POTTERY painting has become such a fashionable and, withal, useful occupation among women and girls that we need not preface our remarks upon tile-painting by any reference to the rudiments of pottery, or, as it is called, Ceramic painting, especially as that subject has been treated of in a former number of The Girl's Own Paper. We shall take it for granted that those who intend to apply this article practically have either a slight knowledge of pottery-painting, or will take the trouble to read the article in No. 22 of The Girl's Own Paper.

There is perhaps no branch of pottery-painting more useful than the one forming the subject of this article, for tile-painting, whether viewed from an artistic or practical point of view, must commend itself to art students and amateurs. Painted tiles can be put to all kinds of uses, many of which instinctively suggest themselves to the reader's mind. In many modern houses, fireplaces and chimney-pieces are often ornamented with tiles, usually printed ones, and, at a very small outlay of money, a girl with artistic capabilities might add to the interest, originality, and beauty of the room by painting some tiles in lieu of the printed ones, for anything done by hand is, from its very nature, so much more interesting than work turned out mechanically by a machine. In older houses, where no provision is made for tiles, and where the mantel-pieces are not beautiful adjuncts to the room (as they too often are not), accommodation can be made for tiles by having a casing made of deal to fit right over the stone mantel-piece, and fastened to the wall with brass plates and screws. The front of this casing will, of course, consist merely of a frame just wide enough to take the tiles, which can be kept in their place by beads. We have seen mantel-pieces so treated when the rooms have been repainted and done up, as the casing should be the same colour as the rest of the woodwork, and the effect is admirable and well worth the outlay, which is not great. An accessory, such as a tile fireplace, gives an unique appearance to a room, and stamps it with an air of originality; and, considering the facilities for fostering various arts such as the present one, which a generation ago did not exist, no houses where there are girls with a little leisure and talent should be wanting these artistic accessories. Indeed, it has been one of the chief aims of The Girl's Own Paper to familiarise its readers with some of the useful and beautiful arts, so that they may employ their spare time profitably to themselves by adding to the charms of their homes by their own work. Many people, especially dwellers in towns, have window-boxes to hold flowers and plants, and these are usually fitted with tiles, as earthenware is capable of resisting exposure to the weather better than any other material. It is hardly necessary to add that this affords a splendid opportunity for the display of artistic talent, and one we hope our readers will avail themselves of. The frame is made of iron, wood being clumsy and liable to decay, and there are several places in London where these are made at a moderate cost. Measure the width of the window, and paint your tiles accordingly. If you cannot get an exact number of tiles, you must have one cut. Let the man who makes the frame-work have the tiles when painted, and he will fit them in their place. It should be borne in mind that it is
Wood could be employed in this case for the framework, and girls who have brothers with a turn for carpentry might get them to make it for them. It is surprising what people can do when they set earnestly to work, and by brothers and sisters joining in a kind of working partnership they would materially help each other to be useful. Many boys are quite expert carpenters, and yet too often spend their time making useless boxes and rabbit-hutches, when, with a little stimulus and directing advice, they might manufacture some useful and ornamental articles. Teapot stands are things which are not difficult to make, and with a nicely-painted tile in them, form admirable presents. Some black picture moulding does admirably for framing tiles, and with four small knobs at the bottom corners, completes a most useful article for the tea-table.

Wash-stand bricks are often fitted with tiles, and, in fact, we might stay to enumerate their various uses, to the exclusion of more important matters; but we will pass on to other considerations. Having seen some of the uses tiles can be put to, we will just consider what are their advantages from a technical point of view. To begin with, a tile is the best possible article to attempt when beginning pottery-painting, for this reason, that the surface is flat and the size not too large. Vases and plaques, besides requiring careful designing and arranging, are difficult to paint, owing to the shape of their surfaces, whereas a tile is no more difficult than a piece of paper, and is almost as portable. Then, again, the price is not formidable. Tiles can be purchased at china shops, and also of the tile makers, who have warehouses in London, and are to be had of the following sizes: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 12 inches, at prices ranging from 4d. up to 5s., the 12-inch tiles being very expensive in comparison with the smaller sizes. They can also be had buff, cream, and green, as well as pure white. The most useful sizes we may mention are 6 and 8 inches. For panels and large subjects the design is painted on a number of tiles put together; they are then burnt, and are afterwards cemented and the joints coloured over. This is the only way big subjects can be executed, it being impossible to make large slabs of earthenware.

It will be seen that tiles are admirably adapted for learning upon, as, even if a few are spoilt at first, no great loss is entailed, and requiring, as they do, a very simple treatment, are the first steps to more ambitious works.

We now come to the question of the style of design most suitable for tiles, and, in order to better illustrate this part of our subject, we have given several illustrations to elucidate the text: seeing what ought to be done is far better than being told what to do. It will be noticed that in all the designs given none of them are absolutely pictorial, all of them being decorative or conventional. By pictorial is meant a drawing made direct from nature, without any modification whatever, whereas in all the designs given there is a certain amount of design—an arrangement and balance of form which would not be the case if the drawing were made straight from nature. In the design of lilies it will be readily seen that a certain selection has been made, so that the flowers shall not all grow on one side, as often happens in nature. In fact, the design shows how a pot of lilies might grow under very favourable conditions, and not as they usually bloom. And this selection not only refers to the general parts of one plant—choosing the most suitable specimen and complete of it—but also in selecting plants whose forms are beautiful and whose growth is not too complicated. A daisy would, for these reasons, be far more adapted for a tile than the rarest orchids, for there is a
about the plant you elect to base your design upon. In drawing a lily, for example, let us first note the characteristics of the flower, which has petals, three sepals, and three small, arranged alternately, so that when looking full at the flower it presents the appearance of two triangles overlapping each other. If we follow one petal line, we impress these simple facts on our mind: we shall never fall into the mistake, by no means uncommon, of making a lily with only five petals, such a flower being unknown to the artist, and not knowing the right and left from the centre vein as in the apple.

We have given these particulars of the lily in order to show how plant form should be drawn when the drawings are to be used afterwards in designing. It is this quality of careful observation which produces good work, and we should always recommend the student before putting pencil to paper to make, as it were, a mental inventory of the plant to be drawn, to avoid the many mistakes which are inadvertently made while the drawing progresses, and also to impress the plant on the memory so that on a future occasion the student would be able to know whether the design that was being painted was connected with nature. It is astonishing, if we look at nature only curiously, how soon we forget the facts of the commonest flowers; even, say, to the number of petals in a wild rose, whereas if we take the trouble to impress these particulars upon our minds it would make our work much more truthful than it is—a quality Ruskin so much admired.

Now we come to consider the plants which are most suitable for tile designs, for, next to drawing accurately from nature, it is necessary to make the most suitable use of our designs. The plant always ought to bear some relation to the size and shape of the tile to be painted. It would be as absurd to choose a sunflower for a six-inch tile, as to attempt to fill out a twelve-in, with a small flower like the sorrel, or to select a flower like the daisy for the panel of a mantel-piece. As a broad rule it is better to disguise the size of nature than to enlarge or reduce a flower to the requisite dimensions. Nature has made each flower in proportion, she has given every flower its most distinctive side, and by reducing the large flower we are apt to get a cramped, as in enlarging a small one, a coarse effect. For a six-inch tile select flowers such as the marigold, as in figs. 1 and 2, and for a tall panel such plants as the iris, foxglove, and any other whose growth naturally fills the space. But as our illustrations will help this part of our subject better than words can, we will append a few notes explanatory of the cuts.

In figs. 1 and 2, drawn from the marigold and dandelion respectively, we have plants that are suitable for the space without compression or enlargement, and as there are dozens of other wild and cultivated flowers of the same size as these, we can give endless variety to our tiles. Fig. 1 is helped by a suggestion of water as a background, which might be done in blue to give a quaint effect as in fig. 2 there is an indication of grass to suggest growth, and give the design a more complete appearance. These designs could be worked with dark backgrounds, but are particularly well as they stand.

Figs. 3 and 4 require little comment. Founded on two well-known plants, the water buttercups and shortia (a plant used extensively in boxwork), they require much the same treatment as our two last designs. Blue-green backgrounds look effective, as both flowers are white with pale yellow centres.

In fig. 5 we have attempted to show how the lilies might be treated for a fireplace, and also to show how to combine conventional and quaintness with natural form. The panel is formed of four 6-inch tiles, and makes an admirable place for the plant, being, as in good proportion. The background might be a rich blue, with an edging of basket-work also in blue. The leaves should be nice tones of green, inclosing to yellow, and the lower leaves of the lilies are often quite red, even when the plant is flowering. The flowers should be shaded with a greenish grey, and a slight wash of pale yellow gives the outline shape appearance the pure white might have.

Fig. 6 illustrates a part of our subject touched on previously, viz., selecting appropriate flowers for the space to be painted. Flowers such as the narcissus, daffodil, jonquil, with their long, straight leaves, form charming panels. We have seen small flower-screens, each panel containing a such of such, decorated with tiles, and exceedingly well they look in a room.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

BITE ABOUT ANIMALS.

Keen Scent in Dogs. — Some dogs are remarkable for possessing a wonderfully keen sense of smell, and by means of it will trace individuals after having been allowed to sniff round any object that has been worn by them. Nelson gave me a sample of his talents in this line which might have been disagreeable in its consequences. His master's family left home on a visit, and, for a fortnight, the house was closed. Being one of the very few persons with whom Nelson was friendly, I volunteered to feed him during the absence of his owners. On Sunday morning my wife and I were busy in the yard and bushes; but on Sundays the place was deserted by human beings, and the neighbours wondered I dared go alone, and Nelson at the bottom of the house, entered the yard, placed the food on the ground, and took up the pail to fetch water from the pump. I did not speak; but I noticed Nelson sniffing energetically at the bottom of my dress, and as I passed on with the pail, the huge beast spring at my throat. Fortunately he seized not my flesh, but the woolen shawl, which, however, was not at all hard to understand how I kept my presence of mind; but I felt no fear at the moment. I gave Nelson a sound cuff with my disengaged hand, and said, “You stupid old fellow, don't you know me?” It was quite touching to see the change in his expression. He crouched down and shuffled towards me, his shoes, then ventured to my hands, and showered doggiest caresses on me, seeming, by every action to impress pardon for his mistake. I could not so I patted his big head and made friends again. But how did it happen that Nelson acted so strangely? I was a girl at that time, and occasionally a partially worn dress of my mother's was “made down” for me. On that Sunday I wore, for the first time, a black silk which had been thus adopted. My muffle face, prefaced by a yellow, and I was snifing at my dress then I found the smell of my garments strange also; hence, deceived in sight and scent, he took me for a stranger. I never felt afraid of Nelson after that day, but my mother was not a little relieved when the return of her mistress removed me from the post of purveyor to a dog that was so very particular about his appearance. — GREY POLLY.

Parrot Acquaintances. — GREY POLLY.

“Most of my bird friends have been parrots, and of these I have owned rather a large number, having had as my seafaring relatives. The best we ever had was brought from the Cape by my uncle, a naval officer, who commanded an East Indiaman in the China trade when iron ships were thought of, and England's 'wooden walls' were the only ones known. Polly was a beautiful dove or ash-colored bird, with a superb crest, and was a perfect creature. She could whistle, sing, talk, and laugh with great distinctness and in the most amusing style. She called every member of my family by name. The boys were going to bed always insisted on bidding each “good night.” If the lads omitted this ceremony she would scream at them, “William, kiss Polly; good night,” until she compelled them to do so. I got to the police. Many of our visitors were also recognized and saluted by Polly as soon as they appeared. One old lady was much delighted by my aunt's parrot, and when poor old Mrs. Jones dropped in early in the afternoon, and took out her knitting, with the evident intention of staying ten, Mary would say, “Pray, don't be grumbling, tom! And that's old Mrs. Jones come again; I wonder who wants her.” Polly had heard this remark so often that it had become fixed on her memory, and one day when the old lady called, she called out, “There's that old Mrs. Jones come again; I wonder who wants her?” My aunt's face became scarlet as she heard Polly's salutation, for she feared the friend, whom she really esteemed, would think she had taught the bird to say this in order to annoy her. Happily, Mrs. Jones not being very quick at hearing, did not catch the purport of the remark. She only heard her own name mixed up with Polly's speech, and appeared rather gratified than otherwise that the bird knew her. And noticed that it was not shut up in a cage, but always stood on a handsome perch, with every possible bird-stand convenience. She was particularly fond of discomposing the bird's escapades, but even Polly's habit of launching her perch, Polly snatched off the girl's light cap with her hooked beak, dropped it on the ground as far away from the owner as possible, and then in a meaningful voice echoed her words, “Polly must wait.”

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TILE-PAINTING AND DESIGNING.

Taking into consideration the number of our readers who are learning the art of pottery painting, we think it will be useful to them if we supply a few additional designs to those published on pages 728 and 739 of this magazine.

Figs. 5, 6, 7, 8 are drawn from shrubs instead of flowers, as in the first four illustrations, and are treated rather more conventionally. Figs 5 and 6 are "autumnal" tiles, founded on the maple and the blackberry. The tone of colour should be rich and warm, yellows, reds, and browns predominating. The leaves might be put in in washes of colour, and the veins taken out before dry with the point or brush handle. Figs. 7 and 8 might be painted in blue, single colour tiles looking very well. In fact, blue is essentially a tile colour, for in very old houses the fireplaces were tiled round almost invariably with blue Dutch tiles. A design for blue treatment should be clear, well-defined, and nicely balanced, and should be effective, without elaboration or high finish. Fig. 8, drawn from the traveller's joy, is a plant eminently adapted to this treatment, the curves of the leaves and stems being highly ornamental.

Fig. 7 is founded on the palm, and requires no further comment.

In figs. 9 and 10 we have panels formed of two six-inch tiles, such panels being suitable for being worked up with ornamental tiles at top and bottom to form the sides of fireplaces. Fig. 10 is a figure of Autumn drawn in a tily manner, and could be worked in blue or colours. Symbolical figures of the seasons, arts, and sciences, &c, are usually chosen for tiles, as it gives a motif to decoration.

In fig. 11 we have an oblong tile panel, and it is suggestive of how such spaces can be treated. The wild rose supporting the head in centre is quite ornamental in character, the stems being made to assume a scroll form, and the colouring should, therefore, not be too natural. The head in centre, a portrait of Raphael, might likewise be painted in soft tones of colour. A panel such as this would be suitable for the top of a mantel-piece, and if several panels were required the head might be changed while retaining the same ornament. We may here recommend our readers to study Japanese painted pottery whenever they have an opportunity, as they, of all nations, are the most successful Ceramic artists. While being wonderfully true to nature they infuse a quaintness and variety in all their designs which gives their work that uniqueness which is so desirable in all artistic effort. It is for this reason we have gone to some pains to endeavour, and we trust with success, to show the sort of designs most suitable for tile painting. To place any design on a tile without method or thought cannot be considered art, no matter how well the individual thing may be executed. It is in filling out the tile appropriately, so that the lines shall flow gracefully, and the masses be well balanced, that we produce worthy designs.

Of course in a short article like this it is impossible to leave nothing unsaid that may further the subject under consideration, and all we can therefore hope to do is to set the reader thinking, and also direct the thoughts in the proper channel; so that a clear idea may be kept before the mind of what one ought to do, as all after success depends almost wholly on a right beginning.

Fred Miller.