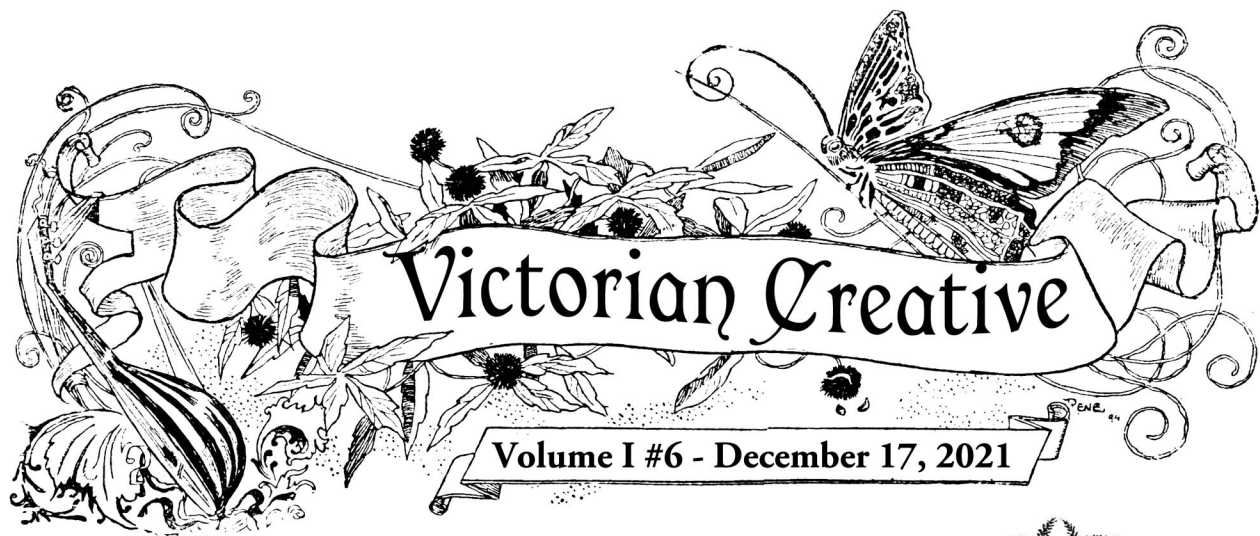


Victorian Creative

Tips & Tools for Victorian-Inspired
Arts, Crafts & Decor



Volume I #6 - December 17, 2021

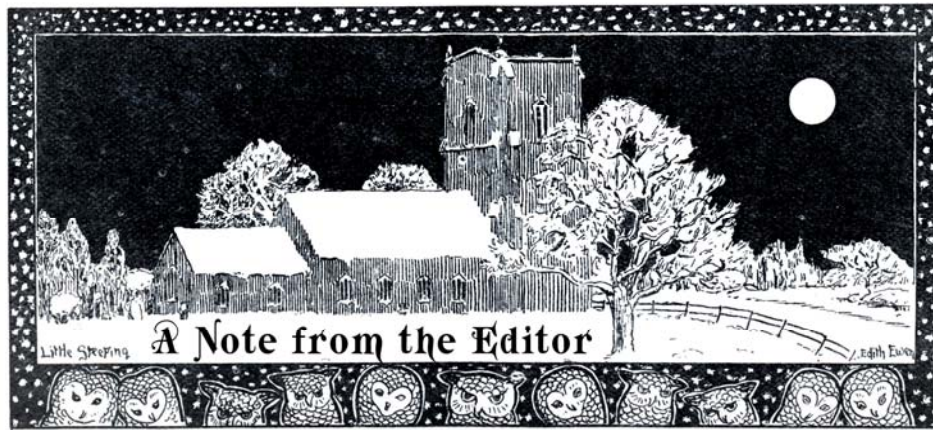


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ABOUT OUR COVER: Our Santa image comes from vintage postcard, probably dating from between 1910-1920. This image, and loads of other Victorian & vintage Santas, is available in our collection of **Winter & Christmas Cards & Ephemera**, at <https://www.victorianvoices.net/clipart/seasons/wintereph.shtml>



DECK THE HALLS, VICTORIAN-STYLE

For many of us, this is the time of year to start hauling the Christmas decorations out of the attic, the cellar, or the closet. Decorating “Victorian-style” generally means bringing out boxes and boxes of treasured ornaments—not only for the tree, but for just about any surface in the house that isn’t moving.

While it seems likely that some Victorians (particularly those in higher economic brackets) may have kept some treasured ornaments from year to year, I’ve never found any articles to confirm this. In Victorian times, the general tradition seems to have been, instead, to create new ornaments and decorations every year.

One reason for this is that much of Victorian holiday décor was based on natural items, such as greenery, fruits, nuts, berries, etc. In Britain, holly, ivy and evergreen branches were brought into town by the cartload in December; Victorians could shop for their Christmas greenery in the open-air markets, or, in some neighborhoods, from carts that would bring these supplies to your very door. Fruits and nuts, of course, were readily available in the market. Country-dwellers could rely on their walks along the hedgerows to provide a supply of cones, seed-pods, and other natural items; these, too, were probably brought into the city by enterprising holiday vendors.

The Victorian home might be ornamented with great swathes of greenery. Besides the tree (which might not be set up until late on Christmas Eve), one might have garlands, wreaths, swags, and even curtains of hanging greenery filling interior doorways. (Most likely those doorways would have had fabric curtains anyway to block the drafts; the greenery, perhaps dipped in egg-white and Epsom salts to add “ice,” simply added a festive touch.)

While glass baubles existed in the Victorian era, their popularity as a “common” Christmas ornament came later in the period, when such decorations became more affordable. Tin ornaments were also popular, and tinsel was another late-Victorian decorating item. Ornaments might also be made out of metal, wire and beads.

For many families, however—and in particular for those who might have a more limited budget—ornaments were more likely to be crafted from fruits, nuts, and paper. Nuts could be painted gold or silver to brighten the tree; apples and oranges might be hung “as is” or studded with cloves. Children delighted in creating multi-colored paper chains, and heavier paper might also be made into cone-shaped cornucopias, which would be filled with candy and hung on the tree. In America, one might make garlands of popcorn, cranberries, or a combination of both. (I tried this one year, and made a number of mice very happy.)

Besides being more economical, this approach to Christmas decorating had the advantage of giving the children something to do, making them feel a part of the process of preparing for Christmas. Again, quite often the tree wouldn’t be set up until the younger children were in bed on Christmas Eve, and the older children in a family would take great pleasure in planning its decoration. (A wonderful account of such holiday decorating can be found in *Five Little Peppers and How They Grew*, originally published in 1881.)

So if you’re thinking about how to decorate “Victorian style” this year, take a moment to consider what could be done with natural elements. Gild some walnuts. String some popcorn. Make a paper chain. Such decorations require no year-round storage space, and they bring no end of fun to the holiday season!

—Moirra Allen
editors@victorianvoices.net

HOME DECORATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS.

HOW shall we decorate the house for Christmas? I think we might diverge somewhat from the old-fashioned ways, and introduce a few improvements, and add a little variety to these decorations. We might ornament our rooms in a more artistic style than is generally our wont.

True, we shall have to spend much more time on our work, but "a thing that is worth doing at all is worth doing well." The old custom is to deck walls and windows with sprigs of evergreens—sprigs and twigs which look uncommonly stiff and uncomfortable, and which spend their time in falling off the tops of picture-frames, and tumbling out of windows, and suddenly precipitating themselves from gaseliers. We will decorate in a more satisfactory way, if you please.

Now, I am going to suggest to you a good many plans for home decorations, but I shall not pretend to advise, or to declare which is the best mode, for that would be simply impossible. Much of the choice depends upon the style of your house—whether it is an old-fashioned structure or one of modern erection—and, again, whether your supply of evergreens is abundant or scanty. If you live in a town, it will seem a mockery to advise you to make wreaths by the dozen yards; and if your home stands in a garden well planted with shrubs, you will perhaps scoff at suggestions which will prove valuable to those who are not rich in the possession of evergreens.

I know that holly wreaths and mistletoe boughs are considered to be the orthodox, and perhaps the only legitimate, materials for use on this occasion, and I should certainly introduce green leaves into every decoration; but it may not be always practicable to confine ourselves exclusively to the use of anything in particular.

It will be best for me first to enumerate what you can make, and after that to offer some hints as to where and how you can place these various decorations. Perhaps

you will be offended if I ask whether you can manufacture a wreath. A simple work it appears to be—merely fastening evergreens on to a string. It is true that is all there is to do; but even for this simple task dexterous fingers are required to weave home decorations.

In a large building, clumsy workmanship is not discernible; and it is a matter of little or no consequence if here and there a piece of string does show itself, or if the garland is rather thick in one part and somewhat bare in another; but in our rooms these defects are eyesores. Wreaths should be made to look round, full, neat; and, moreover, they ought to be made firm enough to be handled and put into their places without fear of a catastrophe.

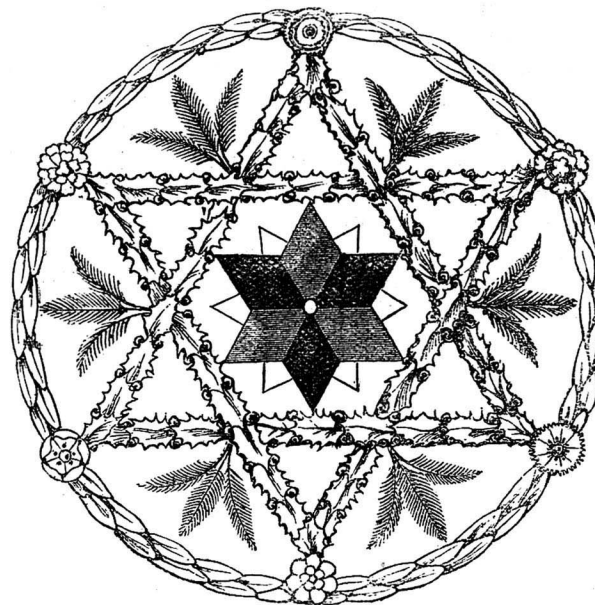
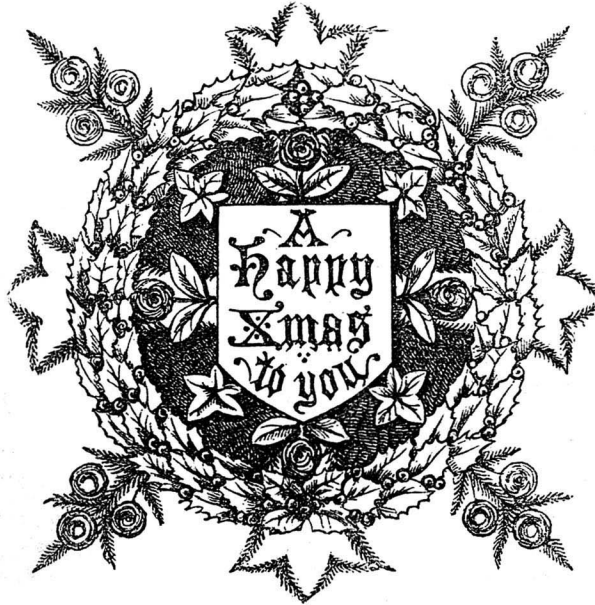
Take a long piece of thick string, or thin cord, and tie one end of it to the door-handle, or some object which

will hold it secure. Have some fine wire or thin string (I prefer the latter) at hand, and any number of small sprigs of evergreens. Place two or three

on the cord, and then twist the wire round the bare stems; then lay one or two over the fixture, and again twine the wire round. The work is more expeditiously done when the cord is stretched tightly over a space, and fastened at both ends; but then the wreath is apt to be flat underneath instead of being equally full all round. This does not so much matter if it is destined to adorn a flat surface—if it is to go round a doorway, or be in any position of that kind—but it is very detrimental to the appearance of festoons or garlands that hang detached. If you are

new to the work, you will be astonished to find what an immense number of pieces of holly and box are consumed by this style of decoration.

I would specially recommend you to wear gloves while engaged in this work, for there lurks poison in the holly, and if it finds an entrance into your veins, then I pity you, poor creature, for what you will suffer; too well I know what you will have to go through, for did I not myself endure much from neglecting to obey



this warning? The frost was severe; a small crack in the skin let in the enemy, and that most useful member of the hand, the thumb, did no service for the writer during a long six months.

And now the wreath is made; and though its leaves are bright and shining, yet its hues are sombre. It will look very well in the hall or staircase. The next can be more cheerful, as bunches of red berries can be put in, at short intervals; or, if the birds have run off with the berries, as sometimes they are greedy enough to do, then we can have recourse to the red and yellow everlasting flowers, which are sent over in such quantities from Germany, and are used extensively for this and such-like purposes.

Paperflowers give a bright and cheerful look, but for myself I do not like to see them introduced, except for some special evening entertainment. Seen by daylight, they are apt to give a tawdry look to the whole, but at night they are particularly ornamental.

In arranging these flowers in the wreaths, the placing of the different colours should be taken into consideration,

not because of a possible disagreement, but because their powers of reflecting light are by no means uniform; thus, blue is lost in the distance before red, and yellow is seen at a distance at which red would disappear. Colours, however, do not decline in force so much by height as by horizontal distance; the reason of this being that the upper atmosphere is less dense and clouded with vapour.

We need not go any further into the science of colour; thus much is necessary, because the wreaths

will still look dull if white and yellow flowers are not frequently interspersed with others of less reflective power.

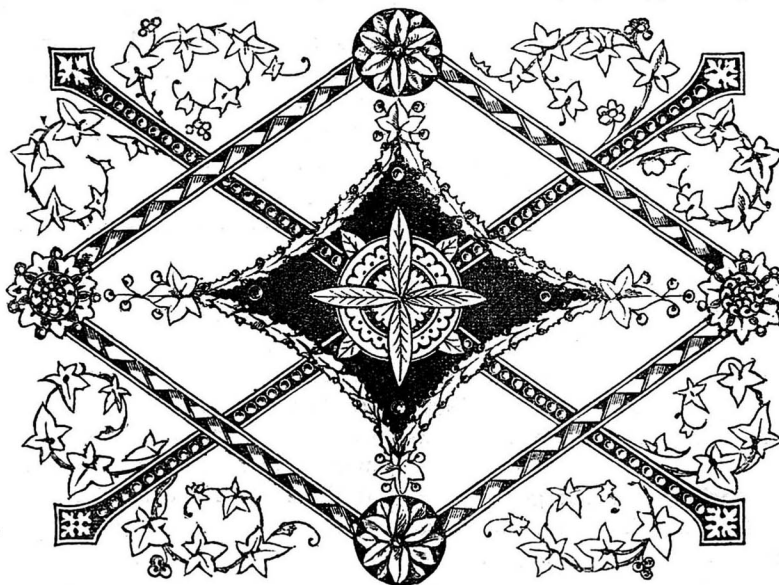
One more device by which to brighten up the leaves; and to gain this effect a visit must first be paid to some glass works, where must be begged or bought

a few ounces of ground glass. This is a miscellaneous mixture of bits of all colours which fall to the ground when the glass is cut. Brush gum over the leaves, and scatter the powdered glass on to them. The cost of the artifice is trifling: the effect is magical. The wreath sparkles and glitters with many-coloured hues in the most radiant manner.

In lieu of wreaths, which are sometimes too heavy and cumbersome a style of decoration, long tendrils of ivy twined round or trained along look light and elegant; a good substitute will also be found in bands formed of leaves only, stripped from the stalk. I grant you that the sewing on of each separate leaf is a severe trial of patience, especially if those selected are the prickly holly,

whose points invariably catch the thread every time the needle draws it through; or the diminutive box, which seems to retard our work by the minuteness of itself and its fellows.

The leaves are sewed on to strips of Turkey red cotton, or white calico, and serve either as a panelling tracery, where the room is wainscotted, or as a frame or bordering for various devices. For instance, it would be a sad oversight if we forgot to put up in some form or other that customary old greeting to all who



enter our homes: "A Merry Christmas—A Happy New Year;" and when we have expressed the wish in a visible form, we can make no more suitable border for it than that of green leaves. How shall the letters be formed? Either by illuminating colours, the use of paper rosettes, or of rice.

May I offer you a few suggestions about your illumination?—for I presume you wish to be correct in the details. These hints do not refer to any design in particular, but to all in general. Supposing you intend to make the letters in gold, and wish the ground to be coloured, then the letters should be outlined in black; if you would reverse the arrangement, separate the letters from the ground by an edging of darker colour.

Dark letters on a light ground require to be outlined with a darker tint. Coloured letters on a ground of contrasting colour should be separated from the ground by an edging of lighter colour.

These few terse rules may be of service, for to a novice the art of illuminating is rather bewildering, for you see the effect cannot be told until it is too late to alter any mistake made in the choice of colours, and we are all so busy at this season that we have absolutely no time to study any art very attentively.

The second mode of spelling out our good wishes to all mankind, is by forming the letters of paper rosettes. Take a piece of twilled red cotton, and trace plain unornamental letters upon it, and then fasten on the rosettes at regular intervals.

These rosettes want dainty fingers to make them, but if they are neatly constructed the effect is really excellent; and there is considerable choice at command, for the letters may be made to look as of ivory or carved oak, of silver or gold; but for this special object, ivory letters on a red ground, bordered with laurel leaves, appear the best.

Long ago rice was used in imitation of carved ivory, and it is by no means a despicable device, and one which will serve in good stead if you are not an adept in rosette-work. Cut out plain letters in cardboard, of such a width that two grains of rice placed end to end, diagonally, will cover it. The large-grained Carolina rice is the kind you require. Wash it several times, but not so as to soften it; then rub it dry in a towel, and, aided by a knitting-pin, put on the grains end to end, diagonally, in such close succession as will entirely hide the cardboard framework. Very strong gum is needed to make the rice adhere.

The letters are fastened on to a groundwork of red baize, and here again a bordering of leaves of ivy, laurel, or box will give the required finish to the whole.

It is so much the fashion nowadays to have a multiplicity of mural decorations, especially in our drawing-rooms, that I should suggest geometrical tracings for this purpose. These can be formed in outline of flat bands of leaves, the inner part to be in coloured ground of red or blue, with a monogram in the centre,

or some other small device formed of rice or composed of very wee ivory rosettes. Or the outside border may be made of stiff cardboard, which having been covered over with thin red unglazed paper, can be then studded with small rosettes, and the centre part filled in with evergreen leaves.

There are some very handsome everlasting flowers which come to us from the Cape, and of which extremely pretty round wreaths can be made, by which I mean a circlet of flowers with no centre; these are suitable for drawing-room ornaments; there is also a very graceful feather-grass, *Stipa pennata*, which adds much to the beauty of drawing-room decorations.

Before we can be said to have concluded our subject, we must pay a visit to the staircase, for this is usually the object first seen on entrance, and one that is continually meeting our eye throughout the day.

One of our most eminent architects considers that our ordinary staircase is a very dull thing; he says that our neat stone steps, with moulded nosings, stuck by one end into the wall, and cleverly notched one upon another, and brought to a nice smooth slope underneath, with neat cast-iron balusters and French-polished mahogany rail, screwed round like a cornu-ammonis at the foot, are excellent in their way, and a time-honoured contrivance; but he complains that there is a sleepy, self-satisfied look about it which one would like to disturb—as if its only duty were to show you the way to bed. Let us give it a filip, and make it look more lively. Shall we see what we can do?

Have you room in your passage to allow of a bank of evergreens being introduced? Then I will tell you how to make one; it will quite transform the appearance of the staircase which has met with such censure from high quarters. Get some wire netting and rear it up outside the staircase. If your space will allow, do not place the network quite upright, but bring it forward at the base; the greater the incline, the more natural will the artificial bank look; if you put a tack here and there, and hitch the wire over, it will keep its place; you can also take it round the obnoxious "cornu-ammonis;" in the holes of the netting put middling-sized sprigs of evergreen, and in this way completely cover the framework. You have only to push the stems of small branches into the holes; no fastening is requisite to keep them there.

In conclusion, I will give one broad hint as to the choice of decorations. The style chosen for dining-room, library, and hall, should differ in character from that which is introduced into the drawing or breakfast-room. The decorations for the former should be somewhat heavy and ponderous, important and consequential in their general aspect; while those which gain an entrance into the latter must be of quite a different stamp; their outward appearance is required to be delicately neat, veritably elegant, and innately refined.

ARTICLES FOR CHRISTMAS-TREES.

A CHRISTMAS-TREE may be made at home for a very trifling cost. Long as they have been in fashion in England for juvenile parties, or for Christmas-eve, these trees seem to be still in favour almost as much as ever. Christmas-trees may be covered with paltry trifles, or made the medium of dispensing suitable gifts amongst the members of a household. When the latter plan is to be adopted, each article is to be marked with the name of the intended recipient. It is also very well to add a few boxes of sugar-plums and valucless trifles, which can afterwards be raffled for. The ordinary Christmas-tree is covered with miscellaneous articles, some of more value than others, which are either distributed at hazard by the

coloured paper. Fold the square in half, like Fig. 2, and cut off the piece at the top, making the two sides equal. When opened it will resemble Fig. 3. Gum it as far as the dotted line, and join it. Be sure to join it so that there is not a hole at the point. If it is made of white paper, cut some strips of red, of green, and of gold paper. Edge it with gold, and paste strips of red, green, and gold round it spirally at intervals. If the cone is made of coloured paper, use gold, white, and some favourably contrasting hue. Fig. 4 illustrates it. Another pretty way to make a rather superior ornament is, to cut a cone of bright green satin-paper, and join it. Cut a scarlet tassel, and fasten it at the point. To the top gum a piece of scarlet sarcenet, with a mouth like a bag, and over the join run some blond lace; turn a row each way,

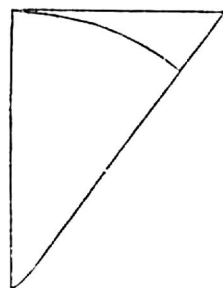


Fig. 2.

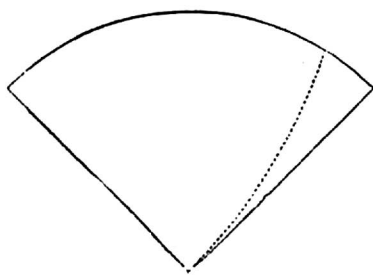


Fig. 3.

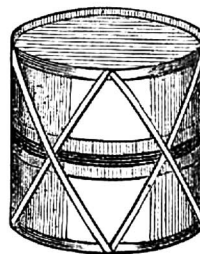


Fig. 12.

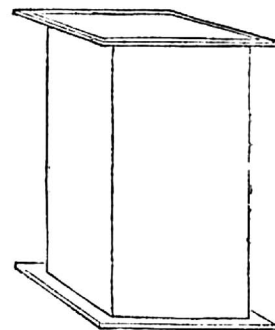


Fig. 8.

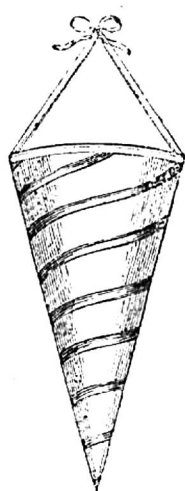


Fig. 4.

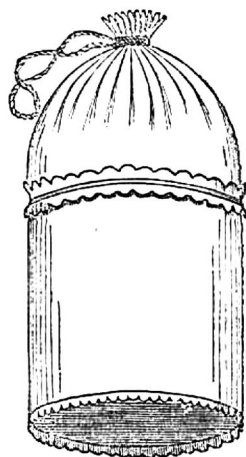


Fig. 6.

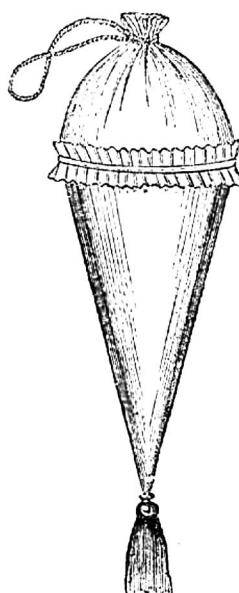


Fig. 5.

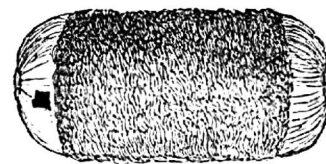


Fig. 14.

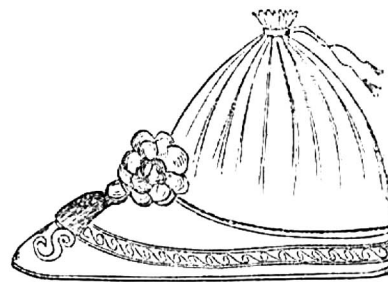


Fig. 15.

lady deputed to cut them down, or lots are drawn out of a bag of numbers corresponding to those fixed on the little presents themselves. A good-sized fir-tree, of regular shape, and with nice wide-spreading arms, is wanted. Cover this at regular intervals with gelatine lights, which are better and safer than wax tapers. These lights are like ordinary night-lights, each one contained in a little cup of gay-coloured gelatine, resembling the glass lamps used at illuminations when gas is not employed. Take care to place these lights so that not one of them is put under a bough, which it may set alight. Suspend them by fine wire, not cotton or string, which will take fire. A little behind every light arrange a bright tin reflector, star, or silvered glass ball. A number of flags are requisite to add to the gaiety of the tree, which a few bows of coloured ribbon will also enhance.

A good many small ornamental paper boxes and cases holding sugar-plums will add well to the decorations of the tree. To make paper cones, cut squares in white or

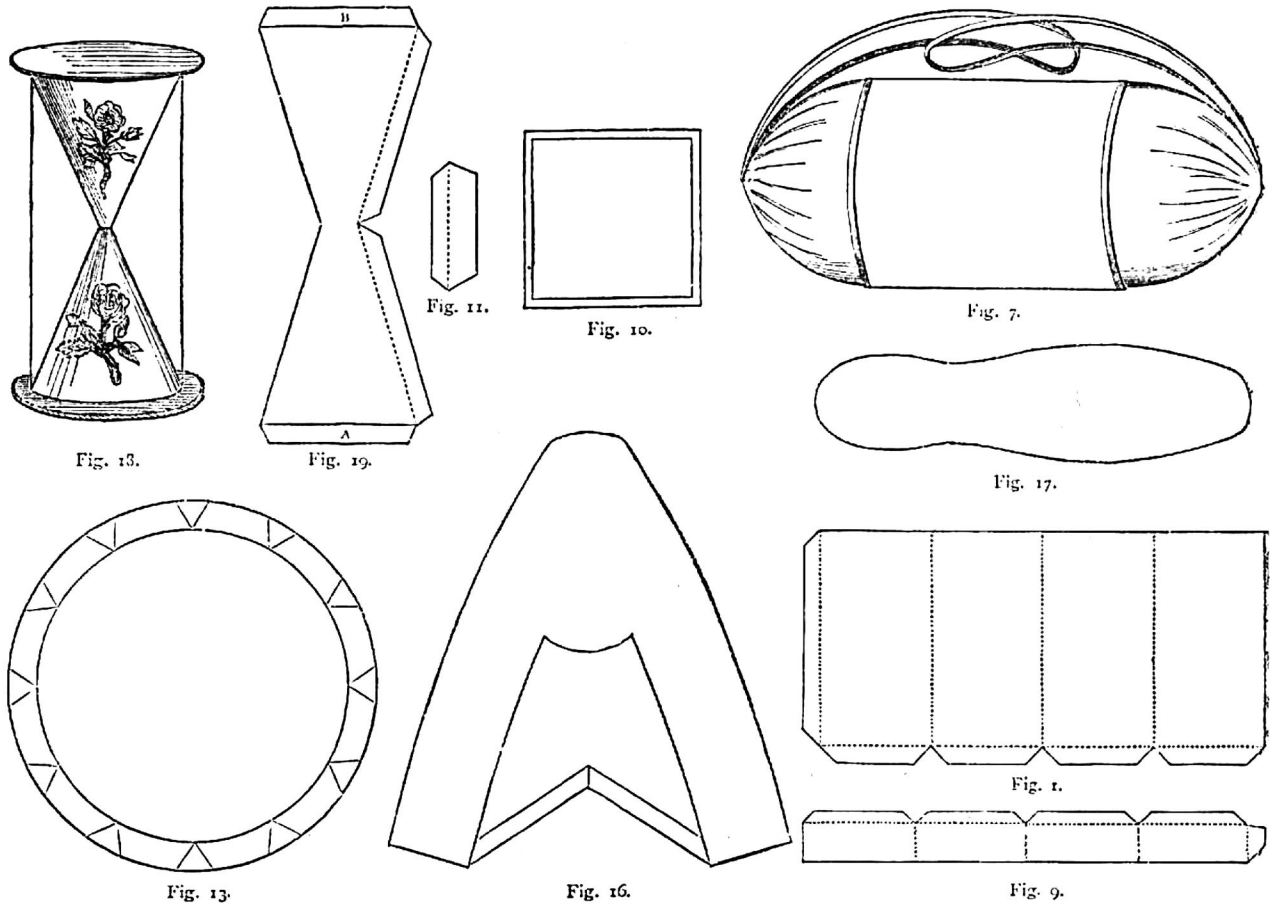
and gum a strip of gold paper between (see Fig. 5). Fig. 6 is another kind of sugar-plum case. Cut a straight piece of card, and sew it together to make a round like a drum. Cut a circular piece to fit one end. Cover the sides round with paper, notch the edges, and turn them down at one end over the piece fitted in, and, if well gummed, they will keep it in place. The other end may be first sewed in. Cut a round piece of coloured paper, and gum on lastly at the end. Have a bag-top of some different shade of silk or satin, and gum it on with some pretty piece of passementerie or gilt paper over the join. If the box is covered with straw-colour, and the bag is of blue satin, it will look pretty. Odds and ends of ribbon may be used in making up these little boxes. A more valuable case may be made by first constructing a box of a strip of card, goring it with a strip of paper each side instead of by sewing. Cover this with white paper. When quite dry, bind both edges with blue satin ribbon. Then draw, in water-colours, a garland of flowers round

the barrel. Very neatly sew a blue satin bag at each end. Put a little powdered scent in, enough wadding to fill the bags, and place it on the tree. It may be suspended by its own strings of blue ribbon. A pedestal is a good design for a fancy case. A design for one is given in Fig. 8. To construct it, take a piece of card large enough to allow for its four sides. Cut this like Fig. 1, allowing four equal sides and a bit over; half-cut through the dotted lines on the right side. Join it round with the small piece inside, and fix it with strong gum. Cut a square larger than the pedestal, for the base. Turn under the little pieces that may be noticed at the base in Fig. 10, below the dotted line, gum them, and fix on the base. For the lid, cut a piece like the base, and a second piece like Fig. 10. Half-cut through the dotted lines. Join the

and fit them into the drum. For the other end cut a similar piece, put a loop of thread or ribbon in the centre, and put it in without gumming it. Made in card, ornamented, filled with sweetmeats, and a piece of net gummed at the top, with a band of gold paper over the join, it is very pretty.

Fig. 14 is a *Muff*.—Make this of a bit of plush that looks like fur. Put a shallow, red silk bag-mouth at each end, to look like the lining. Draw up one and sew it. Cut a piece of paper the size of the muff, roll it round, and slip it inside to keep the muff out stiff. Cardboard can be used instead of paper. Put in the sugar-plums, and draw up the mouth.

The Lucky Shoe (Fig. 15).—Cut a shoe by Fig. 16, of any pretty material; join it and bind it neatly. Cut a sole by

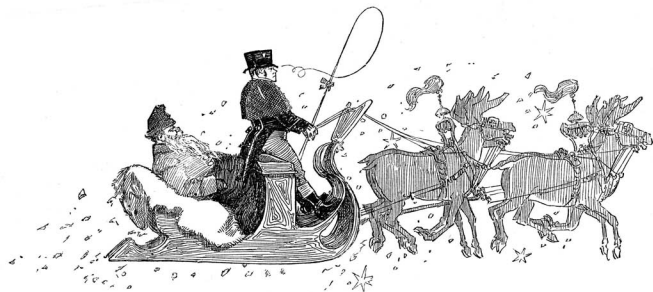


piece as the pedestal was joined, and fix the top to this piece in a similar way to that used in joining the base. But Fig. 9 must be a little narrower each side than Fig. 1, so that the smaller piece, Fig. 9, may neatly fit just inside the larger, Fig. 1. Another way to make this is to cut two pieces like Fig. 1, one just small enough to fit inside the other, and fix square ends of equal size to each. To close the box, put one inside another. Ornament the outer one with coloured paper, and bind the edges with gold, or merely bind the edges and draw a group of flowers on each side in water-colours, and also on the lid.

Fig. 12, a *Drum*, can be made of paper, and ornamented with strips of red and of gold paper, and have a few sugar-plums inside. To make it, join a piece of paper as for Fig. 6. Draw, with a bow-pencil, a round as large as the top, and a second round a little larger. Cut out the larger round, and notch the edges up (Fig. 13). When you have done this, turn down the edges, gum them,

Before joining the upper part, see that it fits the sole well. Cut the sole of card, and tack the material over it. Sew the shoe to the sole all round outside. Cut a sole of white paper a little smaller than the first; gum it, and fix it inside. Make a back, and sew it neatly to the shoe. Fill with scented wadding, sweetmeats, &c., according to fancy. If the articles on the tree are raffled for, and the tree is intended for grown-up girls, as sometimes happens at a Christmas party, it causes much mirth to secrete a mock wedding-ring in one of the shoes, underneath the sugar-plums or wadding. Then make known to the company that there is a ring to be found, and predict that the finder will be the first married. The lucky shoe is a very good place for it, as shoes have, in superstitious times, always been associated with supposed charms—the horse-shoe to keep away evil spirits, the old shoe for luck to be thrown after the bride, the shoes crossed at the bedside to make the owner dream of her sweetheart, &c.

The Hour-glass (Fig. 18).—This may be made in two ways. First cut four pieces like Fig. 19, cutting off the dotted piece at the side (not at the top). Cover each piece with white satin; sew them together. Cut two rounds, much larger, of card; cover each with brown satin. Sew on by the pieces marked A and B, Fig. 19, which are to be turned down. They should have been half-cut through before sewing. Take two pieces of wire, bind coloured ribbon round them, and sew them to the hour-glass. Cut a piece of card like Fig. 11; half-cut through the dotted line; stitch it to the top; cover the top with satin. This completes the whole of it. The second and simpler way is to cut the hour-glass like Fig. 19, half-cutting through the dotted lines, and by the side pieces; gum them neatly together. On the sides draw flowers in water-colours, or paste on spangles.



A Vision of Santa Claus

Through the keen air crystal snowflakes are flying,
 Drifting in heaps in the garden and glen,
 Cyril and Mark in their cosy beds lying
 Plan they will make some tremendous snow-men!
 Loud wails the wind, rising higher and higher,
 Drowsily crackles the nursery fire.

Dreaming, and faster asleep they are falling—
 Mark is a soldier gone off to the wars—
 Suddenly Cyril awakes him by calling,
 "What a bad night for that poor Santa Claus!
 'Tis such a pity it's turned so much colder,
 Each year, you know, he grows older and older!

"Mark, if you only would rouse up and listen!
 This time perhaps we may catch him at last;
 Here by the firelight his white beard will glisten—
 He is too old and too stiff to walk fast.
 Maybe he'd ask us to help him unpacking,
 Then we could tell him if anything's lacking.

"There is your boat—that's a heavy thing, rather—
 Then there's my sledge, to bring all through the
 snow!
 Does Santa Claus get a letter from Father?
 Else I can't think how he always should know.
 Mark, keep awake; I am getting quite creepy!
 Oh, how I wish that I wasn't so sleepy!"

Then his voice fails, and, as shadows grow deeper,
 Someone steals in like a beautiful ghost—
 Kisses the brow of each warm little sleeper,
 Leaving the treasures each wanted the most.
 "But we did see him!" next day cry the brothers—
 "Santa Claus' eyes are exactly like Mother's!"

— Christian Burke (*Girl's Own Paper*, 1902)



CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES.

THE SUPPER-TABLE.

AT this holiday time of the year, tastefully arranged suppers are frequently desirable, and it occasionally happens that a supper has to be extemporised in consequence of the unexpected arrival of friends; and to prepare and produce a supper without notice is a more difficult undertaking than spreading the table on due notice.

Where there are cook and housekeeper the difficulty may certainly be the more easily overcome, as the mistress has only to make them acquainted with the number of the guests, and her own ideas on the subject of dishes, and the supper will be accordingly served at the appointed hour; but where there is only a cook, the mistress will have to exert her own ingenuity to produce a repast suitable to the occasion.

Supper for six or eight persons may be required, in two or three hours, and moreover it is necessary that the supper be somewhat substantial.

Seven dishes at least must be prepared, and of what are they to consist?

The next question will be made to the cook, "What have you in the larder?" and the probable answer will be, "Cold fowl, ham, tongue, game, and cold roast meat." These will do very well; with a few lighter viands and sweets to make up, to be either prepared or purchased at the confectioner's.

The cloth laid, in the centre is placed a glass flower-stand, filled with fresh cut flowers, and around the flower-stand, on a silver épergne, or in small, cut glass plates are arranged custards and jellies.

In one dish is cold turkey or fowl, either cut up and laid on the dish garnished with flowers or parsley, slices of lemon and beet-root; or after having been cut up, the joints again united with white ribbon to give the appearance of a whole bird. This is a good plan to save the trouble of carving at table; as cutting the ribbon at once separates the joints. The poultry may be served whole if preferred; although for a cold supper it is usual to have the dishes served ready cut up, laid nicely in the dish, and garnished.

In another dish we have ham, either whole or in thin

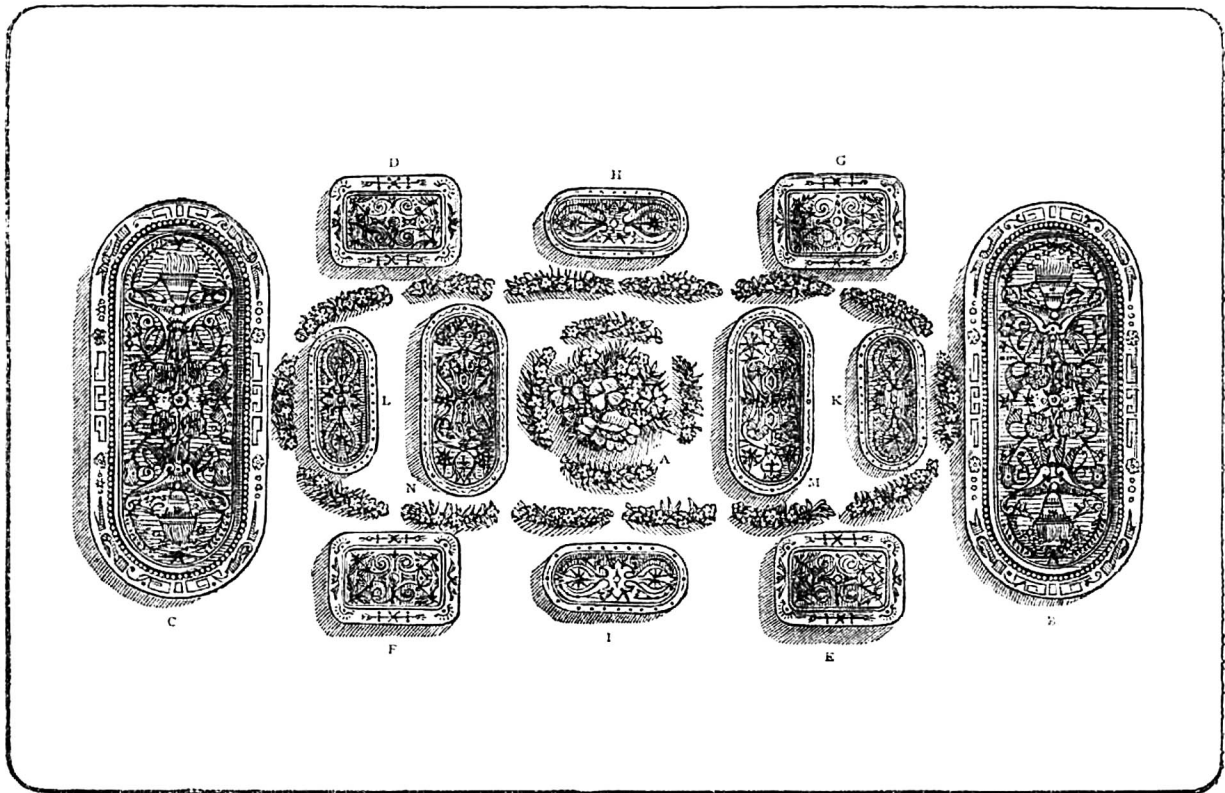


Fig. 1.

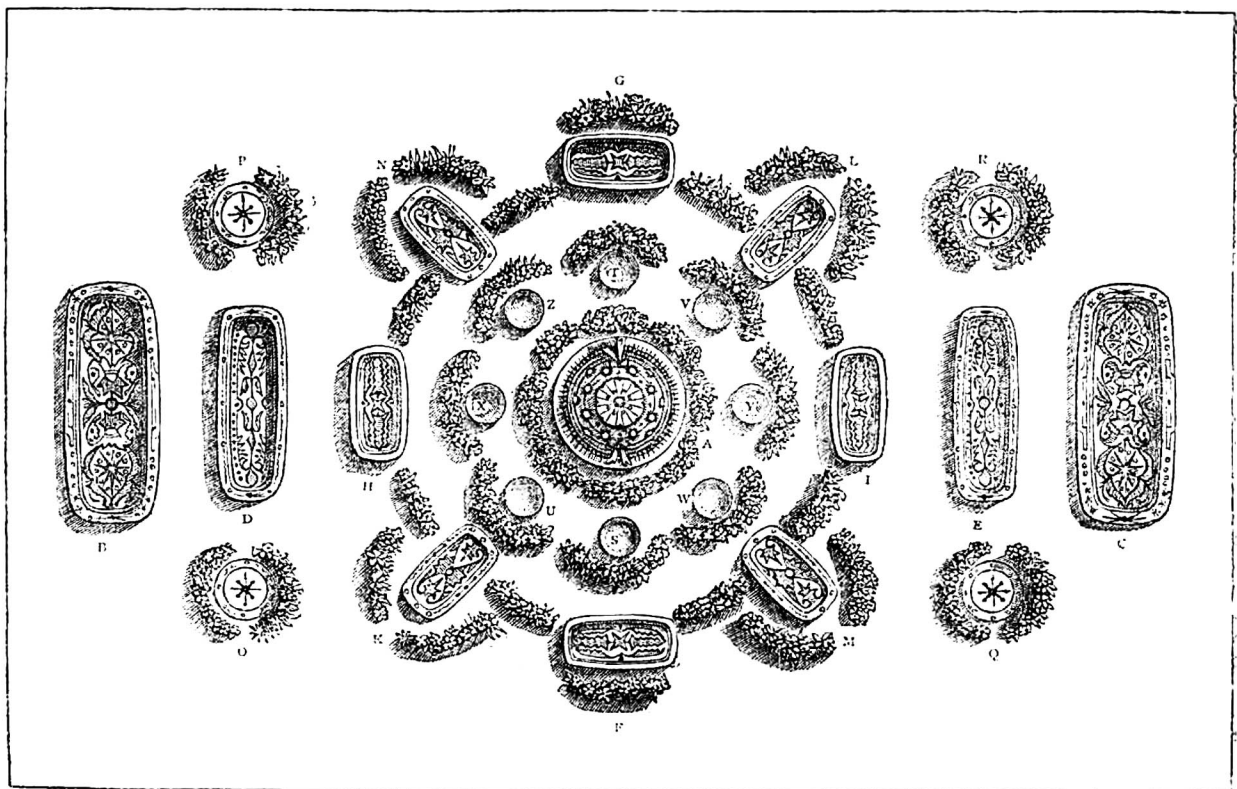


Fig. 2.

slices ; this must depend on taste and circumstances. Another dish will contain sandwiches. A dish of lobster, a dish of game, and a dish of tongue will be suitable. On each side of the glass flower-stand will be placed jelly and blanc-mange, or cream in moulds. The effect of a table arranged in this way will be very attractive, considering the familiar materials with which the result is produced. This bill of fare for a supper is simply supposed to be

got up at a short notice, and would furnish a tolerably good repast ; but if to these dishes were added four, six, or eight more, it would supply a supper for twelve or fourteen guests on a more elaborate scale.

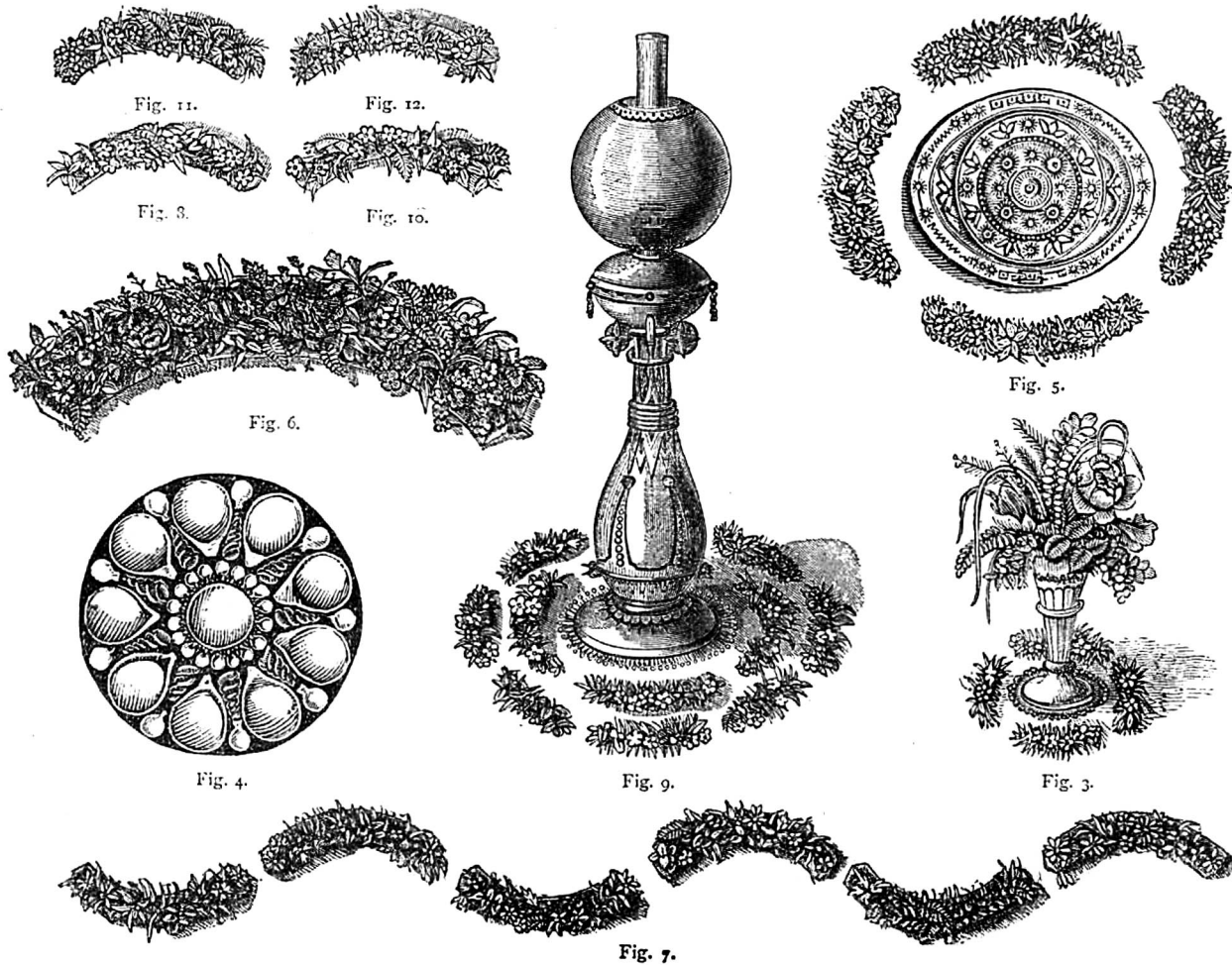
The supper-table is represented in Fig. 1 as decorated with the new floral glass dishes, and in the centre at

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| A, Glass flower-stand. | H, Collared meat, glazed and garnished with savoury jelly. |
| B, Cold turkey or fowl. | I, Raised pie. |
| C, Ham. | K, Mashed potatoes. |
| D, Sandwiches. | L, Potatoes soufflées. |
| E, Lobster. | M, Salad. |
| F, Game. | N, Lobster salad. |
| G, Tongue. | |

Fig. 2 shows a table arranged for a larger number of guests on a more elaborate scale ; and in this case it may

parsley, beetroot, and lemon, laid alternately round the dish, or the parsley may be laid in the dish, and lemon and beetroot upon it.

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|---|---------------------------------|
| A, Glass flower-stand. | N, Plain salad. |
| B, Cold fowl. | O, Patties, veal and ham. |
| C, Ham in thin slices, garnished to match the fowl. | P, Savoury patties. |
| D, Raised pie. | Q, Oyster patties. |
| E, Collared glazed meat | R, Lobster patties. |
| F, Lobster. | S, Ham sandwiches, garnished. |
| G, Oyster. | T, Tongue sandwiches, do. |
| H, Cold pheasant. | U, Pat of butter. |
| I, Cold partridge. | V, Cheese cut up in glass dish. |
| K, Potatoes soufflées. | W, Lemon jelly. |
| L, Browned mashed potatoes. | X, Cake. |
| M, Lobster salad. | Y, Cakes. |
| | Z, Blanc-mange. |



be suggested that a dozen or more friends have been invited to a party or a carpet dance ; or a friendly meeting of some kind calls for the exercise of hospitality on a larger scale than that afforded by the table (Fig 1). There has been more time to prepare the viands, pastry, and sweets, and we can introduce a greater variety of dishes.

In the centre of Fig. 2 may be placed a glass flower-stand filled with choice flowers and ferns, A ; around it are placed custards and sweets in small, cut glass dishes. In dish B we have cold fowl, cut up and laid tastefully in the dish, the joints alone consisting of the wings (cut in half, legs also), the breast and merry thought, garnished with flowers, or curled parsley, lemon, and beetroot, the latter to be previously boiled, peeled, and cut in thin slices, the round divided in two. The lemon should also be cut in thin slices, and the peel notched round. The garnish is very pretty made of small sprigs of curled

Great attention should be paid to the due arrangement of china and glass dishes, flowers, decanters, &c., as they add greatly to the grace and beauty if well placed ; if otherwise, the most costly viands look uninviting, and the effect is lost. Dishes containing the same kind of viands should be placed opposite to each other or at angles, never side by side ; cakes should face cakes, fruit, fruit, and so on. Colours to contrast should be studied, the table should not be over-crowded nor laden with dishes of one size ; but to produce a graceful effect the dishes should blend in colour, and consist of various sizes and shapes in china and cut glass. The arrangement of dishes is alone represented (Fig. 2). A small, cut glass water-bottle should be placed at the side of each plate to the right hand—knife, fork, and spoon, table-napkin tastefully folded on the plate, holding a roll. Saltcellars should be placed at short distances from each other, and if silver they add

to the elegance of the table. Table and dessertspoons with knives and forks, are to be placed by the dishes as required, and two or three wine-glasses of various sizes, with a tumbler to each person.

For a wedding breakfast, the arrangement of the table and style of dishes would be very similar to those represented at Fig. 2; the number and kind of dishes being chosen according to taste and circumstances. The bride-cake would take the place of the flower-stand in the centre of the table, surrounded by bouquets; and tea and coffee would be served at top and bottom of the table. At Fig. 3 is represented a vase of flowers suitable for the top of a glass flower-stand, or to fill up some part of a table. Fig. 4 is an ornamented cake or galette; Fig. 5, a dish surrounded by the new floral glasses; Figs. 6, 8, 10, 11, and 12, the new glasses filled with flowers; Fig. 7 shows the style of arrangement of these flower-dishes down the sides of a table; Fig. 9, a lamp surrounded with them, to be either placed in the centre of the table or sideboard.

HOME-MADE WINES.

GRAPE, GOOSEBERRY, CURRANT, ORANGE, GINGER, ETC.

Sparkling Grape Wine, or English Champagne.—Remove the stalks and decayed grapes, bruise the fruit, and to every pound put one quart of cold water; let it stand in a convenient vessel three days, stirring it twice or three times a day; then strain, and to every gallon of liquor add three and a quarter pounds of lump sugar; dissolve this as quickly as possible, and put the whole at once into the cask. Ten days afterwards put into the cask to every five gallons of wine one pint of brandy and a quarter of an ounce of isinglass. This should be bottled in champagne bottles, when the vines are in bloom the following summer, and the corks will require to be tied or wired down. The grapes for making it should be tolerably, but not fully ripe.

Sweet Grape Wine.—Pick the grapes as above, crush and strain, and to each gallon of juice add three and a quarter pounds of lump sugar; put it immediately into the cask, and bottle when the vines bloom the following summer. The grapes should be fully, but not over-ripe.

Sparkling Green Gooseberry Wine.—Pick out the defective gooseberries, remove the stalks and tails, and bruise the fruit in such a manner as not to crush the seeds; to every pound put one quart of water. This must be let stand three or four days, and be stirred three or four times a day; then strain, and to every gallon of liquor add three pounds of coarse loaf sugar. When this is dissolved put it into the cask, and to every five gallons of wine add one pint of brandy and a quarter of an ounce of isinglass. The wine will generally be fit to bottle in five months, but if it be found too sweet, and not clear, it may be allowed to remain longer. The gooseberries should be taken when fully grown, but before they begin to turn ripe.

Ripe Gooseberry Wine (Still).—Pick and bruise the fruit in a convenient tub or other vessel, and let it stand twenty-four hours; then strain, and return the skins and seeds to the tub, and pour on them tolerably hot water, in the proportion of one quart to every gallon of gooseberries; let this stand twelve hours, and then strain, and mix the water with the juice. To every five gallons of this liquor add twelve pounds of lump sugar; let it ferment well in the tub, then skim off the head, and draw off as much of the liquor as will run clear; put this in the cask, and add to every five gallons two quarts of brandy. To be in perfection it should not be bottled for five years, but it may be used, if necessary, at the expiration of twelve months.

Currant Wine.—Bruise ripe currants with their stalks, and to every fourteen pounds put eleven quarts of water.

Let them stand twenty-four hours, then strain, add one pound of lump sugar to each pound of currants, and stir twice a day for two days; afterwards put the liquor into the cask with a pint of brandy to each fourteen pounds of fruit. Three quarts of raspberries or strawberries to each fourteen pounds of currants is considered an improvement. To *white currant* wine some persons add a few bitter almonds, pounded. Currant wines should not be bottled for twelve months, and will improve if left for a longer period. Ripe gooseberry wine may be made by the same formula, if desired.

Strawberry or Raspberry Wine.—Bruise three gallons of either fruit, and add to it an equal measure of water; let them stand twenty-four hours; then add two gallons of cider, eight pounds of lump sugar, the rind of a lemon cut thin, and one ounce of powdered red tartar. Put into the cask with one gallon of brandy. For raspberry wine a gallon of currant juice, substituted for a like quantity of water, will be an improvement.

Damson Wine.—To four gallons of damsons pour four gallons of boiling water in a tub or other convenient vessel; let this stand four or five days, and stir it every day with the hand; then strain, and to every gallon of liquor add three and a half pounds of lump sugar; when this is dissolved put the whole into the cask. It may be bottled in twelve months.

Cherry Wine.—Same as damson, but as cherries are sweeter, three pounds of sugar only need be used to the above quantity. Many persons like the flavour of the kernels in damson and cherry wines: to give this, one-eighth of the stones should be broken, and infused with the fruit.

Sloe Wine.—Same as damson, but four pounds of sugar should be used instead of three and a half to the above quantity. A considerable length of time should be given to sloe wine in the cask, and it will become little inferior to port.

Rhubarb Wine (Sparkling).—Cut five pounds of rhubarb into short pieces as for tarts, and pour on them a gallon of water; let this stand five days, and stir each day; then strain off, and to the liquor add four pounds of lump sugar. When this is dissolved put it into the cask with one lemon and one pennyworth of isinglass. This will be fit to bottle in six months.

Apple Wine.—To a gallon of cider (new from the mill) add a pound and a half of moist sugar, a quarter of a pound of raisins, and half a lemon; put in the cask as soon as the sugar is dissolved. This will be fit for use in two months.

As the fruits or other vegetable substances on which the foregoing wines are based contain a natural ferment, they will undergo that process spontaneously, and require no yeast. Those that follow will require yeast to make them ferment.

Ginger Wine.—To six gallons of water put eighteen pounds of lump sugar, the rinds (thinly pared) of seven lemons and eight oranges, and eight ounces of ginger; boil the whole for an hour, and let it cool. When lukewarm add the juice of the above fruit and three pounds of raisins. Work with yeast, and put it into the cask with half an ounce of isinglass. This will be fit to bottle in six or eight weeks.

Orange Wine.—Boil thirty pounds of lump sugar in ten gallons of water for half an hour, taking off the scum as it rises. When the water has become nearly cold, put to it the juice of 100 Seville oranges, and the peel of fifty; ferment with half a pint of yeast on a toast; let it stand twenty-four hours to ferment; then put it into the cask with one quart of brandy. When fermentation ceases stop it close for three months; then rack it off, and put it again into the cask with one quart more brandy and one and a half pounds of raw sugar. This will be fit to bottle in twelve months.

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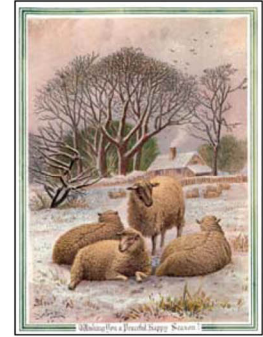
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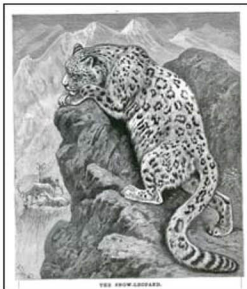
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Seasons & Holidays



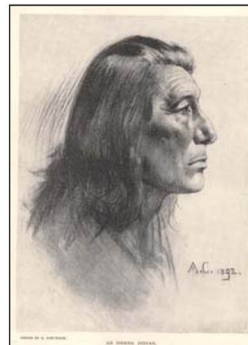
Easter



Children



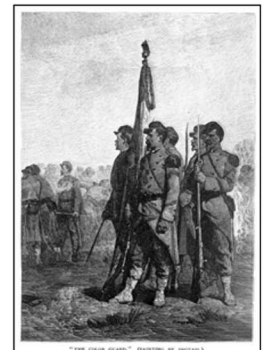
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**Embroidery
Patterns**



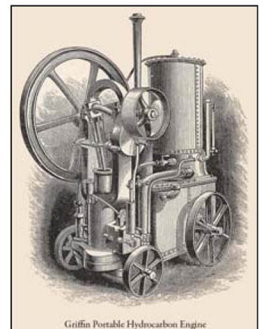
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EMBROIDERED HOUSE AND TABLE LINEN.



Fig. 1.

NE of the latest additions to the beauty of our household surroundings, is the revival of embroidered linen. Both in France and England it has quickly become popular, and the adoption of the Russian embroidered and worked towels is the freshest and prettiest of all the new ideas for bed-room decoration. These towels are used in Russia as a sort of blind, to cover from the general view the half-soiled towels in daily use, as they hang on the towel-horse, and form a disfiguring adjunct to the prettiest *chambre à coucher*. Their use in England has been extended to the ordinary towel, which is frequently embroidered and trimmed after the designs of the fair mistress of the mansion. "I shall never invite her on a visit to me again," said an irate leader in what is known as "high art fashion," the other day—"she shut herself up in her own room the whole morning, while she was with us, and copied all my towels!"

Outline-stitch, Russian embroidery, and chain-stitch are used, as well as crewel-work, for these towels. The first three are done in red and blue ingrain marking cotton, and the last in coloured crewels. The general method is to purchase the bordered towels, and outline the pattern on the border, in ingrain cotton; the ends are always fringed, trimmed ends having, to all appearance, gone entirely out of date. If the diaper or huckaback be purchased by the yard, from a piece, the towel itself must not be less than a yard and a half long; five inches being allowed at each end for fringing-out. Our illustration (Fig. 1) shows the appearance of one of these towels when

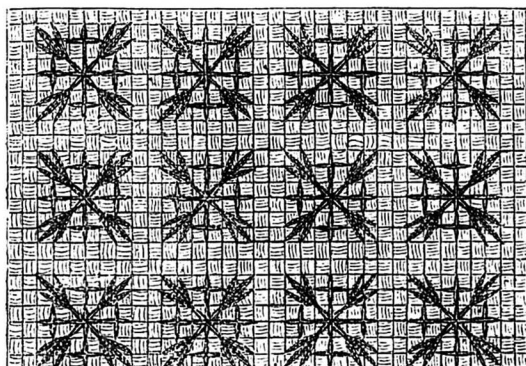


Fig. 2.

finished. Fig. 2 shows one of the Russian embroidery stitches, which simply consists of a series of long stitches, put in so as to form a pattern. This design is for use on ordinary huckaback, and may be worked in alternate squares of blue and red ingrain cotton.

The fringe of these towels is knotted, as seen in the illustration, and the chain-stitch sewing machines embroider very well for this kind of ornamentation. A running pattern, or a scroll design, must first be traced on the material, and then it can be gone over with the machine, leaving the chain-stitch for the right side of the towel. The outline-stitch may be worked in eight different ways, but it will not be needful to mention more than two, one of which is illustrated in Fig. 3; the other stitch would, in church embroidery, be called "couching." It consists in sewing a coarse thread down, at equal distances, with a fine thread. The old Saxon work, the most beautiful of all embroideries, generally has the design outlined in this manner; the interior being filled up with lace stitches, executed on the material.

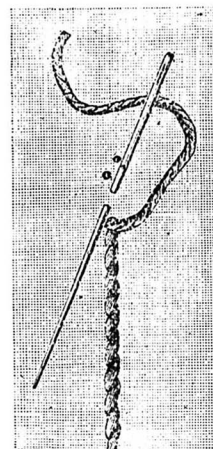


Fig. 3.

Holbein embroidery is also very pretty when both sides of the material are required to be alike—in other words, when there is no wrong side. It is really one of the outline-stitches, although it is unusual to class it with them; it is worked over a certain number of threads, always leaving the same number exactly between each stitch, thus making both sides of the work precisely alike. Square or geometrical designs are most suited to it, but any pattern may be carried out when once the worker is accustomed to it. I have been thus careful in mentioning the stitches in vogue for embroidering table and house linen, so that my readers will quite understand the various descriptions given, and the manner of executing them. The monogram of the owner, or the initial letter of the family name, is invariably embroidered on linen in satin-stitch, with either white or coloured cotton. For serviettes it is usually put at the corner, for table-cloths at one corner, or in the centre of each side, so that it hangs over the edge of the table. The monograms for table-cloths are very large; the same style and design is used of a smaller size for the serviettes of the set, for the side-board, and tray-cloths. Some of the table-cloths and serviettes are fringed at the edges all round; this fashion, however, does not appear to have "taken" very generally. The new French designs for table-linen deserve mention. They consist of large and rather fantastic-looking birds, embroidered in the corners with threads of various colours, and even represent natural scenes, such as the Chinese gathering in the tea-harvest, and Japanese costumes, or habits. The borders woven round ordinary table-linen are sometimes so pretty, that merely outlining them in red ingrain cotton is a sufficient decoration; and the serviettes and sideboard-cloth can be worked

in the same manner. A table-cloth and serviette thus treated and fringed at the edges are illustrated in Fig. 4.

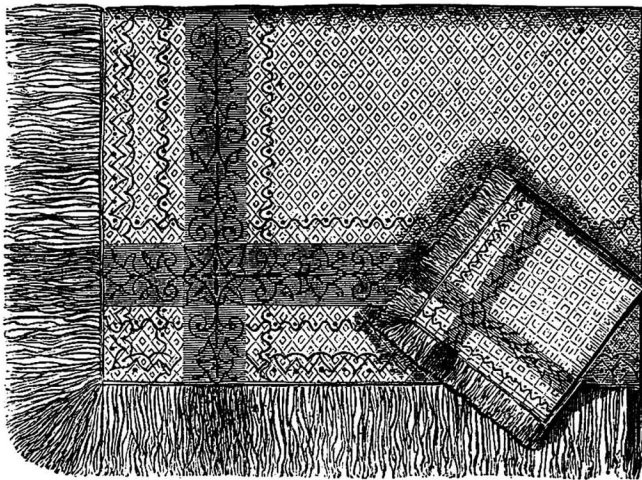


Fig. 4.

What may be almost called the "sampler" style of working linen must also be mentioned, as to those who do not feel inclined to attempt anything difficult it offers an easy but very effective decoration for towels or table-linen. In Germany this style of cross-stitch is used on linen sheets for ornamenting the ends that turn down over the bed, and even in the very poorest houses you find the bed-linen more or less ornamented. The method of working is to tack a strip of canvas on the material, and work the cross-stitch with ingrain cotton, and afterwards to draw out the threads of the canvas. For linen the canvas is hardly needed, the threads being both sufficiently visible and even, and the idea is so simple that any one can weave the little squares and zig-zags for themselves as they work. Fig. 5 gives a small border

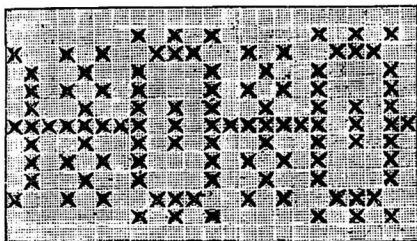


Fig. 5.

pattern, which many of my readers may recognise as a familiar old friend on the antiquated but recently revived sampler. The return to fashion of the primitive style of marking linen in cross-stitch, as it was done fifty or sixty years ago, was inaugurated by the new Needlework Code, and the scholar in a Board school has now her sampler, and works it as conscientiously as her grandmother and great-grandmother did before her. Marking-inks prove occasionally such disappointments, and work such direful mischief to the material upon which they are used, that one cannot regret the return of the old fashion. Children's fingers are very clever

at doing little stitches of this kind, and now that we have so decidedly made a move towards the useful in girls' education, we shall require all the interesting needle-work we can find to keep them sufficiently occupied. Another method of decorating house-linen is afforded by the application of another ancient fashion, that of "drawn work," which consists in drawing the warp threads of the towelling or linen, and obtaining a pattern by binder threads, in the same way as hem-stitching is done. When the weft threads are also drawn, a cross-barred design can be produced, and by the use of darning lace stitches and binder threads form an open embroidery, which was much used for ecclesiastical purposes in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and is still practised as a national industry for women in Brazil, and the other states of South America, where they do it with such skill that it becomes quite worthy of the name of lace, which they bestow upon it. Of somewhat the same nature as this is the old German "cut-work," of which a fashionable ladies' journal has lately given a sketch. This consisted in cutting and drawing both warp and weft threads, so as to leave the pattern drawn on the linen, a solid design, in a groundwork of quadrangular meshes.

In America, what are known under the name of "pillow and sheet shams" have long been in use. They really are embroidered or handsomely trimmed covers, put over the pillows of the beds by day, and over that part of the sheet which turns over. The general method of manufacturing them is to use Victoria lawn, or linen, with lace-edged frills. The linen is cut to the shape of the pillows which it is intended to cover, and the sheet "sham" is about half a yard wide by two yards long. These articles, however, would not find much favour in the eyes of Englishwomen, who use their bed-rooms much less than American ladies do, and who do not turn down their beds until the night, keeping both pillows and sheet covered up by the white or coloured quilt, which is spread over all.

In England, two fashions seem at present in vogue—the first is to have a cover, to lay over the quilt, of crêtonne or chintz, of the same pattern as the hangings of the bed; the second idea is to have this kind of cover composed of a white sprigged or spotted muslin, with frills of the same, or lace, and lined with silk to match the prevailing tint of the room. The first of these fancies I think horrible; and if the crêtonne used be a dark-coloured one, there is neither light nor brightness left in the room when the attractive whiteness of the bed is covered up. I can quite understand, however, that to those people who, in this smoky London, are obliged to study economy in washing, this fashion would prove a decided god-send.

In Figs. 6 and 7 examples of the embroidered bed-linen are shown, which is now used both in England and France. They are done in satin-stitch embroidery, and are intended for use, not for "shams." Great quantities of this work have always been done in France by the peasants of the Vosges mountains.

There is nothing really new under the sun. Even while I write my description of the embroidery of 1877, I am reminded of Sir Gardner Wilkinson's drawings of the Egyptian embroidery in fashion in the time of the Pharaohs.

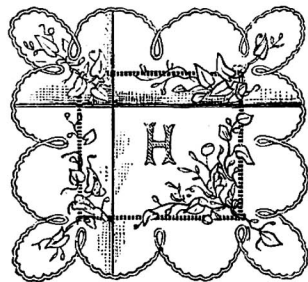


Fig. 6.

These specimens are now in Paris, at the Louvre; one of them has a broad yellow stripe, with some narrower red ones laid on it, and over both is wrought a diamond pattern in needlework; the second piece has a blue ground, over which a netting pattern of white embroidery is worked, and the meshes form the outline of an irregular design of cubic shapes. The stitches used are nearly the same as the long stitch now called Russian embroidery; and one cannot help pondering over endless questions of "hows" and

"whens," as one gazes at the labour of hands which crumbled into dust 3,000 years ago. No, I forgot; they did not crumble into dust in Egypt, for their remains, still in preservation, grace our museums today. If they could have foreseen it, I should think, the embalmer's art would speedily have gone out of fashion. But, in spite of her being a mummy (one of the ugliest of things), I looked with softened eyes at my sister-woman's work, and hope she never found a resting-place, with her embroidery—an exile and a show—under the gilded ceiling of the Palace of the Louvre.

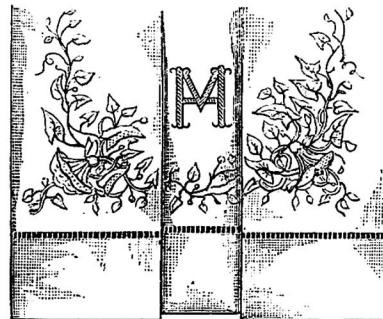


Fig. 7.

DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.



CHRISTMAS TABLE DECORATIONS.

To decorate the house for the Christmas festivities is always a pleasing task, cheerfully undertaken by the junior members of the family, and very clever and ingenious are the designs into which they not infrequently weave the somewhat heavy winter greenery. This year, however, their task will be lighter, and its effect gain in brightness from the masses of berries with which the holly branches are clothed. Not for many years have we had so plentiful a store; even the hips and haws still remain a glowing crimson on their bare branches, while in some places the leaves of the holly can scarcely be seen, so covered is it with berry. Whether or not the old saying that this plethora portends a hard winter be true or not, it is certain that it will be productive of great joy amongst those who are mainly responsible for the effective decoration of the home, the church or the Sunday school.

Yet perhaps in the zeal which is expended upon the transformation of the hall, staircase, sitting-rooms and dining-room walls, it may happen that the table itself is somewhat neglected. The menu, of course, has received the greatest care and forethought, and been in preparation for some days; possibly also a few of the choicest sprays of berried holly or blooms of chrysanthemums have been reserved for the vases which usually adorn it, but this is scarcely enough, for the gaiety and merriment of the Christmas feast will be greatly enhanced by the cheering influence of a bright and harmonious setting.

It is true that nowadays at this time of the year we are able to procure a profusion of foreign flowers for a very moderate sum, narcissi, violets, hyacinths, roses, tulips, etc.,

but the old familiar evergreens are the most appropriate to the season, and carry our memories back to Christmases of long ago. I will give you one or two suggestions which will be a variation to the vase arrangement.

On the fine damask cloth a strip of crimson satin should be laid down the centre of the table, and round the edge may run a border of small trails of the clinging variegated ivy, the sharply-pointed leaves of which will embrace many shades of colour, from white to tender green and brown. If there are no silver bowls we may take china flower pots and arrange in them branches of berberis, holly or mistletoe, to look like miniature trees sprinkled with snow. To do this, when the bowls are arranged, we take a fine-rosed watering can and dew them over with weak gum and water, and when it has drained off a little we dredge them over with the finest white flour and afterwards with sparkling salt. Both the salt and the flour must be well dried and sifted before using. The bowls are placed down the length of the table on the crimson satin, the spaces here and there being filled with little silver or china holders for sweets and fruits, and a tiny spray of mistletoe is placed in each dinner napkin.

Care must be taken that the lights burn brightly, whether they be candles or lamps, and that the shades should harmonise with the scheme of decoration. Red shades are always cheerful in winter time, and red candles add another touch of colour. If the table is very large and this does not seem to be enough, a wreath is easily made of sprigs of berried holly fastened on a slender wire which can be wound in and out amongst the smaller dishes. This kind of wreath is most useful

for twining around picture frames which are too valuable to warrant the intrusion of a nail or tack.

A more dainty and delicate combination of colour for those to whom the above may seem too vivid can be carried out with the time-honoured mistletoe alone. This too will require a table centre to throw up its subtle colouring, but it should be of a delicate leaf-green satin, with a pattern of gold and silver running through it, such as Liberty so frequently shows us. A border of Christmas roses will be very effective if they can be procured, if not the ivy trails are always at hand and are easy to arrange. A copper bowl hung from a tripod of wrought iron, with similar smaller ones, stand upon this groundwork, and are lightly and gracefully filled with branches of freshly-cut mistletoe arranged to spread outwards in light feathery masses. The sweet-meat holders should if possible be of copper, and a similar wreath made of mistletoe sprigs may be twined in and out amongst them if necessary. If the lamp or candle shades are of a reddish pink they will cast a rich warm glow over this delicately-tinted table. Where copper receptacles are not to hand, some good old brass, well-polished, produces an almost equally good effect, and failing that, the blue Delft ware or green Nuremberg glass will best harmonise with the tints of the mistletoe.

An original and inexpensive decoration for an oval table can be carried out with a centre strip of crimson cloth, rather wide, and bordered with the motto "Wishing all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year;" the letters, about three inches long, are cut out of brown paper and covered with leaves

of the variegated holly sewn on, they are then sprinkled with gum and water and afterwards with frosting powder. A tiny wire must be placed at the back to raise them a little from the table so that the motto may be more easily read. In the centre of the cloth a large bowl should be filled with frosted branches of berried holly, with smaller bowls on either side, and the candlesticks of white china holding red candles and shades are arranged on the crimson cloth. The motto and the bowls could easily be prepared a day or two beforehand if they are kept in a cool place where the leaves are not likely to shrivel, and indeed they may be used on more than one occasion, being easily adapted for the decoration of a long supper-table if need be.

Speaking of supper-tables reminds me that if the table stands back against the wall its front should be ornamented with trails of greenery and loops of ribbon. High handled baskets filled with flowers and tied with bows

to match are a favourite decoration, although there is now a new design which is very charming and is specially arranged for supper buffets.

It is a light stand made of gilded wire, in various heights, tall and slender, its top branching out in sprays holding little tubes which are filled with flowers. When lightly arranged with a mixture of flowers, grasses, and trails of fine green they closely resemble a miniature waterfall and are very graceful; their height too is a great advantage, as they are well above the dishes on the table. These wire frames are also made in other designs, arches, columns, towers, etc.

For the decoration of a supper-table for a children's party nothing will delight them more than tiny Christmas trees. They should glitter with "frost" and be well lighted up with candles fitted to their branches, but they need not have many ornaments except coloured sweetmeats and oranges.

There is a very quaint custom in vogue in the north-country at children's birthday parties which might with advantage be more generally known. The birthday cake—with the child's name and age engraved thereon in sugar—is placed in the centre of the table and surrounded with lighted candles, the number corresponding to the age of the child. Much merriment is caused by the efforts of the guests to count these twinkling lights, and the child feels great with the importance of an added candle at each recurrence of its holiday party. This same custom was recently carried out with intense delight at a gathering of children, and children's children, to celebrate the birthday of a great-grandfather. The ninety dazzling lights seemed to illustrate with peculiar force the long, long road of life which he had trodden.

But whatever suggestion we may adopt let us not forget the true spirit of Christmastide—love, peace and goodwill—to one another.



Chatterbox, 1897

"Home for the Christmas Holidays."

EMBOSSED LEATHER WORK.

IN proposing a work but little known in England as one that can be made available for helping the helpless, it may seem at first sight to lie open to the objection of being too artistic and too difficult for workhouse-pupils, but anyone who has learnt the process will be able to vouch for its simplicity and the many advantages it can claim. Any lady visitor to the "Idle-room" wards of a workhouse can see for themselves that some of the men retain all their mental faculties, and their infirmities, such as heart complaints, abscesses in the feet, or other bodily afflictions, are not of a nature to prevent their using their hands and minds when they are feeling a little easier from their incurable maladies. These moments or days free from pain are not sufficiently certain to enable them to leave the workhouse or earn much towards their own support, but they are long enough to give them time to learn to use their hands, and thus while away the tedious hours spent in a room where there are no amusements, and where a newspaper is as rare a visitor as a pinch of tobacco. In such a ward lately visited by the writer the men were found in several cases to be under forty-five years of age, and to have been carpenters, soldiers, and stone-masons. All these men's hands were supple from the use of tools or from indoor work, and they were quite capable of being taught to hold and use a pencil, or of raising and moulding leather, or making on it fine lines, and the work not being heavy or arduous would not tax their feeble powers. There is no great exertion or strain on the muscles, and no noisy hammering, as in brass work, and the moist leather worked upon, being intended when finished for book-covers or ornamental filling in of cabinet or other panels, is cut into pieces that can be moulded and worked upon any ordinary deal table without personal inconvenience to the other occupants of the room.

Embossed leather work has another merit; it is new to English buyers, having only been recently worked upon in this country, and it is for this reason likely to command a good sale. All who have tried to help the poor know only too well the difficulty of finding purchasers for handwork that is out of date and no longer fashionable; and as the sole aim of the Brabazon Society, or of the workhouse teachers, is to produce articles from which a speedy profit can be realised and expended for the benefit of the works, it will

be understood how acceptable is an unhackneyed art.

The art of ornamenting leather has been long practised in Spain and revived in Germany during the last few years, also in England for book-binding purposes it is well-known, but it is from Germany that the work as one suitable for the amateur has been introduced into London, and from Spain the extra art of colouring or gilding in conjunction with embossing comes. The plain embossing is used for book-covers, writing-cases, blotters, cigar-cases, etc.; the gilded and raised surfaces for dados, door-panels, and leather hangings.

The leather used is cow and calf-skin. The tools but few and inexpensive, and need not all be bought at the first, the designs easily

marble at a stone-mason's, as the exact size is not essential. The one expensive tool, and which most workers do without unless they pick it up second-hand, is a proportional compass fitted with pointers above the hinge. Its use is a great help when drawing the lines at the back of a book, or the diamond or other trellis patterns frequently produced as the ornamentation for the under side of any article that is more copiously decorated upon its upper side. Its use saves a good deal of measuring.

The leather is sold by ordinary leather-dealers, and when used in large quantities it is better to purchase from these shops the whole calf-skin, or half cow-skin, which are the smallest pieces they cut, but smaller pieces cut to the exact size required are obtainable from the two London firms that keep all the materials for the work.

The best lesson in the art is a practical following out of some given design, and as the first trial should be of an easy nature, we will follow the working out of Fig. 1, which represents a squirrel upon a branch of ivy. The article when finished would make a blotter; size of design when enlarged $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 6, size of blotter 12 inches by 8, size of leather 24 inches by 18. Having traced the design upon fairly stout tracing paper, lay it upon the leather, and the leather on the marble block. Fasten down the edges of the tracing paper beyond the pattern to the leather with the help of stamp-paper,

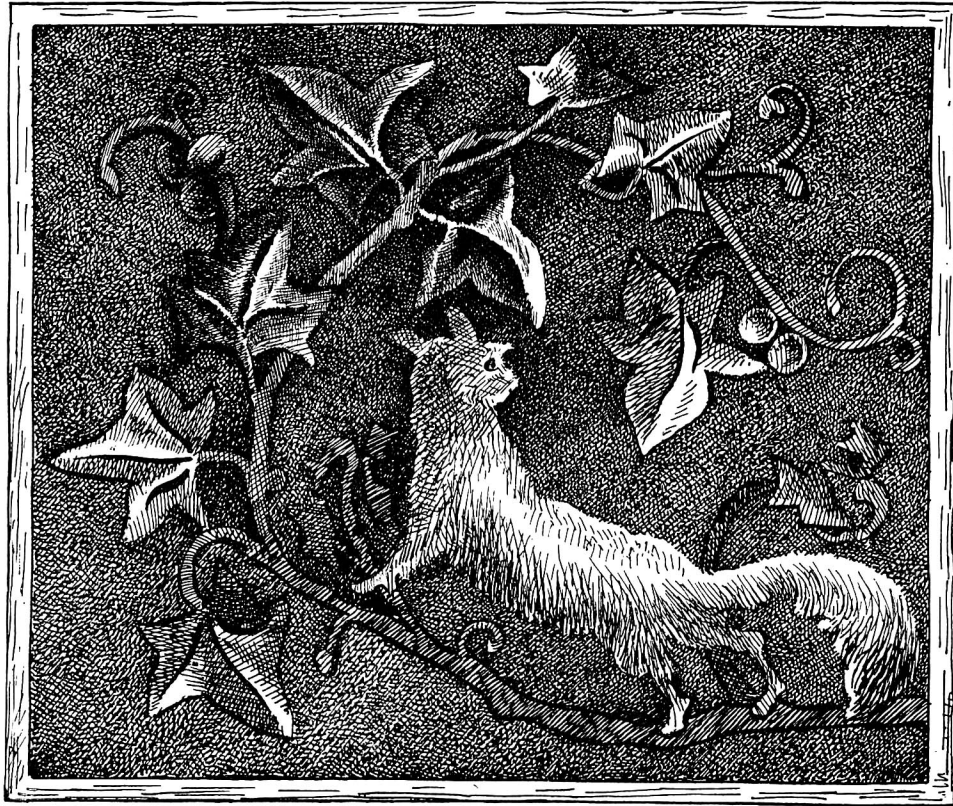


FIG. 1.

copied from the many good publications treating upon ornamental design should a set pattern be required, while for decorative flower and fruit subjects there are no lack of copies in every art paper. The tools are of iron and shaped like modelling tools; they are small. The most important are the following. The modelling tool, price 1s.; the pointing tool, price 1s.; the knife, which is a small short blade set in a fixed handle, price 10d.; and a set of tin shapes, price 1s. 4d.; these four are absolutely necessary. Besides these are the punches for depressing the backgrounds, and costing 8d. each. There are many kinds of impressions given by these punches, such as stars, a large circle, a small circle surrounded with dots, a large oval, smaller ditto, etc. Two or three punches and a hammer are sufficient to commence the work with. Another requisite is a piece of smooth marble an inch in depth and twelve inches square. This can be bought from the waste

and take the pointing-tool and mark every outline of the design through to the leather. Remove the tracing-paper and examine your lines; if not perfect, touch them over with the pointing-tool. The next process will be to open out the lines thus made, and this is done with a knife held in a peculiar way, and run along every line so as to cut it and to widen it. Take the knife in the right hand, hold it firmly upright and yet lightly pressed on the leather with its points touching the leather. Push it along the given lines away not towards yourself, placing the left hand on the leather, the thumb on the blade of the knife and pushing the knife with this left thumb. Keep it in position and upright with the right hand. Let it run without being lifted from the leather round all curves, such as are shown along the back and tail of the squirrel, the lines of the boughs, and the curves of the ivy tendrils, but lift it at the point of sharp leaves (such as the ivy) and put it down again a little

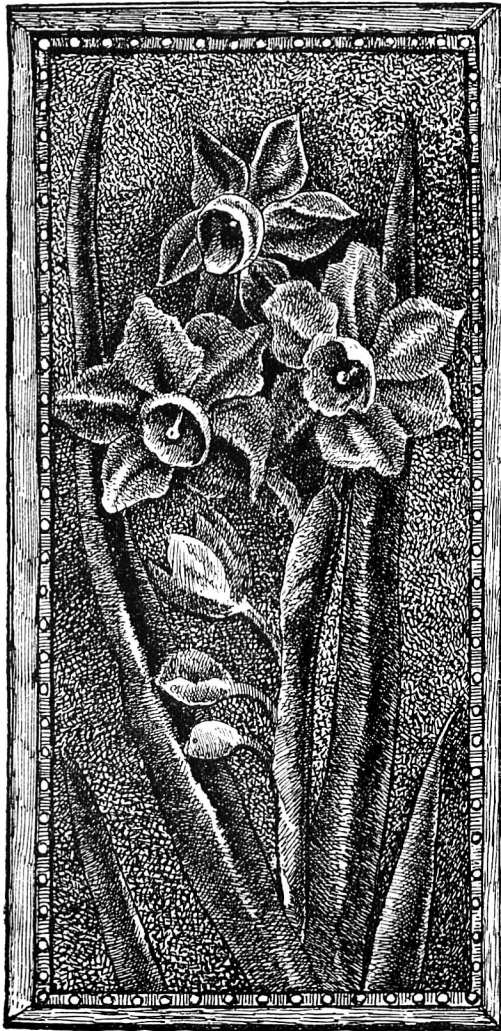


FIG. 2.

way away from where it was lifted. This little space between the two strokes giving the point of a leaf is done to prevent the leather being under-cut when more fully opened out in the next stage of the work. The correct holding of the knife, and position of the left hand, etc., should be practised carefully, as it is necessary by this process to cut the lines into the leather at one even depth, and not to jag deep into it at one point and scratch it only in another. Having "cut" the whole outline, the chief leaf-veins and the more important strokes on the fur, damp the leather with a clean sponge and widen out the cut lines. Take the pointing tool and run it along every outline and as it runs along open the edges of the leather away from



FIG. 3.

each other. Keep the leather fairly damp, but never in a sloppy or pulpy condition. Take up the modelling-tool and help the clearness of the outlines, etc., by pressing the backgrounds down close to these lines. Use the broad end of the modelling-tool for the chief strokes, the narrow for corners and curves, such as round the ivy-berries, the slighter tendrils, the head, ears and feet of the animal. Use the modelling-tool as a flat instrument, holding it in the right hand and guiding it with the left, and work with a firm and even touch without raising ridges on the leather surface. Endeavour to make the outlines clear and the patterns sharp, but do not waste time in lowering the background, as that work is accomplished when the design is raised or embossed, while the work done by the punches will give it the proper surface. The embossing comes next; for this the leather is damped but not made very wet, and one of the set of tin shapes taken and held in the left hand close to the outline of a leaf that it somewhat resembles. The tin shapes are small



FIG. 4.

wedged-shaped pieces, curves, rounds, pointed edges, and though they never exactly fit the outline they are held against, they will do their work, which is to hold down and retain

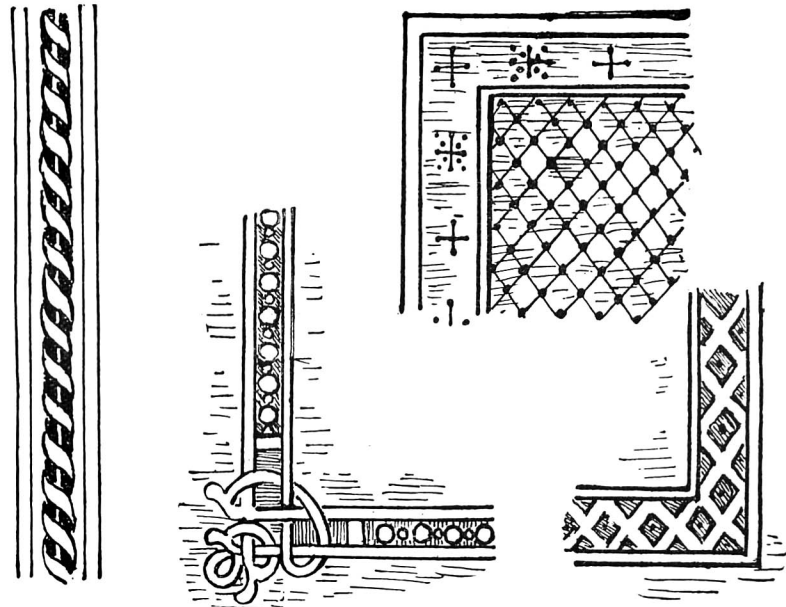


FIG. 5.

in shape the background and edge of the leather pattern that is in the process of being raised. Hold the shape pressed to the outline with the left hand, keeping the leather firm, with the broad end of the modelling-tool work underneath the leather, gently stretch the part to be raised working backwards and forwards, up and down, until it is pushed up quite one-eighth of an inch above the background. Raise up not more than four leaves at first, using different tin shapes so as to alter the outline of each, keep the leather damp and mix a composition of rye-meal, white sawdust and water in a saucer; slowly rub it down until it is quite smooth and even and fairly thick, then turn the leather over on its wrong side, and fill up with the paste all the stretched parts. Do not fill up the spaces with the paste to make a hard mass, but fill them in

carefully and leave an even surface that is flat to the unembossed leather. While the paste is still wet, turn the leather right side upwards, and with the two modelling-points go over the raised leaves, etc. Mark out all outlines clearly, raise one side of a leaf, press downwards the other work at the various veins, gently model little depression and stroke into shape parts that should catch the eye or form shadows. When working at the squirrel be very particular about the lines round the eye, the prominence of the cheek bone, nose, and eyebrow, also the height of the upper part of the tail and the modelling-lines for the lower. It is more effective to raise one or two places fairly high, and keep the rest of the space lowered than to have an entirely even and raised surface. As the paste underneath hardens quickly, the work of modelling must be done quickly and at once, a leaf or stem once wetted and filled in at the back must be finished off without delay. The chief veins of leaves look well opened out and enlarged, and side veins indicated by lines branching from them. When engaged on modelling the centres of such flowers as are shown in Fig. 2, great care is needed, as they contain three different heights; thus the outer petals are raised from the background and their centres raised above their edges, then the inner cap is raised

very high on the side where the light is shown and is depressed deeply at the spot where the one pistil is shown, in fact the markings of the whole of this flower are done most carefully.

Having raised up and modelled the chief parts of the design and marked out with the modelling tools such parts as are required to be in low relief, the background is next finished. Wet the leather and take one of the punches, hold it perfectly upright, quite even, and close to the surface, then give it a light firm tap with the hammer. Look at the mark made on the leather; if the punch has not been held straight, one part of the impression will be much deeper than the other; if it is held correctly, the impression will be perfect and not too deep. Continue to fill up the space with the design on the punch, but let every mark be at even though close distances from each other, and none overlapping. The straight lines enclosing the design are made with the aid of a ruler, the small rounds that edge the same in Fig. 2 with one of the round punches.

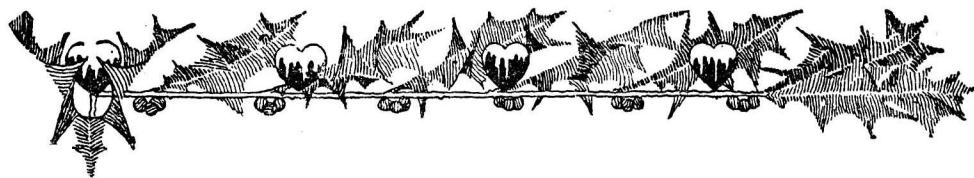
In Fig. 3, a design for the upper band of a dado, there is a more even and conventional system of embossing used than in flower subjects. The parts raised are the head and hair of Medusa and the centre branches of leaves and berries. The modelling of these

parts is but little raised, and the lines that are afterwards made over it are few in number but deeply marked. The background is punched in with a large punch.

In Fig. 4 an example is given of the finer description of leather work that should only be attempted when a perfect mastery of the tools has been acquired. The centre represents a coat of arms, and can be used either to ornament book-covers, cigar-cases, or card-cases. The modelling is very fine, and the parts in high relief—the crest and coat of arms; the helmet and the drapery are in relief, but are subordinate to the rest of the work. The background is well depressed, and the markings on the leather made with a small punch.

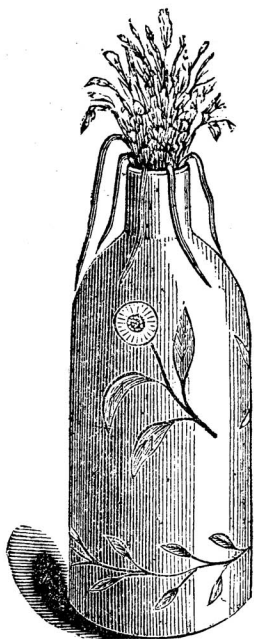
In Fig. 5 some designs are shown for use upon the underside of books and blotting-cases. They are chiefly taken from old illuminated manuscripts, where they form borderings. All lines and workings without much relief as to backgrounds and without the help of embossing require great care in drawing and cutting, therefore this part of the undertaking is about the most difficult. The lines and the design are cut and not raised up with rye meal and white sawdust, but punches are used to depress the rounds and crosses.

B. C. SAWARD.



CHEAP BUT ARTISTIC VASES.

BY MRS. JANE WEAVER.



Two very pretty and artistic vases, that will cost almost nothing, and that will make capital Christmas gifts, can be made as follows:

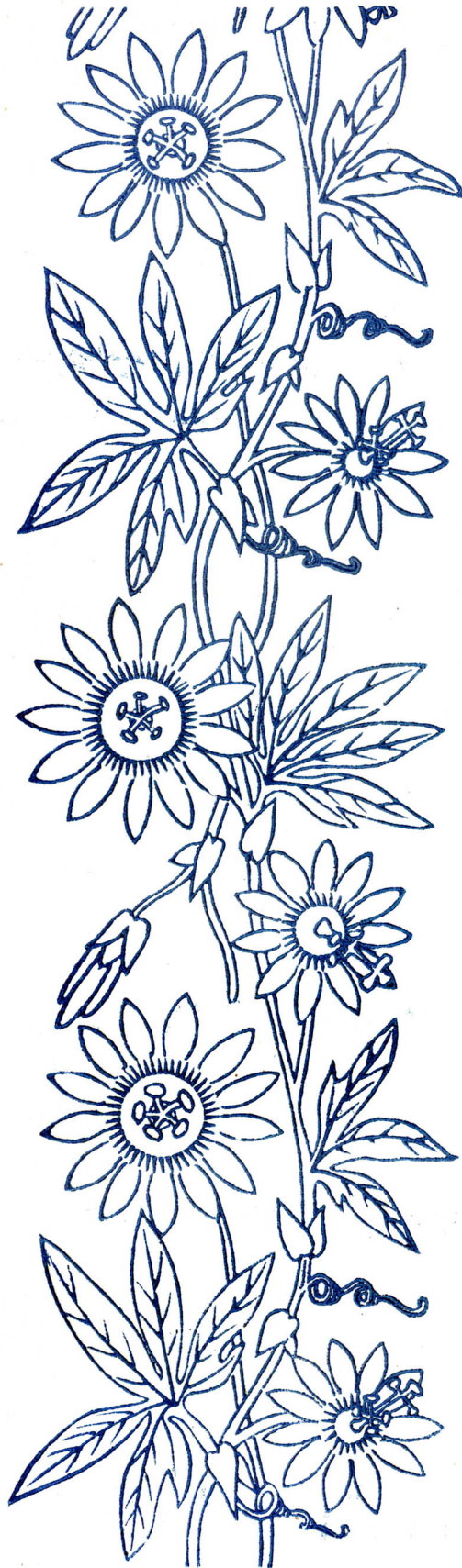
Take an old bottle, with the neck and shoulders cut off, for one; and an empty preserved-ginger jar, for the other. Cover them with two or three

coats of oil paint, laid on very smoothly, diluting the paint, when absolutely necessary, with a drop of oil; but using it as thick as possible, to insure its adhering to the glazed surface. Leave them on a tray, till perfectly dry; as, if moved, it will be impossible to avoid smearing. The paint



will take several days to dry, but will be quite ready for the next process, a week later. The finishing touch consists of embellishing each with a flower or spray of flowers, the paint being laid on thickly, and with as unstudied a look as possible, as seen in our illustrations. One, say the bottle, may be painted an olive-green; the other, the ginger-jar, a deep-blue: or the colors may be varied according to your taste.

PETERSON'S MAGAZINE. MAY, 1882.



PASSION FLOWER AND HOLLY DESIGNS.



CONDUCTED BY LAURA WILLIS LATHROP.

THE TABLE.

THE fickleness of fashion is no where more apparent than in the appointments of the table. Casters which have long held a central position have been condemned to an ignominious exile, being superseded by individual pepper and salts, by glass jugs for oil and vinegar, in quaint designs and in all shades of coloring, while dainty mustard pots are found in every style that the freaks of fancy have been able to suggest. For large dinner parties or ceremonious meals of any description, the latter three, with bread plate and butter dish, are placed upon the sideboard to be served by the waiters when required. The larger-sized napkins are used for both dinner and luncheon, while the smaller ones do service for breakfast and tea. The use of napkin rings is no longer considered a necessity, but altogether *passé*, the same napkin appearing but once, when it is relegated to the laundry prior to an immaculate re-appearance. A happy thought suggested the inauguration of "carver's cloths" placed under meat platters, as a protection to the cloth against accidental splatterings during the process of carving. They are made of crash or linen, fringed and embroidered. A very appropriate design for one is found in illustration No. M 45, page 26, May number, INGALLS' HOME MAGAZINE. Full directions for ordering are found on page 24 of the same number, and by consulting the catalogue advertised on same page you will note that the material can be obtained, ready stamped for the skill of the embroiderer, at very low rates. The design is traced in simple outline stitch, and we have seen it beautifully done by the busy fingers of very youthful workers. The near approach of Christmas time is suggestive of opportunities.

INDIVIDUAL PLATES for vegetables are no longer considered good form. This restriction, however, does not apply to salads, which are still served separately. The beautiful

Holbein cloths or tinted napery are still in vogue for breakfast, luncheon, or tea tables, but none save purest white are approved for dinner. Both the latter and the tinted fabrics may be found in devices to match almost any style of spread that fancy may devise, and in grades to suit the purse of any one, from the person of limited means up to that of the most wildly extravagant votary of fashion. The dainty viands which constitute the fashionable luncheon come decked in dainty ribbons.

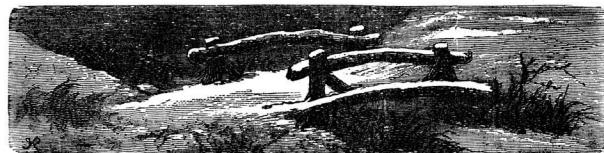
"The bouillon and the cheese,
Rolls and straws, if you please,
Come flaunting in scarlet and gold;
While sandwich in blue,
Or pink, 'old' or 'new,'
A mysterious savor enfold."

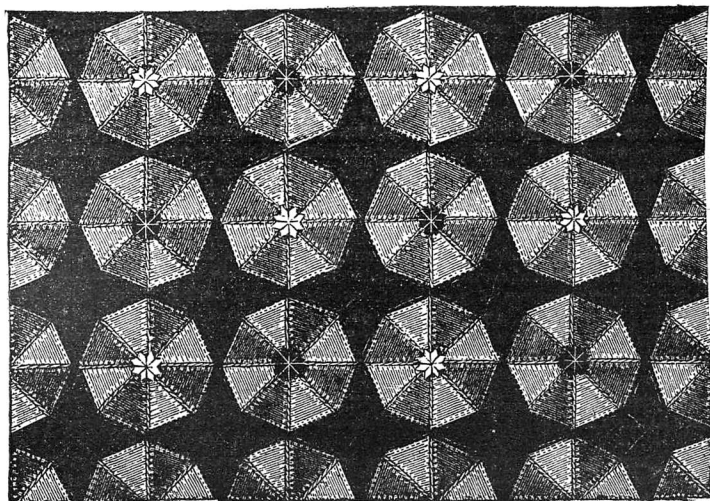
The whole reminds you of a bright bevy of school-girls bedecked for a picnic.

CREAMS come frozen in boxes, and in innumerable designs. A pretty conceit is the decoration of these boxes with paper flowers in harmony or with the natural ones which adorn the table.

FRUITS, like peaches, pears, grapes, etc., are still served in their natural state, resting on a bed of natural foliage or dainty greenery in their receptacle of glass, majolica or gilded wicker, as the case may be. Fruit ices are as popular as ever.

WHITE FLOWERS combined with green are in high favor for table decoration, although any innovation on popular forms is greeted with favor, providing that it is in good taste. Ladies of established social position vie with one another in the adoption of novelties.



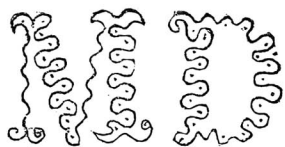
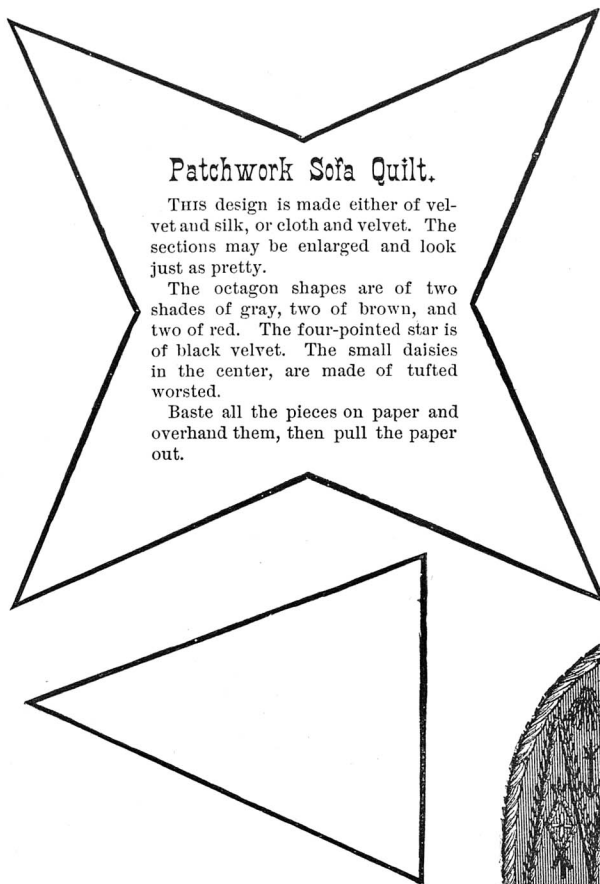


Patchwork Sofa Quilt.

This design is made either of velvet and silk, or cloth and velvet. The sections may be enlarged and look just as pretty.

The octagon shapes are of two shades of gray, two of brown, and two of red. The four-pointed star is of black velvet. The small daisies in the center, are made of tufted worsted.

Baste all the pieces on paper and overhand them, then pull the paper out.



Initials.

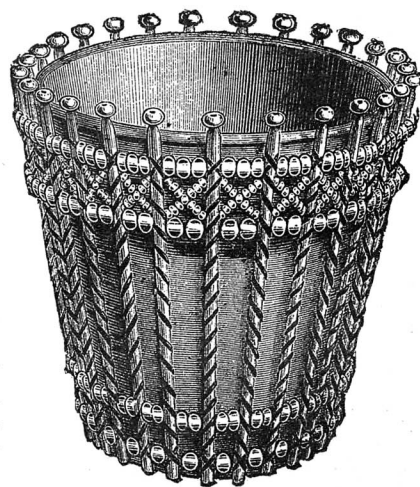
SIMPLE pretty letters worked with red marking cotton in chain stitch. Suitable for bed linen and towels.

Wood Basket.

Wood is now very much burst in sitting-rooms, as it is bright and clean, and ornamental baskets for storing it are becoming fashionable; they are more convenient than boxes, being more portable. Our design is of wood; any carpenter can make it. The handle is made of a barrel hoop, and when you have all the fancy work finished, plait, small rope and fasten on the edge and wind it on the handle, then varnish it.

The sides are ornamented with a valance of red cloth, embroidered with black, bronze, and blue wools. The vandykes are embroidered with bronze and blue wools, the edge being button-holed with gold-colored silk. The tassels between the vandykes, as well as those at every point, are made with wool of the same color as the embroidery. A black and gold silk cord, terminating at both ends with tassels, is twined round the handles.

Red or green cloth makes a good stout lining for the basket.

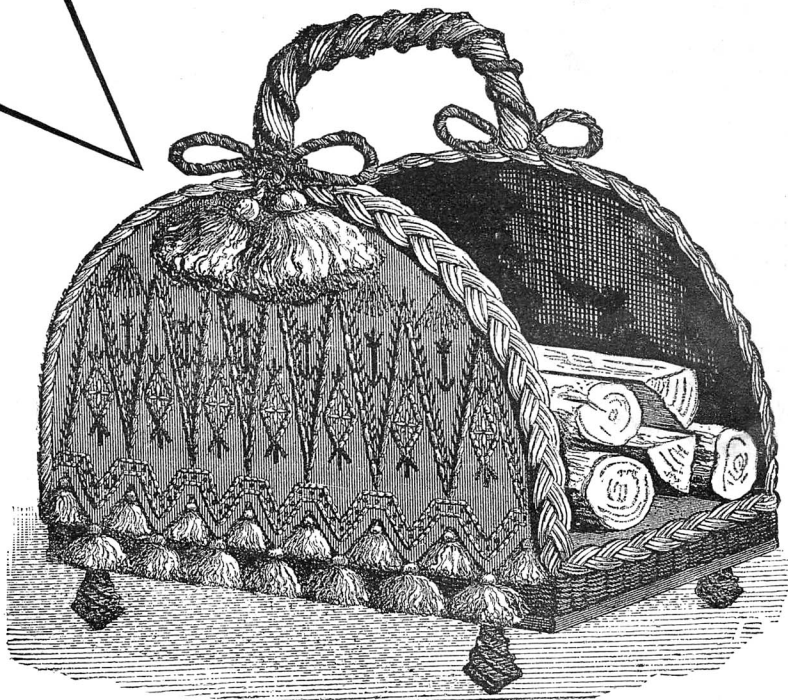


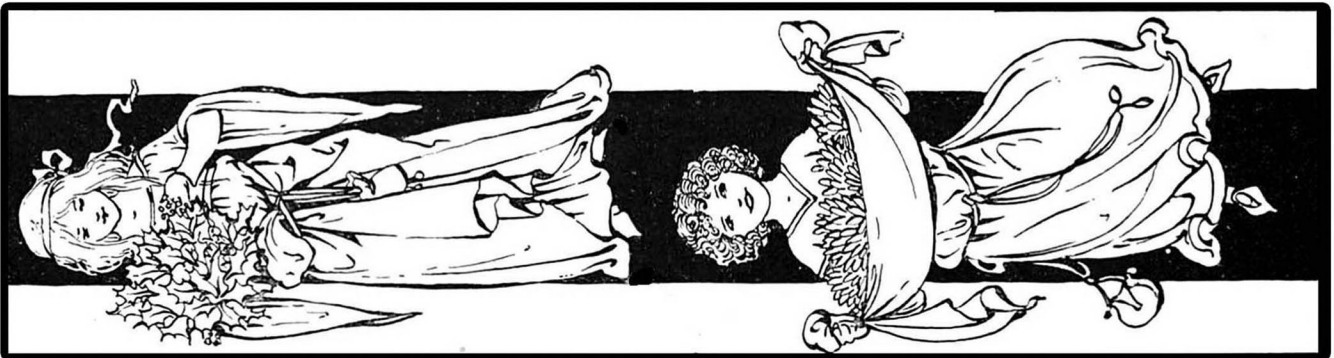
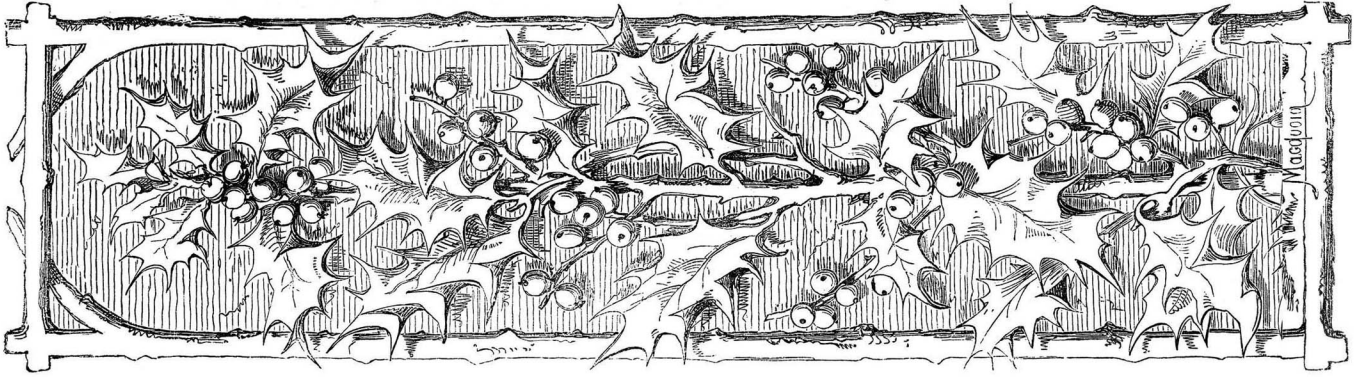
Flower-Pot Cover.

THE design we give is made of hoople sticks. Drill holes through each stick in four different places; through these holes pass strong wire, and string beads of different sizes between each.

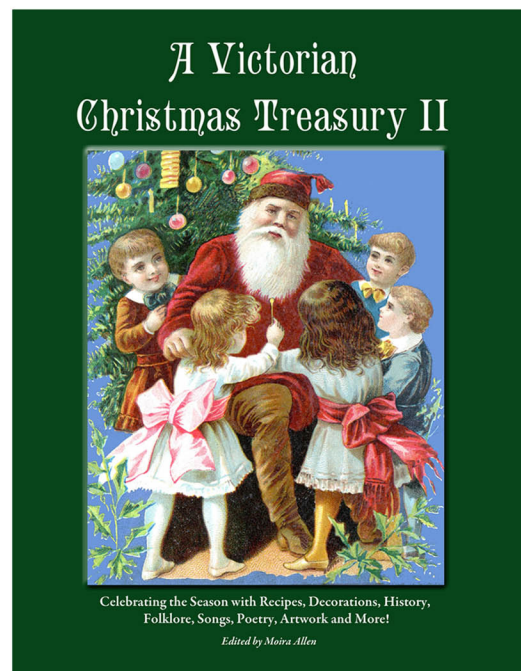
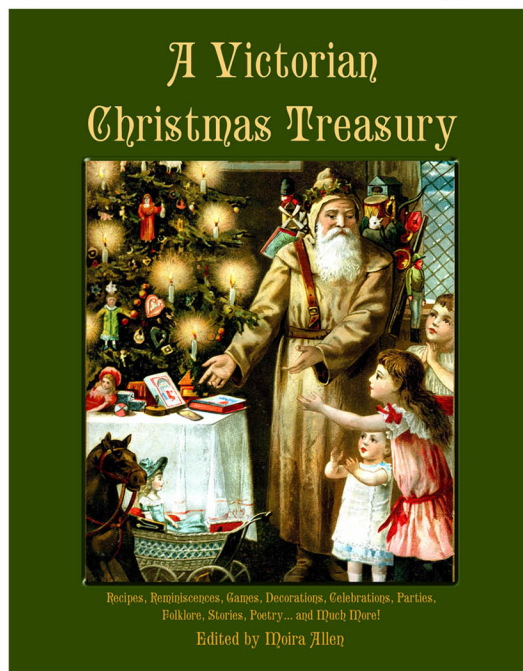
The sticks are wound with colored worsted braid or cord, and fastened at each end by a large brass-headed nail.

This makes a very pretty work-basket by cutting the sticks in half and lining it with silk





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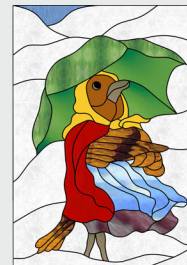
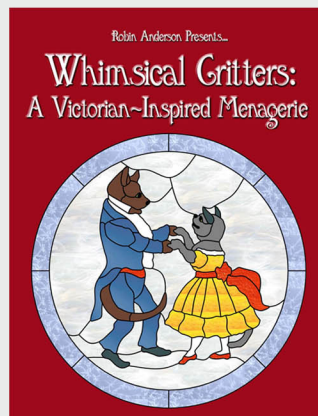
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