

CHAPTER IV.

BRACKETS, SHELVES, MANTELS, ETC.

WITH the saw and other tools described in chapter on "Picture-Frames, Etc.," many elegant and tasteful articles may be made wherewith to adorn the house



Fig. 1.

CARVED WALNUT BRACKET WITH ARTIFICIAL ORNAMENTS.

Cut a shelf 10 x 6 inches in semi-circular form, with five scallops on the front edge, as shown at A, Fig. 1. Cut, also, two small braces 3 1-2 x 2 1-2 inches, as

and surroundings of those who love beautiful things; and when added to fret-work, carving, etc., and the various lovely objects of natural formation, such as are used for rustic work, and the exquisite artificial wood-carvings just described, it would appear almost a matter for censure for any one who desires to make home and its surroundings beautiful, not to furnish themselves with these "home-made" elegancies, which are within the reach of all, poor, as well as rich. We begin our descriptions of these articles with that most popular addition to every house, in this day, brackets; and will first explain the method of making a

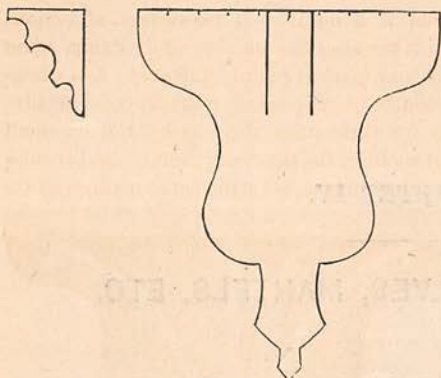


Fig. 2.

This is a very rich and tasteful bracket, and may be handsomely gotten up at but little cost. If desired, the ornaments may be carved by hand.

IMITATION MARBLE BRACKET.

These brackets are appropriate for marble or bisque statuettes, plaster casts,

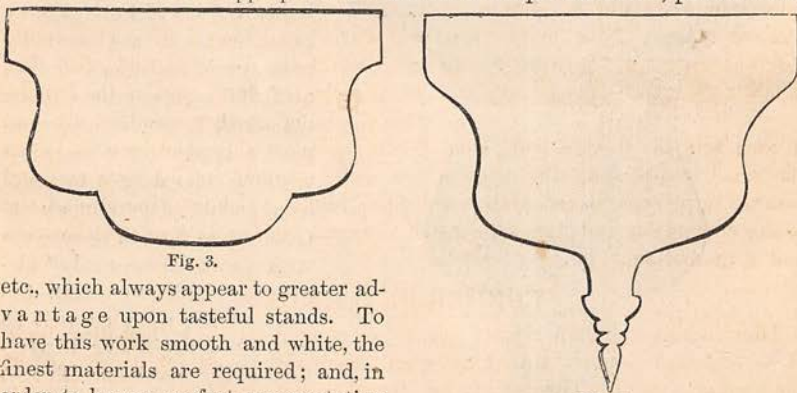


Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

etc., which always appear to greater advantage upon tasteful stands. To have this work smooth and white, the finest materials are required; and, in order to have a perfect representation of marble, great care is required in executing and arranging. The brackets here described as a sample, are intended to hold statuettes four feet high. They are made as follows: Obtain a rough pine skeleton of a bracket; shelf, eighteen inches long, twelve inches deep, and one inch thick, cut in ornamental shape Fig. 3; also, a bottom piece sawed out of inch wood of the shape Fig. 4. Cover these with white muslin or linen, the whiter the better, tacked smoothly over every part. Make a quart of nice smooth paste in which an ounce of white glue has been stirred (after dissolving); paste three pieces of the muslin together

drying under a heavy weight, cut from it a number of rose-leaves of various sizes, with the molds used for wax-work, pressing the muslin while damp, upon the wrong side so firmly that each vein and mark is plainly indented; add white-covered wire for stems, either sewing them or pasting between the layers of muslin. Cut, also, as if for wax flowers, petals for three roses, three large and six small buds; also a number of rose-buds, and mold in the same way, rolling and curling the rose-petals with the wooden or steel molding-tools in the same manner as for wax flowers, fastening together with white glue and a few stitches. Screw the shelf firmly to the bottom or back, and with three pieces of wooden hoop made smooth, form the supports, cutting them to arch inward from the shelf to the point at the bottom of the back, as in Fig. 5; cover with raw cotton, over which place muslin, and wind a white cord around them like a spiral coil, as in Fig. 6. Mix a

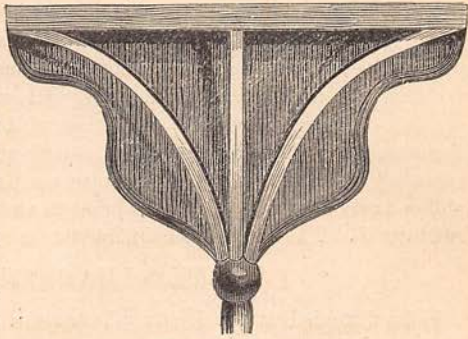


Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.

little at a time, of the finest "plaster of Paris," in which a little clear white glue has been dissolved, and with this, paint smoothly every part of the foundation. Mixing another quantity, dip into it each leaf, the flowers, buds, etc. When perfectly white and smooth, fasten the small leaves along the edge of the shelf, commencing at each end and making them cross in the center; coil them, also, as a slender vine around the braces or supports, and place a cluster of the roses, buds and leaves at each corner and at the bottom.

CORNER-BRACKETS.

These admit of even a greater amount of ornamental work than those for a plain surface, inasmuch as they necessarily have side-pieces, for the support of the shelf or shelves. The designs for carved corner-brackets are numerous in number and variety. Some with a single shelf, others with two and three; some with solid sides, and ornamented with heavy work in relief; others so carved as to appear like a mere net-work of intricate designs, or vines, leaves, and flowers. We offer some beautiful designs, hoping to induce some tasteful person to practice in the work of wood-carving, and improve upon the mere suggestions offered here.

GILT CORNER-BRACKET.

Make a shelf one-third of an inch thick, rounded upon the front edge; take

four stiff pieces of card-board, which cut to fit the sides of the shelf, and run, when placed together, to a point above and below the shelf. Cut the edges in small scallops, and within these any pretty design, such as scrolls, stars, Maltese crosses, etc. Cut a narrow strip for edge of the shelf, scalloping it upon each edge. Take fine, heavy gilt paper, and damp the wrong side with smooth flour paste, in which a little glue has been boiled; cut all the pieces a little larger than the part they are to cover, in order to fold over the edges and fasten along upon the "wrong side." Press every part perfectly smooth with a clean, soft napkin, and edge with the narrow gilt paper, sold for a cent or two per yard, by the dealers in fancy stationery. Make a gilt ornament for each corner, and the points at top and bottom of back, by pasting the gilt upon stiff brown paper; cut into rounded pieces, like the petals of a large, single round flower, gluing them around a little circular piece of card, and placing a fancy button in the center; glue these firmly in their proper positions. This forms a showy bracket, and is easily constructed. If the paper is varnished with Demar varnish it will not tarnish. The shelf may be painted or covered with paper.

GILT LEAF-BRACKET.

Make two shelves, the lower one one-third larger than the upper. Cut stiff card-board to extend above the upper shelf (behind) sufficiently to run up to a graceful point, and continuing down between the two shelves; run below, in the same manner; make strips to pass along the front of each shelf, the upper line even with the top of shelf, the lower an inch below. Cover all the card with any light paper. Cover some thick, brown paper with the best plain gilt-paper, making it perfectly smooth. Cut from it, when dry, a number of square pieces; some one inch, others half an inch square, which, fold down the middle from point to point; then fold again, round off one corner and make a plait in the other end, thus forming a leaf; commencing at the point above, glue these leaves upon the back of the bracket, laying one row over the ends of the preceding, until the bottom point is reached; make gilt leaves of two sizes, laid one in the other, and fasten all round the edge; form full rosettes of the leaves by sewing or gluing a number of the large ones upon the edge of a circular piece of card with small ones in the center; which, fasten at the points (top and bottom), also at the corners of the shelves. Fasten a double row of leaves along the edges of the shelves; large ones below and small ones above, finishing with narrow gilt paper. Screw the shelves against the back (through the wrong side of the back), and hang by cords passed through holes in both shelves.

BOOK-RACKS.

Besides the tiers of shelves in the library, and large enclosed book-case in the ordinary sitting-room, it is frequently a great satisfaction and convenience to have a convenient place for the few books in daily use. And as beautiful

objects are always more pleasing than merely ordinary and "homely" ones, we append descriptions of two or three pretty book-racks and shelves, which will be found to be both tasteful and convenient.

MARBLE-CROSS BRACKET.

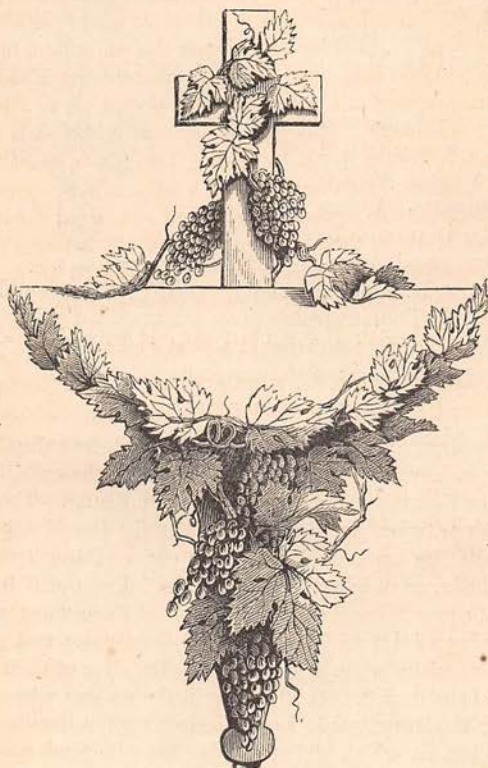


Fig. 7.

The back of this cross must be made of hard white wood, in shape of an ornamental cross painted white, and when perfectly dry sized with white glue and covered with muslin. To this, fasten a shelf, cut from inch-thick wood, and from edge to the bottom of the back which is cut as broad as the shelf at top, and running to a point, lay the stiffened muslin (described in making the "Marble Bracket") in fluted folds, broad and deep at the top, and gathered to a cluster at the bottom; paint all with the plaster of Paris; make three clusters of grapes by tying small white marbles in muslin, with stems of white wire; also, vine-leaves of three sizes, from the stiff muslin; dip all separately

into the liquid plaster and dry. Cluster a bunch of grapes and two leaves with a spray upon the lower point, and one likewise at each corner, with a vine of small ones along the edge of the shelf; ornament the cross with a delicate vine.

Should this work become soiled, a coat of the plaster will restore it to its original pristine purity and whiteness. Unless examined closely, it cannot be distinguished from genuine marble. The plaster hardening rapidly, only a small portion should be mixed at a time. A coat of thin Demar varnish gives the marble a glossy appearance and prevents its soiling so easily; but should not be applied if at all yellow, as it will mar the pure, snowy whiteness of the composition.



Fig. 8.

COTTAGE BOOK-RACK.

Obtain from a dry-goods store three boards such as calico, etc., are rolled upon, selecting graduated sizes. Bore holes through the ends, two at each end, in such a manner that the cords will hang perpendicular. The first shelf will thus have an inch or two of margin at each end; the second only one, and in the third, or top shelf, the cords will be at the edge. Cover these shelves with brown glazed muslin, or stain and varnish them. From stiff brown paper, cut several dozens of square pieces, which, round off at the corners, and fold in box plaits, thus forming a leaf; stiffen with thick flour paste and glue, and dip in Japan, or Copal varnish; when dry, tack along the edge of shelves, commencing at the ends; fold one over the other, ending in the center; where place a rosette, made by sewing the leaves, made in three sizes, upon a circular piece of paper. Take strong twine, on which string spools (No. 40), placing button-molds between each spool, either two or more, putting the flat sides together. Then, having spools and molds upon four strings, pass one end of each through the four holes in lower shelf; securing with a knot, hidden by a tassel made of the smallest button-molds. Sufficient spools placed upon the twine to make a proper distance between the two shelves, place the second shelf in place; and passing the string through the holes, string spools of No. 50 upon them, and smaller sized button-molds,—then place the third shelf in position in the same manner, and string very small spools and molds upon the cords; finishing with tassels similar to those below. The spools and molds must all be stained and varnished. This forms a beautiful set of shelves.

BRACKET IN CONE-WORK.—MATERIALS.

Beech-nut hulls, pine cones, acorns, fruit-stones, etc., card-board, moire paper, a small plate of wood, glue, and varnish. These brackets are especially pretty on each side of a looking-glass. Our model consists of a little wooden shelf eight inches long at the back, four inches wide, and rounded at the front; to this

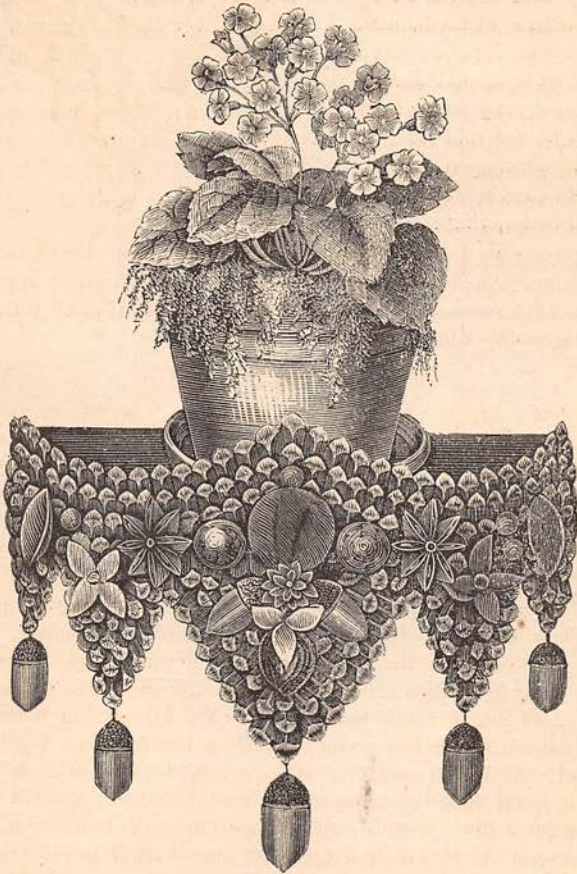


Fig. 9.

is attached the lambrequin of card-board covered with brown moire paper; the shape may be easily seen from the illustration. The cone-work is glued on in the usual manner, tasteful bouquets being arranged of beech-nuts, pine cones, acorns,

apricot stones and the like. The points of the lambrequin are decorated with acorns depending on a wire loop. When finished, cover with good varnish.

CHINESE SHELF.

This pretty hanging shelf, although simple in construction, is, nevertheless, very elegant and tasteful in appearance. It is intended to be one of a pair, with little stands beneath, made to correspond with the shelves. The shelf being a corner one, is of course, a triangle; the front of which should be a gracefully-rounded curve, and decorated upon the upper surface with the curious figures and designs peculiar to Chinese adornments. These may be procured in sheets, such as are sold for Potichmanie work. These must be carefully cut around and pasted upon the shelf, which is then varnished; along the edge is a deep band of card-board, cut upon the lower part in square points, as seen in the diagram below, thus :

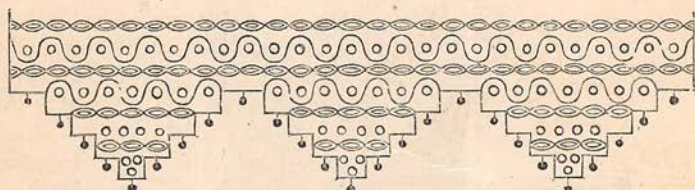


Fig. 10. Chinese Shelf.

Upon each point is suspended, by a bright-colored, delicate silken cord, a little gilt bell, or button; holes are made in the back and two front corners, through which bright-colored cord is passed, for suspension. These should be long, in order to hang gracefully; a bunch of tassels is placed at the top where the cords meet. * * * * * Elegant shelves are made by covering the shelf with velveteen, reps, brocatelle, or other rich material; and ornamenting the edge with pieces of the ornamental gilt and walnut cornice-moldings. With heavy silken cords and tassels, these shelves are highly ornamental; whether arranged as side or corner shelves; especially with "*hour-glass stands*" covered with the same material and ornamented in the same style, placed beneath them. Corner-stands and shelves of this kind are particularly appropriate and beautiful for a tastefully-furnished chamber, or morning-room. They are at once inexpensive and tasteful when covered with light chintz, braided in bright colors; or, with deep-colored material, pink, blue, or crimson paper-cambric, and covered with Swiss or tarlatan, with ribbon bows and quillings.

A CORNER BOOK-RACK.

Have secured two shelves, the lower one two-thirds larger than the upper one, allowing the one, perhaps, to be eighteen inches on the sides, the other six inches.



Fig. 11. Corner Book-Rack.

Cut out two side-pieces of card-board, thirty-six inches long and of the form shown in the diagram; marking it off into three divisions; one part, twelve inches, to be below the large shelf, and to extend one inch beyond it, running to a point in the corner; the second extending between the two shelves, and, diminishing in size upward, is eighteen inches in length; and the point above the little upper shelf six inches. These pieces are cut out in an ornamental scroll on the edges as shown by the diagram. The lower shelf intended for books, and upper one for vase of flowers or pot with vine or trailer, are stained with umber and varnished; as, also, the card-board. When dry, the shelves have holes bored in each corner, and are glued to the side. Cords are passed through the holes in the shelves, and knots made beneath each shelf in order to aid in supporting them; and a bunch of tassels hangs above the upper shelf, against the card-board. This is an extremely graceful and elegant shelf; especially, when a pretty ornamental glass with trailing vine is placed upon the upper shelf which falls in long sprays almost to the one beneath; intended for books, work-basket or other articles, necessary in a sitting-room or chamber.

RUSTIC CORNER-BRACKET.

This frame may be made of pine boards for the shelves, and stiff pasteboard sides. Paint or stain with umber or Vandyke brown in vinegar, then rubbed smooth with sand-paper and varnished with Copal. When card-board is used for the sides, it becomes necessary to have cords for suspending, passed through the shelves, and secured with a knot below each shelf. Thin wood for sides obviates this necessity. Form a beading along the edge of the sides or back, with peach-stones, cut in two (these within the line), upon the edge, cherry-stones,

stained. Draw a design with crayon upon the surface of the sides ; which cover, as the taste may dictate, with scales from pine cones, paw-paw, seed apple, water-melon, musk-melon, and tamarind seed ; arranged in such a manner that the various colors will contrast or harmonize well, as the case may be. By dusting black pepper, or coal-dust upon the varnished surface, the various pieces may be glued perfectly tight. Some parts of the design may be made more beautiful by imitations creased upon the surface of the wood with hot iron ; which will give various shades of black and brown that appear like inlaid wood. Small cones, acorns, lichen, and pieces of bark, cut into shape and dried under press, may also be introduced with good effect.

Another tasteful mode of ornamenting this bracket is by using nuts of various kinds : thus, for the beading, the glossy brown "chinquapins," and smallest of filberts, with pecans, Brazil-nuts, English walnuts, chestnuts, shell-barks, black walnuts, and acorns, cut in two, and grouped upon the side pieces in fanciful designs, filled up with scales from pine cones, or coffee berries ; and clusters of whole nuts at the corners.

Shells, of various kinds, arranged with artistic taste, form a beautiful corner-piece, and these present so many fine shades and colors, that they can readily be so combined as to give beautiful designs of mosaic patterns.

SHELVES WITH LAMBREQUINS.

The highly-ornamental shelves, now so popular with draperied hangings are, perhaps, more graceful and rich than any others. The modes of ornamenting lambrequins are multiplied ; from a simple Swiss muslin, adorned in rustic style with autumn leaves, to rich silk velvet with heavy gold embroidery.

A corner shelf, covered with green reps, and trimmed across the front with a rich brown lambrequin, with application embroidery of green, is exceedingly beautiful ; Oak leaves are cut from green velvet, a cluster of large ones in the center, with small ones at the sides ; the leaves fastened with stitching, done in button-hole stitch, of silk of a deeper shade, and acorns in silk embroidery with two shades of brown, darker than the foundation ; the edge finished with fringe, and tassels at the corners, with long suspension cords and a bunch of tassels at the top. Another handsome one is made of purple velvet, with an embroidery of pearl and crystal beads. The design is drawn upon tracing-paper, and pricked through ; then powder, dusted upon it, will leave the design, in white, upon the velvet. It is then traced around with working-cotton, and various flowers and leaves raised with it, by stitching it loosely, backward and forward, until of sufficient height ; the beads are then strung and sewed upon the flowers, etc., which makes a deep hollow in the center, in which a large pearl bead is fastened ; a heavy bead fringe, and silken cords and tassels finish it.

Another mode of adorning these lambrequins is by means of pictures in Decalcomanie. Exceedingly lovely scenes, bouquets, etc., are so printed that when transferred to even dark surfaces, they appear perfectly distinct; and a fine view, or rich bouquet or basket of flowers, with lovely garlands around the edges, or beautiful faces, and rich borders in mosaic upon a bright silk foundation is, perhaps, as beautiful a mode as can be employed.

CLOCK-SHELF.

As clocks vary greatly in size, as a general rule, the back should be about an inch wider than the clock to be accommodated. Cut this in some tasteful shape, and saw two triangular pieces as braces, upon which the shelf is to rest. Fasten these to the back, which may project very slightly above them, in order to fasten against the shelf (B); make the supports six inches long at the back;

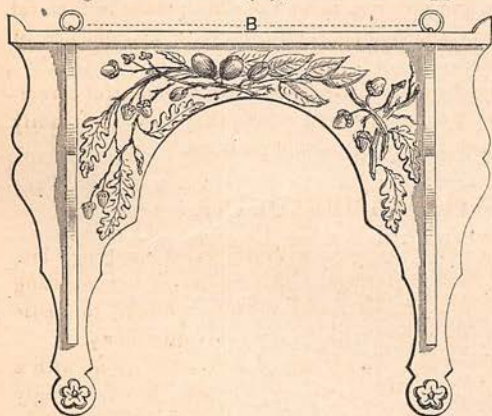


Fig. 12. Clock-Shelf.

screw the shelf securely against the back and upon the braces; saw the back between the braces, and under the shelf, in an arch. This forms a secure foundation, upon which any kind of ornamentation may be placed. A pretty one consists of a beading, formed of the hard circular tops from dried poppy seed-vessels, which, when varnished, look precisely like exquisitely-carved wood. This along the edge of shelf, around the arch beneath (on back),

and upon the edges of supports; groups of small leather-leaves and clusters of berries, made from cherry-seed, or a group of nuts, upon the center of arch; and also, on the bottom of supports, smaller clusters of the same. When done ornamenting, varnish with Copal. A combination of leather-leaves, nuts and acorns is pretty; also, the brown paper leaf-work, or shells and coral; or an inlaid pattern in mosaic; chains of strung cloves, or sections of cherry-stones form a beautiful addition, festooned around the shelf, hanging in long pendant loops and ends, with a tiny basket cut from a stone, as a finish on each. When such a shelf is formed of pine wood, it may be made really beautiful by covering every portion of it with the scales of pine cones; forming a beading of small cones, halved, and ornamenting with groups of large cones and leaves formed of scales glued upon brown pasteboard, cut into appropriate shapes.

It is always in good taste to adapt the shelf to the style of clock to be placed

upon it. The ordinary walnut clocks may be ornamented to correspond with the shelf; and thus a plain, and perhaps, homely, piece of furniture may be changed into one of great beauty. We have seen a clock of marble, upon a scallop-shell, with statuette of Venus upon the summit, which had a lovely shelf made for it, perfectly adapted to its artistic style.

It consisted of a shelf of pine, rather larger than bottom of clock, with piece below the shelf at the back; against which, two inches within the shelf, the supports were placed. This back was covered with a layer of putty spread upon it while damp with glue, upon which was arranged small shells, in flowers, leaves, etc., filled in with tiny rice-shells. The roses were made of the pretty pink rose-leaf shells, as described in chapter on Shell-Work, the leaves of long, narrow shells, fastened upon card-board foundations. Each rose has in its center, a tiny china doll-head; the crimson ones with dark hair, the white and bluish-colored ones with the golden or flaxen-haired bisque kind. A border or vine of these shell-flowers was arranged around the arch, a large rose forming the center, the wreath diminishing to the bottom; a pretty border of shells was arranged along the edge of the shelf, down the front of the brackets, etc.; and a pretty, chubby bisque doll placed upon the front, under the shelf, above the wreath on the arch, and formed into a little marine god, with wings of pretty shells of suitable shape; and either seated upon a pretty shell or riding in a conch-shell, surrounded by pieces of coral and rock with shells and other marine treasures.

Another elegant shelf for such a clock is made by covering a plain, pine frame-work with white muslin, sewing loops of twine, candle-wick or crochet-cotton upon it, and suspending it in a solution of alum, until handsomely crystallized; upon this arrange sprays of white and scarlet coral, shells, and pretty pebbles and stones. Select two tiny bisque dolls, upon which place shell-wings, and a girdle or sash of smallest rice-shells strung upon thread, using a sufficient number of rows to hang almost to the knees; fasten two shells of appropriate size and shape at the termination of each brace, and fasten the little sea-gods in them or upon them with cement. Form a sea-nymph of one of the exquisite blonde dolls that may be found in bisque; and fastening a cluster of beautiful pearl shells upon the front of the under part of the shelf, arrange the nymph to appear as if rising out of them. Among the shells in the collections for sale, some may be found so delicate as to appear like silken scales; others of pearl, with lovely opalescent hues, that look as if the sun's rays were constantly shimmering and quivering upon them with all the bright hues of the rainbow. These, and many others should be selected as appropriate for the dress and adornment of the figures. Strung (through the minute holes pierced through them) upon threads of fine wire, they may be arranged to appear like dresses of opalescent pearl woven under the sea-waves by fairy mermaids. Another suitable and exceedingly lovely material for such part of the work are the bright, pearly fish-scales. When a suitable figure can be procured, of a rather weather-beaten old sea-

voyager, Neptune may be portrayed riding in his chariot of shells, drawn by a sea-monster, with trident in his hand, etc. As these clocks of ornamental character are costly, it may be well to suggest that a very satisfactory and tasteful one may be formed by using an ordinary clock; and, covering with shells, upon a foundation of putty or shell cement. By placing large shells in proper positions, with beading of small ones, of uniform size, along the edges, larger ones within, and clusters of flowers in conspicuous positions, an elegant clock is formed, from rather homely materials.

MANTEL WITH LAMBREQUIN.

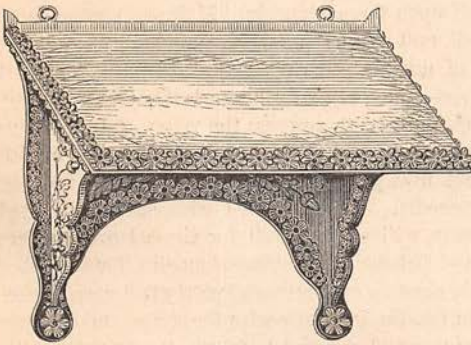


Fig. 13.

As marble, or even iron mantels, are comparatively expensive, it is desirable to form such useful appendages to a room in some way that will at once be within our means, and tasteful, as well. When iron brackets may be procured, they are perhaps more desirable than any others; but those of wood may be made more ornamental, and can be so formed as to be quite as strong. The heavier and longer the brackets, the more rich and ornamental may the work be made; for a mantel five feet long by eighteen inches to two feet deep, the brackets should be eighteen inches long and sixteen inches on the top. They may be sawed out of hard wood, such as walnut or oak, or of pine, stained in imitation of dark wood, or covered with veneering. Handsome mantel-brackets are made by covering the face with a vine of grape, ivy, or convolvulus-leaves of leather, with clusters of grapes, flowers or berries at the base, to correspond with the leaves; cover the shelf with reps or moreen, to correspond with the furniture, placing a row of fringe along the edge, fastened with gilt-headed tacks.

Another mode is to cut the brackets in graceful shape of pine; rub smooth with fine pumice or emery paper, and decorate with vine or "spatter-work;" screw the shelf securely on them, and cover with scarlet or any colored material desired, finishing the front with lambrequin. This may be richly embroidered with silk, or "applique," upon the material, or canvas used for the lambrequin, and embroidered in the German style.

For a chamber, these lambrequins may be made of chintz or cambric, corresponding with the covering of furniture and bed; and for summer, white pique, or solid, gay-colored cambrics, with over-covers of Swiss, are deliciously cool and

tasteful looking; and for dining-room, a lambrequin embroidered with designs of fruit, game, etc., is appropriate and elegant.

For a tasteful but inexpensive parlor, an elegant mantel is made thus: Cut two semi-circles of pine wood, twelve inches long by eight inches deep at the broadest point, of "inch stuff." Make two triangles, sixteen inches long by eight inches wide; cover these with close, stout, white muslin, tacking it on perfectly smooth. Have a strip of smooth board, five feet long and eighteen inches broad, sawed out at the lower part, in two arches, forming a point in the center; cover this also smoothly with the muslin: also a shelf two inches longer, and twelve deep, of "one-inch stuff." Nail the back in proper position against the wall, then the brackets against it, placing them one inch within the edge of the back, nailing the shelf upon them securely. Make a quart or more of smooth, flour paste, boiling well, and adding a half-pint of clear, white glue; paste together three thicknesses of muslin, press perfectly smooth, and from it cut a number of oak and ivy leaves—using the wax-flower leaf-molds—pressing them upon the molds while damp, in order to impress the veins and markings on the surface.* Take wire as thick as a knitting-needle, which cover with narrow strip of the cotton wound neatly around. Make tendrils by twining crochet-cotton around a knitting-needle. White-covered wire, such as is used for the same purpose in wax flowers, will answer well for these leaves; pieces two inches long should be inserted between the layers of muslin, for fastening them together. Obtain, also, a few clusters of acorns and pretty twigs, and make bunches of berries by tying peas in muslin, inserting wire for stems, and forming into clusters. These preparations finished, proceed to fasten the ivy along the front edge of the shelf, commencing at each end, and covering the stem of the last by the point of the next, arranging them carelessly in double row; when the two vines meet in the center, form a cluster of the largest leaves, and arrange berries among them; place a few clusters of berries also among those along the edge.

For the under-piece, or back, beneath the shelf, which is shaped like Fig. 14, cut a piece of the thick, three-doubled muslin, of the shape of the board, but three times as long, which, fold into fluted plaits at the point, sewing them together longitudinally, not flat; then, securing to the point with a strong nail, draw these plaits out to the points where the shelf and brackets meet it, in wide fluted plaits. Make a quantity of edging by plaiting together long strips of stiffened muslin, which tack with small gimp-tacks along the edges requiring covering. At the point where the plaits

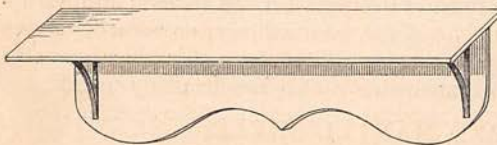


Fig. 14.

*The outside of the leaves might better be of fine jaconet or cambric, as this will retain the impress better.

are collected, group a number of oak leaves and acorns, with a few sprays of ivy; the same, of smaller-sized leaves, etc., at the bottom brackets, with vine of ivy, and clusters of berries along the face of same. When all are arranged, having some fine French plaster, mixed with a little white-glue water to the consistency of thick cream, proceed to paint every part of the work with the wash; using for the purpose, a round, fine-bristled varnish brush for the leaves, etc., and a broad, flat brush, for the flat parts; a very small bristle brush may be required for some fine parts. When finished, allow to dry; then give a second coat, using the wash thinner.

By using potters'-clay with glue, instead of plaster, the work will appear the color of the celebrated "Roger's Groups" of statuary, and is beautiful for dining-room or chamber mantel-shelves.

In any case, the work is intended to appear, as much as possible, like carved marble or stone; therefore, the ornamental parts must not be crowded nor added too profusely, as this would not only spoil the effect, but appear artificial.

Should the work become soiled, it may be renewed by a coat of the wash. The wash or paint should be used thin; as, if too heavy, it will cover the beautiful veining in the leaves, and otherwise mar the fine effect by appearing heavy and rough.

An exceedingly dazzling white is produced by using the paint, the recipe for which is given below. If, while damp, a slight sprinkle of the very finest "*diamond powder*" is dusted lightly upon the surface, the brilliancy is greatly increased; and where rooms are desired very brilliant for an evening entertainment, nothing can be conceived which will produce such an exquisitely lovely effect as brackets, lamp or candle stands, flower-shelves, etc., made as here described; which will appear like frosted marble, and reflect from the crystal ornaments, thousands of glittering sparks like gems of fire. Sprays of flowers, and long garlands of leaves may be thus formed, and twined about chandeliers, or festooned around windows, or wreathed about pillars; and change an otherwise plain and unpretending room, to a scene fairy-like in its array of fantastic and glittering beauty, and ethereal in the purity and exquisite loveliness of the white frosted ornaments.

For festivals, fairs, or other occasions, large flowers and leaves or other ornaments may be made as directed above, richly frosted and fastened upon various parts of the curtains, walls or tables, and form an inexpensive and yet wondrously-brilliant effect. Small and delicate garlands, for ornamenting cakes, fruit-stands, and other table decorations, are equally beautiful.

BRONZED MANTEL-SHELF.

This shelf is made of either black walnut or pine wood. The brackets (or braces) are sawed out in an ornamental design as in Fig. 15. The shelf is not cut straight along the front, but is curved as in Fig. 18, and finished with a

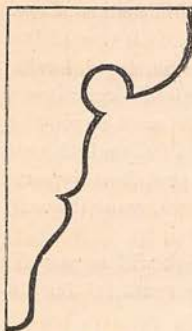


Fig. 15.

molding. There is a back slab beneath the shelf, which is also cut in ornamental shape, with a point in the center. The shelf and brackets sawed out, of suitable size, make a paste of flour and common glue, with sufficient burnt umber to color a brown. With this paste, fasten together from four to six thicknesses of brown muslin, which, when partially dry, press perfectly smooth with a warm iron; cut from this stiff muslin a number of ornamental leaves, similar to Fig. 16, fluting them, and gathering together into a close cluster at the bottom. Cut out, also, an ornament like Fig. 17, greatly enlarged, making four of them five inches in diameter (the smallest); pass these through a fluting-iron, and gather the narrow parts into a cluster; placing a cluster of leaves and a

flower in the center as a finish. The wood-work is rubbed very smooth, and the brackets screwed against the back, with the shelf fastened securely upon them. The entire work is then painted with the liquid bronzing sold in bottles, at the art emporiums.*

This done, arrange the fluted leaves upon the edges of the brackets, around the lower part of the back and upon the edge of the shelf, which should be one inch wide below the molded edge; if it is not convenient to use a heavy inch plank, a half inch one will answer, perhaps better, and an edge may be made of the stiffened muslin, or a strip of heavy pasteboard.

The fluted ornamental leaves must be fastened to the point of back below the shelf, and clusters of leaves of smaller size at the point of each bracket. When all the ornaments are fastened on, they must be painted with the bronze, using a large camel's-hair brush.

If preferred, large heads may be glued upon the center of the fluted leaves, with small ones in the cluster of leaves on the brackets, fluting them to correspond with the rest of the ornaments. This mantle is exceedingly beautiful and chaste, and the imitation is so perfect, that many are entirely

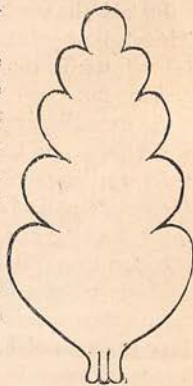


Fig. 16.



Fig. 17.

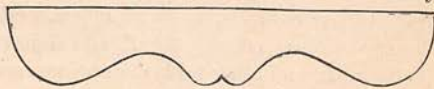


Fig. 18.

deceived, supposing at a first glance that it is solid bronze. Brackets ornamented

*It will require from a pint to a quart to bronze one mantle (according to size), but when finished, the work is so elegant and richly ornamental, as to fully compensate for the comparatively trifling cost of the bronzing.

in this style are very suitable for holding various elegant articles, such as statuettes, cigar-holders, vases, etc., which are made of bronze.

If at any time the work becomes marred, a touch with the bronzing immediately restores it, and makes all bright and well again.

HANGING-SHELF WITH LAMBREQUIN.

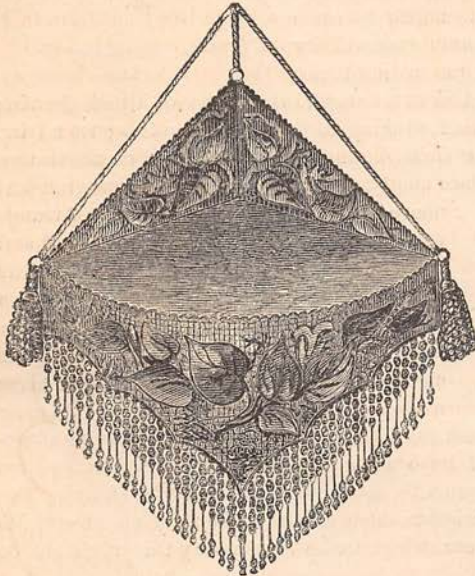


Fig. 19.

the same manner, with beads and zephyr, but upon much finer canvas. Cord finishes the edges of the top, and a heavy bead fringe the bottom, of the lambrequin.

This shelf is designed for a corner, and will be found a most tasteful as well as useful addition to a sitting-room or bed-chamber, for the purpose of holding a few favorite books, a work-basket, etc.

The shelf A, Fig. 21, is of triangular form, rounded outward in front; dimensions, 14 x 18 inches; the side-piece B, Fig. 22, is 8 x 14, and C, Fig. 20, is the lambrequin, extending along the front. The design is worked in cross-stitch embroidery on coarse canvas; the ground-work of which is filled in with crystal beads, one on every thread—four to every stitch of embroidery. The side-pieces are embroidered in the

RUSTIC BRACKET.

This may be termed an "impromptu" bracket, as it is quickly made from

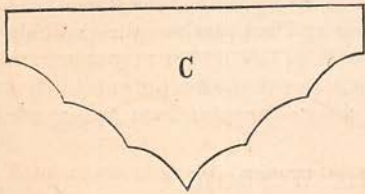


Fig. 20.

materials gathered about any country home. The half of a keg or barrel cover answers for the shelf, which must be neatly "sandpapered" and painted. A section of a hoop, or rather three of them, will answer for the supports, treated in the same manner; then nailed to the shelf and to the back, which is a piece of thin board twenty-four inches long and as broad as the length of the shelf, in the center sloped to a point, above and below, in a curve. Cover this

back entirely with pieces of thin bark, with the white silvery moss upon it, first giving all the wood a coat of black pepper or coal dust, sprinkled on with glue made of the consistency of syrup. Nail little gnarled pieces of root, branches and twigs, and pieces of vine, upon the supports under the shelf, arranging them gracefully, and piercing holes for the nails; in some places the pieces may be securely fastened by tying with pliable wire. The pieces must not be crowded, but have the appearance of a natural branch, around which the vine has twined, reaching each way and clinging to the two side pieces; round the shelf arrange, along the edge, the shell-like fungus growth found on the stumps of old trees; cut them off and place singly, with a thin piece of grape-vine just

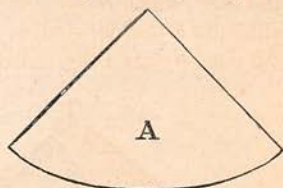


Fig. 21.

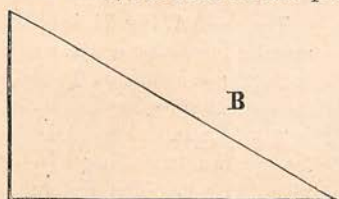


Fig. 22.

above to cover any rough edges. Arrange the solid wooden back with these fungi and pretty branches, finishing the edge with the single pieces arranged like shells; place a cluster also at the bottom where the three arched supports join. These dark pieces against the silvery foundation of bark gives a beautiful effect. Varnish with Demar

varnish, using a rather stiff brush, and merely touching the parts, as drawing the brush over them would have a tendency to drag the delicate pieces of moss and bark. This frame must be seen to be fully appreciated, for no one from reading the meager description here given, could form an idea of its beauty and real elegance. No country girl, who loves pretty things, should be without one.

CROSS BRACKET.

This bracket is suitable for holding a Bible or prayer-book, and is carved from walnut of one-fourth inch size. Its beauty of form is greatly enhanced by having the carving carefully and neatly done; the leaves rounded off neatly, each vein cut and scratched with the sharp point of the knife; and the cross "picked out" into an indefinite number of tiny lines and indentations, the shelf, also, marked and cut in the same manner. Simple as this design may appear, the workmanship is so fine that when finished it is one of the most exquisite pieces of wood-carving we have ever seen. The design is copied from an imported Swiss bracket.

CROSS AND GOTHIC WINDOW.

This is designed for the same purpose, and, being heavier, will hold a larger book. The design can be seen from the Figure,* and may be accurately marked

out and enlarged. The back is about eighteen inches high, twelve inches above the shelf, which is cut square and carved out in ornamental scallops. The back simulates a Gothic window, and the mullions and delicate frame-work should be cut out very carefully. Around the deep, plain margin make a narrow beading

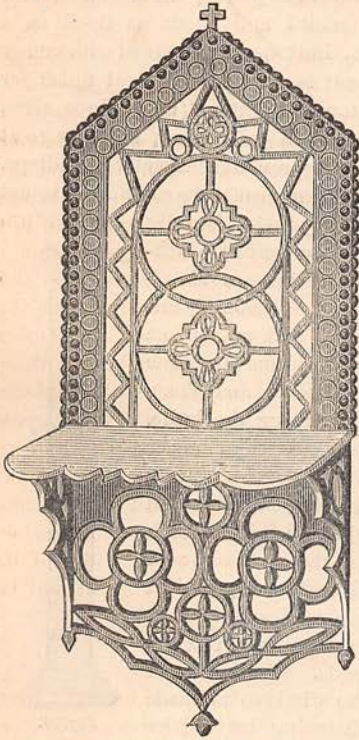


Fig. 23. Cross and Gothic Window.

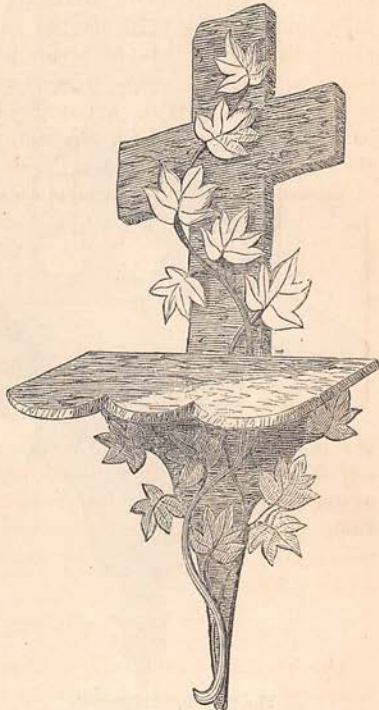


Fig. 24. Cross Bracket.

of wood, or stained coffee grains and cherry-pits, arranged alternately, upon the outer edges; within this, a row of figures, made by heating an iron circle, key, or other device, and burning the wood slightly. The shape of the back, beneath the shelf, may be seen from the Fig. 23, and the braces are carved out with a circle in the center, filled in with ornamental work, corresponding with the back.

GOTHIC BRACKET.

This bracket, Fig. 25, is intended to fasten against a window-frame for purpose of holding vase or pot with plant. The design is an aerial window in three parts,

cut with Gothic arches upon the top of each, the center one two inches higher than those at the sides. The mullions, or heavy division pieces, A, Fig. 26,

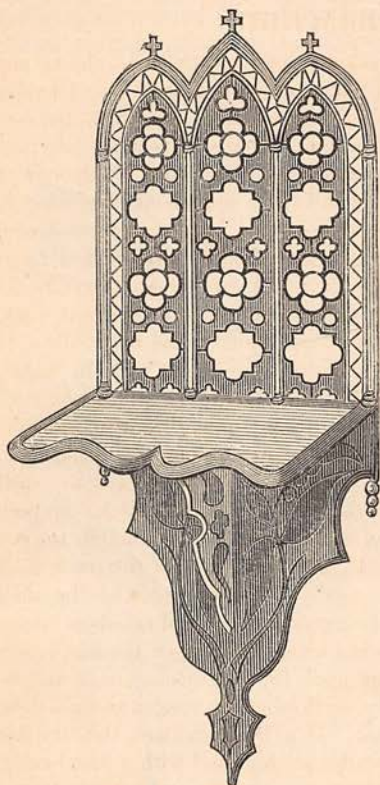


Fig. 25. Gothic Bracket.

of bright-colored stained glass against the three divisions, fastening as directed, and marking off the diamond-shaped panes with very slender strips of wood, crossing each other regularly.

The shelf is cut with three sides to fit in the recess, of the stained glass window, and has the front corners rounded off; it is supported by three brackets, which run together to a point, meeting the lower part of the back, which also ends in a point; an ornament such as an acorn carved from wood or a fancy knob finishes the point. The three points of the window-arches are finished with an ornament also.

This bracket is a novel one, and is of such unusual beauty that it calls forth praises and admiration from all who see it. The light, shining through the

must be made to appear massive by having carved strips fastened on upon the broad flat pieces; the last one should be rounded and about as thick as a straw. Button-molds, stained with umber and cut in half, form a neat finish for the top and bottom (C). Three sizes, placed upon each other, the largest below, appear like circular moldings. Round ornaments are so difficult to cut accurately that it is really a desideratum to find so perfect a substitute as these molds afford. The lighter framework is cut out in fine tracery, and may be made very delicate and beautiful by using the knife, chisels, etc. The upper arched part of the window forms ornamented-shaped openings, behind which place various colored stained glass, held in place by strips of wood or strong cloth glued across the ends. The lower part of the windows is made by fastening long strips

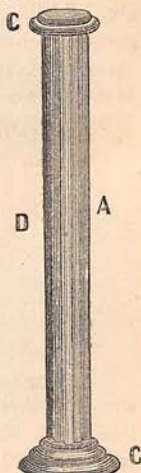


Fig. 26.

stained glass gives a fine effect, especially if a lovely vine in a tasteful vase or pot is trained over the high points and made to fall over the sides.

A CRYSTAL BRACKET.

As a piece of ornamental work, this bracket is, perhaps, the most chaste and brilliant of any that has been described. It consists of a shelf about twelve inches long, and eight inches deep, of pine wood one-half inch thick, the corners rounded off and covered with white muslin. The back is made precisely alike, above and below the shelf, and is constructed thus: take whalebone or thin canes, which form into circular pieces, like little hoops, about two inches in diameter, and others bend together like a figure eight; sew six of the circles together, and then add five of the long pieces, which should be six inches long; upon these sew four circles; then three of eight; then two circles, then one circle; add the same for the under part of the back. Upon these twist candle-wick, covering every part closely, and sew tags of coarse white twine or candle-wick upon every part, allowing them to hang in little loops a half inch in length. Make a brace or bracket for supporting the shelf, of circles covered in the same manner, using first four, then three, then two, finishing with one. Place this frame-work in a strong solution of alum until perfectly crystallized; when fasten the shelf securely against the back, and upon the bracket-support, by passing a needle, with strong thread through the cotton cover of the shelf, and then through the back, back and forth, until secured. The front edge of the shelf should be covered with crystal gimp, and tassels of strung crystal beads, with the same strung upon the suspension strings. The beads upon the suspension cords may be

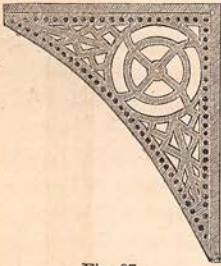


Fig. 27.

strung in double rows and joined at every sixth bead, forming a chain—those lined with silver-foil are the most brilliant. If well crystallized, this bracket will, especially at night, sparkle like "frost-diamonds;" and with a wire basket, crystallized in the same manner, filled with mosses, grasses and autumn leaves, will be found a lovely article for parlor decoration.