

# HOUSEHOLD DECORATION.

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CONDUCTED BY LIDA AND M. J. CLARKSON.

## WINDOW-BOXES AND FLORAL DECORATIONS. — AWKWARD CORNERS MADE GRACEFUL.

IT has been very truly said, that "there is no employment which so tends to the development of the better nature of men and women, than the culture of flowers," and certainly there is nothing which adds more to the grace and refinement of home, than the presence in it, of flowering plants or cut flowers. After the summer season is over however, few can indulge in the luxury of

tribute toward the beauty of home, that we shall try to describe a few of them.

It is a praiseworthy effort which seeks suitable accommodation for plants, shrubs and flowers, and the introduction of them into our homes cannot be too highly commended.

"Let us have flowers on our window sills,  
In gardens, vases — bring them everywhere."



FLOWER BOX.

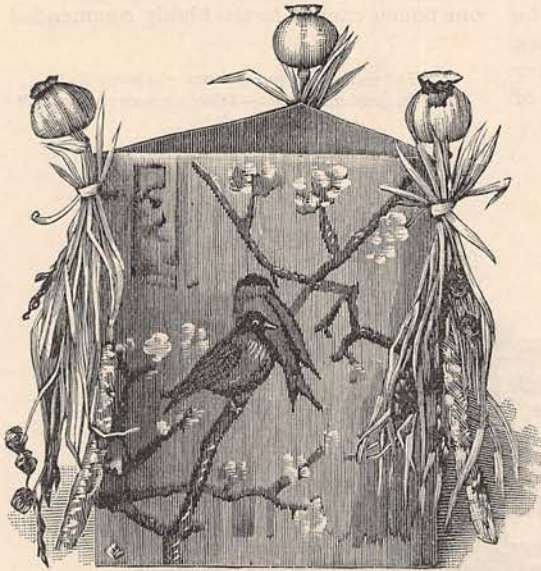
cut flowers, except on occasion, and so resort is had to window gardening, and growing plants are often used in decoration with even prettier effect than hot-house flowers or vase arrangements. To our mind there is nothing in the way of floral decoration prettier than boxes and *jardinières* for windows if tastefully arranged, and there are so many ways now of decorating these affairs which con-

So sings the poet, and so we have really come to think of window gardening as one of the greatest of helps towards household decoration.

As for the home-made boxes for windows of which we would speak more particularly, we would advise that they be made a convenient size for the window, generally about 8 inches high and 10 to 12 wide, is a

good size. Firmly joined and puttied at the seams with several coats of water-proof paint they will stand wear for a long time, without the expensive zinc lining which many cannot afford. Holes should be bored at the bottom for drainage, and if the box sets upon casters as it should, small dishes can be placed under when the plants are watered.

For outside decoration, either china tiles may be used or *lincresta walton* or *lignomur* in tile patterns substituted, or the box may be handsomely painted, stenciled or decorated in what is known as scorch or poker work. The design is in better taste if conventional in arrangement, with a background that will



WINDOW BOX.

harmonize with other furnishings of the room in which it is to be placed. Let it stand for several days until the paint is thoroughly dry and then give a coat of drying oil which will not spot like varnish and yet will bring out the color and preserve it from fading. If *lincresta* or *lignomur* is used it should have a coat or two of good shellac varnish before it is painted or bronzed. A molding at top and bottom makes a neat finish.

As we have said casters are a very great improvement, and really a necessity where the window is to be opened and closed, and as growing plants like people never thrive without fresh air, have the casters by all means.

We have heard of the "poet's license" but we think it can be no greater than in these home decorations, and there seems no limit to the extent to which it is carried in the matter of floral arrangements.

The charming little flower stand shown in the second illustration, is one of these fancies, as well as the hanging *jardinière*, very simple affairs, yet highly decorative.

The painted flower stand or holder, is a three cornered box made of heavy mill board fastened at the corners by wire concealed by ribbons, or by fancy chains. Holes are punctured at the corners to admit the wire.

The poppy heads shown in the illustration are not essential, but are very pretty if they can be had; lacking these, full bows of ribbon may be used or little brass chains looped from corner to corner. The three sides have a hand-painted design in oil colors with a shaded background, and the inside is painted a plain harmonizing tint. This is used only as a cover to a potted plant, a tall palm, begonia, fern or tropical plant, being prettier than a flowering shrub, indeed judgment should be shown as to the variety of plants selected for these boxes or *jardinières*; the colors or foliage should be chosen with a view to color harmony, and should correspond with other furnishings.

The hanging *jardinière* is simply a little wire basket with a metal chain by which to suspend it. Inside of this is placed one of the handsome ornamental flower jars, not at all concealed by the open wire frame of the basket.

An ingenious friend has utilized several of the little wire baskets used for culinary purposes by gilding them, and they are not only very inexpensive but ornamental, for while they serve to hang up the jars in a bay window they do not conceal their beauty and are light and strong.

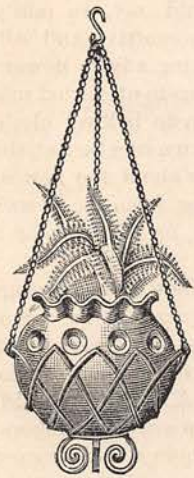
We might describe many other pretty fancies of this sort if time and space permitted but will leave it for some future number.

#### Awkward Corners Made Graceful.

As our first impression of a person is formed from his dress and general appear-

ance, rather than by his intellectual and moral qualities of which we know nothing, so on entering a strange house, we are apt to form our opinion of its inmates by the character of its furnishings and the manner in which it is arranged.

How few of us there are, who have not, at sometime or other in our lives, been ushered into an elegantly furnished parlor whose very atmosphere breathed of chilliness and formality. There were rich carpets on the floor, beautifully upholstered furniture, rare statuary and valuable paintings, and books; but the shades were drawn down, and heavy curtains closed to exclude every ray of sunlight, the furniture was placed primly against the wall, books hidden away behind carved book-case doors, while even the pictures, all hung at the same height and angle, looked stiffly down at you. Were you not chilled and awed by its magnificence, and almost astonished if its occupants showed any warmth of feeling in their greetings, rather than the cold formality the home led you to expect?



HANGING  
JARDINIÈRE.

Then again, have you not been into other homes where the furnishings were far less elegant, but where the sunlight shone in gloriously, where the open piano with new music scattered on it, brought cheer to your heart, and where everything around you breathed of a delightful home, and a charming home-keeper?

Which do you choose, dear friends? The latter of course! so as you stand in the doorway of your little parlor criticize fearlessly and mercilessly its belongings all and their arrangement, and if you think the "first impression" of your rooms are not all they should be, set your wits to work to remedy the defects. If it is a corner which first greets the eye, as you enter from the little hall, study to make that corner particularly bright and attractive. Perhaps you have a set of plain book-shelves which you have placed in

a dark corner because of their plainness; bring them out at once and stand them across this corner. Varnish the whole thing anew, and make for it the prettiest curtains the combined efforts of nimble fingers, fertile brain and the resources of your pocket-book, will allow.

For those to whom painting and embroidery are as yet sealed books (and there cannot be many readers of *INGALLS' HOME MAGAZINE* who have not made some effort at mastering one or the other) there are the China silks in dozens of lovely shades and tints, and in the most beautiful designs. These are easily made up requiring no trimming but simple hems and a fringe of tiny silk tassels. But one of the most beautiful sets of draperies for a book-case which can be conceived, and which need not be so very expensive now that pushes are so cheap, is in three pieces, the curtain proper, the scarf to lay across the top, and a shorter curtain. All the pieces are of a rich moss-green plush, lined with rose-colored satin, the decoration consisting of scattered sprays of apple-blossoms embroidered in ribbon-work and arrasene. The curtain proper, has the heaviest sprays toward the top, while leaves, scattered flowers and single petals, are falling downwards, as if dropping from the branches above; the scarf has a simple spray on each end and is finished across the ends, which hang over about eighteen inches, with long silk tassels to match the embroidery; the narrow curtain needs very little embroidery, just a spray or two in one corner, and is suspended above the book-case by a brass rod and rings, and forms an effective background for dainty bits of bric-à-brac.

Drape your corner as your fancy dictates, and the contents of your purse will allow, however, only let it be bright and pretty; hang above it your prettiest picture, fill the shelves with choice volumes and the "coziness" of it all will amply reward you for your labors.

Do n't push your piano close up against the wall in that ugly fashion, bring it out, and if your room is large enough, turn it so that the back of it is toward the room. This will afford you another opportunity to display your ingenuity in covering up the back of the case. Felt or plush with tapestry bordering, makes a pretty drapery, caught up at one

corner with heavy cord and tassels, and this manner of draping was prettily illustrated in a previous number of the Magazine.

Stand against the piano a little fancy table and a chair or two, or a *tête-à-tête*, and a cosier place for a chat will not be known in "all the land." This leaves you the wall-space behind the piano for pictures, also a good corner for your music stand.

If you have not room for this arrangement, stand it across one corner rather than flat against the wall. "But," you say "that leaves two ugly bare places on the wall, neither fit for pictures or anything else." Fill the space then, as I did with a large fan made of samples of wall-paper in "crazy" fashion — you have all seen them on a smaller scale; it is in shape semi-circular, with the straight edge as long as the top of the piano, and is fastened to a standard the upright of which is just as long as the piano is high. This fills your "ugly space," and makes a pretty background for anything you may wish to stand on the instrument.

That space between the door and window, for which you have no suitable picture, can be fitted up very prettily with a set of shelves. Have the lower one nearly as long as the space is wide, and fastened to the wall with iron brackets, about four and one-half feet from the floor; then have three others cut at least twenty inches shorter and fastened to the wall about nine inches from the first shelf, and as many inches apart — one end of each of these being placed directly above one end of the long shelf. Another long shelf is to be fastened above these. Hang a pretty lambrequin or "drapery" to the lower shelf, and fasten to the upper one a brass rod, from which suspend by rings a curtain of soft pretty silk or other material, which can be draped back to display a choice bit of statuary, while the shelves can contain the "overflow" from the bookcase.

If you have a bay window do your best to make it a cosy and inviting place. Blooming plants are always attractive in a window, but many do not care to keep them in a parlor bay window, particularly if it is on the pleasantest side of the house and where the prettiest view can be obtained. If such is the case, a couple of chairs and a little table will be about all the furniture you can use; but the chairs must be comfortable and the

table hold attractive papers and books — the last new Magazine and a tiny basket for your bit of fancy work ready to pick up at odd moments when a friend drops in to spend a half-hour with you. Or the chairs can be the light willow ones with pretty "sachet" cushions of china silk, and there may be room on the table for an odd-shaped frame or dainty case for the photographs of friends.

Many odd conceits are shown in the way of photograph holders; the soft, wadded and perfumed ones of plush and silk are familiar enough; those of chamois skin pinked around the edges, lined with bright silk and decorated in oils with a spray of flowers and a "sentiment" as "Betsy" would say, in oddly "quirled" letters, hard to contrive and still harder to read, are something a little newer; while a bag-shaped case, made of varied materials from chamois skin to bolting cloth, prettily decorated and drawn together at the top with bright ribbons, is about the newest fancy, and is seen hanging from the corner of the table or book case, or the back of a chair.

An easel to hold portfolios of engravings or sketches can often be made a very conspicuous and attractive feature of a room, if you are fortunate enough to be able to strike just the position for it. A screen embroidered or painted by your own willing fingers, will fill a bare corner or hide a seldom used door, or can be put to many useful purposes, besides adding greatly to the appearance of the room.

For your walls have the best pictures you can afford, bearing in mind that a good engraving or simple etching, such as are sent out with many of our leading periodicals, framed in a plain oak frame, is of far more value, and in much better taste than a dozen gaudy chromos or cheap oil paintings framed in flashy gilt, though it does not make one half the show.

Drape your windows and doorways as prettily as possible, avoiding too much of a sameness both in materials and manner of hanging. In a wide doorway or arch, set the pole inside the jamb, and let both curtains hang straight, but in a single opening it is often better to fasten the pole on the outside and drape the curtain to one side. A pretty fashion, and one that is particularly desirable for lace curtains, is to let one of the pair

hang straight from the pole, while over it fasten to the same rings, a straight valance of plush-satin, satine or any preferred material, painted, embroidered or left plain as suits the fancy; the second curtain is then fastened to the remaining rings outside of the valance and draped very high, the chain which holds it passing over one end of the pole, and the bottom of the curtain just touching the floor. This is a little departure from the old style of tying back window curtains as nearly alike as possible, and is particularly adapted to a double window, or where the windows are low, the pole being fastened the depth of the valance above the window-casing, thus cutting off none of the light, and adding to the apparent height of the windows.

But the cosiest corner of all can be contrived out of a little alcove if you are fortunate enough to possess such a one opening from your parlor, or it can be made by cutting a doorway into a closet which is not much used; the latter suggestion will be "hooted" down I know, for who ever heard of a house with closets, for which a woman could find no use? Not I! Cover the floor of your alcove with a bright rug, and place in it a large easy chair and your own little sewing-chair, a reading table with the latest papers, and then when the lamps are lighted and curtains drawn, no one, peeping into your cheerful room will dare to dream of aught but friendliness, kindness and a cordial welcome to be found there.

LESLIE DEAN.

### CHISEL AND MALLET. — III.

K. K.

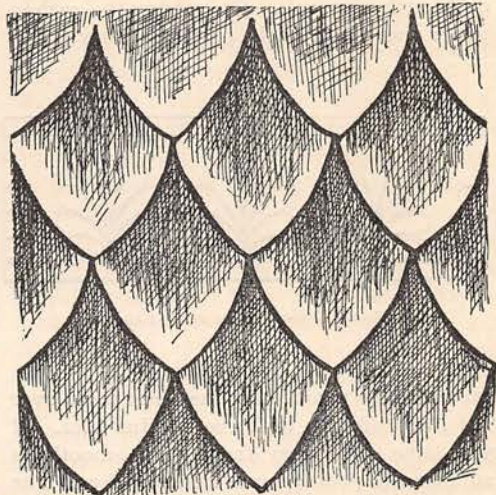
"A SCHOOL of wood carving has been established at Albert Hall, South Kensington, where three years at least must be devoted to learning the art." So writes Sarah K. Bolton in *Social Studies in England*.

This seems to be a direct contradiction of my assertion that it is an art easily acquired, but I think it may be partially explained by something that has been said, viz: That the carver will not begin his second job before he finds that the designing is the main difficulty.

It is not to be expected that one will immediately produce original designs, so it will be safe to use some of the world-wide admired and enduring designs of the Greek, Egyptian or Celtic nations. The ornamentation of these first two was founded on plant forms. The Celts have some designs which remind one of interlaced straps.

Our own American foliage makes beautiful designs used naturally according to the growth of the plant, or conventionalized into regular bands or panels. One should study the adaptability of the design to the object to be decorated, and it will often render the work more expeditious if one composes a de-

sign with a view to having certain tools exactly fit certain parts of the design so that one stroke will be sufficient. The study of



SHINGLE PATTERN — CAN BE REPEATED.

design is exceedingly interesting, and will well repay the decorative artist for much time spent upon it.