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CONDUCTED BY NATALIE STURGES.

WHAT TO DO WITH OUR AUTUMN GATHERINGS.

A GERMAN lady on a visit to this country expressed herself as charmed with the many pretty ways we Americans have of arranging Autumn leaves, grasses, pressed ferns, etc.

"We have our 'Makart bouquets,'" she said, "arranged for us by the professional florist, but I have never seen natural objects worked into so many pleasing and elegant forms as I see in your country, nor such pretty arrangements for their display, which add so greatly to their beauty."

The artistic arrangement of our Autumn gatherings — for who does not come home from the Summer trip to seashore or mountain, laden with a treasure-trove of these beauties—is one kind of fancy work which has of late gained in popularity with the lovers of nature, and the endeavor to form pleasing decorations, leads to many original devices, a number of which I will suggest to you.

The reeds growing in marshy places, which were used so much last year in the construction of pretty frames and easels, may again do duty for various other purposes, two of which are shown in our illustrations. You will see in the first how one of the larger of these reeds may be hollowed out, and used

as a holder for what our English cousins would term "a posy" of grasses, berries, ferns, etc. These are charming to hang at the side of a mantel, or to suspend from

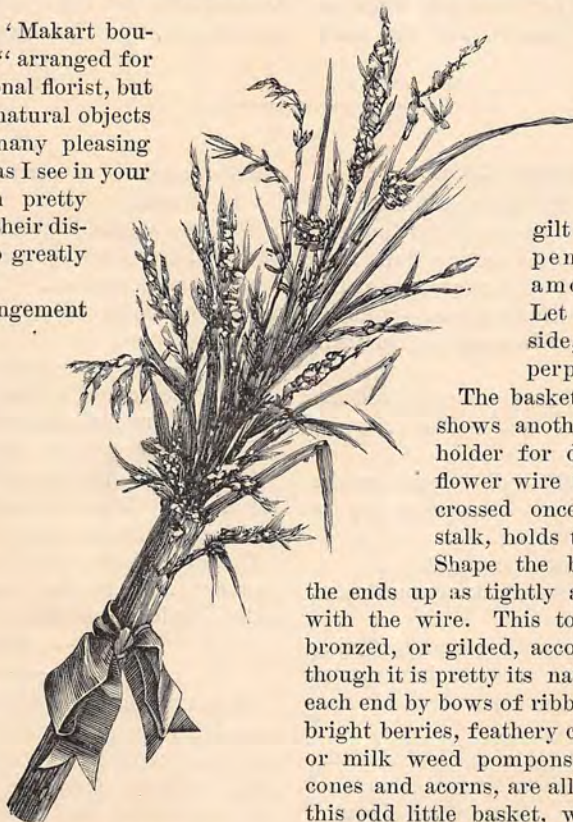
chandelier, bracket, or easel frame. The reed may be gilded, bronzed, or left its natural color, and finished with a smart bow of ribbon. A fine

gilt wire is used to suspend it, concealed amongst the grasses. Let it incline to one side, instead of hanging perpendicularly.

The basket in our second cut shows another odd and pretty holder for dried grasses. Fine flower wire bent in halves, and crossed once after each rush stalk, holds the whole together.

Shape the basket by drawing the ends up as tightly as will be required with the wire. This too, may be painted, bronzed, or gilded, according to fancy, although it is pretty its natural color. Finish each end by bows of ribbon. Grasses, ferns, bright berries, feathery clematis, and thistle, or milk weed pompons, the smaller pine cones and acorns, are all suitable for filling this odd little basket, while in Summer it may be converted into a most unique fruit holder.

Another pretty fancy is to hollow out a bit of a small log, covered with its rough bark. Cut squares at each end, and varnish. This is prettier than the majolica or porcelain dishes made in this shape, and suspended by a brass or nickel chain, makes a charming hanging basket. Hollow gourds, decorated with painting, or metallics, are also pretty



REED HOLDER.

receptacles for holding these autumn gatherings, and perhaps there are some readers of this Magazine yet unacquainted with the pretty birch baskets trimmed with grasses, which have been the rage for several years, but as they are too pretty to be consigned to



ORNAMENTAL BASKET FOR GRASSES, ETC.

oblivion, even though they have ceased to be a novelty, I must mention one which I have seen decorated in a little newer style than those illustrated in last year's papers or magazines. Certainly nothing could be more graceful than these baskets thus decorated. They are manufactured by the Indians in many different shapes, but the favorite seems to be that shown in our illustration, useful as a scrap basket or as a holder for tall plants or pampas plumes. To trim this in a graceful and durable manner, the grasses should be of a kind not to shake off readily, and the best plan is to cut a foundation of pliable cardboard upon which to sew them, beginning at the edges and working towards the center, then filling in at the front, finishing in such a way that the sprays will droop gracefully at the sides. This foundation piece is then placed in position upon the basket, with a pretty bow of ribbons, with ends for a finishing effect. A basket trimmed costs three dollars or more, while the untrimmed article may be had for fifty or seventy five cents, the ribbon being the only expense in this mode of decoration, aside from the basket. Some of our friends who have access to woodland treasures, fashion the baskets themselves, thus saving even that cost. There is nothing finer in the way of household decoration than

one of these baskets loaded with sand, and filled with tall pampas plumes and cat-tails, or a large bunch of pheasant or peacock feathers. Standing in an archway between rooms, at one side, with drapery looped opposite, it is strikingly artistic. Fancy crosses trimmed with autumn gatherings are much liked by some, and although I cannot say that I fancy them particularly, there are others that do, so that the following hints as to an elaborate arrangement of this kind may be acceptable to some of our readers.

"Line a recess with white velveteen. Cut a wooden or card cross with three steps, using care to make the steps of size suitable to depth of case. Fasten on the back of recess, and cover with the stiff white moss found on rocks, with clusters of lichens; if none of the last named moss is to be had, dip pieces of the white kind in red sealing wax, dissolved in hot spirits, touching only the extreme points. Make a foundation below the steps and cover with green moss. Cluster grasses, immortelles, pretty leaves, shells, etc., upon this, and let a few droop carelessly



DECORATED BIRCH BASKET.

upon the steps, and form a background of the light green and silvery mosses and lichens found upon old trees and fences, with pressed ferns; cluster these also upon the steps at the back, and form a vine of tendrils, stems of ferns, bright leaves and tiny berries, let it

fall in sprays from one arm of the cross, and cluster thickly upon the top of the opposite arm. Some may like to dot various pretty shells amongst the moss, or touching with mucilage, dust with diamond dust. Frame in a rustic frame of black walnut, inlaid with white wood."

New Fancy Work.

A LARGE proportion of the decorative fancy work done just now consists of the working up of lace with color. There are both simple and complicated ways of doing this. The scrolls of guipure may merely have a mossy kind of mohair braid sewn all over them, which produces a good effect with little trouble, especially with the addition of some button-hole stitch in the center of the scrolls; while imitations of old renaissance point may be altered out of knowledge by having the edges worked over in dull gold thread, and the flat portions relieved by fancy stitches in different colored crewels mixed with gold.

This sort of decoration may be carried on according to the fancy of the moment, and the more shades and the greater variety of stitches used the better.

For chair and sofa backs in figured etamine, copies of antique friezes are now preferred to the worn-out Greenaway juveniles; and these are outlined and shaded in the same way with colored silk, the lace with which they are edged being worked to correspond. White and tinted canvas of all sorts, worked in cross-stitch, suit a variety of applications — lined, for the ornamentation of mantle-pieces, the covering of small chairs and cushions, unlined for curtains and antimacassars — when, through an affectation of faded age, they might be mistaken for grandmamma's sampler brought forth from the seclusion of a lavender-scented drawer.

Some very new and effective embroidery is executed in transparent black silk canvas — also in cross-stitch; many shades, and the floral form of decoration being chosen, the ornamental canvas lined with colored silk is suitable for many purposes where sombre tones are in request.

This revival of canvas as a ground for decorations executed in silk and wool is, per-

haps, the most noticeable feature of modern fancy work. Cross-stitch embroidery on linen and various textures has been so popular of late, that it is no wonder that we have again to accustom ourselves to the sight of canvas, as that material is best suited to the work. But plain white canvas will not meet the requirements of the present fashion, which demands richness of color and elaboration of design in decorative work. So the canvas is colored, and it is woven in various ways to form a pattern suggestive of the squares of a chess board. Strands of tinsel are also introduced amongst the threads of linen; indeed, canvas, pure and simple, as the Berlin wool-workers knew it, is so changed as to be almost another production. The result of the cross-stitch on the ornamental ground is admirable. To describe a cushion for which it is employed: A band of tiseled canvas is laid down the whole length; on this a design is worked in crewels and brightened up with silks; the flowers are raised, and much of the canvas is left visible. Two strips of diagonal cloth, trimmed with rows of tinsel, border the band, separating it from the plush which covers the side portions.

Another plan is to take a wide band of tiseled canvas, work it in tapestry stitch, then lay it across the cushion in a slanting direction. This leaves two triangular pieces, which are covered with dark green unadorned plush. It is finished with a border of the same plush, on which a pattern is worked.

A toilet bag is composed of silver-gray linen canvas. Outlined stars are placed at stated intervals, and between these is a running pattern of flowers and foliage. When carried out in soft shades of gold, brown, and pink it makes a charmingly dainty little article.

A cheval screen, partially formed of canvas which, however, is hidden by the decoration, is extremely handsome. Both sides of the square are of plush, the center panel of gray canvas. A set design is wrought out in various colored chenilles, which are laid on and caught down with thread through the ground. It is further embellished with Japanese gold, that serves to accentuate the pattern.

Another mode of working is seen in an antimacassar, which is grounded with ruby silk, the gray canvas itself representing a