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FASHIONABLE ART WORK.

ALTHOUGH none of the minor arts are likely to be taken up with such zeal as china painting, or to retain a place in public favor so long, yet the time is come when ladies are desirous of a change in art occupation. They are just a little tired of their old favorite; they have covered the walls of their rooms with plaques, ornamented their toilet tables with pin trays and powder boxes painted with their own hands, dispensed five o'clock tea to bosom friends, out of cups decorated with their own designs, and now they are looking about for some new amusement.

China painting has been a source of vast pleasure to thousands of women, and some have excelled in it to a degree hardly expected, when first it was introduced as a pastime to fill up leisure hours. But a more earnest desire than that of self-amusement has sprung up lately, and the serious question of how they can best help their poorer neighbors to help themselves, is becoming one of great moment to many who formerly asked but how to pass the time.

An answer well worthy of consideration to such inquirers is: "Teach them some handicraft that will enable them to get their own living, or at least to increase the small wages that many of them receive." A "Jack-of-all-trades" is by no means the most likely person to fail in earning a comfortable livelihood, and if we give boys and girls of the working classes a chance of turning their hands to useful decorative work, we are enabling them to increase their sadly poor wages.

Now, although china painting might prove remunerative to a small percentage of such scholars, there are other arts far more likely to be productive of good results, and consequently ladies are showing a decided inclina-

tion to become proficient in them. Nor are these latter much inferior to china painting; that they are so in some respects cannot be denied, but, nevertheless, they each possess qualities that render them pleasant work for amateurs.

The designing of patterns for inlaying or mosaic-setting is as improving for learners as the arrangements of flowers and foliage that the ordinary run of china paintings exhibit. The neatness and dexterity requisite for executing marqueterie teaches that technical skill is as important for the worker in woods as the painter in oils. And though the combination of colors in mosaic-setting is simple, yet the principles governing such combinations, are the same for all colored decorative work.

A few words of practical advice to beginners may induce some to make a trial of their skill. Those who have practiced the art of wood carving will have an advantage over those who are ignorant of its first rudiments in commencing in-laying and marqueterie, but their inefficiency in sawing pieces of wood exactly in accordance with the outline drawing must not dishearten them; a good deal of practice is required before perfection is attained in everything that is worth doing.

Certainly the best plan is to begin with an elementary design which will not harass the worker with unnecessary details and intricate outlines. To glance first at the marqueterie worker. Every one knows that the art consists in cutting certain colored woods and arranging them into a pattern for the decoration of furniture and ornaments, but how to set about it so as to produce good workman-like results is quite another matter.

Say that a small round table-top is chosen for the first attempt. Three veneers will be obtained from a veneer merchant. The

needful tools are few. A board with hole for fret-sawing, a hammer, a fret-saw frame and saws, a fine brad-awl, a scraper, and some hand screws will suffice for a commencement. Both labor and material are economized by glueing the three veneers together and treating them as a solid piece.

To manage this, they are each cut to the same dimension, namely, a size rather larger than that which the selected design will cover, and are glued together with thin sheets of paper laid between. Then they are pressed, boards being used for the purpose, and the hand screws are now brought into requisition that the pressure may be strong and effective. When the glue is thoroughly set, the wood is ready for the worker. A sheet of paper is pasted on the surface, and the design sketched correctly upon it, or a tracing may be resorted to if preferred. It is important that the drawing should be perfect in every detail, as it is the guide which must be followed accurately throughout if success is to be secured.

Holes are next bored with the fine brad awl, which is held quite upright in the hand during the operation, on the drawn outlines wherever the saw needs to be inserted. The importance of keeping exactly to the outlines is evident after a moment's thought, for if each piece is to fit into a pattern, with no in-

terstices visible, it follows that the edges must be sawn with great precision.

The process of sawing being accomplished, the veneers may be separated with the point of a knife, and then arranged according to design on a board. A sheet of paper glued on to the upper surface keeps each piece in its right position, whilst the glue and paper is being removed from the under side.

When this is done, the under surface is levelled with glass paper, and also the board to which the veneers will be attached. The latter, which should be of well-seasoned hard wood, is sized, and set aside to dry. Then, after being dampened on the upper surface, the veneer is glued and turned over on to the board, which has also received a coating of glue, the whole being rubbed down with a hammer that has been heated in hot water. The piece is then again pressed. It is done by first laying a sheet of paper over the entire surface, then a double layer of flannel, and then a piece of wood, which is heated, and the handscrews finish the business so far.

When time enough has passed to allow of the setting of the glue, the glued paper is removed with hot water, and the surface equalized with glass paper, and the piece is ready to undergo the process of French polishing under the hands of a competent person.

(Concluded in our next Number.)

MUSLIN doilies, edged with delicate lace, with a single flower, and leaves arranged across, and worked entirely in yellow fillo-selle, are very pretty. Also in silk of various shades, worked all in one contrasting color, such as pale blue with a dark blue flower, pale pink with a deep red, old-gold with red or brown, deep red with black or dark green. The flowers should be worked in silks, and the doily edged with silk fringe to match it. A piece of fern, dried and painted bright green, laid between two pieces of circular cut net, gummed together, looks well with a lace edge. Some doilies have merely the monogram or crest worked in the center in gold twist, while others, more simple, are of drawn linen, with a pattern worked in red or some other colored ingrained thread in cross-

stitch, in imitation of the Russian style of work now very much done for towels, etc. Small flowers worked on silk or any material with narrow china ribbon are pretty and novel. The ribbon is drawn up.

THE new pencils introduced for writing upon glass, porcelains and metals, in red, white and blue, are made by melting together: spermaceti, four parts; tallow three parts, and wax two parts, and coloring the mixture with white lead, red lead or Prussian blue, as desired. — *Mrs. J. B.*

HIGHLY polished brass may be kept absolutely bright and free from tarnish, by thinly coating the articles with a varnish of bleached shellac and alcohol. — *Mrs. J. B.*