



CHAPTER XXXIX.

SPATTER-WORK.



THIS class of decorative work is extremely effective, and is very easily done by any one who has the slightest taste for artistic effects. The articles needed are a piece of cardboard, the size the picture is to be, a moderately stiff brush—a tooth brush being recommended—and an ordinary comb, together with India ink, ink of sepia tints or other soft colors, which forms the spatters. Also fac-similes of the articles to be reproduced in the picture, which usually consist of foliage, tendrils, crosses, monograms, etc., etc. With these articles at hand the process may at once be begun.

The designs, if to be in flat effects, such as monograms, emblems, etc., are fastened to the cardboard with a small, finely pointed tack or needle-point, and only enough pressure is used to keep the design steadily in place, thus avoiding perforating or puncturing the cardboard conspicuously. After one has become more expert in the work it will be better to do away with the tacks and have the designs held in place by light weights, if their own weight is insufficient.

After the design is properly arranged the brush is dipped into the ink, which should be of moderately thin consistency, and drawn smoothly over the teeth of the comb, which forms a fine spray, or spatter, that is deposited upon the cardboard. This process may be continued to produce shaded and clouded effects according to the taste of the operator, and may be made with greatest depth of color either at the center and diminishing to the outer edge, (where it should be thin and indistinct to produce a vignette or halo appearance), or in the reverse manner, with the heaviest portion of the color about the margin of the picture, and gradually decreasing toward the center. When the design is removed the portion of the cardboard which has been covered during this work will be left clear and white. This portion may in turn be shaded in beveled and other effects by having other designs similar to, but narrower than, the first, or those which are wider, or perforated in different figures, placed over the design already outlined. Extreme care must, however, be exercised in placing the design on the board, that the edges may lie flat, to prevent any of the ink from spattering under

the design, as this would materially affect the outline.

Maple and ivy leaves, together with those deeply serrated, are extremely effective, and sprays of delicately colored foliage such as

variety of specimens from which to select the pictures to be made. Fine blossoms may also be used, and should be pressed in the same manner as the leaves, care being taken to separate the petals and portions of foliage

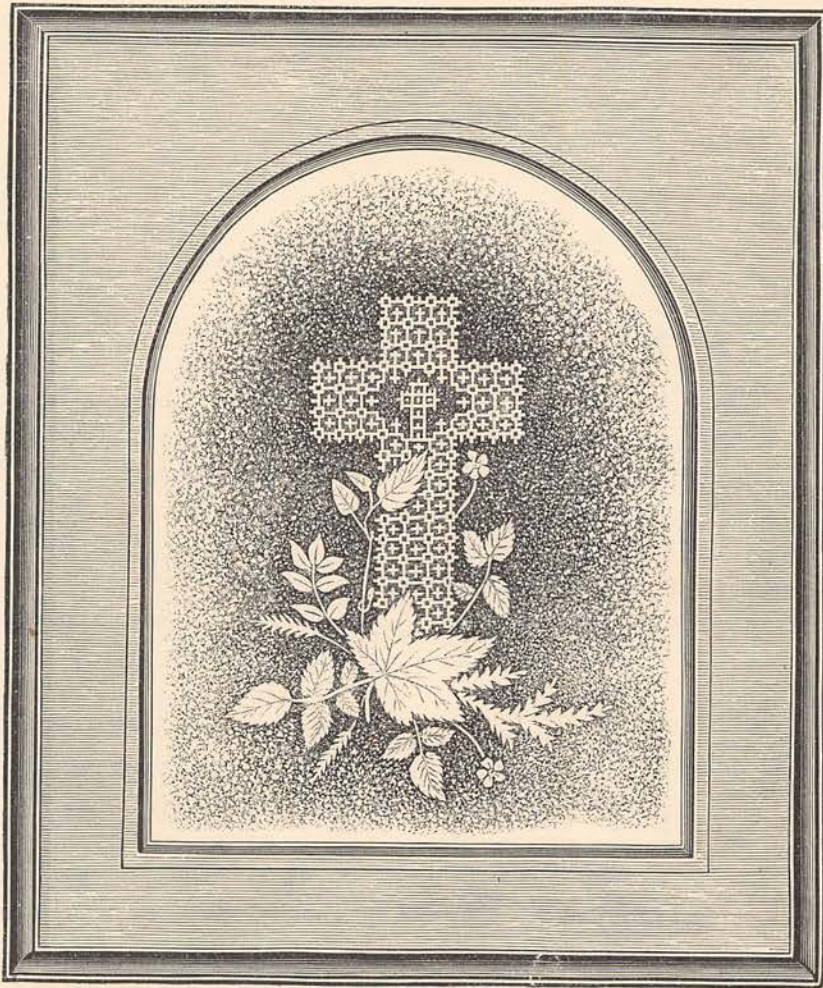


FIGURE NO. 1.—DESIGN IN SPATTER-WORK.

ferns, smilax, and fine grasses are light and airy in effect. By collecting these and pressing them carefully between sheets of newspapers or an old book, in which the paper is quite porous, one can have an unlimited

that may still be attached to the stem, so that the result may be as natural as possible. In pressing foliage and flowers of an especially sappy nature, it is better to change their location between the papers occasionally, to pre-

vent mold or mildew forming; but in so doing, careful handling is essential, as their mutilation would produce a very unnatural and imperfect appearance. In arranging these for the picture, which may be in designs to illustrate bouquets, wreaths, etc., the articles may be grouped upon the cardboard in any artistic fashion. For an ordinary bunch

obtained. One must take time in placing the leaves upon the cardboard and so arrange them that the removal of any will not affect the position of others, as the readjustment of any that might be displaced would be difficult. It is well to make the design with as few leaves as possible, giving distinctness to the outlines of those selected.

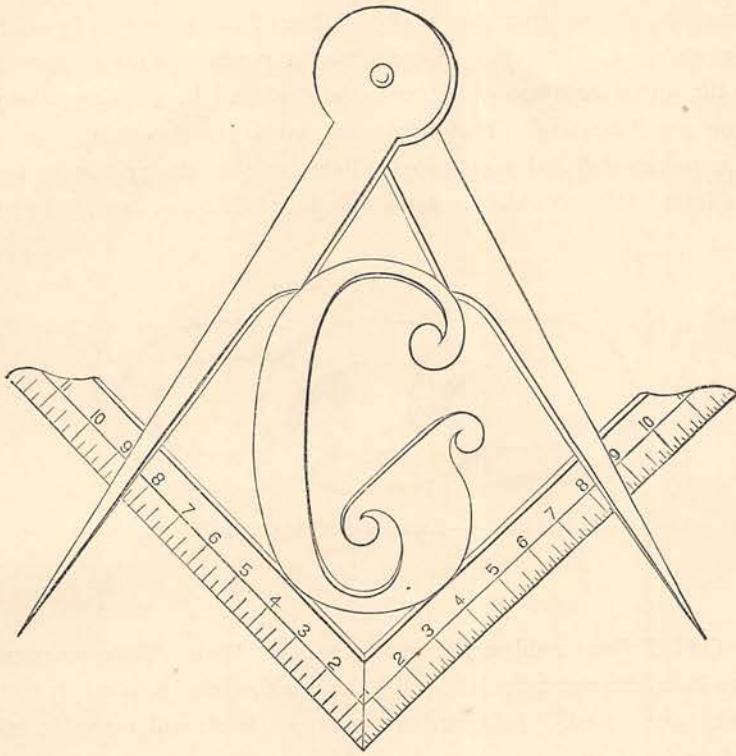


FIGURE NO. 2.—EMBLEMS FOR SPATTER-WORK.

or cluster the finer and more delicate specimens that are to be about the outlines may be placed first upon the cardboard, and the heavier or larger leaves laid over them. Then by beginning the process of spattering, and removing from time to time different leaves, first taking away those that are uppermost and leaving for the last those that are to be more delicately tinted, an effective result is

Among the many desirable subjects for this work, are the different shaped crosses, which may be cut in solid lines from heavy paper or Bristol-board, or in the more delicate and airy shapes produced by cutting them in different combination effects from either crossed or medium-sized perforated cardboard. Nearly all of our readers are acquainted with the method of producing pretty designs from this

perforated cardboard by the use of a sharply pointed pen-knife. A beautiful example of spatter-work, showing such a cross wreathed at its base with foliage is illustrated at Figure No. 1 in this chapter. The engraving gives a good idea of the shading and suggests a pretty frame for the piece.

Masonic emblems, which comprise the square and compass, the sun's rays, the letter G, the ark, lamb, broken column, open Bible, the 47th proposition of the first Book of Euclid, etc., can be used. At Figure No. 2 the outlines for the square, compass and letter G in combination are illustrated. They may be duplicated in pasteboard and reproduced in white or in a faint tint upon a darkly spat-

laid upon whatever piece of material is chosen for the work and the ink deposited upon the space left by the cut-out portion. If in white, the design is placed upon the cardboard or other foundation, and the spattering is done upon the margin, leaving the portion revealed by the removal of the design perfectly white. A good way of obtaining silhouettes is by placing the subject for the likeness between a strong light and the paper upon which the outline of the shadow is to be thrown. Then with a pencil or crayon draw the outline of the shadow. In reducing to any size desired, one must exercise great care in cutting the lines, so that the prominent features of the profile shall be as nearly like the original as

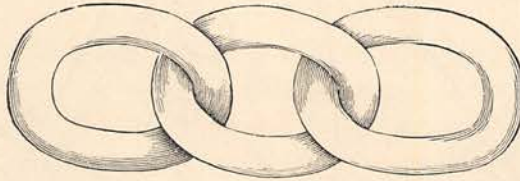


FIGURE NO. 3.—EMBLEM FOR SPATTER-WORK.

tered ground. Odd Fellow emblems, comprising the three links, altar with fire, clasped hands, etc., are also used. Information regarding the designs of any crafts may be easily obtained from the members of such societies, who are always willing to furnish information to their fair solicitors. The triple links constitute a simple and pretty design for practice work, the exact outlines being given at Figure No. 3 of this chapter.

Pleasing effects may also be produced by the introduction of silhouettes, which may embody a mirthful or serious sentiment, and be worked out in flat effects in black or white. If in black, the design of the silhouette is cut out of a large card or piece of paper, which is

possible. With a little practice this can be done with quite satisfactory results, which in many instances will resemble examples of the old-time silhouette art—the early method of preserving likenesses. Pretty effects are produced by introducing in connection with flower designs the photographs of children, who are often seen easily poised upon the lilycup, or playfully thrusting a little head from the heart of a rose. If the artist be somewhat skilled in the drawing of human faces, a soft and pleasing effect is produced by tracing from the photograph the outline of the picture, cutting this in stiff paper and spattering in the manner described. The necessity of extreme painstaking in the intro-

ducing of the face, is quite apparent. If it be but indifferently done the effect is far from agreeable. If one is fortunate enough to have profile likenesses, silhouettes can be formed simply by making tracings of them and shading as directed with the foliage and emblems.

The finished portion of the photograph can

be easily taken from the mounting by allowing it to soak in tepid water. Its immersion will not efface the photograph, and it must remain there sufficiently long to allow of its being removed without straining, or stretching the albumenized paper upon which it is printed.

Chips from Decorated China.

If the dainty ware *will* chip the best thing to do is to gather up the chips, examine them carefully and from them learn, if we can, how to prevent further chipping. To prevent chipping from over-firing, always send your wares to a reliable kiln; or if you do the firing yourself study and experiment until you understand the process. The "rose" heat is as high as the soft paste which is used for raised gold designs should be subjected to, and in burnishing these designs after the second firing light handling is necessary.

Quite as bad a defacement as a ragged or broken edge are the defacements and effacements of color which characterize carelessly done amateur work, but a great deal that seems to be the direct result of inattention to details, is often due to the decorator's haste to see the results of her work after its crucial test—firing. Ample time should be allowed for drying, and if there is any question or doubt regarding whether overlaid colors are dry, every piece should be subjected to a moderate degree of artificial heat before being exposed to the more intense heat of the kiln. No one should rely upon the attendants at the kiln to supply bits of colors that have become rubbed off in transit, as the defacement may be ren-

dered more marked by the use of a wrong variety of color.

An echo of the plaint of an aspiring novice in china decoration comes to our ears and tells us that far worse than any chipping which might occur was the condition of a beautiful plaque which went to the kiln in good condition but came back little better than a confused blotch of colors, so far as any ornamental attributes it might possess, was concerned. In painting it, an ambitious subject which the artist might perhaps have successfully carried out on canvas, was selected, and among the colors liberally used was yellow. This color she has since learned is the unyielding enemy of almost every other color except green. It vanquishes almost all the reds, halting only at capucine-red, but is nevertheless one of the most beautiful colors employed in china painting, as the novice learned afterward. She received through the failure of her plaque a valuable lesson, and it is emphasized here for the benefit of those who read as they run. Make use of no colors which you imagine depend on admixture with yellow for certain effects, and do not attempt elaborate designs until you have acquired proficiency in executing simple ones.

