not press your hand on it as you follow the design over with a hard point. A piece of tissue-paper rubbed over with a little ordinary stove black-lead, which must be well rubbed in so that no loose black-lead remains on the surface of the paper, would do almost better, as you only want a delicate outline just to guide you in the painting.

The first thing to do now is to outline the design, and I think diluted Indian ink is the best thing to use, as it is easily applied and is indelible. But it must not be used too strong, as on white silk or satin your painting should be delicate. It should be thinned down to a grey. Use a fine sable rigger for outlining, following the design with feeling and with a certain freedom, as the merit of your work will not lie in a slavish adherence to the original, but in a spirited and spontaneous rendering which is much more to be considered than painstaking accuracy.

The Japanese paint silk in a delightful way, and if my readers could refer to some Japanese paintings it might give them some valuable hints very helpful in their own efforts.

Water-colours are the best for silk painting, as they are more easily handled and are more delicate than oil. Advantage should be taken of the transparency of water-colours, so as to obtain the maximum of fair effect with transparent washes: in fact, treat water-colours as though they were dyes. The grey for white flowers could be obtained by cobalt blue and yellow ochre put on highly diluted, leaving the silk untouched in the lights, which can be heightened if desired with a little Chinese white. The flowers of the may might be very pale rose madder, with deeper rose madder for stamens. The yellows of the polyanthus narcissus should be aureolin for the petals, and Indian yellow for the centres. This colour would also do for centres of ox-eye daisies. The wild anemones should have pinkish stems and pinkish buds.

The leaves of the narcissus in both cases should be glaucous or grey-green, made with cobalt green toned with yellow ochre, and even a little pure cobalt made very thin might be used in the lights. The flower-stems themselves should be dark green, viridian, and Indian yellow. The pansy and anemone leaves should be a cold green, say Prussian blue and raw sienna, while the grass should be varied, washes of yellow ochre, gamboge, cobalt green, blended or glazed one over another, gradually getting lighter and greyer in the distance, so as not to interfere with the positive greens of the foreground. The greens in the hawthorn and ox-eye daisies should be juicy, gamboge and Prussian blue, viridian and aureolin, cobalt green and Indian yellow affording good tones which can be varied infinitely.

The colours should be applied with camel-hair brushes, and should be floated on, as it were—i.e., the brush should always be fully charged with colour; but, of course, be very careful not to drop colour where it is not wanted, for nothing will take the stain out of the silk.

The birds are bullfinches, and it would be as well to refer to some stuffed specimens if possible (if live ones are not to be seen) for the colouring. Many amateurs make the mistake in getting birds too gaudy in colour. They are sufficiently emphatic in the design as not to need having attention called to themselves by garish colour. Warm browns made of burnt sienna and black with yellowish grey for the under side of wings should be the tone aimed at; but do not get them too heavy in colour. Keep the whole scheme light and delicate rather than strong.

Cobalt used very thinly might be painted on the plain portions of the design instead of leaving it white; but this would require to be done very carefully, as it should be perfectly even and show no brush-marks. It would perhaps be advisable to slightly damp the silk with perfectly clean water where this blue is to go. Then have plenty of the tint, which must be very light, in a saucer, and put it on evenly with a largish camel-hair brush. If this were done, then there would be no necessity to use Chinese white for the lights in the white flowers. The leaves might be touched up in the light parts with a little opaque colour made by adding Chinese white.

If a dark silk, such as dark indigo blue or black, be used, then the colours must all be mixed with Chinese white to make them opaque; but even then it would be well to glaze over the solid colour with transparent washes of colour. Only so much white should be used as will make the colours solid.