

profession must take care not to allow herself to sink in her intellectual attainments. One mistress who has had a large and satisfactory experience with lady-servants says that many of her maids have been provided with introductions from their doctor, clergyman, or other friends, and have quite a little social circle of their own.

Another advantage is that training and experience in household matters are so valuable to all classes of women. Probably more than half of the trouble about domestic

servants to-day is owing to the incompetence of mistresses who, not knowing what work really is, expect impossibilities, and so get less than they otherwise would do. From the lowest to the highest, every woman ought to understand how to manage a house, and a few years of domestic service would be a splendid training for future mistresses, and the "dames" will make far better wives and mothers in consequence of their experience.

ALIX JOSON.

MARQUETRY, OR COLOURED WOOD INLAYING.

THE old furniture was charmingly ornamented with inlays, and there can be no question that inlaid decoration is the most appropriate way of ornamenting cabinet work, as it is one of the most durable. A great revival has taken place within the last few years in this class of work, and at the annual exhibition at the Albert Hall of works made in villages under the supervision of the Home Arts Association, some quite charming effects are obtained by the use of coloured inlays.

I was much struck, too, by the use of inlays in some of the modern French furniture known as *L'Art Nouveau*.* A more naturalistic treatment was adopted by these French workers than we associate with inlays, and yet a charming decorative feeling was observed, so that the inlays did not pretend to be painted decoration, though the utmost effect was obtained by the careful disposition of the various coloured woods employed. Another feature of this French marquetry was the introduction of a sort of landscape

effect by cutting some of the inlays like trees against the sky-line, allowing the motifs to come across these landscape effects. I have endeavoured to illustrate what I mean in the two designs, but my readers must remember that what is intended to be in colour has a very different effect when translated into black and white. I have devoted a chapter in my book entitled "*Art Crafts for Amateurs*" to the consideration of inlays, and though my space here is very limited, I will give my readers a few practical hints which I hope will help them in their work.

The French use woods such as walnut, birch, and mahogany, which have a very decided grain, and they stain it in such a way that instead of getting the whole surface one tint, it is light in some places and dark in others. They then cut out spaces which suggest a line of trees, and by inlaying these in some dark wood obtain the effect suggested in the sketches accompanying these notes. The foliage is then taken over this. The design of the inlays should be drawn on paper full size and transferred to the wood, and then with a sharp knife—a fixed blade in a wooden handle such as can be

* Examples of this modern French work can be seen at the Bethnal Green Museum.



MARQUETRY, OR STAINED WOOD DECORATION, SUGGESTED BY L'ART NOUVEAU. (*The elder in flower is the motif.*)

purchased at a good tool shop is a suitable one—the design should be cut into the wood to the depth of about a sixteenth of an inch, that being about the thickness of veneer, but the depth depends upon the thickness of your marquetry. The spaces now want taking out with flat chisels. About three are required, say quarter, half-inch, and three-quarter inches wide. An oil stone is indispensable, as the tools must be kept very sharp, so that the spaces can be lowered with as little effort as possible. As the inlays are thin and of an even thickness, it is obvious that the spaces to receive them must be kept of a uniform depth and not quite so deep as the inlay is thick, because if the inlay projects at all, it can be easily lowered subsequently.

The inlays themselves should be shaped before proceeding to remove the spaces to receive them, as then you have a gauge to work to when taking out the spaces, for the more accurately these fit the marquetry, the better will it look when finished. A little practice with the tools will soon enable the tyro to remove the spaces to a uniform depth.

The inlays themselves are cut out of veneers which can be purchased of a cabinet maker. In London and large towns there are veneer merchants, the addresses of whom can be got from a directory. They vary in thickness, but one-sixteenth of an inch is about the gauge, so they are easily shaped with a sharp knife.

The gluing is a very important part of the work, as upon it the durability of the marquetry depends. Glue should be freshly made and kept hot in a proper glue-pot. Steep the hard glue in cold water for some hours until it swells, and then boil up until the glue itself boils, and it must be used boiling; therefore have a small oil or other stove handy, upon which to keep the glue-pot while glueing the work.

As soon as the space has been brushed over freely with glue put the marquetry in and place a flat iron or other weight upon it, and leave it there until the glue has set. This keeping a weight upon the work is very important, in order that the inlays attach themselves thoroughly to the wood.

When the work is dry, which will take at least twenty-



DESIGN FOR MARQUETRY OR STAINED WOOD DECORATION SUGGESTED BY L'ART NOUVEAU. (*The teazel is the motif.*)

four hours to accomplish, the inlays can be made level with the wood with glass-paper, the edge of pieces of glass, and by the use of steel scrapers sold for the purpose.

With regard to the colour of the veneers, those of very light wood can be stained almost any colour, but from what I saw at the Paris Exhibition I think those effects are the pleasantest in which a certain tone of colour runs all through. Thus you might take the blackberry or other shrub in the autumn, and model your scheme upon it, keeping within the scale of brown to yellow, and never introducing green or grey. Marquetry which seems to suggest painted decoration is apt to look common and vulgar. The work can be polished with beeswax dissolved in warm turpentine and well rubbed with flannel after being brushed with a hard brush.

Stained wood decoration is very effective and is much easier of accomplishment than the work I have described. The wood to be so treated must be light in colour, and pear-tree, sycamore, pine, satinwood—though this would be expensive—and bass-wood are those usually employed. After transferring the design it should be firmly outlined in some dark brown colour, such as burnt sienna and black. The colour should be thinned with turpentine and a little copal varnish, using a rigger. When this outline is dry, the design can be stained with transparent oil colours thinned with turpentine. The tints should be put on evenly with camel hair brushes, and you must avoid going beyond the

outlines. Raw and burnt sienna, Vandyke brown, yellow ochre, and golden ochre, cadmiums, gamboge, Indian yellow, ultramarine, Prussian and indigo blues, terre verte and madder brown will give a wide range of tints. The background itself can be stained dark, leaving the design light.

When the work is finished and dry, and these colours used with turpentine sink right into the wood, it should be French polished. This should be done by a polisher, as it is seldom an amateur can do it well enough. The work must first of all have a coat of spirit varnish, and the polish is—when the varnish is quite hard—put on with rubbers, cotton wool covered with linen. The surface so obtained is much more beautiful than varnish, as it is both brilliant and perfectly smooth.

The designer of inlays must be guided by the method employed to reproduce them. It is obvious that forms which have to be cut out cannot successfully render perspective or foreshortening, except to a very slight degree. The elder in flower was sketched direct from nature, but I was careful to choose a spray which came simply. The flowers are all lumped together, and only the silhouette or general shape reproduced.

In the other design the teazel is the motif, and a very excellent plant it is for the designer. Here again, nature has only been simplified. Insects often help a design and are easily reproduced in marquetry.

REX'S RUBY.

By INA GARVEY.



It was some fifteen or sixteen years ago, in the last Burmese war, the war which added Lower Burma to our Empire, that my poor cousin Rex, as he put it at the time, made his fortune. A Lieutenant in the Middleshire regiment, he did good service throughout the operations, distinguished himself at the taking of Mandalay, got his company—and his ruby.

"I'm fairly off my chump with joy, old fellow," he wrote to my brother from Mandalay. "Things have panned out fine for me in this row; mentioned in despatches, certain of the D.S.O. and a step in rank, the Chief shaken hands with me, and spoken to me in an awfully decent way, and I've made my fortune too! I'll be able to pay off the mortgage on the estate, do up the old Manor House in style, and let mother have all the comforts and luxuries she ought to have had, and never has had. There was any amount of loot when we took this jolly old town; several of our fellows annexed precious stones, but this child's got the most swagger one of the lot—a ruby (Burma's headquarters for rubies, you know) as big as half an egg—a palmful of blood-red light. It was the one eye of a hideous idol, in a small temple in the garden of old Theebaw's palace here, and in the fighting that went on round the palace, 'over went the show,' and it was my luck to find the good old idol knocked into a heap of mud, and relieve him of his eye. He's no good without it, I believe. I'm writing to mother, too, by this mail. Hope to see you all at no distant date. Yours, REX.

"P.S.—My ruby is worth, I'm told, near a hundred thousand of the brightest and best. Good biz! There is also a legend that bad fortune rests on whosoever shall take it from the idol's head. Who's afraid? That is only abstract; rubies are distinctly concrete.—R."

Poor Rex saw us all sooner than he had anticipated when he wrote that joyous letter.

A few weeks after the operations, which culminated in the taking of Mandalay, my cousin sustained a severe sunstroke, and was invalidated home. Let me hasten over the

sad story. Brain fever supervened on the sunstroke, and he arrived in England a wreck in mind and body. His broken-hearted widowed mother met him, and took him back with her to Mainwaring Grange, the old manor house where he was born; and there, virtually insane, he dragged out the remaining months of his life. Whether the ruby was still in his possession, or whether it had been got from him when he became no longer fit to defend it, neither his mother, nor we, his cousins, had any means of knowing. He would mention it frequently in his half delirious wanderings, as having brought bad fortune with it; he would make humble, propitiatory speeches, thinking he was addressing the hideous idol from which he had taken its eye, and would promise to restore the eye to its rightful owner, or to any of his godship's kin that might be in England; but whether he had the jewel yet it was impossible to ascertain, for, at anything like a question on the subject, he grew either violent, or silent and sullen. My poor cousin was active and restless during the first weeks of his sad residence at the old family home, and would roam about the gardens and paddocks of the little estate, often angrily driving away the attendant my aunt had found it necessary to engage for him. But after a time his bodily strength began to fail. I will not linger over the details of his cruel illness. Nine months after his return from India, all that had seemed so joyous, so successful, so full of youth, and hope, and promise already fulfilled, sank, a piteous wreck, into the grave.

My aunt did not long survive. The sorrow attending her son's sad illness, and the shock of his death, developed a fatal disease, to which she succumbed within a year.

At her death my brother and I became possessors of the old family home of the Mainwarings, and of what little personalty my poor aunt and cousin had left. It was very little; and the old house, with its small estate, was so heavily mortgaged, that we decided to let the place, much as we should have liked to live in it ourselves, for it is a sweet place, and only an hour from town, so that my brother could have gone to his business every day quite easily.

"But it's no good thinking of it, Jane," said Frank. "We couldn't keep the place up, let alone pay off the debt on it. We must let it."