

Pictures on the Human Skin.

BY GAMBIER BOLTON, F.Z.S.

IT may sound almost incredible that people are to be found who will patiently submit to sit or lie for hours at a time, whilst undergoing a certain amount of pain at the hands of a tattooer who, with his sharp needles or other pointed weapons, fixes indelibly on various portions of their bodies pictures and

tattooing practised not only for religious purposes, but for purposes of decoration and identification after death as well, and in such widely different places as Great Britain, Japan, Palestine, Central and South America, Burmah, Borneo, New Zealand, and over the whole of Oceania, whilst many of the natives of Africa and the wild red men of North America are still more or less decorated in this fashion, as their forefathers were for countless generations ; and, in very ancient times, we find it also a common practice amongst the Germans, Gauls, and Romans. One of the most interesting and mysterious facts in connection with this subject is the way in which it spread from continent to continent in early days, and at a time when there could have been no possible means of communication between the various races of mankind.

But to come down to more modern times, we find England, America, Burmah, and Japan the centres of really artistic tattooing, and we give several illustrations of the various styles of work done there, with the instruments generally in



A COAT OF ARMS, BY MR. S. MACDONALD.
From a Photo. by G. Renwick, Burton-on-Trent.

designs of all kinds, and yet that such is the custom to-day in nearly every part of the globe is a fact that can be proved beyond doubt, and it is no exaggeration to say that tens of thousands of men and even women are more or less decorated in this manner at the present moment.

In early times, when our barbarian ancestors pricked a decoction of woad into their bodies, the custom was possibly connected with a religious rite, and to show how universally it was practised in Britain we have only to refer to the earlier historians who, during and after the Norman conquest, speak of it as a "vice." But to-day we find

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RIGHT SHOULDER MARK ON
BORNEO WARRIOR.
From a Drawing by the Author.



LEFT SHOULDER MARK
ON BORNEO WARRIOR.
From a Drawing by the
Author.

use. Whilst in these countries the fair sex but rarely submit to the operation, in Borneo we find the women tattooed more or less heavily, according to the district, on the hands and arms, feet and ankles, and from the waist to the knees ; but the men, and these nearly always warriors, carry only the quaint designs shown in the sketch, and high up, one on each shoulder, so that it is extremely rare to



FIJIAN TATTOOING INSTRUMENTS
(VERY RARE—FROM THE COLLECTION
OF W. CHAMBERLAIN, ESQ.).
From a Photograph.

find anyone but an inhabitant of Borneo, or some European whom they have greatly respected, bearing these special marks. In the Queen Charlotte Islands the Haidas are universally tattooed, the design, in every case, being the totem, done in conventional style. Sometimes several families

of different totems live together in the same large house, and in such a case the Haida chief will have all their totems tattooed on his person. In the Marquesas Islands (South Pacific) the men have the whole of the body covered with black punctures, whilst the women have very few of them. In



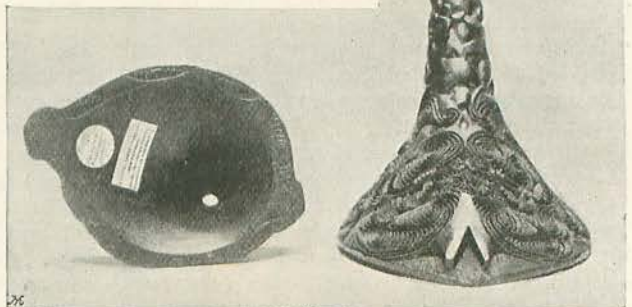
FEEDING FUNNEL, NEW ZEALAND (SIDE VIEW).
From a Photograph.

Samoa and the islands immediately adjacent, the men alone are adorned in this manner, whilst at Fiji, on the other hand, only the women are tattooed. The Maoris of New Zealand tattoo the lips of the women a blue tinge, whilst the faces of the men are adorned with the strange design shown in our illustration. They use only a sharp shell, with which they cut deep lines in the skin; these are kept open for a time and coloured earth rubbed in, the result being a series of rough ridges wherever the shell has

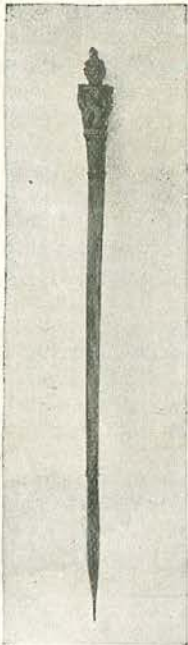


ARANGHU, THE TATTOOER OF NEW ZEALAND.
From an Engraving.

touched; but as this most unpleasant operation was deeply mixed up with their religion, it was universally practised and submitted to, until the missionaries arrived upon the scene. How unpleasant this operation is may be inferred from the curious feeding funnels which are illustrated on this page. The funnels, carved with elaborate designs, are employed to feed newly-tattooed natives with liquid food for some days after the operation, during which time the jaws are too stiff and sore to masticate solid food. In the Hawaiian (Sandwich) Islands, widows used to have the name of their dead husband pricked into the tongue, but so far as the writer's experience goes, neither this, nor in fact any kind of tattooing is now



FEEDING FUNNELS FROM NEW ZEALAND (INTERIOR AND FRONT VIEW).
From a Photograph.



BURMESE TATTOOING
INSTRUMENT (RARE).

From a Photograph.

practised in these islands, owing possibly to the influence of the missionaries, who, in all quarters of the globe, attack the custom with the greatest energy, especially where it is found to be in any way connected with the religion or superstitions of the natives.

During the reign of the last King in Burmah, a law was passed making it compulsory on every male over ten years of age to be tattooed from the waist to below the knees, and this in spite of the fact that

very many boys and young men died under the operation, generally from the inflammation set up by the use of the barbarous weapon still used to-day. It consists of a brass rod measuring altogether about

15in. long, and at the top is a heavily-weighted iron god, whilst at the "business" end is a piece of hollow brass rod 5in. long and ground down to a somewhat sharp point. The Indian ink is placed inside this, through two slots, for they use but the one



TATTOOED MAN (BURMAH).

From a Photo. by M. Biato, Mandalay. (By permission of Messrs. Spooner & Co.)



BURMESE WORK—SACRED DRAGON ON THE AUTHOR'S BODY.

From a Photo. by the Author.

colour, and the artist, sitting on some portion of his victim's anatomy, steadies the hollow point of the weapon between his toes, and then with both hands proceeds to prod the point into the skin dot by dot, the result being shown in the illustration. This is an extremely unpleasant operation, as the writer can testify from his own experience, and when added to this it is borne in mind that the work is generally performed in public,



SPIDER'S WEB ON AUTHOR'S CHEST—DONE IN BLUE-BLACK, RED, AND BROWN. BY HORI CHYO OF YOKOHAMA.

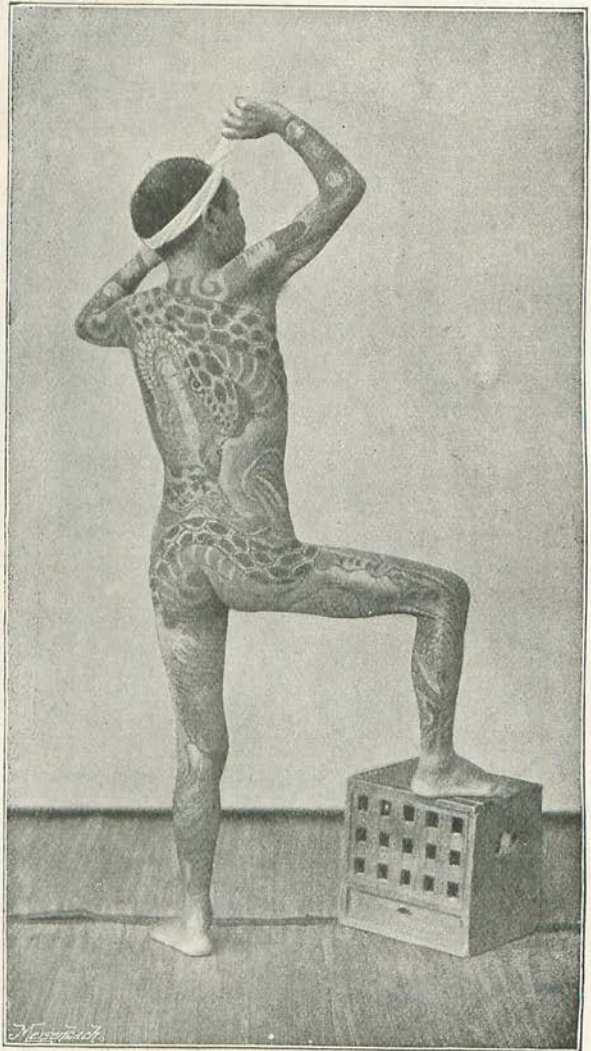
From a Photo. by the Author.

and with a crowd of laughing girls and boys anxiously waiting to hear the victim cry out, or use more or less violent language as the operator touches up some peculiarly tender spot, it will be seen that the tattooed in Burmah have to pass through a very disagreeable ordeal. Although since the occupation of that country by the British the practice has become almost obsolete, it is quite common to see men of five-and-twenty and upwards tattooed as shown in the photograph of a native taken by Mr. Biato, of Mandalay, and the artists still manage to earn a precarious livelihood by operating on travellers and soldiers who are stationed there.

The Japanese tattooers are celebrated all over the world, and in that country, at least, the work of the best men is recognised by their countrymen at a glance, and is looked upon with the awe and respect that we should show to a *chef d'œuvre* by Leighton or Tadmé; and one is bound to admit that there is more or less of Art in the work done by Hori (*i.e.*, the tattooer) Chyo, of Yokohama, who had the honour of placing several designs on the late Duke of Clarence, and his brother, the Duke of York, and Hori Yasu, of Kioto, to whom Chyo was apprenticed, and whose whole body is covered with the rough designs and crude efforts of his

pupil whilst under instruction. For these two men at least can turn out genuine pictures on the human skin with the proper lighting and shading, and all those cunning effects for which the painters of Japan are so justly celebrated, and which are only surpassed by the tattooing work of one man in England.

A visit to Chyo's charming bungalow on the Esplanade at Yokohama is one of those things that most travellers to that fascinating country perform almost as soon as they land, and after a hearty welcome in most excellent English, we sit down either to watch the operation or to have some memento of our visit placed on our bodies. Two or three smiling pupils walk about noiselessly, ready to supply the master with any sized



From a

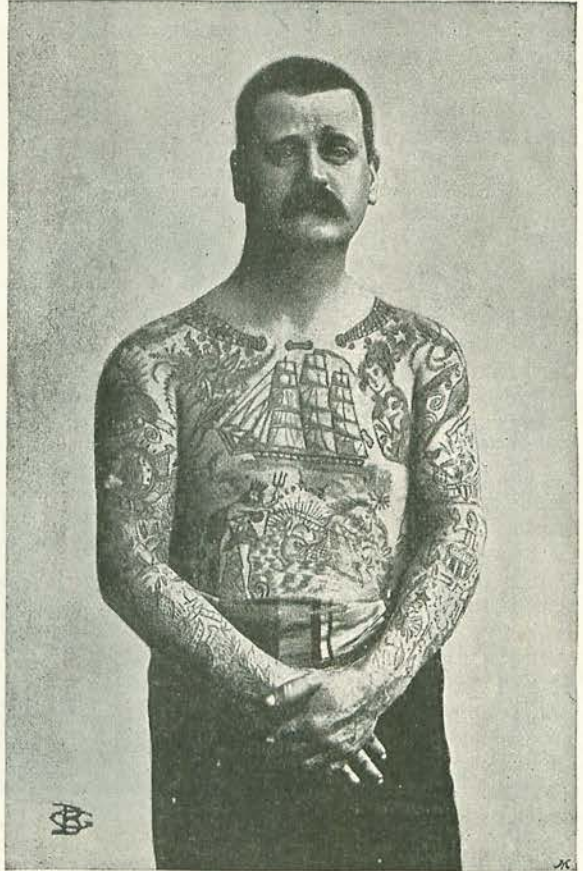
A TATTOOED "JAP."

[Photograph,

needle or different ink that he may require, and ever ready to bring fresh cigarettes or cooling drinks to the visitor, whilst on their bodies may be seen some of Chyo's finest work executed before he lost the sight of one eye, from constantly straining the eyes over some of the smallest and most delicate work ever done by the tattooing-needles—a life-sized lizard on the top of the forehead of one of the pupils being so painfully realistic that we quite believed that no fly would ever settle on his head, unless it had made up its mind that life was not worth living. Lying at full length on luxurious cushions on the floor, and whilst Chyo's needles were leaving their indelible marks on our bodies, we had time to examine a few of them, and found them to consist of neatly carved and brightly decorated ivory sticks, about the length and thickness of an ordinary pencil, whilst firmly lashed on the end were needles of various thicknesses, and ranging in number from one to half-a-dozen, the finer ones being used for outline work, whilst the heavier grades were used only for shading; but one and all are held and used at such a sloping angle as to give the smallest amount of pain possible, the sensation being more of a gentle scratching than anything else, and we were not surprised to hear from him that many European lady travellers often carry a tiny butterfly or stork on their shoulders to the end of their lives when once they have crossed Chyo's fatal threshold. Still, he is always provided with a miniature silver hypodermic syringe, and this he will use constantly, if requested to do so by owners of unusually tender skins, in the case of heavy shading or on any spot that he knows from experience is likely to cause sharp pain, and we could not help comparing his methods with those of the rough-and-ready Burmese tattooer.

A curious story is told about Hori Chyo. It seems that some time ago he was summoned to the police-court and told that his trade was contrary to the law of Japan. To this he replied that he had never tattooed any Japanese, but that some years ago when the Russian Heir Apparent (at present Emperor) came to Japan he tattooed a dragon on the Prince's left arm. Since then, he had tattooed several foreign noblemen

and millionaires. He added that tattooing is now known abroad as one of Japan's fine arts, and he claimed that, so long as he does not operate upon Japanese, he commits no violation of the law. The police, however, did not take this view, but ordered him to stop the business, and mulcted him in a small fine. This was reported in some of the papers at the time, and a Mr. Bandel, a millionaire of New York, who had come to Yokohama, offered to engage him for three



SPECIMEN OF AMERICAN TATTOOING ON MR. WILLIAMS.
From a Photo. by the Author.

years at an annual salary of £2,400 (silver). This, however, Hori Chyo declined, saying he would not accept less than £2,400 (gold). Mr. Bandel seems to have agreed to this, and is soon to take him to New York. It is said that Hori Chyo told one of his friends in jest that his getting such a high salary was entirely due to the kind efforts of the Yokohama police.

Hori Chyo's great discovery was the use of

the third colour (brown) in addition to the regulation blue-black and vermilion, and with these three colours he has produced veritable masterpieces. A glance through his album of photographs, of the work actually performed on English and American patrons, is a revelation to anyone seeing it for the first time, two of the most remarkable being a huge dragon in three colours, covering an American doctor's back entirely; whilst on the other hand a life-sized fly was put on an Englishman's wrist so naturally that one would feel tempted to call his attention to the fact that the insect was getting a free lunch out of him, if we were not told that it was the work of the tattooing-needles.

As examples of American work we give the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Williams, who are said to be tattooed from top to toe. The price charged in New York for a costume of this kind varies from about eighty to one hundred and twenty pounds, the Brothers Riley producing most of the best work on the bodies of those who make a living by exhibiting themselves to the British public. It will at once be noticed that there is a distinct type or character in the American tattooing which is quite different from that produced in Burmah or Japan, and more closely resembles that borne by sailors who, for the purpose of identification in case of death by drowning, at one time pricked gunpowder into their arms or the backs of their hands, and then touching it with a lighted match, left a scar that nothing but actual excision could ever take out again. The only case in which this painful ordeal has been borne, so far as the writer's experience goes, was at the hospital at Singapore, when the scar left behind was infinitely worse than the original tattooed design of an anchor on the back of the hand. But of recent years

this "gunpowder" tattooing has dropped out of fashion, and the three or four needles at the end of a piece of stick with Indian ink and a cochineal red are now used generally by sailors; and although this style of work is rather crude and rough in draughtsmanship, yet many pleasing designs, such as those shown by Mr. and Mrs. Williams, ships in full sail, anchors, stars, mottoes, and names, can be seen at times on the chests, arms, and legs of our gallant blue-jackets.

One of the finest pieces of tattooing ever produced in America is now on the back of Emma De Burgh, who, with her husband,

Frank De Burgh, has frequently appeared before English audiences. The piece of tattoo art which we refer to is a most effective reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper." One would little think it possible that a tattooer would be able truthfully to reproduce the variety of expression shown in the faces of Christ's Apostles, but it is the success with which this has been done that makes Mrs. De Burgh's back unique. Above the picture stands the "Golden Rule," in a neat scroll, and on the "table-cloth," in large letters, "Love one another." The Biblical idea, which was carried out upon Mrs.

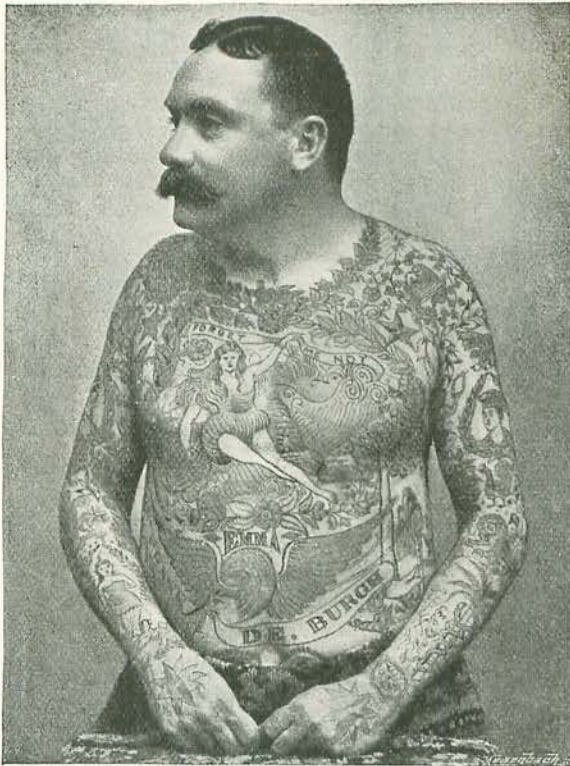
De Burgh, finds a

mate on the back of her husband. The tattoo represents the ever memorable scene on Mount Calvary, the figure of Christ being an excellent reproduction of the original. The scroll, containing the words "Mount Calvary," extends from shoulder to shoulder, and the picture occupies the whole of the back. No one who does not examine the original can realize the minuteness of the work in this picture, and the length of time taken for its accomplishment.

A better idea of the skill with which almost every inch upon the human skin can be utilized by the tattooer with picturesque



AMERICAN WORK, ON MRS. WILLIAMS.
From a Photo. by the Author.



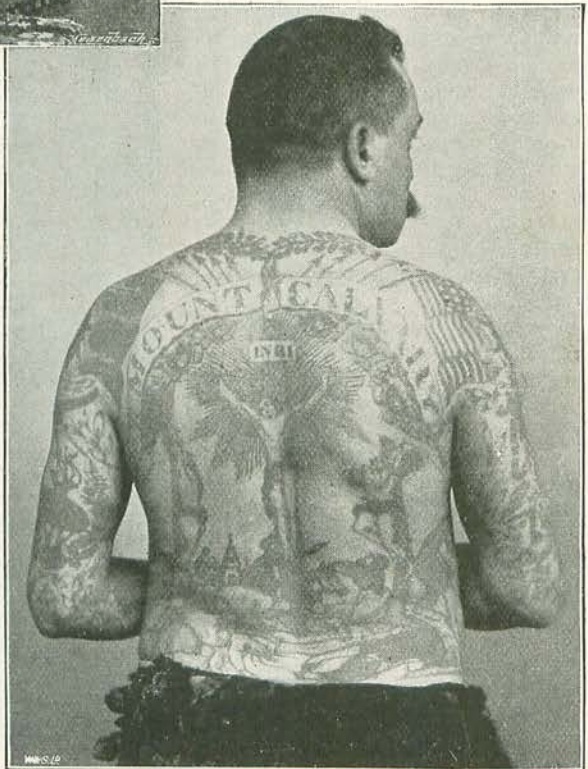
FRANK DE BURGH.
From a Photo. by Carl Müller, Berlin.

effect will be gained from Frank De Burgh's "front view." We also note that between these two public characters there is an indelible bond of affection. For, on Mr. De Burgh, we find the inscription, "Forget-Me-Not," in a graceful scroll, held aloft by the hand of a maiden fair. Beneath this figure is the name "Emma," and below this the full name of the head of the firm. On Mrs. De Burgh, the names of "Frank" and "Emma" are again prominent.

It may have been from photographs of the Williamsses and the De Burghs, with their highly-decorated bodies, that the New York comic paper, *Puck*, got its idea some years ago of representing the Hon. James G. Blaine as the "Tattooed Man." Anyone who compares the photographs we reproduce with the *Puck* cartoons, will note the similarity. The "Tattooed Man" immediately sprang into popularity, and in a Presidential campaign that

unfortunately descended into most degrading personalities, these cartoons did destructive work.

English soldiers do not appear to take to this practice readily, although many officers and men who have been quartered in Burmah bear the regimental crest or badge on their arms, roughly forced into the skin with the weapon already mentioned, and some few men in regiments which have never been to Burmah have not only had designs placed on their own bodies, but may sometimes be seen practising on others in their regiment. To this habit we owe the fact that in London at the present moment is produced the very finest tattooing the world has ever seen; for Mr. Sutherland Macdonald, whilst in the Royal Engineers, used often to watch the men working with their roughly made needles in the barrack-room, and having always had a taste for figure and landscape painting, he was at last induced to give his



FRANK DE BURGH'S BACK, SHOWING THE CRUCIFIXION IN TATTOO.
From a Photo. by Carl Müller, Berlin.



EMMA DE BURGH.
From a Photo. by Carl Müller, Berlin.

attention to tattooing, with the result that in a few years' time he has not only equalled the work done by the Japanese, but has even excelled them; for in addition to using Chyo's three colours, he has, after much patient investigation, discovered a permanent ultramarine blue and a very beautiful green, both perfectly harmless to the human skin, and he is now diligently practising on his own body for a yellow and a lavender. The two chief difficulties to be overcome are that many skins will not stand any known yellow, throwing it out very soon after it is worked in, or else, as it heals, it will turn to a very different and unpleasant colour; and this applies also to all of the lavenders at present known to science. But it is only a question of time and money with him, and before long he will be using no fewer than seven different colours; and, by mixing one or two of these, he will have nearly as many to choose from as the oil or water colour artist.

As if this were not sufficient, he has also invented and patented an electric machine into which he

inserts either a single fine or large needle, as he may require one or the other, and with this instrument he can do outline work five or six times as quickly as that done with the ordinary needles in the hand of an expert, and the lines are far more regular and even, whilst pain is reduced to a minimum. For shading or heavy work he uses the Japanese needles, ivory handles and all, and to prevent any chance of carrying disease from one sitter to the other, he has the most perfect system of disinfecting that the most careful medical practitioner could wish for, as he fully realizes the mischief that may be caused by the use of needles which are not properly disinfected on one person after the other, as many have found out to their cost abroad.

As examples of his work, we give a dragon, coat of arms, snake round the neck, and his masterpiece, the fighting eagles; but it is impossible to reproduce these subjects by photography as well as we might wish, for most of the delicate shading is missing, and the coloured work is absolutely lost; but it



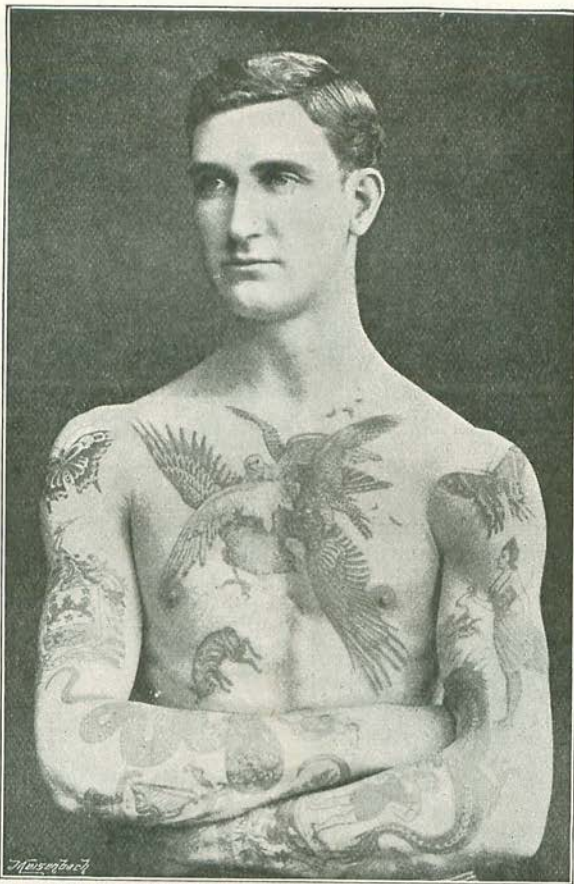
EMMA DE BURGH'S BACK, SHOWING THE LORD'S SUPPER, BY DA VINCI,
IN TATTOO.

From a Photo. by Carl Müller, Berlin

may be said without fear of contradiction that no one in the past, and no man living to-day, can compare with Macdonald in placing really artistic pictures on the human skin.

A visit to the little studio at "The Hammam," in Jermyn Street, is, in its way, quite as interesting as a visit to Chyo's bungalow, and whilst recognising such salient features in both as the luxurious cushions, resting here on a divan instead of on the floor, the familiar needles with their gaily decorated handles and the little hypodermic syringe, not to mention the ever-ready box of cigarettes and the

accompanying cooling drinks, we find here the additional comforts of the electric light and a snug stove, both of them very necessary in the variable English climate. And quite as much time may be profitably spent in going through the portfolios of both, for whilst in those of Chyo's we find scarcely anything but the art of Japan, very beautiful and fascinating in its soft colouring and dainty effects, in Macdonald's albums we

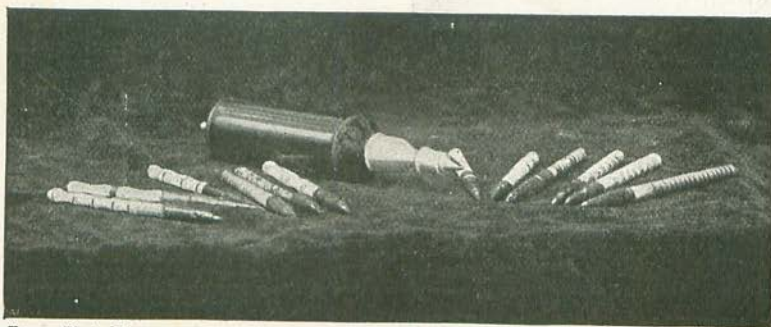


"A BATTLE ROYAL IN MID-AIR"—MACDONALD'S MASTERPIECE.
From a Photo. by the London Stereoscopic Co.

find drawings and paintings gathered from all quarters of the globe, and of all and every kind, quaint, humorous, and pathetic, but each one specially selected for the purpose of being reproduced by the tattooing-needles, and in more than one instance the copyright of some particularly striking picture has actually been purchased outright, so that no one but the wealthier patrons of the Jermyn Street studio shall have the use of them.

Turning over the leaves, we notice, amongst other quaint designs at this moment adorning the bodies of some of our best-

known society men, three five-pound notes, full size, on which, perhaps, the owner can "raise the wind," if at any time short of a cab-fare, by placing himself in temporary pawn; a fox hunt in full cry, horses and their scarlet-coated riders, with a very level pack of hounds careering down the owner's back in wild pursuit of a "little red rascal," racing for his life; whilst one more than plucky individual, who rumour says has an extremely



From a Photo. by] ELECTRIC AND JAPANESE NEEDLES, USED BY MR. MACDONALD.

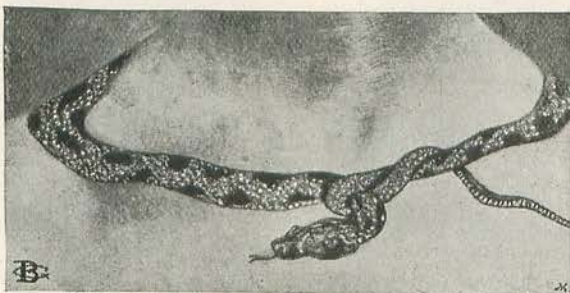
[The Author.

tender epidermis, not content with a handsome pair of dark blue socks with scarlet "clocks" on his feet, has lately been adorned with all manner of strange designs, from his neck down to the top of the socks, and this at quite a fabulous price, when we bear in mind the length of time it must have taken to carry out such a large order. Officers are constantly to be seen here having their regimental badge placed on their arms, whilst the number of crests and coats of arms in the albums testify how popular is this form of decoration.

intend to travel through, placed on their wrists as a sort of passport in cases of emergency and identification after death; whilst the ladies—but, no, we will draw the curtain

down and spare them: suffice it to say that Royal Princes and Dukes, the members of our nobility and thousands of humbler folk, bear to-day on their bodies clever, humorous, and artistic designs the work of that master of the art of tattooing,

Macdonald, of Jermyn Street, and we leave him with the thought uppermost in our minds what a pity it is that, unlike Chyo, he has no pupils and no one to take up the mantle, which some day must fall from his shoulders for ever.



SNAKE, TATTOOED IN GREEN AND BLACK, ROUND THE AUTHOR'S NECK, BY MR. MACDONALD.

From a Photo. by the Author.



FALCON, ON THE AUTHOR'S BACK, BY MR. MACDONALD.

From a Photo. by the Author.

Travellers in dangerous and remote districts often have a few words of Arabic, Burmese, or the language of whatever country they may



DRAGON, TATTOOED IN BLACK, GREEN, AND RED, BY MR. MACDONALD.

From a Photo. by the Author.