

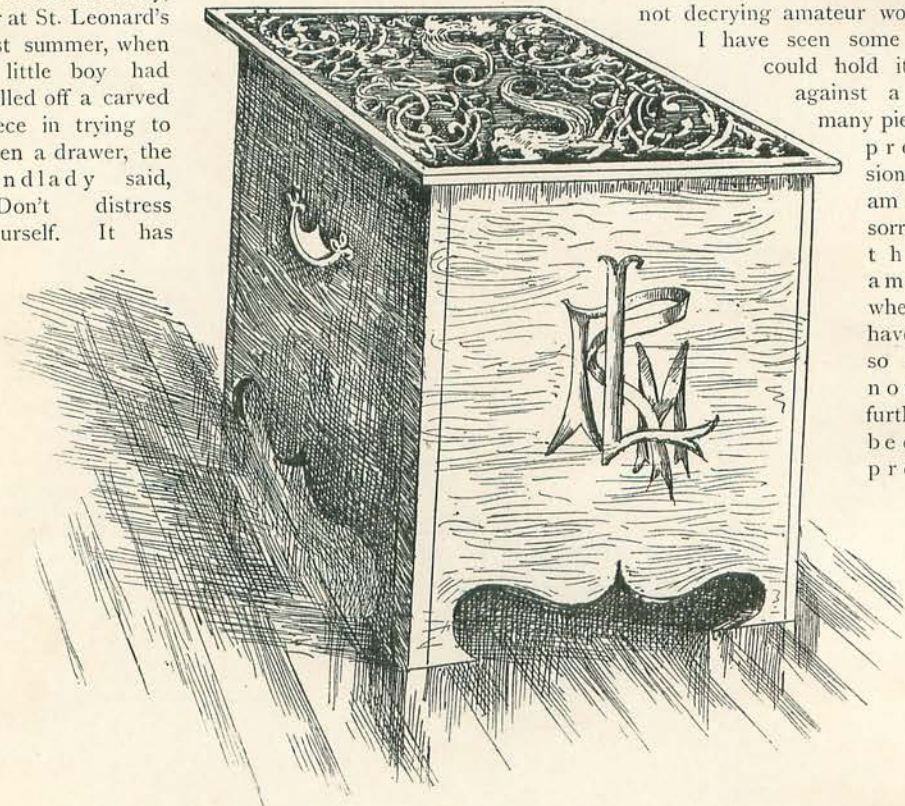
IN a series of papers published at intervals in this magazine, wood-carving as a means of adornment has been frequently advocated; not the machine-made kind on the decorated sideboard fronts, all done in the block in America, and sawn to size here—how loathsome is its smooth surface, with its pseudo-Italian patterns! Every seaside boarding-house with pretensions to gentility boasts a Renaissance sideboard in the place of honour. Surely this heralds their decay, for at St. Leonard's last summer, when a little boy had pulled off a carved piece in trying to open a drawer, the landlady said, "Don't distress yourself. It has

been off a dozen times, bless you! It is *all* glue! Many a hard-earned shilling did I put by to get that sideboard, for lodgers are caught by a fine, handsome thing like that when they come to look at rooms. But oh! the times I have had the carpenter to it and glued it myself! I hate the sight of the gimcrack thing!"

Now the sort of wood-carving I want to talk about is not the kind to make a show and meet with the acceptance of uneducated people; it is amateur and for home use. I am

not decrying amateur work, for I have seen some which could hold its own against a great many pieces by

professionals. I am always sorry that these amateurs, when they have gone so far, do not go further and become profes-



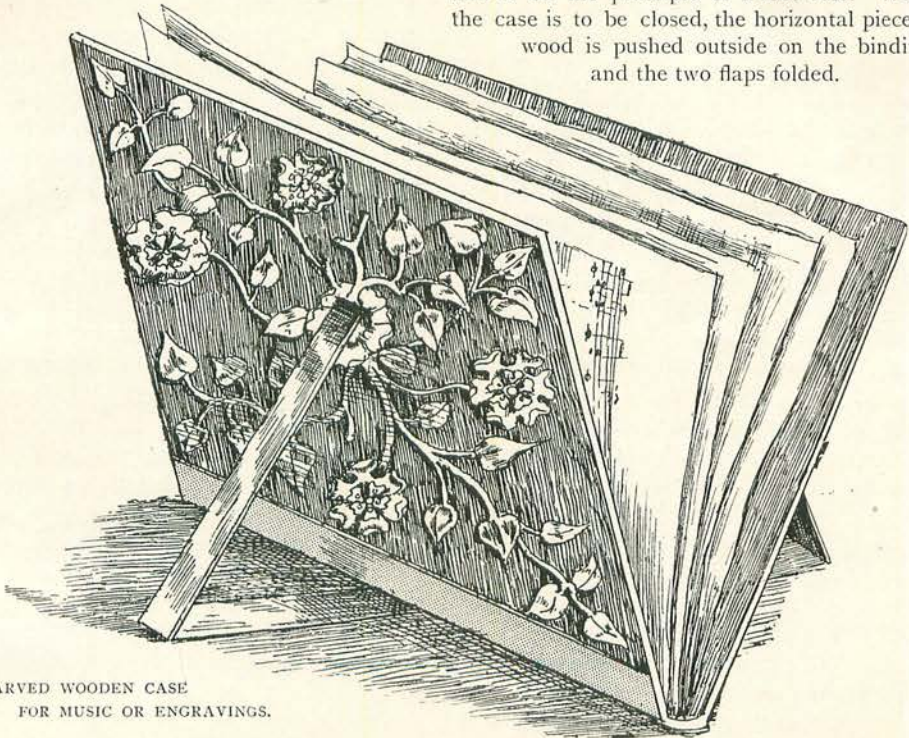
CARVED PIANO-STOOL, WITH BOX TOP, IN SCANDINAVIAN PATTERN.

sional themselves—that is, if they require to earn a livelihood, or even wish to have one to fall back on. But oh! if they are rich, let them leave the scanty loaves and fishes to their poorer brethren. Carving holds out very little inducement perhaps, but other professions do; and the number of lady journalists writing penny-a-line fashion tips, while their money lies snug in many a sweet investment, no one would believe! It is the charm of being thought literary, I suppose; but it has a cruel back side to it, for they take the pay their sisters need for bread, and buy themselves a new bonnet with the guineas. If you are rich and can write, write a book—you won't make much out of that for some time, and yet you will feel you have been doing the highest in you, and leaving the soul-crushing little journalism to those who are compelled to "potboil."

I fear I have wandered far from my music-seat. What little design it had it owed to its carver, and she was vexed that the carpenter had not turned out a more shapely seat. I can't help feeling I have rather exaggerated this in my sketch, but it was done entirely from memory. The box lid lifts up, and the case forms a splendid deep place for every sort of piece of music; but I wondered, when I saw it so full, how it was pushed about. So first have your stool of slighter build, and don't fill it too

full. The feet could be altered into club-shape and castors put on. All this passed through my mind as I looked at it, but I preferred to give it our readers as it was, and suggest what I thought afterwards. The carving on the top was one of the old Viking designs of dragons, with everlastingly twisted tails, exceedingly difficult to render. The background was cut away, but not deeply enough to form an uncomfortable seat. I should have preferred more carving on the sides of the box, but my friend thought when she had added her sister's initials she had done all that family affection demanded. The monogram was cut just very slightly in the wood: and here again this might have been improved on, and so might the handles. Instead of brass, I should have substituted figure-eight-shaped open holes, smoothed for the fingers. Of course the figure eight must be lengthways. But my readers will think I am getting too trivial if I go into minute particulars. I liked the idea generally, though, as I have said, it was amateurish in many ways; and as I am neither a carver nor a carpenter, I can only give my ideas as a whole. It was too plain, too strong, and wanted to be smaller and prettier, with more decoration.

The music-case, also intended for carving, differs little from the ordinary book shape except in size, though the support is an idea of my own, and is on the principle of a foot rule. When the case is to be closed, the horizontal piece of wood is pushed outside on the binding, and the two flaps folded.



CARVED WOODEN CASE  
FOR MUSIC OR ENGRAVINGS.