

## Christmas Decorations.

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AS years pass we see but little improvement in the manner in which Church decorations are carried out; and the whole effect as a rule, especially at Christmas time, is far too heavy and gloomy when finished. I want these practical suggestions to be of use to all my readers, and I am giving designs that may be carried out either on lavish or economical lines.

Some decorators have an endless variety of material to gladden their hearts, whilst others perchance, from no fault of their own, have to make the best of scanty materials.

However, it is not always the scheme that has had the most time and money spent upon it that looks the best.

Most decorators spend far too much time and work upon their garlands, &c. Did we but realise that the less we try to alter nature the better, and how much more pleasing would be the result. My meaning will be more clearly understood by glancing at the trails of foliage here shown.

On the left is a laurel leaf garland such as year after year we see attached to arches, columns, &c. Great care is taken, I always notice, to get these garlands perfectly symmetrical — by the way, how seldom we see straight lines in nature — and what is the result of all this trouble? Just a stiff ugly line of leaves.

Oh! how different is the

trail of ivy that has been sketched just in its natural form. Trails such as this may now be purchased in bundles, and they are an invaluable aid to the decorator for producing graceful effects.

The great tendency is to make Christmas decorations too massive, with a general lack of brightness. At Easter we have so many sweet spring blossoms, whilst Harvest time brings endless riches in the way of colouring. But at this season we must depend almost entirely upon foliage.

Yet how beautiful it is! Have you ever marvelled at the never-ending variety of colour, form and texture there is in leaves?

Trails of ivy may be used in so many different ways. Here is a graceful design for a pillar in which they form the principal adornment. It is one of the prettiest ways of treating pillars and is very quickly arranged. First take a length of strong copper wire, four inches longer than the pillar is round, and bind moss to it with fine twine, leaving two inches of the wire protruding at each end. Use plenty of moss so that when finished it is as thick round as a grown person's wrist. Fasten this moss ring round the pillar just below the ornamentation by twisting together with a pair of pincers the protruding wires. Next mount short sprays of ivy



GRACEFUL TREATMENT OF A PILLAR  
FOR CHURCH DECORATION.



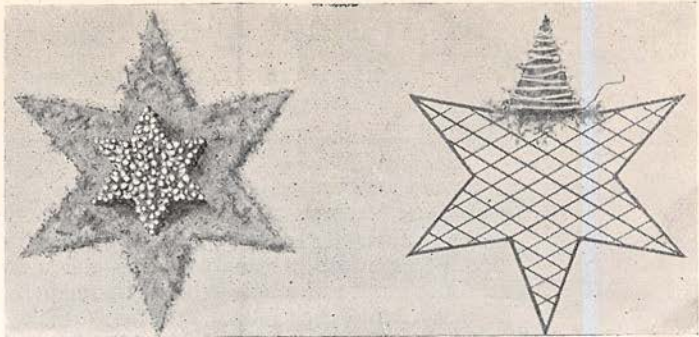


and berried holly on very stiff wires or small hairpins and stick these upright into the moss band, letting them stand out well from the pillar. Mount in the same way long trails of ivy, or any foliage to be had in trail form, and stick their ends into the moss so that they fall gracefully. Be careful to get the trails of various lengths in order to produce an artistic effect.

Small sprays can be fastened together with thin reel wire to form long ones if there is a scarcity of the latter.

Should the pillars be so placed in the Church that their whole length is in prominent view, another band of moss may be fastened round each of them near the base and decorated in the same way, but when the pillars are placed in among the pews this is not necessary. If the pillars are near to one another, too, garlands of berried holly or ivy fastened securely with wire to the moss rings look very pretty suspended from one to another.

Gas standards look very well treated in this way with falling sprays. The column of a gas standard being so very slender in



METHOD OF MAKING A DECORATIVE STAR.

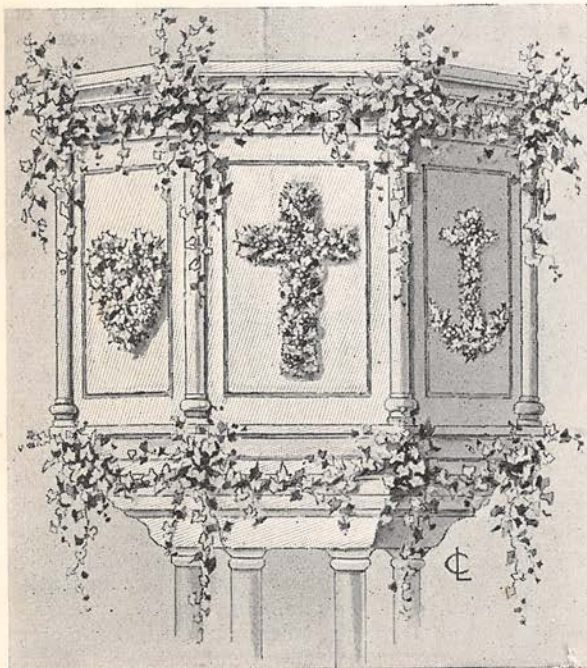
comparison with a pillar, it is not necessary to make wire rings for them. Simply take a good clump of moss and bind it tightly on to the standard just beneath the gas brackets and this will be quite sufficient foundation for the wires.

Before proceeding I want to say a few words about the various devices; such as crosses, anchors, stars, &c., that are used for decorations. Most helpers, I find, have very vague ideas of the way to form them, and if they are badly shaped the effect is completely spoiled.

Many workers fashion their own devices in cardboard but, except for small objects, such as letters, this is not satisfactory, as the damp moss invariably softens the cardboard and the wire frameworks can now be purchased so very cheaply as to be within reach of the most economically minded decorator.

Having obtained the wire frame, the next thing is to moss it carefully. How to do this is clearly shown in the diagram of a star. The moss is packed closely on to the wire. Both sides are covered in this way, if both are to be seen, but if it is going flat against some object then only one side need be mossed.

The moss must be bound on very tightly, or the shape will be lost. The best material for binding is hemp. It is very fine and yet very strong, and can be procured at the ironmonger's. When the mossed foundation is ready, the flowers or foliage to be used must be mounted on thick, short wire or hairpins, and inserted firmly in the moss. The star here shown is composed of the pretty grey lichen, with a smaller star of scarlet



THE FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY DESIGN FOR A PULPIT.



berries standing out in bold relief. When the foundation has been covered with the grey moss, a smaller star should be cut out on paper and laid on as a guide to show where to place the berries. This would look particularly well against a white marble background.

An effective floral star is shown in the chancel entrance sketch on the last page. In many churches there are arches of light construction which afford great scope for decoration. Here they are entwined with branches of fir, laurel and holly, with sprays of drooping ivy attached at intervals. Use holly that is plentifully berried or wire artificial berries on to plain holly. If this is done carefully it is difficult to tell the difference. Copy nature as nearly as possible, use very fine black wire to attach the berries, and use it in such a manner that it is hidden by the foliage.

At the base of each column a pot of arum lilies surrounded by ferns is placed, and on the centre arch is fixed a star of large dimensions composed of the exquisite eucharis lilies. But should you not be able to procure these it would look very well fashioned of scarlet and white everlastings or variegated holly.

Very great care must be taken when mounting eucharis lilies as the stems are so fragile. The stiff wire should be placed against the stalk of the lily and then a little moss put round before it is bound on, as, if the binding wire comes in direct contact with the lily stem, it is apt to cut it. This is a safe rule to apply to all blossoms with delicate stems.

The pulpit is one of the most important features in every church, as it always occupies a prominent position.

Opposite is a pretty "Faith, Hope and Charity" design. The little tin hanging

vases that are usually used for church decorations are first attached, one to each corner of the panels. These are filled with wet moss and then sprays of small ivy are arranged in them with festoons of the foliage from corner to corner. The panels are first covered with frosted cotton wool, and then one of the emblems is fixed in the centre of each panel. They are composed of variegated holly, plentifully berried and frosted. At the base of the pulpit a group

of palms and flowering plants may be arranged edged with ferns, the pots being hidden with moss.

It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules for pulpit decoration as we seldom find two alike. Some are so handsomely carved or sculptured as to need very little decoration, whilst others are so primitive as to depend largely upon floral adornment for their beauty. Flock paper in a rich tone of red forms a bright and pretty filling for plain panels ornamented with texts or devices of white flowers.

Frosting greatly adds to the attractive appearance of foliage, and is so easily applied that one wonders it is not more often seen. The only materials required are thin, clear liquid gum and crystal frost. See that the foliage you wish to frost is free from dust,

brush it over with a thin coating of the gum, allow it to nearly dry and then sprinkle well with the crystal frost. Leave until quite dry, then use. For cotton wool sprinkle lightly with gum but do not brush it over.

A pretty font is here depicted, its novelty consisting of the raised monogram in the centre. The base and sides of the font are garlanded with sprays of holly wired on to thin string and festooned from point to point. In the font palms of medium height are placed intermixed with plants of *Harrisi*



AN ARTISTIC FONT.

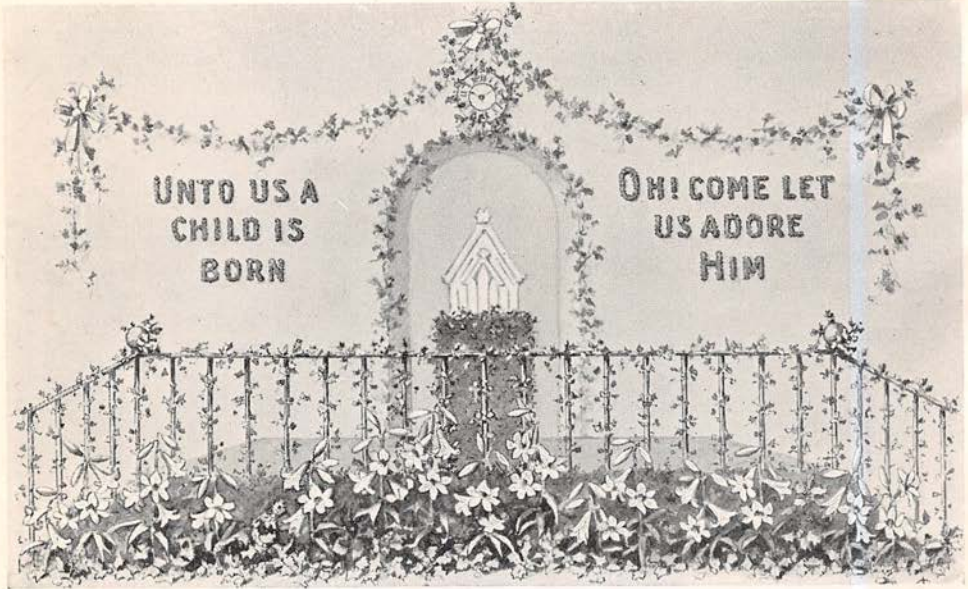


lilies and edged with pots of maidenhair fern or lycopodium.

For the I.H.S. you will require a slender wire frame. Cover it very sparingly with moss, using only sufficient to hide the wire, and then cover with scarlet and white ever-

form. If there is a clock it should be wreathed with holly.

The texts "Unto us a Child is Born" and "Oh! Come let us Adore Him" may be made of cardboard. Draw them first on thick cardboard, then cut out the letters with



DECORATIVE SCHEME FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL PLATFORM.

lastings or geraniums. The letters must then be firmly fixed to the top of a very thin bamboo rod or cane, the other end of which is embedded in one of the pots that are in the font.

Christmas is essentially the children's time, and in our schemes for decoration their Sunday School must not be forgotten. Here we have a design showing how pretty the schoolroom platform may be made for the festive season.

The wall at the back of the platform is decorated with festoons. These are composed of small sprigs of holly bound on to string. A touch of brightness is given by the garland being caught up in the centre with a bow of bright scarlet ribbon. It is then carried to the sides, where it is again caught with ribbon and then allowed to fall to within a short distance of the plat-

some old scissors. Cover them thinly with dry moss and then with artificial red berries. Bind the berries on with wire or hemp, packing them closely so that they form a solid red when finished. The texts may be simply hung on the wall or a background of frosted cotton wool would be very effective bordered with holly leaves. The platform rails and staircase are entwined with ivy. This is chosen in preference to holly, as the latter should never be used in any place where it is likely to come in contact with the hands.

Arrange pots of ferns, lilies and winter cherries in front of the platform, hiding the pots with branches of evergreens.

Perhaps some of my readers sigh when they look at this design; remembering that their Sunday School platform consists only of some raised wooden boards. But almost the



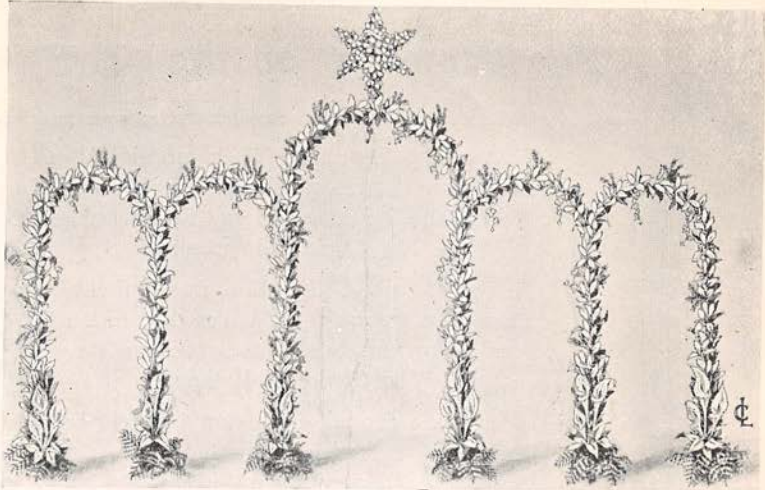
A NEW POT COVER.



same effect can be produced as here shown even with such a scanty foundation. At each front corner of the said boards fix a bamboo pole of convenient height with holes cut at intervals to hold the evergreens, then from one bamboo to the other fix a strip of wooden lattice painted green. Decorate the bamboos with evergreens and scarlet ribbon bows and entwine the lattice work to correspond.

At this hospitable season a scheme for the Christmas dinner table will doubtless be welcome to my readers. The centre slip is composed of a long narrow strip of frosted wadding, to imitate snow, edged with sprays of variegated holly. Upon it place one of the pretty bark baskets which represent Yule logs and are fitted with tin linings for flowers.

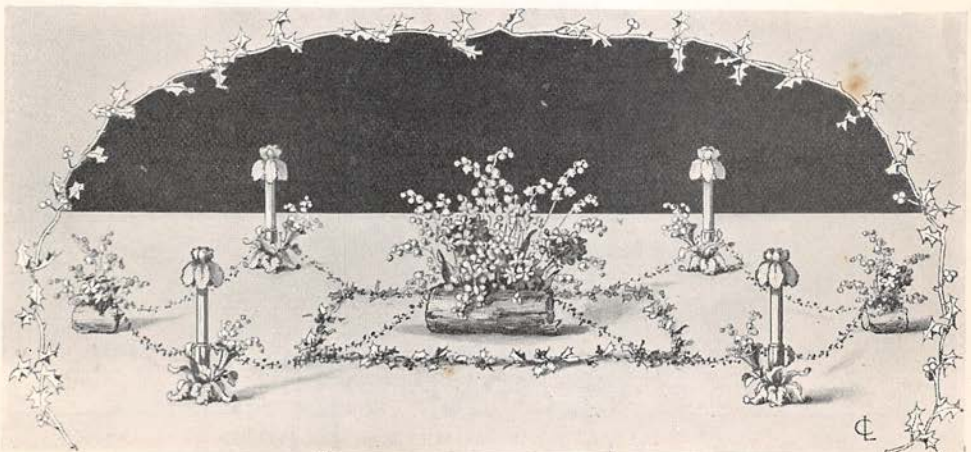
This is filled with wet silver sand covered with moss and then lilies of the valley and scarlet geraniums are lightly arranged in it with sprays of asparagus foliage. Do not overcrowd the blossoms but let each one stand out individually. Place a smaller bark basket filled to correspond, at a suitable distance on either side. Use candlesticks



BEAUTIFUL DECORATIONS FOR THE CHANCEL ENTRANCE.

with scarlet shades and fasten garlands of smilax from these to the baskets. Tie the dinner rolls and cheese straws with bébé ribbons of scarlet hue and use menus to match printed in silver.

On the opposite page is a pot of maiden-hair fern and tulips standing in a scarlet rose leaf cover. Take a piece of stiff paper or very thin cardboard large enough to go easily round the pot and deep enough to just cover. Cut a sheet of plain tissue paper of scarlet hue into strips four inches wide. At intervals of two inches make cuts in the strips of paper three parts across it. Curl all the edges so formed with a paper knife to represent rose petals, and sew the strips of petals round and round on the cardboard until it is completely covered.



OUR CHRISTMAS DINNER TABLE.