

CHAPTER X.

INDIAN PAINTING IN IMITATION OF EBONY AND IVORY.

THIS tasteful and artistic work may be applied to various decorative purposes, being suitable for tables, stands, boxes, brackets, book and card racks, and many other articles made of wood. A chess-table, and box for the chessmen are very ornamental thus made. A smooth white piece of pine may answer for the article, but white walnut or poplar, white-wood, satin-wood or maple, will make a far handsomer piece of work.

Patient care and neatness are all that are required to produce fine specimens of work, which anyone, with a medium share of skill and taste, may readily accomplish.

The wood, to be ornamented, must be rubbed perfectly smooth, and polished.



Fig. 1. Decorative Border.

Patterns of leaves, flowers, butterflies, birds, grasses, shells, etc., must then be cut from white paper, and affixed to the surface of the wood by means of pins, or by pasting.

The surface is to be perfectly black; which is done by rubbing up in a saucer, lamp-black and turpentine, to the consistence of thin cream; and painting the whole surface with a soft camel's-hair varnish-brush; commencing by painting around the edges of the design first with a small brush, then continuing out upon the surface; using care not to touch any parts a second time, until the first coat has dried for ten or twelve hours. Paint until perfectly black; then dry and varnish with superfine Copal. When perfectly dry remove the papers, if pasted, by moistening with clean water. When entirely clean, shade with India ink, stippling in when required, and veining with

dark lines. Allow this to dry, and varnish the design with the fine Copal; and when dry rub down carefully but thoroughly with pumice-stone, finely pulverized, using a wet, soft flannel, and going over the whole surface; wash off with clear water, and when dry, re-varnish, and again rub down, continuing this process until a highly-polished surface is obtained, and using care when the last coat of varnish is applied, to apply it evenly and smoothly, producing an enameled surface of highest finish, equal to Japanese work.

Fig. 1 is a design for a decorative border which may be used for a variety of subjects. The edges of deal book-shelves look very pretty when decorated in

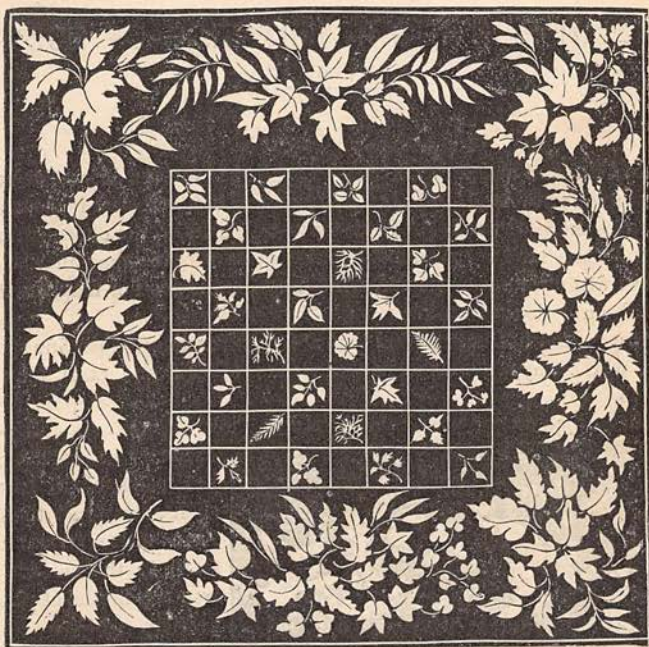


Fig. 2. Chess-Board.

this way, and a pattern of the required kind may be made by first tracing a waved line, and placing on this line, apparently springing from it, tracings from a series of small leaves flattened out for the purpose. Such borders may be adapted from other decorative work to be found in illustrated works of art.

Fig. 2 is a design for a chess-board. The easiest plan is to take a sheet of cartridge-paper, cut the exact size of the table. Enlarge the design of Fig. 1 to the size of the paper, by squares which must be measured with a pair of compasses to get them exact. Draw the lines across at right angles both ways.

When a correct drawing is completed on the paper, if there are many erasures, go over the right outlines with pen and ink. When dry, trace this on clear oil-paper, and transfer to the wood by means of blue, not black, tracing-paper—the article is kept by most stationers, or may be ordered. With a clean, white rag, rub the blue paper well, and remove much of the color before tracing with it. Next with a camel's-hair brush, dipped in India ink, rubbed up in a saucer with water, draw over the outline of the tracing on the table. Shade the flowers or figures with India ink, and finish up with stippling them. The ground is entirely black, put on with a camel's-hair brush charged with lamp-black and a very little indigo mixed in it, to intensify the black. The color is rubbed up in a saucer with water, and used moderately wet. It must not be put on very black at once, but by degrees, never going over the same place a second time till

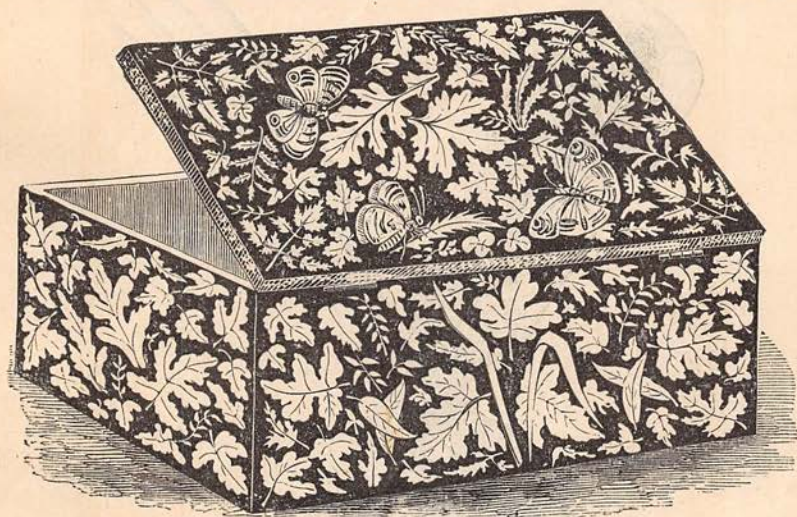


Fig. 3. Fancy Box.

a day has elapsed. Care must be taken not to lose the outline of the design. The ground must be jet-black when finished, and perfectly even in tone. The design requires more shading as the work proceeds; or the shading may be left altogether till the ground is completed. Lastly, varnish it with pure Copal, which should be procured colorless and genuine. It is better, perhaps, to send the chess-board to an artist's colorman to be varnished. A stand and legs to the chess-table may be made and painted black; a cabinet-maker will provide them.

Fig. 3 is a box to be ornamented in the same way; it is suited to hold chessmen, draughtsmen, and a pack or two of cards, and may stand on the table.

Both Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 must be varnished. A cover of wool, or fine, not

coarse, cotton, in crochet or knitting, should usually cover the top of the table, to preserve the varnish from scratches.

The mode of decoration we have described may be applied to a great variety of useful purposes, and many articles of the simplest and cheapest kind may be made to assume a very ornamental appearance by its aid. Leaves and grasses may be selected from the garden, and when flattened out and arranged, be made to supply a large number of highly interesting decorative designs.

WATER-COLOR DRAWING ON WOOD.

The application of this mode of ornamentation can be made almost universal, from a card-table to a pen-holder; the illustrations and explanations we give,

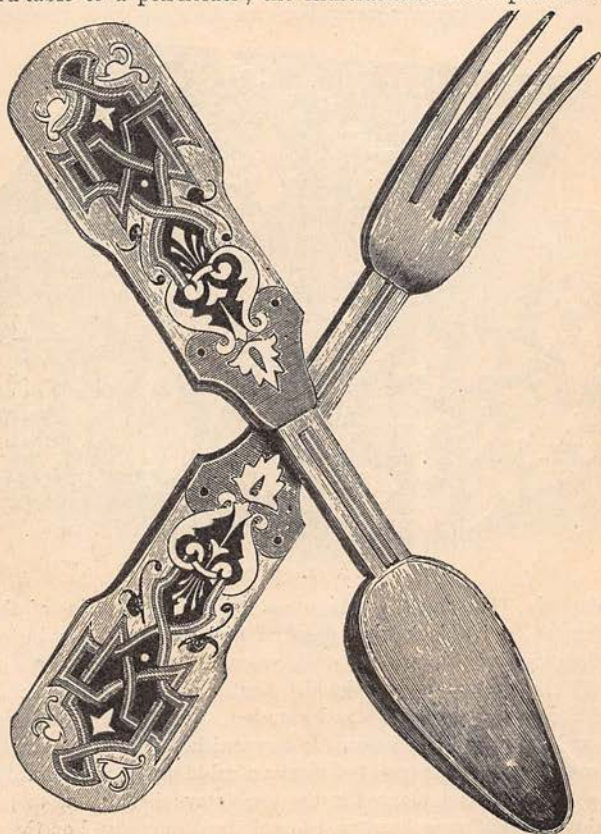


Fig. 4. Salad Spoon and Fork.

will show how the subjects may with the greatest ease and effect be treated in this way. The wood chosen for coloring should be of as hard a quality with as little grain as possible; the former to reduce to a minimum the probability of the color running, which, however, it will do under any circumstances if laid on too moist; and the grain, if prominent and handsome, destroying the effect of artificial ornament, nature being in that, as in everything else, unapproachable. The best surfaces are those of white maple, not the curled or bird's-eye, linden-wood and boxwood. A very little practice will suffice to impart a correct judgment of suitable woods; but by taking pains any surface can be made to answer the purpose.

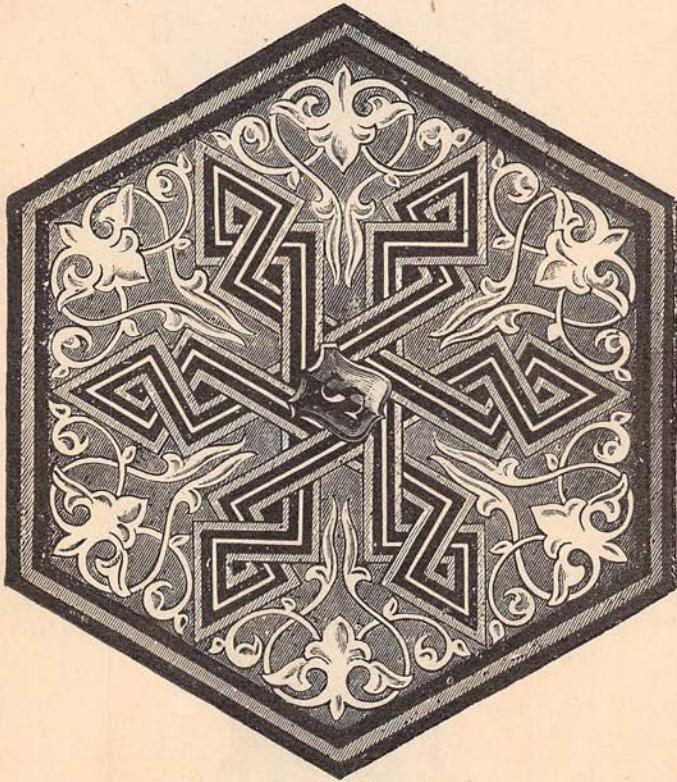


Fig. 5. Top of Boxes 6 and 7.

We give here a suitable subject for the style of art in a salad-spoon and fork, of which the parts painted are made of maple, the remainder of plumbtree-wood. The two parts are usually made to unscrew for convenience of washing. The

design is first drawn in outline with a good pencil, but not so as to injure the surface of the wood, which must not be polished; the spaces left light, and then

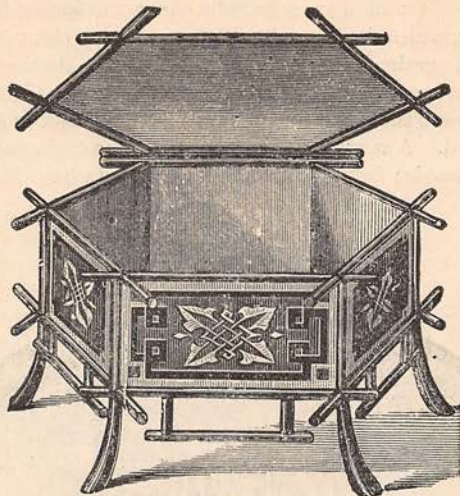


Fig. 6. A Bonbonniere.

carefully filled in with the best cake-white rubbed fine, and the black portions done in the same manner with India ink; while the shaded lines are tinted with sepia.

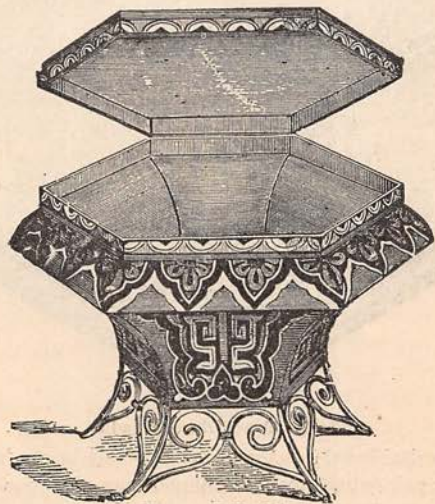


Fig. 7. Toilet-Box.

The remaining portion is either left the color of the wood, or, in the case of a decided grain, is colored with a warm gray. When thoroughly dry, the pencil lines are gone over with a fine mathematical pen and India ink. Should it be found necessary to go over the black portion a second time, it should be done before these final lines are drawn, as they give a finish and decisiveness to the outlines not otherwise attainable. The last, but not least, part of the business now remains, namely, the polishing of the surface that has been colored. This requires extra care and mechanical taste, as the stability of the color depends mainly on its being done thoroughly well, to resist the the action of the moisture.

The polished surface may be cleaned by freely wiping it with a damp cloth, and will sustain no damage therefrom, provided always that it be thoroughly dried and re-polished with a dry one, or piece of wash-leather. Although we should advise beginners to follow the pattern given herewith in their first attempt, less formal ornamentation may advantageously be substituted on future occasions, such as a bouquet of flowers, a wreath, or rustic scene, etc., as the fancy of each may dictate.

Fig. 6 represents a *bonbonniere* made with a frame-work of cane-laths with panels of lime-wood. The design for the top of both Figs. 6 and 7 is given about full size in Fig. 5. The initial or monogram may be replaced by some other design if desired. Fig. 7 is a small toilet-box or work-box, made entirely of maple, and ornamented with painting in the same manner.

PAPIER-MACHE OR JAPANESE LACQUERED-WORK, PEARL INLAYING, ETC.

The exquisite, decorative art-work, introduced into England and this country by the Japanese, has given rise to various beautiful modes of ornamentation, which are unrivaled for profuse enrichment in gold and colors, mingled with the iridescent luster of delicate pearl, and the opalescent hues obtained by silver-foil, which, upon the hard, glossy, black surface, are exhibited in striking beauty.

This imported work had for its foundation, a peculiar dark varnish, which was laid upon hard wood; but the materials of which it was composed, and the secret of its manufacture remained a "sealed book." In order to obtain a substitute, the art of making papier-mache was resorted to, which was found to produce a surface almost equally hard, and capable of receiving as high a state of polish as that obtained by the Eastern prototypes.

It would be impossible in this little treatise, to give a minute description of the mode of manufacturing papier-mache as followed by the large manufacturers, but as some may desire to make a small portion of the article, we add the methods of making an article, which, for all ordinary purposes, answers admirably, and is not difficult to accomplish. The best papier-mache is composed of sheets

of heavy, porous, gray paper, pasted together until of the desired thickness, a flat article requiring three or four sheets, which is then thoroughly saturated with a strong size composed of flour and glue, and put under press until perfectly solid; then placed in a stove or oven and thoroughly dried; the heat being about two hundred degrees Fahrenheit.

If a vase or other cylindrical article is desired, it should have been put in a mold while soft, and must, after baking, be sawed in two, the center cut out, and paper like the preceding pasted over the line of connection; coatings of the mashed paper spread over the whole and baked again.

After the final polishing, the article is soaked in linseed-oil until it has absorbed all it will take up; again dried in a hot oven; when it is ready for its final dressing with files and sand-paper; after this, it is varnished with black varnish, and polished with pumice. If panels are made, they can be sawed, cut, etc., in the same manner as boards.

As in the establishments this work is performed by women, there is no reason why any lady may not thus form a very good article; we have done it with good success.

A more recent method is to take the mashed material, of which paper is composed, porous brown paper will answer, mixed with the size of flour and glue before-named, and pressed into oiled molds or shaped with the hands into desired forms, placed under heavy pressure; baked, and rubbed smooth with sand-paper; then varnished with black varnish, and polished with powdered pumice-stone. But the ornamental painting, pearling, gilding, bronzing, etc., which is applied to papier-mache, may be used upon wood, metal, plaster or other hard surface with almost equal facility.

The first step in this work is to obtain a perfectly smooth, flat and polished surface, which is done by rubbing with the pad dipped first in water, then in powdered pumice; finishing with dry pumice and a soft silk-rubber, or the palm of a smooth, delicate hand.

The colors for this work are mostly of the transparent class; a few touches of dead or opaque color, being occasionally added for effect.

The first step is to make a drawing of the picture or design intended upon thin white paper, marking out the outline and principal lines; prick this with the point of a needle, and it is laid upon the "blank," which the article to be ornamented is called, and a little powdered chalk or whiting is rubbed upon it with a brush or piece of flannel, or a pounce-bag may be shaken upon it, which will answer the same purpose. Upon carefully raising this paper, the design will be found traced upon the blank in minute dots, and can be made more permanent by tracing delicately with an extremely-small camel's-hair brush, dipped in flake or Chinese white.

The colors used in this work are precisely the same as those named in Oriental painting, and the same stand will be found available. With the white

paint greatly diluted, cover all the white flowers with a very thin coat, and when dry give another, and still another, until a solid coat of white is obtained; coat the yellow flowers in the same manner with chrome; the scarlet with a single coat of opaque-scarlet; the leaves pencil with a mixture of chrome-yellow, a little white, and some Prussian blue, using a medium tint first, adding shades with more yellow and white, and touching up the lights with lighter tints of the same.

Having touched the surface of the opaque flowers, the next step is to lay on the transparent shades, provided the former work is dry; should there be roses, pink geraniums, oxalis, or flowers of that kind, use rose-pink with crimson-lake in the dark parts, and white touched upon the lights; blue flowers, such as forget-me-nots, use light blue in the light parts, finished with the same darkened with Prussian blue, in the shades; deep crimson flowers paint crimson-lake; purple flowers make with rose-pink and a little pale blue, and for the deep, rich purple of pansies or violets use crimson-lake and Prussian blue; for lavender use light blue and a trifle vermilion with a dot of white; scarlet, use crimson-lake darkened with a trifle blue in some, and lightened with white in others, and made more or less strong with varnish and turpentine; white flowers must be shaded delicately with neutral tint made of yellow-lake, crimson-lake, and blue weakened with varnish, or with Vandyke brown and light blue likewise weakened, but all colors must all be shaded and touched until the desired effect is obtained; leaves are coated over partially with yellow-lake and Prussian blue; the tints varied to suit the case; for a yellow-green, yellow-lake must be added largely, and for a blue-green, burnt sienna, crimson-lake, and a little yellow; where covered partially with an overhanging flower, touch with Vandyke brown and Prussian blue; vein with Vandyke brown and crimson-lake added; the stamens the same; the anthers touch with chrome-yellow, and dot them with burnt sienna; the veining is improved by lining with yellow against the brown.

Touch up some of the flowers with weak, neutral tints, and white weakened with clear varnish. It is well for a person intending to make this work entirely perfect, to practice in making various figures usually appearing in the course of arranging a design.

Two sized brushes are required for the work; the one with hair half an inch

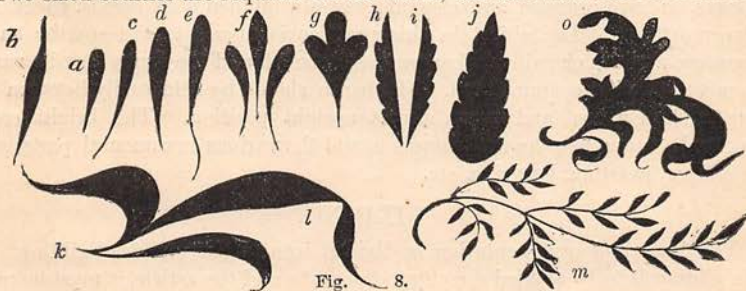


Fig. 8.

long, and the other somewhat shorter; with these and India ink proceed to make a number of figures similar to the following:

The brush, dipped in the ink, is placed upon the paper, at the hair-line A; drawn slowly down, bearing on more heavily in the center, and gradually declining to the point B; a page or more of these should be made until perfect; then make the next one, C, commencing with a heavy stroke, and declining to a hair-stroke; the three following are the same with heavier stroke, F; these formed into a triplet, G; the little stroke made upon commencing a leaf, H; a number of these forming the half of a leaf, I; the same reversed, J; the two formed into a leaf. K is commenced with a hair-stroke, gradually made broader and

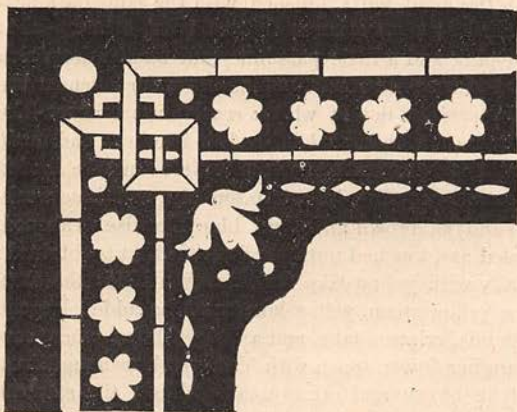


Fig. 9.

Designs in Pearl Inlaying.



Fig. 10.

heavier, and then slowly withdrawn into a graceful hair-stroke; L is the same manipulation, formed into a grass-leaf; M, a cluster of the same; N, a small movement of the same character, arranged as compound leaves; O is a section of a scroll. Practice in forming these various forms and combinations, will soon make it a comparatively easy thing for a person to paint any collection of flowers, or form graceful and elegant groups combined with scrolls, check and diaper patterns. The object in this practice is merely to educate the hand; therefore any ink or paint will answer as material, and the forms may be varied to suit the design contemplated. The brush should be held easily between the fingers, like a pen, and in an almost upright position. The bright colors having been applied, the next step is to add the various ornamental parts, such as gilding, pearling, bronzing, etc.

GILDING.

This branch of ornamentation is divided into bright and dead gilding. As the gilding is to be applied directly to the surface of the article, it must be made

as smooth and bright as possible. For "bright-gilding" boil a few shreds of isinglass in a half-pint of water; let this cool, and with it paint over all those parts of the work intended to be gilded; while the surface is still moist, take up one of the pieces of gold upon the "tip," and using care not to blow the breath upon it, dextrously transfer it to the place it is to ornament, laying it smoothly out, and pressing it upon the moist surface with the "dabber." If any cracks or faults appear, wet first the end of a tracing-point with the lips, and tear off from a leaf of gold a piece just large enough, and lay it over the crack, pressing it down carefully.

If the gold-size becomes too dry, it may be moistened by breathing on it. When perfectly dry, the superfluous gold must be lightly blown off. Generally five or six hours may intervene between the application and burnishing of the gold, and the surface being smooth, the rubbing may be done with ease and rapidity.

Upon some articles it is a pretty change to have the gilding what is called "raised," and a material called in technical *parlance* "Chinese-raising," is sold in the art stores for this purpose; but it may be made as follows: Two parts of white lead, one part of litharge, and part of umber mixed with gold-size, a little turpentine and varnish, rubbed in a paste (use merely sufficient turpentine to form a paste). Put this on the surface with a small brush, having traced the design as before described. When all the parts desired to be raised have received a coat of this paste, let it remain until the following day, when repeat the same again, continuing the operation until the parts are sufficiently raised; this should harden for a week, unless heat is resorted to, when three days or less will suffice. The parts all dry, coat them with gold-size, and proceed with the gilding as directed before. Both kinds of gilding may be used here—the "bright" and "dead" gilding, which will require two separate sizings. Proceed next to touch various parts with gold-size again, and when sufficiently dry, lay on some bronze with a dry brush.

A distinct piece of work may be done with this Chinese raising. The design is traced as previously described, and the "raising" applied as described; then sized, and the bright gilding applied. Fine foliage, trees, shrubs, etc., can be introduced and colored with fine opaque color, made with chrome-yellow and Prussian blue.

A Chinese design is very appropriate and elegant done in this way; various objects introduced, such as figures, buildings, scenery, etc., flowers and foliage can be painted in with white and touched up with bright tints—red, blue, yellow, purple, etc. The gold may be etched with black and shaded with neutral tints. The bronze parts can be stained with transparent green and brown; using sienna in some parts, and shades of crimson bronze in others, with the lake colors. Gold spangles are a fine addition to such a piece, and are applied with varnish, making the work look brilliant and sparkling. Let this dry for a week and finish with varnish.

One of the principal and conspicuous beauties of papier-mache work, is the gilding; and to have this as perfect as possible is of course very important. For



Fig. 11.

the bright gilding, a piece of soft cotton dipped in turpentine and rubbed briskly over it, will greatly increase its brilliancy. Two or three washings with turpentine will be necessary, before the gold will appear perfectly bright; a further polishing with cotton dipped in fine whiting, lightly rubbed, will still further enhance the brilliancy, and by these means the most intricate designs, and the most delicate lines in burnished gold, may be readily executed. A variety of tints of gold, as well as of silver foil, may be applied in the same manner, and this "bright gilding" is the crowning beauty of papier-mache ornamentation.

DEAD GILDING.

This is the "oil-gilding" process, accomplished by using gold-size prepared with oil, etc., and the leaf applied upon a dry ground. "Dead gilding" is very satisfactory in combination with bright gilding, especially when executed in various shades of gold.

Japanese gold-leaf is of two kinds or colors, "deep" and "pale;" the former being alloyed with copper, has a reddish tint, the latter with silver, possesses a yellowish white color.

In "dead gilding" the size is made with a proportion of chrome-yellow added, which is done for two reasons; gold-size being almost transparent, would not show upon the black background, and, also, because the yellow color given by



Fig. 12.



Fig. 13.

the chrome has a tendency to conceal cracks or flaws in the leaf laid upon it; a small portion of fine, clear linseed-oil is added to prevent the work from drying too rapidly. After applying this size to the surface, it is allowed to dry until it is merely "sticky," when the leaf-gold is applied, pressed down firmly with a soft pad, and the edges smoothed and brushed off.

A number of shades of gold, and also silver-leaf, may also be applied in the same manner. As a means of imparting beauty and brilliancy to certain transparent colors, the latter is most particularly valuable. The effect it has in this regard is, in some instances, truly astonishing; for instance, in painting the "eyes" in the bronze spots on a peacock's tail, it imparts that peculiar metallic brilliancy unattainable in any other way; also, in the stained glass of windows, etc., it produces wonderful results.

VARNISHING.

As papier-mache work requires the highest polish and smoothest of surfaces, great care and nicety are required in the finishing. Wipe the painting carefully with a silk handkerchief of the softest texture; and laying the article upon its back, with a flat, soft, camel's-hair brush, entirely free from dust, apply a coat of finest Copal varnish. The varnish must flow smoothly beneath the brush without "dragging," and the entire surface be evenly covered; allow it to remain in the position named, upon its back, until the varnish dries. When entirely dry, which will require a week, give another coat of varnish in the same manner, drying for another week.

Then take a piece of soft flannel or cloth, and make a rubbing-pad, as before described, with which, using moisture and pumice-stone, rub the varnish perfectly smooth, but taking great care not to rub through to the work beneath. Repeat this over and over until the surface is as smooth and glossy as the finest enamel; then, with a soft hand, or a piece of velvet or silk, and a very little oil, burnish finally and effectually; when the surface should present the appearance of a polished mirror.

In applying this style of ornamentation to various articles of furniture, it is not necessary they should be composed of papier-mache, as this style of painting is equally beautiful for wood, metal, plaster, etc.

Exquisite little fancy tables may be made by painting, varnishing, and polishing any article of the kind. Frequently the old attic or lumber-room, or that never failing resort, the "auction-room," will furnish treasures in this line, and we have seen a suite of bed-room furniture, consisting of the complete set of twelve pieces, purchased at an auction for fifty dollars, for which a lady refused five hundred dollars, after finishing it in papier-mache style, and with exceedingly simple designs; for a set completed with gilding and pearling would be worth four times that price, a small table costing fifty dollars. The examples we give, Figures 8 to 14, are suggestive of many ways to decorate furniture, etc.

Then, again, the work is so fascinating, that we feel inclined to urge upon any lover of the beautiful, to make an attempt to achieve some of the victories to be won in this art, which is capable of such astonishing and satisfactory results; for the trophies they may exhibit would prove sufficiently valuable to atone for all the labor.



Fig. 14. Design for Pearl Inlaying.