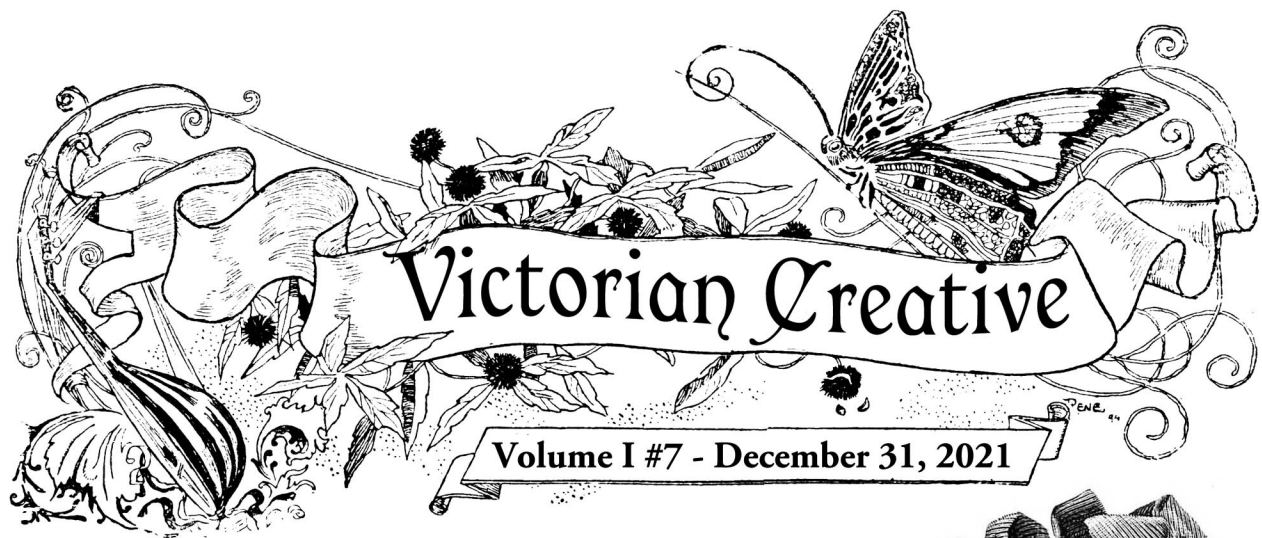


Victorian Creative

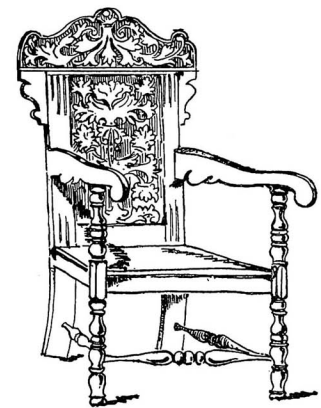
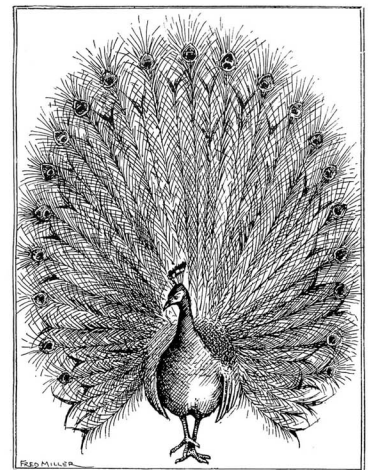
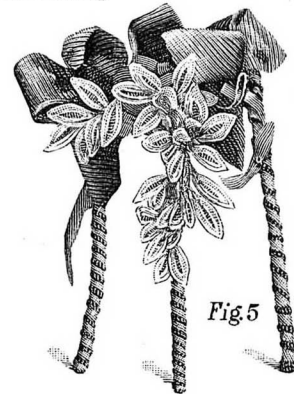
Tips & Tools for Victorian-Inspired
Arts, Crafts & Decor



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ABOUT OUR COVER: A clowder of cats celebrate the New Year in style in this marvelous postcard by German artist Arthur Thiele. Dating from around 1918, this card is available in our collection of **Winter & Christmas Cards & Ephemera**, at <https://www.victorianvoices.net/clipart/seasons/wintereph.shtml>



HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM VICTORIAN CREATIVE!

Tomorrow is the first day of a New Year. I suspect it's a day that most of us will greet with an unaccustomed mix of hope, optimism, fear, and perhaps resignation. Last year, we all hoped that the imminent arrival of vaccines would bring an end to the pandemic and a return to "normal." This year, many of us have concluded that "normal" isn't something we'll ever *return* to, but rather, something we'll be inventing as we go along.

I *was* going to say that the Victorians who wrote the articles gathered in these pages didn't have to cope with a world-wide pandemic such as we face, but it turns out that this isn't true. By 1870, tuberculosis (or "consumption") had reached epidemic status in both the UK and the US, and it was a killer. Small wonder that Victorian magazines are packed with fiction and poetry focusing on the loss of loved ones—especially wives and children.

Yet those same magazines were also packed with articles about moving forward. Women were taking huge strides in every area of life (except perhaps voting rights). They had gained the right not only to higher education but the degrees that went with it (formerly reserved for men). They were taking their place in the workplace, regardless of their social class. (No one imagined that Victorian women didn't "work"—they simply imagined that only working-class women worked.) They were gaining rights in the realm of marriage, finance, and child custody. As today, the world was changing, and I'm sure many of the writers in these pages wondered where it would lead.

As we approach a third year of pandemic, many of us are coming to the conclusion that in the midst of all this confusion and tragedy, many new and positive changes are arising. People are concluding that they no longer want to waste hours of their day on commuting, when those are hours they could spend with family and friends. People stuck at home with nothing to do have begun to turn away from the passive entertainment offered by all our electronic gadgets, and are exploring older, far more rewarding options that involve the work of the hands and, more importantly, the mind. People are discovering it's more fun to be creative than simply to be entertained.

I don't know where 2022 will take us, but I'm pretty sure of a few things. I'm sure that the thousands of people who have begun to explore cooking and baking aren't going to give up fantastic flavors and better nutrition for take-out and convenience foods. The thousands of people who have taken up new hobbies and crafts aren't going to put them aside for the joys of commuting and spending hours in the office. The thousands who have reconnected with family, friends and, most of all, kids aren't going to be quick to give them up again.

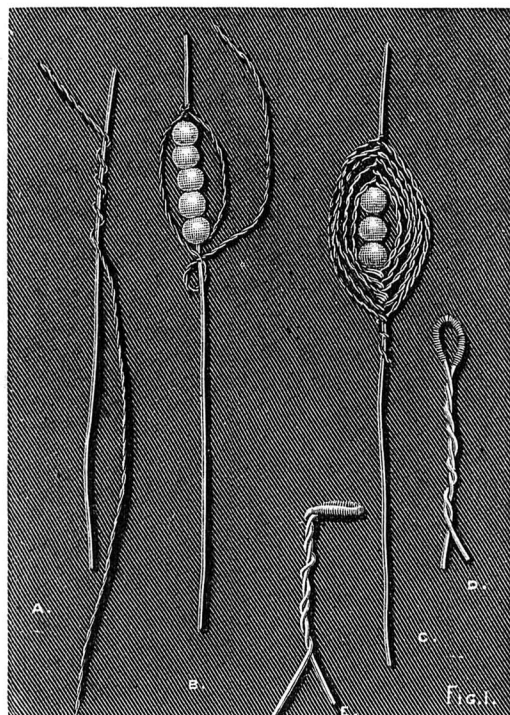
So, in many ways, we are going to be like the Victorians. Victorian women made decisions about what they wanted, decisions that went against the "norm" and the status quo. In doing so, they set the wheels in motion for the creation of their own "new normal"—a "normal" that has opened up doors for us today that we can't even imagine being closed. As we move forward into a new year, I suspect that we will be doing the same: creating a new "normal" that will have benefits for our own children and our children's children.

I believe our new normal is going to have a lot to do with community, charity, cooperation—and, of course, creativity. It is my humble hope that this magazine can be a bit of help with the latter!

—Moirra Allen
editors@victorianvoices.net

FILIGREE AND HOW TO MAKE IT.

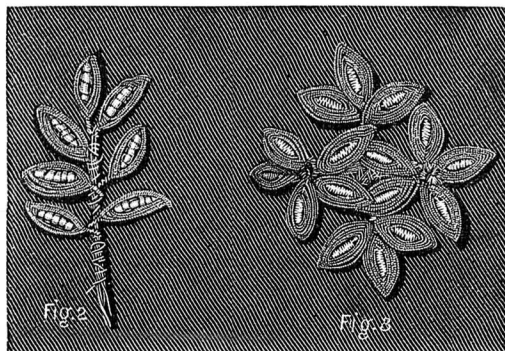
FILIGREE ornaments can be made at home with but small expenditure of money and patience, so it is surprising that girls, tired of amusing themselves with needle or paint-brush, do not adopt the art more generally.



Small articles of jewellery, such as hair-pins, brooches, scarf-pins, and sprays can be successfully contrived out of gilt or silver wires, while, for the decoration of fancy articles, there are coloured materials to be had which for that purpose are not unsatisfactory.

Silver wire is less expensive than gold, and a shilling will purchase a reel of each of the two kinds required; the stem wire for the middle of the leaves and for mounting; twisted wire for making the blades of the leaves.

The processes employed in making filigree ornaments are neither many nor complicated. Leaves, whether used to form conventional foliage, or for buds, are made in the way shown in Fig. 1, where working details are



given on so enlarged a scale, that but few explanatory words are needed.

Thus, at A, the worker will notice a leaf foundation made from a two-inch length of stem wire. Round the upper end of this the end of twisted wire is wound three or four

times very closely, the tip of the latter is nipped off close to the stem, while the long end of wire hangs down.

Over the top of both short ends of wire are slipped four or five little beads, which are to be pushed down until they conceal the coil made with twisted wire. This done, the length of twisted wire is arranged to form the blade of the leaf, being (see diagram B) brought up to the top of the beads, there wound tightly round the stem with the twist illustrated in the sketch, carried down on the opposite side of the beads, and below them turned again round the stem. This process is continued until there are from five to nine strands of wire on each side of the leaf-centre, according to whether a small or large leaf is required.

After the last strand of twisted wire is in place it should be wound once or twice more round the stem to secure it, and then snipped away. As a finishing touch the tip of stem wire left at the top of the leaf is to be bent down to the wrong side of the work, parallel with the stem.

Before passing on diagrams D and E may be described. They represent the making of a flower centre. For this a length of bullion (purl some workers call it), measuring about an inch, or else from five to seven small beads, should be threaded on a four-inch length of stem wire, which is then bent in half and the ends of it are twisted together leaving a ring of bullion at the top as seen at D. This ring is to be bent down to set at right angles with the stem as at E.

After making a due supply of these materials for leaves and flowers, the worker will naturally be desirous to mount them.

Leaves are mounted in a way rather suggestive of rose or ash foliage, notice Fig. 2, and to copy it take seven leaves. Twist the stems of two of these together, arranging that one of them shall be at the top of the spray, the other slightly lower down, and branching off upon one side of it. Put a third leaf half an inch below the last but on the other side of the centre, lashing down the stalk by winding stem wire round and round at the base of both the new leaf and those already in place. Add the remaining leaves, one below the other, on alternate sides of the centre, until all are used up, when give a final twist or two with stem wire to fasten it off. While the work is in progress the stalks of the leaves can often be made shorter; it is not possible always to judge exactly of what length to cut these when beginning to form a leaf, but when mounting is in progress, so long as sufficient of it is left to keep the leaf in position, it is better to snip off any extra length, as this only serves to make the main stems thicker and clumsier.

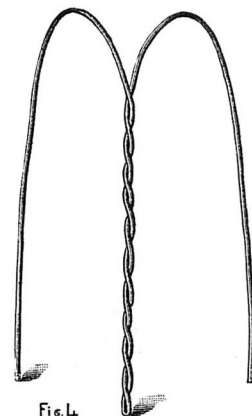
All mounting is done in this way. Stems are, when practicable, twisted together, and are held still more firmly as well as made neat by the twisting round and round them of stem wire.

Thus also, as leaf is joined to leaf, are buds and flowers caught down to their appointed places in a trail.

Flowers or stars are easier to make than leaves. All that is necessary is to arrange four, five, or six single leaves round a centre

(see Fig. 1, E), keeping the wrong side of each leaf downwards. The stalks are twined very lightly together, then made firm with a few vigorous twists made with stem wire. Often, especially at first, the result of the work will appear as a hopeless tangle, but even if much bent, careful use of a small pair of scissors or pliers will arrange it into the required form.

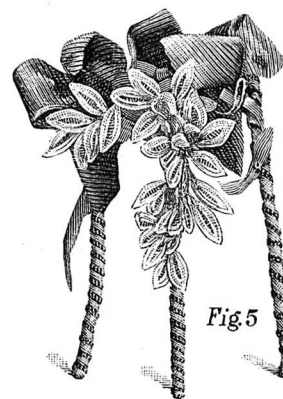
Fig. 3 illustrates a brooch such as any one who has followed the directions before given should find no difficulty in copying. Sixteen



little leaves are needed for it. With ten of these and two centres, two flowers should be made up in the manner just described.

Of the six remaining shapes, two sprays of three leaflets each are formed. These are laid pointing towards each other, the stalks slightly overlapping in the middle and bound together with stem wire. With some of this also the sprays are lashed down to the brooch pin, being laid across it, while, along the pin, their stalks also crossing in the middle in the same way, the two stars are secured. The twists of stem wire must be strongly yet neatly made, the filigree being pushed aside the while and afterwards restored to position, and arranged to cover as much of the foundation as possible. The leaf centres are here, as in many other cases made, not of beads, but of a short length of bullion.

In the filigree spray seen (much reduced) in the last illustration a shape known as a bud is



introduced. This is made round a centre, just as is a flower, only the wrong side of each section is turned inwards, not to the outside as with a bent-back flower.

This bending or arching of each leaf is a distinctive feature in filigree work, adding much to its effect.

In this Fig. and Fig. 4 a watch-stand is shown,

partly to illustrate the appropriateness of specimens of filigree when applied to fancy articles.

The watch-stand is made on a foundation of stout wire. Of this three ten-inch lengths are cut and each is bent into the form of a hoop. One leg of each hoop is twisted to one leg of another in the way indicated in Fig. 4, where two pieces of wire are seen thus united. When a sort of triangular cage has been constructed in this manner the wires must all be covered with narrow ribbon lashed over and over them and kept down by the twisted tinsel. Bows of ribbon are added at the arch of each hoop, and also at the top of the legs. One wire-covered loop should be pulled out until it is a little wider than the others, and to the bow on the top of these a hook for the watch should be sewn.

To the left leg of this, the front of the watch-stand, a filigree spray is attached.

The spray here illustrated is composed of two trails of leaves, two flowers and a bud. Of the flowers one is double, the six outer leaves being arranged to form a bent-back star round a small incurved bud made only of three leaves and a centre.

Little further need be added. Having learnt to make leaves and centres, and to mount these for foliage, buds and flowers, the work can be considerably varied. Colours of wire, beads and bullion must be left to the choice of the worker, the sizes of the leaves and sprays made of them must depend upon the article under consideration.

No other materials will be found necessary unless a pair of small pincers are thought

desirable. The wires are, however, so soft and flexible that an old pair of scissors will be found quite sufficiently strong to cut them. At the several places where filigree wires are obtainable, brooch, and scarf-pins, and hair-mounts can also be got. The brooch pins are useful not merely for the purpose for which they are more especially intended, but also, when a spray has been fastened upon them, for affixing filigree to any detail of dress, to a bracket-drape, curtain-band, pincushion, calendar, photo-frame, or other article.

Of course filigree work bends readily, and is therefore unusable on subjects liable to much handling; nevertheless it wears well, the gold wires especially keeping untarnished for a long period.

LEIRION CLIFFORD.

NEW SEQUIN EMBROIDERY.

UNDER the name of sequins our old friends spangles have been re-introduced, and are used on so many articles and so abundantly that a few hints and designs may be acceptable.

To begin with, sequins can now be had in many varieties of shape and colour; the round ones are on the whole the most generally useful, and seven sizes of these in gilt metal are shown in Fig. 1. For sewing spangles to the foundation, from one to four stitches of silk are needed; the colour should accord with that of the rest of the work; the make known as horse-tail is both fine and strong.

Sequins are most effective when massed, and one of the prettiest ways of doing this is by overlapping them. The little knot of ribbon shown in Fig. 1 is adapted from an old French design, and is a good example of a single line of overlapping sequins. It should be noted that certain loops of the bow pass under others, and that the centre is formed by a moderately large sequin, in the middle of which is a small one, and a gilt bead on top of all.

To work this, or any similar design, stretch the material in a frame and lightly mark the desired outline. Bring a needleful of silk from the wrong to the right side of the work, lay a spangle with one edge touching the place where the needle came up, push the needle through the central hole of the sequin and thus to the wrong side of the work, * bring it up again half a sequin's length from the lower edge of the former sequin, lay another spangle close above the thread and push needle again back through the centre hole to the wrong side of the work. Repeat from * all along the outline.

The bow in the illustration was worked on white satin and with the tiniest gilt sequins procurable.

Fig. 2 is also deserving of study as showing some of the many kinds of sequins and ways of sewing them



FIG. 6.—DESIGN FOR READING-CASE IN SEQUIN EMBROIDERY.

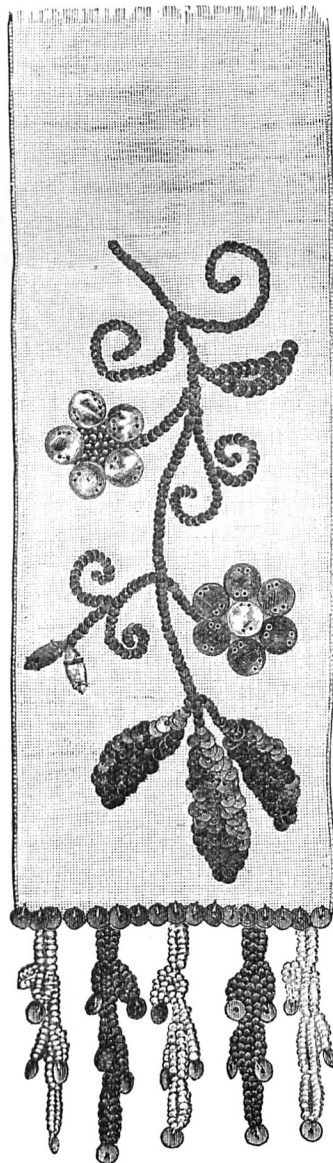


FIG. 3.—SASH-END IN SEQUIN EMBROIDERY.

down and mixing them with gems and similar bright trifles.

Notice first the centre of this *boubonnière* lid. It is a "sapphire" surrounded with blue metal beads, and beyond are pearl beads divided by lines of gold pearl.

Further out still are gilt sequins overlapping, but not fully, since each is sewn down with a gold bead. The circle round this and the four arms (each ending in a ring round a pearl bead) are of Japanese tinsel. Blue sequins caught down with blue silk are scattered about, and at intervals is a line of three gilt star-shaped spangles and one round one, each secured with a gilt bead.

Sequin embroidery applied to dress trimmings offers a large field to the ingenious worker. A popular way of embroidering sash-ends is illustrated in Fig. 3, where is seen a white satin ribbon on which the design was first lightly traced in pencil. The stems are covered with the smallest gold sequins closely overlapping. The uppermost leaf is formed of pale bronze sequins and the bottom leaves are of green (the centre one), and (the two side ones) of iridescent sequins put on thus:—Stretch some white book-muslin in a frame, trace the desired shape upon it and cover with overlapping spangles; cut the leaf out with an ample margin of muslin, put under it a small piece

of cotton-wool and sew down the muslin edges over this, thus padding the shape slightly; put the sash-end in a frame to prevent puckering, and sew on the leaf.

The flowers are formed by groups of round cabuchons; one has a centre of closely-set iridescent beads. In one corner are two mother-of-pearl *paillettes* issuing, as it were, from the end of a stem. The sash-end is finished off with tassels of beads and sequins headed by a line of gilt spangles.

The peacock in Fig. 4 is made of iridescent spangles sewn on in rows verging from the centre and ending, at the outer edge, with silver fish-tail *paillettes*. Between these lines are iridescent beads sewn down in rows. The body of the bird is of wee spangles overlapping, with a few larger ones at the bottom, a red bead serves as an eye and stitches of gold passing suggest the beak and legs.

Quite another kind of this work is exhibited in the photo-frame illustrated in Fig. 5. It is worked on coarse linen, and in shades of gilt and bronze. The sprays are embroidered in silks shading from gold to dark brown, the centres are filled with stitches of copper passing, or, in some cases, with gilt sequins, some of which also are scattered about on the cream-coloured linen background. The outlines are traced out with chain-stitch worked in copper-passing.

On page 705 is a design for a reading-case to hold the current number of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER. The contents are intimated by the initials G. O. P. These letters can be bought made of card for a penny each, and though primarily intended as a padding for embroidery serve well for such a purpose as this. They should be gilded, or coloured with lustra paints, and when quite dry the strengthening bars of card cut away and then each letter can be glued carefully in place with a dot of the gilt paint after it. Meanwhile the rest of the model here illustrated should be described more fully. The upper part is of dark green *moiré*, the lower of green and pink shot and patterned-silk, the two materials being divided with a line of gold gimp. On the upper or *moiré* portion is a design supposed to represent a horn of plenty with flowers, leaves and petals showering down out of it. The cornucopia is made of lines of tinsel sewn down to a muslin background in a frame; it is also padded, just as were the leaves for the sash end, but more highly. Lastly it is sewn to the silk and outlined with another line of

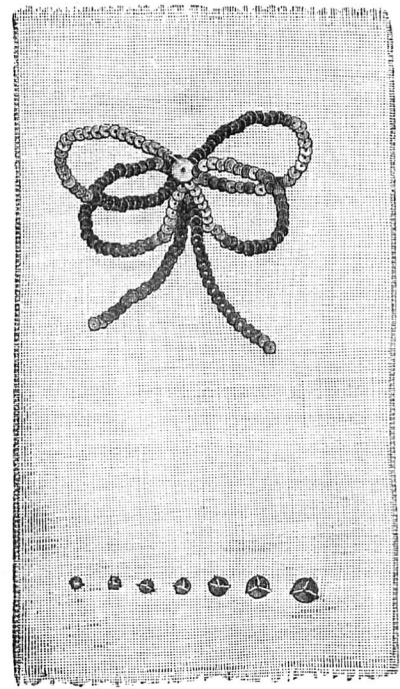


FIG. 1.—SPECIMEN SEQUINS AND HOW TO USE THEM.

tinsel. In the left hand top corner is a green "gem" in gilt claw-setting, just below it, a flower of "rubies" of various shapes. Other supposed flowers are made of mother-of-pearl *paillettes* round a "diamond" centre, and of gilt and silvered sequins round a green cabuchon. The two leaves are formed, one of silver fish-tailed sequins, the other of gold sequins with smaller green sequins in the centres; the stems are worked with green silk. Then there is a shower of gems and spangles ranging from those of the largest size to the smallest of all in the extreme corner.

Such are a few ways in which sequins can effectively be introduced into embroidery. They are so bright that they have always for certain purposes a value of their own. And, further, just now their usefulness is fully appreciated and they are very largely in favour.

LEIRION CLIFFORD.

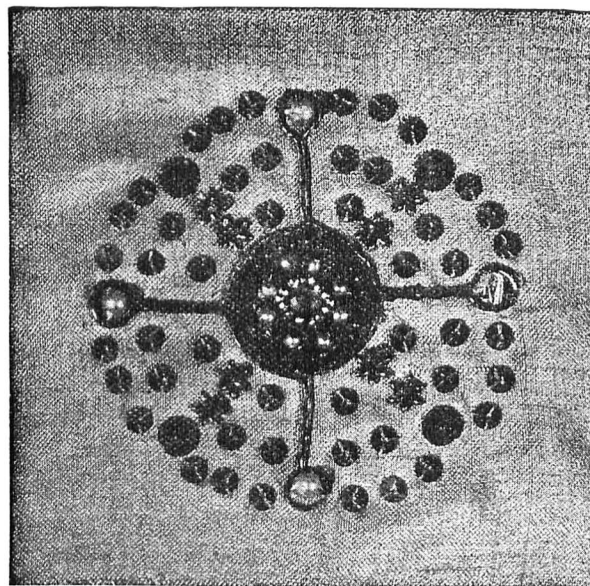


FIG. 2.—DESIGN FOR TOP OF BONBONNIÈRE IN SEQUIN WORK.

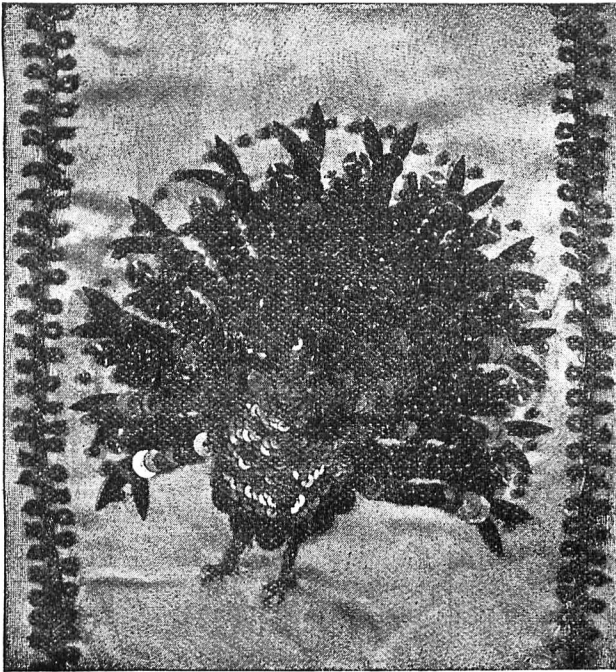


FIG. 4.—PEACOCK WORKED IN SEQUINS.

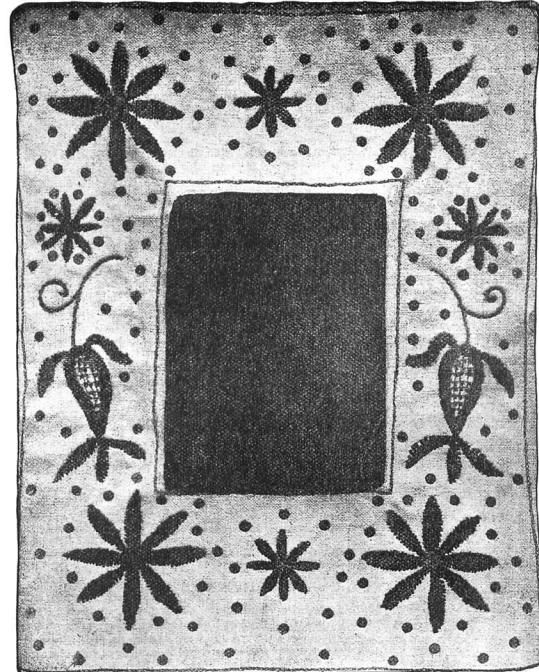
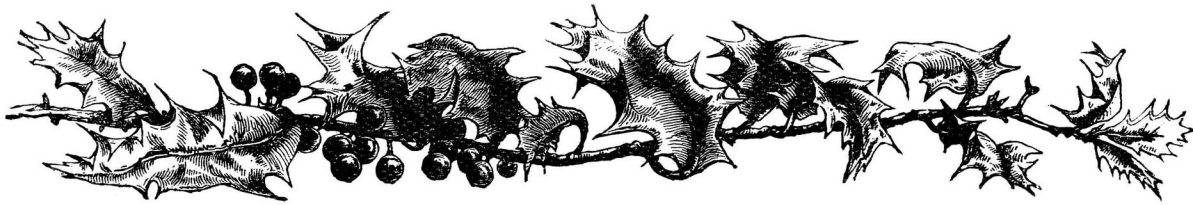


FIG. 5.—PHOTO FRAME IN SEQUIN WORK.



PAINTING ON SATIN AND SILK.



WITH the revival of art in the present day, painting on satin has become deservedly popular. It is very effective, by no means difficult, and it can be utilised in various ways. It is particularly suitable for large folding screens, hand-screens, table borders, tennis aprons, and dress trimmings. Some of the handsomest court dresses have lately been prepared with sprays of flowers painted on them, and ladies have begun painting little bouquets on their long kid gloves to match their dresses.

We will now give a few simple instructions in the art. To begin with colours :—

Transparent :—Carmine, Prussian blue, purple lake.

Semi-transparent :—Burnt sienna, terre verte, Vandyke brown.

Opaque :—Flake white, Venetian red, cobalt, vermilion, chrome yellow, Nos. 1, 2, 3.

You will find these sufficient to make a beginning. They are prepared in tubes at any colourman's. You will also require a bottle of turpentine, a wooden palette, a palette knife, and some sable brushes, Nos. 4 and 5.

The satin may be cotton-backed, but the finer

the grain the better. It can be procured at any draper's shop. Now for your design. If you are able to draw, you will prefer taking a flower and copying it as you go along, and indeed this is much the best way; but for those who are unable to make a design of their own, I should suggest their utilising their old crewel patterns. Honeysuckle, jasmine, ox-eye daisies, apple-blossom, and any other flowers with a good deal of white or yellow in them always come out well on black satin. We will now imagine you are going to paint a piece of apple-blossom. Take your palette; squeeze out of your tubes a little carmine and a good deal of flake white for the apple-blossom, and terre verte, chrome yellow, burnt sienna, and Prussian blue for the green leaves. Begin by putting in the high lights with flake white, using a little turpentine, and while the work is still wet, apply a little carmine mixed with white to those petals that require it. For the calyx use terre verte mixed with yellow chrome, and put in the stamens with orange chrome. You will now begin the leaves, using the paint as thin as possible and working the way of the leaves, instead of putting on a flat tint as in water-colour. If you wish to show the under-side of a leaf, use a little flake white with the green. The stalk might be of Vandyke brown mixed with white, burnt sienna being used in places showing the knots in the wood. Do not

use much turpentine with your colours, but be very careful to wash your brushes well in it after using them. This is of the utmost importance, for if they are left dirty, the paint will stick to them and loosen the hairs of the brushes.

clematis would have a charming effect. Painting in water-colour, although not so effective as oil, is not without its merits. It is not so much trouble as oil, and has the advantage of being free from smell. Oils depend very much on the weather, whether they



DESIGN FOR PAINTING ON A SCREEN.

For decorating a screen, you might have some such design as the following: a kingfisher flying over a lake with water-lilies growing on it, and bulrushes in the background; or storks by the water-side, and large yellow flags growing near; or the beautiful golden oriole flying upwards to a bough of pale blue wistaria.

For a dado to a room, red poppies or purple

smell or not; on a dry fine day with the windows open it is imperceptible, but a damp day makes all the difference. Painting in oil on silk presents no further difficulties than painting on satin, although it is sometimes recommended to have the silk prepared by sizing it. In painting in water-colour the chief thing to remember is to use plenty of Chinese white; this may be procured in bottles, and lasts

much longer than the tubes generally used. A little gum added to the colours brightens the general effect.

A quick artistic eye for the beautiful, combined with neatness, and a determination to persevere, is

all that is required to carry this useful art to perfection. A love of the beautiful is a refining influence, one that raises the mind to a higher level, and opens out to it an ever-widening field of intellectual enjoyment.



OLD TINS AND THEIR USES.



HERE are few things more plentiful in this present work-a-day world than old tins; and it occurs to me that a few suggestions on the ways of turning a nuisance into things of beauty may be acceptable, especially to girls more richly

dowered with artistic taste than with money. I will plunge into the subject without further preamble.

For years I have used an empty coffee tin in place of a sponge bag for travelling. Till you have tried it, you will not believe that you can carry a nail-brush, glycerine bottle, bit of flannel, and fair-sized sponge in a tin that has once contained a pound of French coffee; but having once tried it, you will see what a cheap, convenient, and waterproof receptacle it is. Williams' coffee tins are my favourites for this purpose, as the trick of the lid prevents any possible catastrophe on the journey. If you wish to make the thing really pretty, get a tin of enamel of some good wholesome colour, and paint your sponge box within and without, always remembering that the lid already fits close to the body of the tin, and that a plain line must be left at the top, lest the lid should, by the insertion of the coat of paint, become too tight. Sponge boxes thus prepared would be cheap articles to make for a bazaar.

The large four-pound jars in which Lyle's Golden Syrup and other makes of treacle may now be purchased make surprisingly pretty covers for small flower-pots when coated in this way with enamel. You must choose a shade to match or contrast with your surroundings, of course, and without knowing the colouring of the room it is difficult to suggest what looks well. Dull red harmonises with most pot plants, and looks well on a white tablecloth.

When I was much concerned with church decorations I found the little flat-sided quarter-pound mustard tins simply invaluable. I got the carpenter to paint them inside and out to match the oak in the church, having first been careful to ascertain whether or not they were thoroughly water-tight. This is an important point, as two out of every three are almost sure

to leak. When thus painted they are scarcely visible against the woodwork; being flat, they will slip into almost impossible corners. They obviate all risk of injuring the precious wood by contact with wet flowers or moss, and the flowers not only live twice as long as usual, but are quite easily replaced when withered. This idea may be utilised for other decorations as well, and for drawing-room purposes the tins might be made an adornment by painting them in brilliant colours.

If you have a cottage friend whom you wish to make truly happy, buy a quarter of a pound of tea, paint a gaudy tin, outside only, put the tea inside it, and make an old lady's heart glad by the present. Nothing is so welcome as a little gift of tea, and cottage folk have a by no means despicable taste for clear, bright colours.

My favourite conceit in the way of utilising old tins is—the bottle tidy. Nobody who takes cod-liver oil fails to observe how the insinuating liquid soon makes it impossible to set down the bottle without its leaving an unpleasant impress behind it. To meet this disagreeable consequence, I at first employed the lid of a tin, choosing one to fit as near as might be the foot of the bottle. Then it seemed to me that the less I saw of the bottle the better I liked it, and that the tin itself was a pleasant hiding-place.

The adornment of my bedroom has always been a consideration with me. I dislike much drapery, upon both artistic and sanitary grounds; but I wish to conceal all unsightly objects as much in my bedroom as in my drawing-room. I agree with those philosophers who think that the whole day is more or less coloured by the first impressions on waking, and I do not care to let my eyes light first of all on a blacking bottle. If you are not rich, and yet indulge in pretty boots, you are unwise if you entrust the blacking of them to other hands than your own. I thought this over, and then I spent tenpence on a tin of Venetian red enamel, hunted up a coil of fine wire, an old cork, a little awl, and three equal-sized round tins. I coated these with my enamel, inside and out, then, taking careful measurements, I pressed my cork against the inside of the tins (this prevents your making a dent in the metal), and ran a couple of holes

through each tin near the top. I then strung them together with my wire, drew it up as tight as possible, twisted and broke it off. Two more coats of enamel made my threefold bottle-tidy quite a lovely piece of furniture, and for some three years it has brightened the centre of my mantelpiece, hidden my bay rum, boot polish, and glycerine, and looks like lasting half a dozen years more.

I have adapted this scheme to wall decoration by running a couple of larger holes for the insertion of nails through the two hindmost tins, and connecting the three tins at the bottom as well as the top. This is necessary if you want the arrangement to support any weight, but it is *rather difficult to twist* the wire tight through these lower holes. You can make flower-holders of these bottle tides of mine if you set them on brackets, and you can produce many varieties of shape or colour. You are not tied to the use of tins of equal size; for instance, two tall tins at the back and a short one in front, or a triangle of three instead of twos, of equal or unequal sizes, would look well, and you can mix colours. Ivory white for one tin and china blue for another is a charming mixture, and ivory white looks equally well with a rich red or with olive green. All depends on your own taste; and if you are skilled in painting, you can produce far more beautiful results than I have hinted at.

The process of enamelling is so cheap and simple that almost anyone can indulge in it and be sure of producing a pleasant effect. A tin covered with glue and rolled in chips of broken cork is by no means an unsightly addition to a table of ferns or drooping foliage plants, and for my own part I can see a flower-holder treated similarly with whole rice without a shudder.

I have jotted down these few ideas in the hope that someone may find amongst them something useful for the adornment of her own bedroom or sitting-room. Pretty things are not always to be despised because they are cheap, and I am sure that it is our duty as Christians to keep everything about us as pretty and seemly and cheerful as our means will allow. Whatever is an eyesore to us is a reflection of our laziness or thoughtlessness, and we are simply bound to make the best of all that comes in our way.

New Years Receptions.

So many ladies have adopted the method of receiving one day in every week, that it rather interferes with the time-honored observance of the first of January as a reception day. Still it ought to be remembered that in these informal day receptions, ladies mostly participate, gentlemen not having the time to take from their business for matters so unimportant. There is no reason, therefore, why they should interfere with the day set apart solely for the use of gentlemen, nor is it likely that anything but failure on their part to honor it with due formality, will cause its abandonment.

Regularly as the New Year comes round, announcements are made that the first of January has ceased to be regarded a social festival, yet, no sooner has the day actually arrived, than dwellings are swept and garnished, ladies put on their freshest toilettes, set tempting little tables, and receive more callers than ever before.

Still the form has greatly changed within the past twenty years. Tables are no longer elaborately set with substantial viands, but with light refreshments of a simple character. *Bonilow*, coffee, cake, sandwiches, pickled oysters, and glazed fruits, have taken the place of the boned turkeys, the hams, the pies, the chicken, and the tongue of former years. Many ladies, indeed, receive without offering refreshments at all, but this is rather a cheerless way, for, even though it has become quite common for gentlemen to refuse to partake of any, reserving their appetites very sensibly for a regular lunch, or dinner, at the house of some intimate friend, it is still desirable, or at least hospitable, to have something to offer, and serves as an occasional refection not unacceptable to the ladies who are receiving, as they rarely have time for a regular meal, if their circle of acquaintance is large.

The most agreeable way of receiving on New Years day, and one that is becoming very common, is for several ladies to meet together at the house of one, and receive in company. The hostess has her house put in order, more or less decorated with vines, plants, or flowers, and prepares or orders beforehand the delicacies which are to furnish the refreshment-table. A small table is set the previous evening, if necessary—that is, if there are not trained servants to attend to it early in the morning—and upon this are placed plates, spoons, dishes, napkins, and whatever will be required, except the eatables. Of course there are many things which cannot be done until the morning of New Years day; and it is, therefore, necessary for those who have to depend upon themselves, to rise early enough to make their sandwiches, cut and fill their baskets with cake, arrange the fruit, and perform any other necessary duties in addition to the regular breakfast routine, and the important one of dressing for the occasion. All this must be done, and the hostess must be ready to receive her guests by half past ten o'clock at the latest; though it often happens that callers do not begin to put in an appearance before eleven. If the lady visitors are bright, intelligent, and helpful, and especially if one or two of them are musical, the day may pass delightfully, both for the hostess and her guests.

In small establishments, it is a very good way to have a turkey cooked the day before, and this with mince and pumpkin or apple pies, cranberry sauce, celery, and mashed potato, makes a very good dinner, to which a caller may be invited who is sufficiently intimate, if he happens to come in at the right time, and which can be prepared without embarrassing the operations of the staff of domestics, which is usually busily employed in waiting upon the door, and performing other incidental work.

Dress is more a matter of taste upon this occasion than upon almost any other that occurs during the year. Few ladies, however, wear evening dress, and a low neck is in decidedly bad taste. The toilette may be artistic, picturesque, and becoming as can be invented, but it is considered much better for it to present marks of originality and individuality in the wearer, than to be merely costly or elaborate, or pretentious, as a full evening dress in the day time would appear.

Decorative Novelties.

An odd, and indeed a childish fancy, it would seem, is the placing glass balls—to which are attached silken strings—in the boudoir and drawing-room or *salle de reception*. These balls which are intended to imitate soap-bubbles—and are so light that they float up or nearly up to the ceiling—are, however, to some extent a source of amusement when a variation of the temperature of the apartment causes them to descend, for, on floating near, they are found to contain little fiends—*diablos*—of paper, cork, or feather, and little dancing figures dressed like Turks and like Russians. A French fancy has improved upon the London idea, which filled the floating glass “air-ball” with little stars of metal and paper flowers.

A very pretty fancy is the imitation, in ware, colored to look like fire-defaced iron, of the antique models for vases, etc. The hue is not unlike bronze, as to the main surface, on which run colors, such as appear on iron when it begins to cool after being exposed to the action of fire. The sides of these vases are formed so as to look as though indented by accident, and the whole affair is a very taking imitation of the antique.

One could not exhaust in many pages the enumeration of the different ways in which the present fancy uses animals, reptiles, and birds in biscuit ware, china ware—so called—porcelain, parian, majolica, and faience. Dolphins, frogs, monkeys, cats, dogs, mice, rats, snakes, insects of almost every description, but especially beetles, and dragon-flies, lions, tigers, elephants, leopards, the tortoise, the alligator, and the lizard, ducks, peacocks, swans, guinea-fowls, and pheasants; all these are used to serve in some way for what may be called *useful* ornamentation. By this is meant that each article has, apart from its beauty or oddity, a use. Each animal, bird, or reptile serves as a receptacle for cigarettes, perfumery, jewels, or cards; the novelty being in the whimsicality of the shape, the ludicrousness of such or such an object being put to such or such a use, or, as when a peacock is made a jewel-case, a certain quaint fitness in its adaptation to the purpose. The utter absurdity of a swan harnessed with ribbon drawing a boat full of cigars; the preposterous notion of a lion's back as a place for depositing cigar ashes; the inimitable nonsensicality of four upright frogs escorting a staggering monkey, whose strength is supposed to desert him, especially as to the knees, under the enormous weight of the jewels in the case upon his back; the risibility of a solemn-faced toad under a palanquin, being fanned by a white mouse, and drawn by four Muscovy ducks—the palanquin being so constructed as to serve for a glove-box—all these define my meaning.

But for beauty, exquisite beauty of design and execution, and of the modern style, a pair of vases lately imported leave far behind anything of like kind that has been seen lately. The surface is gray, and resembles satin in gloss; the ware is exceedingly fine glass—there are many superb novelties in foreign glassware—and the design represents birds of the most brilliant hues perched upon autumn foliage, also of glowing color. But the peculiarity which makes these vases a triumph of art is that, owing to the rounded form of the vases themselves

and the management of the color, both birds and boughs appear to be completely detached from any under surface, and to stand off from the body of the vase, thus giving an effect as to light and position of which description fails to convey an idea. It is really startling. You see the design, and then you see the groundwork, but neither appears to be incorporate with the other. *Touching* is believing.

Some years ago, brass fenders, reaching up so as to cover the whole grate or wood fire, and attached to the sides of the mantel-piece—an excellent precaution, both against children falling into the flames and ladies' dresses catching the same—were introduced here, and, though expensive to a degree, were adopted.

Foreign caprice now demands that the high fender shall be gilt, and some of the very elegant ones are ornamented with a design, fabric on fabric, as, for example, a silver-wire fender on which is a silver-wire design representing a salamander. Another design has three small mirrors set into the body of the fender, apparently to reflect the apartments and furniture. Another, and by far the handsomest, has a design of a vine laden with flowers, and so placed that the fire in the grate seems to form the bright and fantastic blossoms and leaves that creep to the very top. But, of these fenders, the very plainest is still a handsome addition to the furniture of the apartment.



The Mountain and the Squirrel: A Fable

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel;
And the former called the latter
“Little Prig.”
Bun replied,
“You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together,
To make up a year
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not as large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry.
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track;
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

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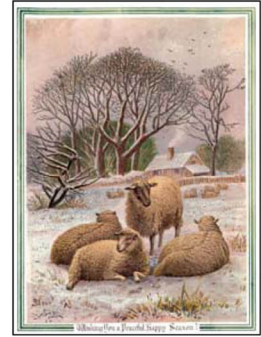
Cats



Dogs



Horses



**Farm Animals/
Farm Life**



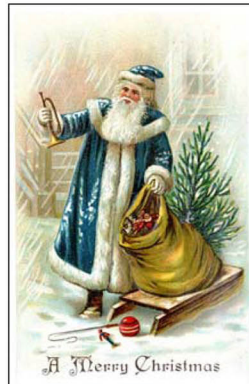
Birds



Animals/Wildlife



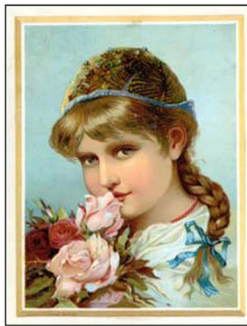
Flowers



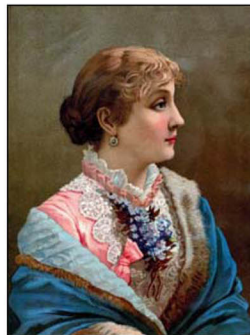
Seasons & Holidays



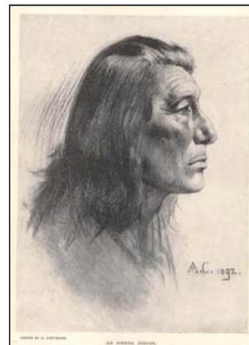
Easter



Children



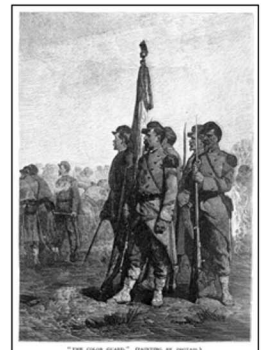
People



Native Americans



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Civil War



**Embroidery
Patterns**



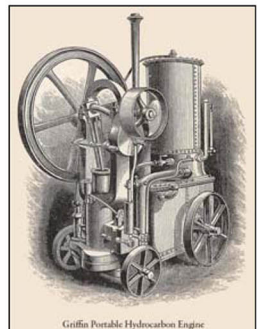
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THE USE OF FEATHERS IN EMBROIDERY.

THOSE of my readers who have seen the feather cloaks made by the Maories and other native tribes will, I think, agree with me that the effect is often very beautiful, for there is no coloured object in the world more exquisite than a beautiful feather. In turning over in my mind how the work of the needle may be developed and novelty obtained, it has occurred to me that feathers might be introduced with advantage, and one way of doing this I put before the readers of the "G. O. P." It is to

combine feathers with needlework as shown in the sketch of peacock screen. The body of the bird, and legs and wings could be worked in silks and crewels and the tail feathers of the peacock sewn on. The end of the feathers should be taken behind the needlework, and by reducing the thickness of the quills this can easily be done. With a sharp knife you can easily pare down the back of the quills so that your needlework can be taken over the ends of the feathers, and these are thus made

to appear as though they grew out of the needlework. The feathers can be attached to the fabric by stout silk of a brownish or greenish tint securely tied at the back so that it does not become undone.

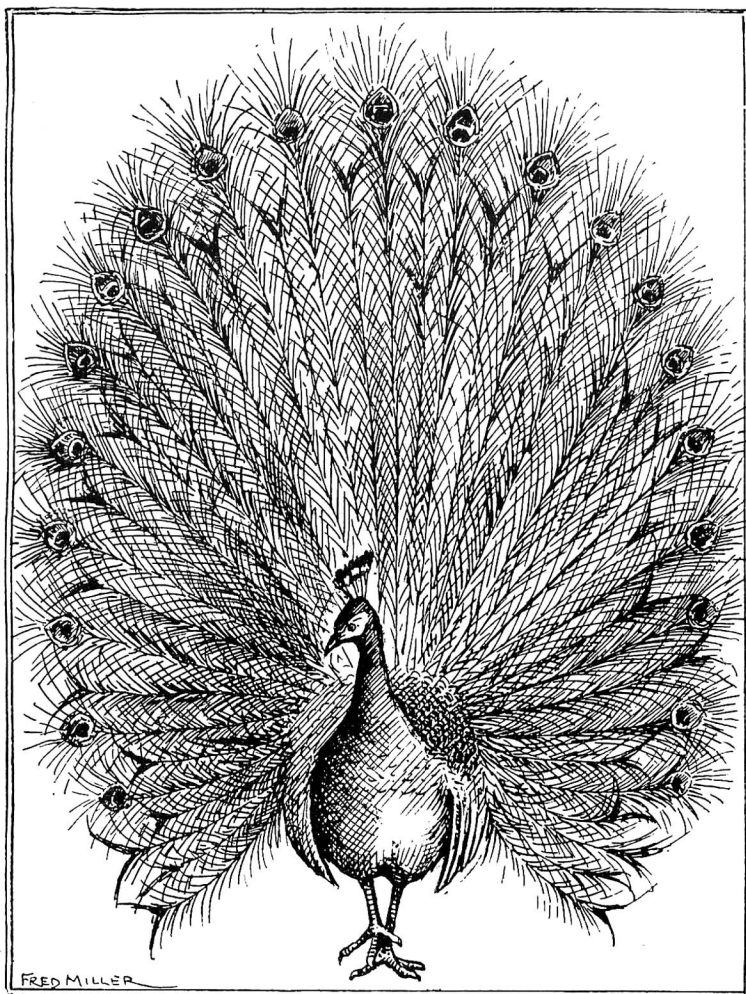
The feathers should be arranged in some sort of order, getting the larger ones at the top and the smaller ones at the lower sides. There are in the tail feathers some which have not developed into eyes, but are very beautiful for all that, and these might be alternated with the eyes. I have endeavoured to show this in the sketch. With regard to the working of the bird itself this may be done either in outline or solid. If the breast is worked in peacock blues, the legs might be merely outlined in a warm brown, the back of the bird where the feathers are to be inserted should be in a yellow green. Some readers may feel that the breast of the bird might be composed of small feathers sewn on, but I am inclined to think that it is better to confine the feathers to the tail, and I am not at all sure that outline embroidery would not do for the bird. It is a mistake to attempt to be too naturalistic in embroidery. It is an ornamental art and not an imitative one, and therefore all objects should be treated ornamentally rather than realistically.

As regards the material to work on any light coloured fabric may be chosen. Canvas or linen would do very well. I fancy the feathers would be more effective on a light than a dark ground, but this is a matter of taste. A deep indigo blue might throw the feathers into relief, but on the whole I lean to a light rather than a dark fabric. There is a slight danger of moth where feathers are used, but blowing on a little spirits of camphor occasionally or a little insect powder will guard against such a danger. The feathers might have a dressing before being *appliquéd*.

Many other treatments of feathers will occur to my readers other than the one shown in sketch, but having possibly started the reader on a new quest she can follow up the suggestion for herself. Small feathers for instance might be *appliquéd*, and some very charming combinations be the result. I may mention that the body of the peacock should be life-size as you are using real feathers.

It would look ridiculous to have the bird smaller than its own feathers. Those who live near the Zoo can there study the bird from life.

Of course it would be quite possible to form a design without working the bird, or only the head and neck introduced with the feathers to form a background as it were.



HOW I FURNISHED.



Two people ever furnished exactly alike, hence I suppose it is that no golden rule is offered by their elders to innocent young householders when they set about feathering their first nest. So much depends upon the ways and means that perhaps it is unnecessary to lay down any hard and fast line to be generally followed, for what is within the reach of one is out of the range of another.

In brief, circumstances alter cases, and as a result the inexperienced find themselves driven upon their own resources, which means that in despair they take advantage of the convenience of the "through-out" furnishing firms. But with regard to myself I determined that I would not pursue this ready-made mode of making my house habitable. Its rooms, argued I, need as much consideration in respect to colour and cut as I exercise when giving my tailor an order. A very laudable determination,

no doubt; but few of my friends could help me with their advice; at least, it was so inapplicable as to be useless, for one said, "Young people should be modest; go to second-hand dealers, and attend auction sales." Another observed, "Don't get too much furniture. I did, and now find I don't use one-half of it." A third advised me to go in for comfort and eschew elegance; whilst a fourth, newly married, informed me that his wedding presents had been so numerous that he did not think he should have to trouble about ordering furniture at all.

Friends proving of no service, I next looked up the literature on the subject, but found nothing to guide me, the same reticence distinguishing every writer. Pots, kettles, and pans were perhaps, I began to think, too commonplace to be written about. The only light which illuminated my darkness was that proceeding from furnishing catalogues and radiating from shop-windows. Finally, after much consideration, I determined to follow my own plan, and take no one into confidence, consult no one except my wife, and ask no one's opinion until all was complete. Now I will proceed to give a general outline of my operations.

First I chose my house. It needed thoroughly doing up. The wall-papers, moreover, were most Philistine, and the painting of the woodwork on a par. By an arrangement with the landlord I secured the selection of every paper to be used, and the choice of every paint-colour. We decided first upon the tone of the dining and drawing-rooms, which opened into one. We hit upon sage-green. It was a most important point, and made the rest of our labours easy. In preference to a set pattern a small running design was picked out, and in the end it proved a cheaper paper than that fixed upon by the landlord. So at the outset we learned that the exercise of one's own taste did not mean necessarily increased expense. This was satisfactory; for I feel sure that many people swallow down their own tastes when an outrageously ugly thing is submitted to them as desirable on the score of economy. I do not believe in such economy.

All through the house we gave the decorator this or that instruction, and at the end of the business were told that the gratification of our own desires had cost us a very small sum indeed.

In the meantime I had made up my mind to expend so much and no more upon furnishing. Accordingly, in a manuscript book, each room having a separate page or pages, I prepared an estimate, putting down every necessary that I could think of. Totalling up the entire book I satisfied myself that the aggregate sum was well within the mark. Then I set a cross against such of the items representing goods that I should wish to last for years, and, if possible, to improve with age. These were the dining-room and bed-room suites. Duly armed with my prices I went to a reliable manufacturer, and said, "Can you supply me with these goods at my figures? I wish for the best material and workmanship rather than ornament, and the furniture must be all in a certain style." The manufacturer met me fairly, and I have no reason to think this mode of ordering was more expensive than

buying second-hand goods, although one individual damped me by saying that it would be impossible for me to get the things I wanted at my estimate. However, I convinced him to the contrary, for style does not of necessity consist in ornament; and it is possible to obtain a really good piece of furniture, made to order to, say, a simple Early English pattern, at the same cost as a more elaborate but less pleasing article, turned out by the gross and adorned with carving and mouldings to catch the taste of the many.

The outlines of the interior of the house having been thus arranged for, it was my next care to provide for every detail that might afterwards present itself, and it was astonishing to find how many and various these odds and ends were, and what a respectable sum they cost me: curtain-hooks, clothes-hooks, kitchen-hooks, brass-headed nails, tin tacks, and a thousand and one little things which every house requires, and which I should ask pardon for mentioning but for the fact that in laying out money these trifling items are apt to be forgotten, or taken into no account as of small consequence. I dare say it is because these etceteras are not unfrequently left unprovided until their need is felt, that gives rise to the lugubrious cry which more than one individual has raised in my hearing—"Furnishing! Ah, you never know when you have finished," and from the sigh which accompanies the exclamation I take it that the oddments make rather vexing demands upon a housekeeping purse not intended to defray such expenses. For my own part I intended that my agreed upon sum should cover everything, and if anything had to be excluded it should not be necessities, but luxuries. There was one great item in the estimate upon which, like a Chancellor of the Exchequer, I played—viz., the piano. This instrument was the last article of furniture to be ordered, and the price of it was determined by the unexpended balance at our command. At times the piano loomed very largely upon us, and seemed quite within our grasp; at others it receded into dim distance, and became almost illusionary. Just accordingly as our estimate was exceeded or economised upon so the piano ran up and down the scale, from the impossibility of procuring it to the certainty of its actual possession.

Putting the estimate to the test we learned that it could be depended upon in respect to the drawing, dining, and bed-rooms. Where it was all at fault was in what I may call the Commissariat Department. Kitchen utensils and table furniture are of themselves so familiar that of course they could not be forgotten; yet, as a matter of fact, most of them were. And on this point I advise "those about to marry" to view the furnishing lists, wherein pretty little estimates may be found ready prepared, with considerable care, for they are by no means exhaustive, and it is most annoying to encounter deficiencies when all one's money is gone. If you want to avoid such vain regrets as that an ornamental article of furniture has been purchased in place of forgotten essentials, you must look things boldly in the face and see that *everything*—even to skewers—goes down in the estimate.

In the ordering of our furniture from makers recommended to us, two things were most helpful: first, the estimate, in keeping well within our means; and secondly, the style we had resolved upon. With a sage-green back-ground to consider, we were not perplexed when plunged into the wealth of warehouses displayed in numberless textures, colours, and shades. It was not a matter of choosing between this and that, but of finding the actual thing for which we were in search. We had what we wanted in our mind's eye, and in most cases we found it. Then, again, having gone in for Early English, we were spared the envy that we might have felt upon inspecting Persian saddle-bag-covered couches and chairs, which may have been beyond our pocket; for Persian saddle-bag velvet would not harmonise, and therefore to us it was of no value. Throughout the main idea kept in view was that of harmony—*i.e.*, that each article should contribute its appropriate quota to the general effect, and that none be allowed arrogantly to claim more than its fair share of attention.

In the arrangement of our rooms I designed that each should have its distinctive character. Hence, the dining-room was quiet and more formal than the

drawing-room; the latter, however, in opposition to popular custom, I did not make light, yet sought to impart to it a comfortable appearance by varying the shapes of the chairs and the design of their cretonne coverings. For the rest the carpet and the wall-papers were the same as those in the dining-room. The reason for this identity was that on opening the two rooms into one, and slightly shifting the furniture in the dining-room, there should not be too great a dissimilarity in the styles. I dare say by this time it will have been perceived I am writing for people of moderate means and unambitious aims.

We were careful not to allow green to run through the whole house, and some rooms were accordingly allowed other dominant colours—the bed-rooms

having the more delicate shades, and the sitting-rooms the warmer tints. It is not my intention to catalogue the several apartments and their contents, for what has pleased me may not please others. One or two suggestions, however, perhaps I may offer. For instance, the hall being narrow, I revolted at the thought of a hat-stand with which my furnishing friend would have supplied me. In substitution I placed a

small umbrella-rack and hat-pegs out of sight of the door, and a curtain running on a brass rod lent an artistic effect to the foot of the stairs. On the staircase a small bracket with a flower-pot occupied a corner, and on the first landing was a hanging book-case, with blue china on the top shelf. Now, I name these things for the reason that they were the most noticed by visitors, who seemed struck with the notion of meeting with books on a staircase, &c., and I have also to remark that the effect produced was at a most inexpensive outlay. Thus I claim that one's house may be rendered artistic and attractive without lavishing on it an abundance of gilt and a profusion of primary colours.

There was another delusion I set my face against—*viz.*, the "spare room." A spare room I could not afford, but a visitors' room I admitted

was necessary. Visitors, however, were not likely to be frequent, and I was not disposed to maintain a room in solemn state for use three or four times only in a year. Therefore the visitors' room was so arranged as to be convertible from a sitting into a bed-room whenever necessary. The dressing-chest was placed unobtrusively in a corner, and the marble-topped wash-stand, deprived of its ware, was made to resemble, by the addition of flower-glasses, a console table.

It was in this way that I made my capital at command sufficient for every purpose, and, as the result, my home is quite as attractive and as rest-giving to me as the richly upholstered retiring-rooms of ducal mansions, no doubt, are to the favoured possessors of unlimited wealth.

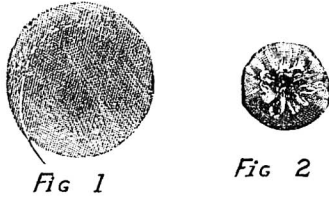




Peacock Pattern for Embroidery, *Ingalls' Home Magazine*, 1888

HAND-MADE BUTTONS.

THE linen buttons which we buy so cheaply and can sew on so quickly are, we persuade ourselves, a wonderful convenience and a great saving of time. I believe, however, if we counted up the number of times a button has to be replaced upon the same article, we should conclude that they are not, after all, so economical of time as they appear to be.



The little metal frames upon which they are made seem to have a peculiar fancy for catching on wringers and mangles, and safe indeed we may consider ourselves when some of the material has not been wrenched away with the button, leaving us a hole to darn as well as a button to replace.

The old-fashioned buttons which our great-

grandmothers made had not this failing, for in my possession I have some pillow-cases, now frail after years of good service, upon which the original old-style buttons still remain, apparently as good as ever. These buttons are not tedious to make when you practise the work for a little while; and their cost is practically nothing, because they are generally made of small scraps of material, usually consigned to the rag-bag.

The illustrations show how these buttons are made. The material used for the model was flannelette, which is nice and soft to learn upon. Cut two rounds of it exactly the size of a penny; gather one of them evenly round the edge, leaving a margin of less than a quarter of an inch beyond the gathering, and draw it in until the edges meet in the centre. Pull the material into a neat little round, and fasten off the thread. Repeat the process with the second round, but do not break the thread. Place the two pieces together with the gathers inside; hold them between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, and join them together the whole way round by button-holing them along the edges.

Linen buttons are made in much the same

manner, but the material being thinner the gathering should be pulled in closer, so that the margins may fill them up better, thus of course making the button somewhat smaller. Should the linen be of a light make, a little extra stuffing may be added by snipping up some small pieces of it, and slightly filling the two puckered up rounds; but it is a mistake to stuff them too much, or to make the buttons



very hard, as they are then troublesome to sew on, and, moreover, they do not wear so well.

Any ornamental work may be added to the upper side of the button, such as satin-stitch dots, if you wish it. When sewing on the buttons you should sew through them, as this prevents their being squeezed crooked in the wash. The buttons may be made larger or smaller, by cutting the rounds of different sizes.

HOW TO CARVE, AND WHAT TO CARVE.

I.

THE other day I was fortunate enough to meet again a dear and gracious woman whom I had not seen since I was a boy. During the quarter of a century and more which lies between then and now changes manifold and obliterating had come to both of us, and naturally there was much of personal interest to question about and relate. After the first greetings, however, and as we sat mentally noting the alterations in each of us that time had wrought, I blurted out as my first remark, "I wonder if I ever thanked you enough for the set of carving tools you gave me long ago?"

Through all those years the most enduring recollection I had was of the pleasure given to me by her introduction to this most fascinating of all the artistic crafts, to facility in which the amateur, and especially the girl-amateur, may aspire. If I cannot go quite so far as my old friend did in my case, and present my readers with the tools necessary for their carving experiments, or guide their hands to make their first tentative gouge and chisel strokes as she did mine, I may perhaps be able to attract the interest of some of them sufficiently to lead them to embark for themselves on this most witching sea of discovery. Should this be the case, and should they not be deterred from further effort by the first adverse current of disaster or chilling wind of inaptitude, I shall not have written in vain.

I propose to briefly tell you how to carve and what to carve, confining myself, under the first head, to a brief setting forth of the methods by which a simple panel of low-relief work may be produced, thus necessitating a description of the tools and manner of using them; and under the second, to a handful of suggestions as to what lines it is desirable to follow in the choice of objects and designs on which the skill acquired by practice and application may be exerted.

It is said that a bad workman complains of his tools, but it is just as certain that bad tools offer even to a good workman just cause and opportunity for grumbling and complaint. I should therefore advise those who have made up their minds to

take up the art of wood-carving, to begin by procuring a set of tools from the best maker rather than to be allured by the sounding advertisements of those who rely on cheapness, with its accompanying nastiness, to procure them customers. Better buy your tools one by one and get them good and serviceable, than waste your money and fritter away your time by trying to get something for nothing.

With this preliminary word of advice let me point out of what the tools you will need

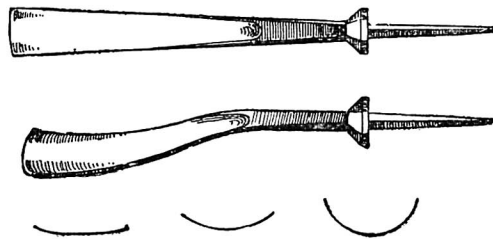


FIG. 1.—FLAT AND CURVED GOUGES.

for your elementary work consist. You can begin with an assortment of from twelve to eighteen, which will cost you from eight to twelve shillings, with box handles complete. They consist of assorted sizes of the following:—

First.—Extra flat gouges varying in width from an eighth of an inch to an inch. These are a sort of compromise between a gouge and a chisel, and are used by the carver as a carpenter uses his chisel, for cleaning off the

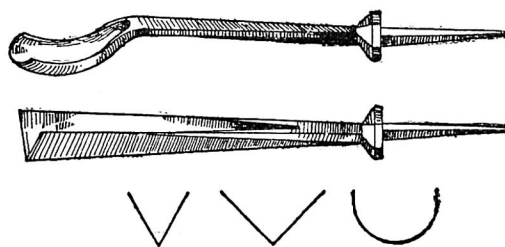


FIG. 2.—BENT GOUGE AND PARTING TOOL.

rougher tool marks and so forth. The slight curvature given to them not only renders the task of levelling backgrounds with them easier, but by the slight unevenness it gives to the surface, produces a more artistic play than would the monotonously cutting chisel.

Second.—Gouges of greater curvature, some of them with the blade bent in such a fashion as to render their function of scooping out deep hollows the easier.

Third.—Veiners, which are gouges of a small size, but exceedingly sharp curvature. As the name implies, they are used for veining leaves and stems of either natural or conventional foliage.

Fourth.—Fluters, also gouges of nearly the same form as veiners, but with a larger cutting edge. Their use is sufficiently designated by the name.

Fifth.—Parting tools, or V-tools. This is one of the most useful tools in the carver's repertory; but its use can be abused, for when used, as the youthful carver is often tempted to use it, for the modelling of stems, it is apt to give a hard, angular effect to them. One of its most useful functions is for the lining out of the flat incised work common to the early English, Italian, and German schools.

Sixth.—The skew chisel, which is the nearest approach to the ordinary carpenter's tool the youthful carver ought to employ. It resembles the ordinary chisel as regards its cutting edge, but the edge is ground off at a more or less acute angle to the general direction of the blade. It is useful for bevelling edges and clearing out corners, and in some cases for smoothing backgrounds.

To keep the tools in order—and it must be remembered that for the carver no tool can be too sharp, and no trouble in keeping it so too great—there is needed, first, a small grindstone, secondly, an oilstone on which to sharpen the straight-edged tools; thirdly, a set of slips, or pieces of oilstone rubbed down until they fit the inner curves of the various gouges, and can thus be used to sharpen the inner edges; and fourthly, a strap of buckskin plentifully besmeared with a mixture of tallow and emery powder, with which to

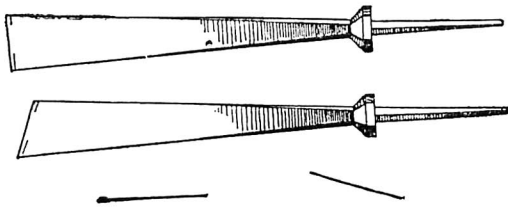


FIG. 3.—PLAIN AND SKEW CHISELS.

give the finishing touches to the razor-like edge.

A bench and stool are, if not essentials, at all events to be desired. Neither need be expensive in character. The bench may be of ordinary pine or "deal," with a top some 3 ft. long by 2 ft. wide, and about 3 ft. 1 in. or 2 in. high, and good firm legs inclining outwards slightly, and mortised or bolted into a rail some 6 in. from the floor. (See Fig. 4.) The stool may be an ordinary office stool with the legs so cut down as to bring the top some 2 ft. 3 in. from the floor, and inclined forward at a slight angle. It is better, however, to stand rather than to sit at one's work. As a matter of fact a common kitchen table with its legs clamped to the floor with iron brackets will serve every purpose of the beginner. It is necessary, however, to have a table which can be given up exclusively to the carver's purposes, for in order to fix the work firmly in position it is necessary to bore in the table top a number of holes in various positions relative to the edge thereof. The work is fastened by what is called a bench screw. (See Fig. 5.) The point is driven into the back of the wood of which the face is to be carved, and the end is then passed through one of the holes in the bench, and the thumb-piece screwed tightly up, a piece of hard wood with a hole bored through it being generally slipped on first so as to prevent the wearing away of the under-side of the bench. There are other ways of fastening the work in position, but they are not altogether satisfactory, the best perhaps being a board with two wooden cleats at the back and with a number of holes bored in it. This board is clamped to the table, and the work is fastened to it by inserting pins into such of the holes as surround it, wedges being driven in to tighten it up if necessary. A carpenter's vice is also useful for holding work of a different character. It is affixed to the edge of the table, as shown in the sketch, Fig. 4.

In addition to the tools and accessories already mentioned, there must be provided a

box-wood mallet, two or three punches for background, and what is called a "router." This is a small chisel driven through a small flat piece of wood in such a fashion that it can be fixed to project any required distance. This is used for scraping sunken grounds to a true level, the wooden part resting on the upper surface and the tooth "routing" up the wood in the sunken portion to any required depth.

Now as to the wood and the varieties thereof best suited to the carver's purpose. All wood used should be close-grained and well seasoned, and for the beginner's purposes as soft as may be consistent with firmness and freedom from splintering. Some think that the best, as it is the cheapest, wood for the tyro is yellow pine or deal, for the very reason that it does split easily, and therefore requires extra care in its manipulation. I do not agree myself with this dictum, for I think the fewer difficulties placed in the beginner's

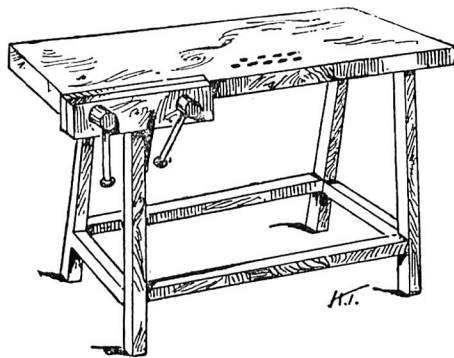


FIG. 4.

way the less chance there is of discouragement and too early an abandonment of the whole business as being "too hard to learn." Take for your first experiment some nice pieces of lime wood, which you can procure at small cost at the shop of any respectable cabinet-maker; or, if this is not procurable, a good clean piece of American "white-wood" or bass, and see that it is free from knots, or "shakes," as they are technically termed. When you get further advanced you will have plenty of choice, including walnut, both American and Italian, oak, pear, chestnut,



FIG. 5.

sycamore, Australian jarreh, Californian red-wood, pear, teak, and for very delicate work box and satin-wood.

I shall now suppose that an assortment of tools has been bought, a bench of some description provided, a few pieces of wood procured, and the carver is ready for business. Before beginning, every tool must be carefully sharpened and stropped, and if they are notched or very blunt they must be ground. In grinding tools use plenty of water, and turn the grindstone *away* from the tool at a high rate of speed, moving the tool constantly from side to side, so as not to work a groove into the face of the stone. When the notch or rough edge has disappeared, take the tool in the left hand, holding it firmly, with the edge pointing upwards, and with the right hand pass the slip rapidly over it. Finish it on the strop with plenty of emery. Now take a piece of "white-wood" about 14 in. long by 6 in. wide, and from $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch to 1 inch in thickness. Upon the surface of this with a carpenter's square, a set square of an angle of 45° , and a pair of compasses draw Fig. 6. This gives you the main or guiding lines of your design. Now take your bench screw and firmly fix your panel, with its longer side parallel with the front of your table, having taken care beforehand to so set out the design as to have its longest dimensions running *with* and not *across* the natural grain of the wood. If for some reason you do not wish the back of your panel to be disfigured by the screw-hole of the bench screw, you may glue it to another piece of board, inserting a piece of brown paper between the two boards, and soaping the under side of your panel. Then the under board receives the point of the bench screw, and when your work is finished the two boards are easily detached from each other. Take now one of your flat gouges, letting the top of the handle rest in the palm of the right hand, so that the fingers may close round easily and naturally; but so as to give a firm

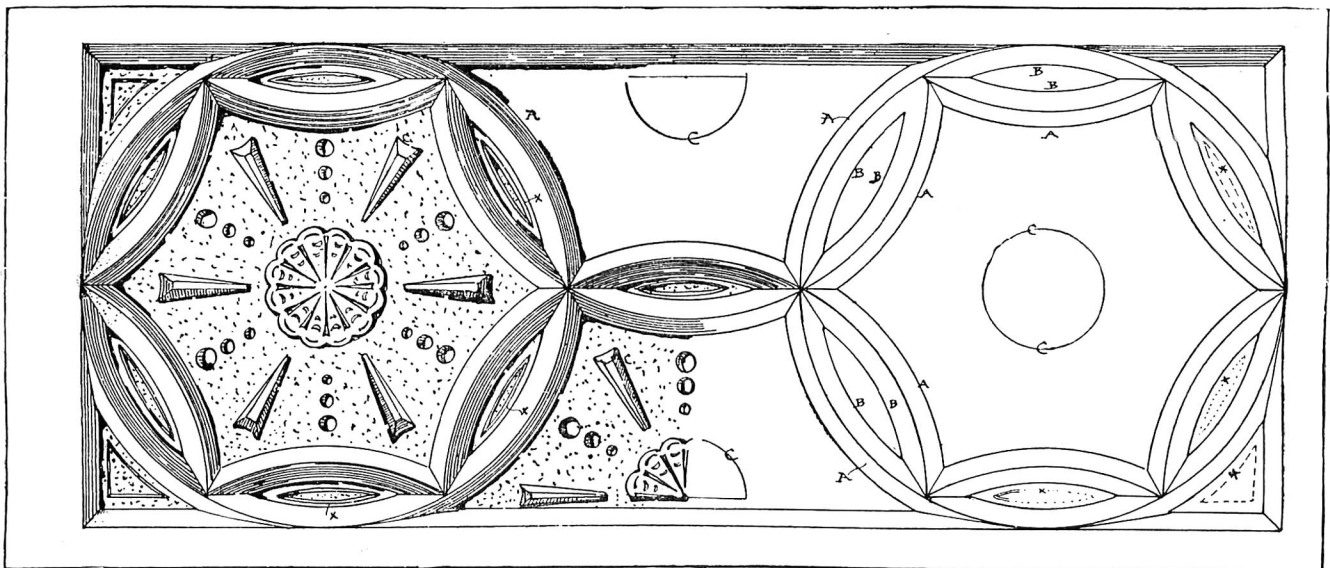


FIG. 6.

control the first three fingers of the left hand should be placed on the blade in such a fashion that they may play a considerable part in the guiding and controlling of the tool. As a rule the tool should be held in a position but slightly removed from the horizontal, but when cutting round an outline it is held perpendicularly. Should it deviate from either of these positions it has a tendency to run too far into the wood, and cause it to split in a most exasperating fashion.

Take your flat gouge, and holding it perpendicularly, cut firmly and cleanly, but not deeply, round the lines A A A A. Then, holding the tool in a slanting position, cut another line to meet this. Do the same thing with the lines B B B B and the lines C C. Now take one of your curved gouges and begin to waste away the wood in the spaces within the lines you have just cut. Level it down with a flat gouge, and if necessary use the router, but not to excess. The ground must be lowered to a depth of 3-16th of an inch all over, uniformity of depth being obtained by trying it at intervals with the router, which must first be properly set. Cut the centre button vertically with a gouge which will just fit the curve. Now with a V-tool cut the incised lines x x x x with a free sweep, and allowing full play to the wrist. The punching to the ground is done either with one of the punches sold for the purpose, or even with a blunt pointed wire nail. The beginner should not be discouraged if the first attempt meets with disaster. Failure will probably come from the splitting away of the wood about the intersecting circles, or from the failure to produce a clean

knife-like edge. In this case I should advise the starting it entirely over again from the beginning. Care must be taken in finishing off to leave all the acute angles and the intersections of the circles clean and sharply cut. This can be accomplished with the aid of the skew chisel. The concentric cuts on the sunken ground may, as suggested, be cut with the V-tool, but some of them may be produced more readily by the aid of gouges of various sizes, the first cut being given with the tool held perpendicularly and driven down with a sharp tap of the mallet. The second cut is made in a slanting direction, and must just meet the bottom of the first cut, so as to bring out the minute section of wood cleanly and leaving no broken splinters behind it.

Unless your panel is to be hung up on the wall (and even in this case), you will find that as it is cut out of soft "white-wood" it will readily soil and become unrepresentable. You can adopt one of two means to obviate this necessity—that is to say, you can either stain or varnish the work. If you decide on the former course, take a little of Stevens' stain—for your purpose, walnut is perhaps the best—and dilute it quite freely with water. Then, with an ordinary hogs'-hair brush, lay it on, working always with the grain of the wood. When the coat has dried give it another, and after that a third, or even a fourth if the desired depth of shade has not been attained. Now take a little boiled linseed oil, and with a soft rag rub a *very little* of it well into the wood. This will fix the stain and prevent it coming off on to the fingers when the panel is handled. You may prefer a rather higher

degree of polish though in the case of the panel described. I should not advise it, as there is too little of the natural surface of the wood left. Should you wish it, however, you can take equal parts of linseed oil and turpentine and brush it over the wood, polishing afterwards with a stiff brush. Or a mixture may be made of beeswax and Burgundy pitch in the proportion of two to one, heated over the fire in a vessel placed in a pan of hot water and thinned down with turpentine. It must be used slightly warm, and brushed thinly over the work, and when dry, well polished with an ordinary nail-brush. Specially prepared lacquer for finishing "white-wood" work is also sold by the colour merchants, but I should not advise its use. Its advantages are simply that the wood can be left its natural colour, and cleansed from finger marks with a damp duster.

I have now, I think, given hints and suggestions enough for a beginner to learn at all events how to handle the tools. Commonsense must fill in the necessary blanks; and experience after all is the best teacher. In these days, too, there are few places where, with a little pains, a practical wood-carver cannot be found who, even if he does not care to directly teach the tyro, will at all events allow the latter to watch him while at work. Half an hour of this is worth pages of description.

In another paper I shall offer some remarks on design as applied to wood-carving, which I trust will be of value not only to the beginner but to those who have already attained a greater or less degree of proficiency in the art.

HORACE TOWNSEND.



December-Winter

This is winter, this is winter,
How the wind about us blows
And becomes the rosy tinter
Of our ears, and cheeks, and nose!

Hear the wind go wildly scooting
O'er the lone and leafless bog;
Hear outside the mournful tooting
Of the daily-booted dog.

Hear the fagots glowing ruddy
Shoot their sparks upon the floor;
Hear the yell come from the study:
"Shut the door, oh, shut the door!"

See the coaster swiftly riding
Down the hillside on his sled,
While the ped. is madly sliding
O'er the side-walk on his head.

See the pretty snow bird hopping
Round the kitchen door elate;
See the urchin dodge the chopping
Of the wood to go and skate.

See the little fellow pelting
His companions far and near;
See the frozen snow-ball melting
In the wincing victim's ear.

When it's twice as cold as Norway,
Then the quaking, shaking put
Like a shot flies through the door-way
For the cosy, rosy rug.

When the golden day is breaking
And by pleasant dreams we're seized,
Then the housewife's buckwheat caking
And the griddle's nicely greased.

While these thoughts of breakfast nestle
In our souls at morning sweet,
In our reveries we wrestle
With the toothsome sausage meat.

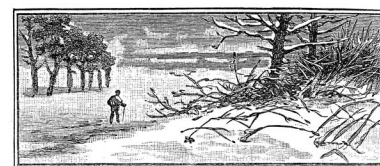
Hear the shining kitchen kettle,
As upon the stove it hums;
See for warmth the car-man settle
Down to blowing on his thumbs.

See the old brown jug of cider,
All our thoughts to it entice;
See the skater etch a spider
When he sits upon the ice.

See the sparrow coyly winning
Crumbs upon the window sill;
See the plumber wildly grinning,
As he figures up his bill.

Winter, winter, winter, winter
Soon away from us you'll wing,
Then I fancy, we'll beginter
Kinder, sorter think it's spring.

— R.K. Munkittrick
(St. Jacobs Oil Family Calendar,
1886)



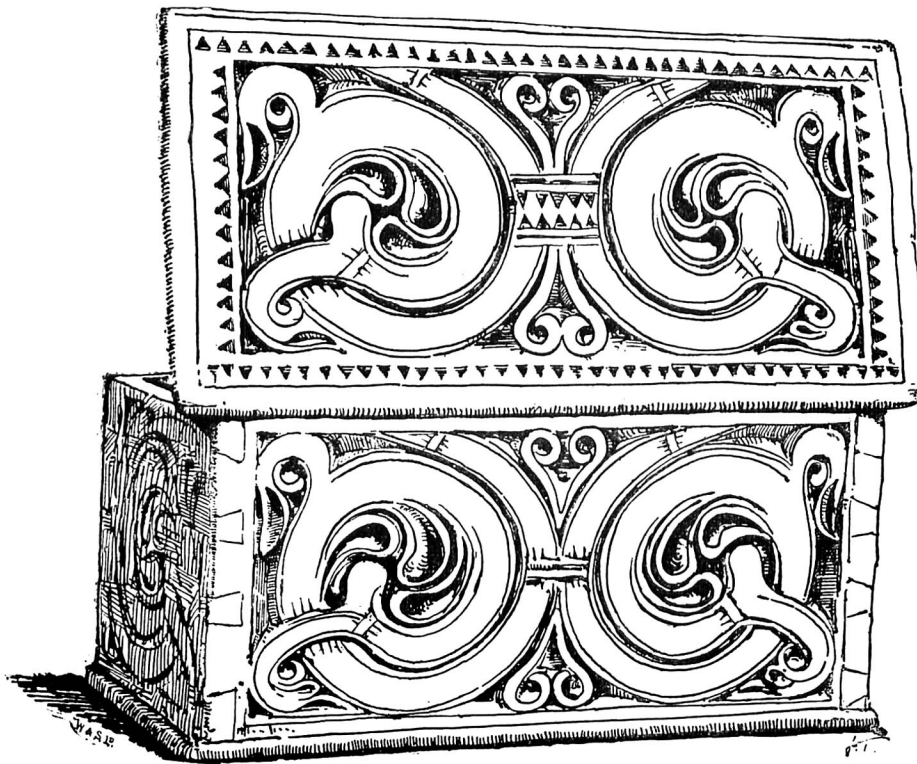


FIG. 1.

II.

IN my former paper on wood-carving, I endeavoured to give enough information as to the practical and technical aspects of the subject to enable those who felt inclined to pursue the matter further to put themselves upon the right track and reach some satisfactory conclusion. No craft, especially one which lends itself so freely to artistic development as does carving, is child's play; and I would warn those who desire to take it up that the chief virtue which they must bring to the pursuit is that of patience. But when the tedious apprenticeship is passed, when the keen-edged tools have ceased to be whimsical, erratic, and tricky masters, and have become the humble and obedient slaves of the nervous fingers and supple wrist; when assurance has taken the place of hesitation, and the wood, be it hard or soft, falls away in clean clear-cut shavings from the outline within it, hidden

from all eyes save those of the craftsman, then indeed the end crowns the long, laborious, often heart-sickening, work, and the joy, beside which all other joys are naught, the joy of artistic creation, is the reward of the patient labourer.

But it will not do to have mechanical skill alone to be able to cut with a steady hand and follow a curve with scrupulous fidelity. These, essential as they are, are yet only means to an end, and that end is the production of beautiful things. It is no use to be able to carve well and correctly if the object carved, as regards its design, is not worthy of the pains bestowed upon it. The artist wood-carver will, of course, design his work himself, and will thus be a creator as well as a craftsman; but it is not given to everyone to have original talent of this nature. It is possible, however, for everyone to so study the principles of design as to know, in the first place, what is fitting and beautiful, and in the second, to so adapt the original conceptions of others as to stamp them with a certain amount of individuality which makes them more truly artistic than a mere slavish copy would be.

The first essential of good design is that it should be suitable to the object which it is intended to beautify. Thus, the intelligent carver will not enrich a table-top with elaborately under-cut ornament in high and rounded relief, for, by doing this, the chief purpose of the table

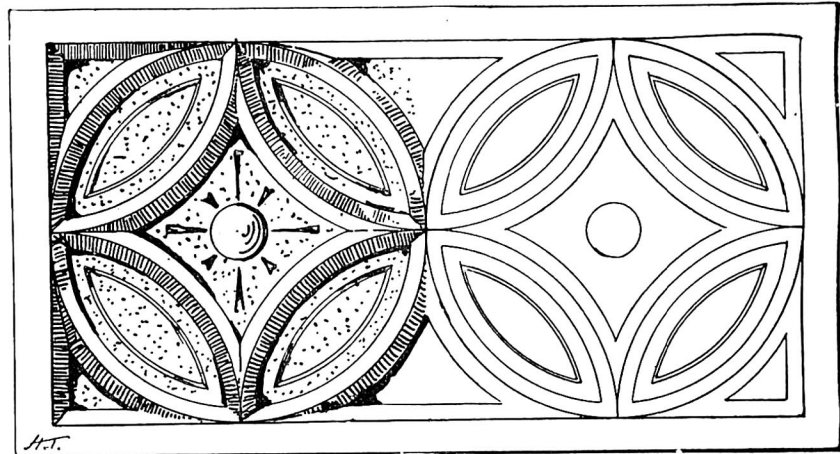


FIG. 3.

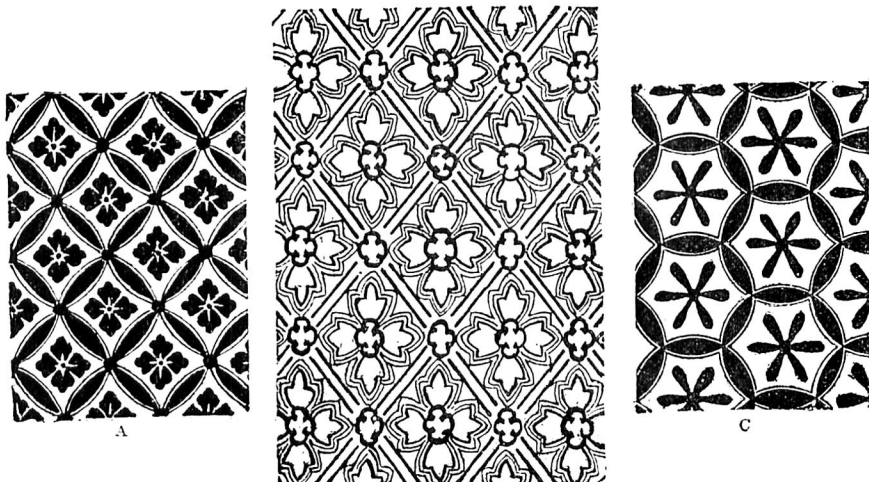


FIG. 2.

would be lost sight of, and it would not fulfil the purpose for which it is primarily intended. On the other hand, the sensible designer will not expend his time uselessly in covering a frieze with delicate, incised ornament which cannot be properly appreciated unless it is brought close to the eye. These are, of course, extreme instances; but exaggeration often brings a moral home to one better than restrained statement will. The design, again, should be dependent to a certain extent upon the material. Ebony cannot be carved with the same freedom and dash as lime-wood, and, therefore, the celebrated English carver, Grinling Gibbons, who flourished in Sir Christopher Wren's time, chose the latter wood in place of the former for his luxuriantly rich festoons of flowers and fruit, carved with a sweep and freedom which, had he worked in a harder material, would have been attained only with an infinity of toil. With a similar regard to their material, the Hindoo carvers, and the Japanese also, when working in their hard teak, employ only

delicately incised ornament and conventional designs in low relief, which would soon be worn away were a soft wood used.

Again, the design should conform to the degree of skill possessed by the executant. Beauty can be produced by simple as well as by elaborate means; while to attempt something far beyond the reach of one's powers, results inevitably in failure and disaster. Nothing is so pitiful as to see a good design rendered ridiculous by the inability of the carver to carry it out fittingly. But the simplest ornament, when carved with complete control, assumes a beauty of its own, and gives pleasure to those who view it.

Begin then by limiting yourself to what you can do; and with each performance you will find the scope of endeavour enlarged, until in time nothing will be too difficult for you to attempt with fair prospects of success.

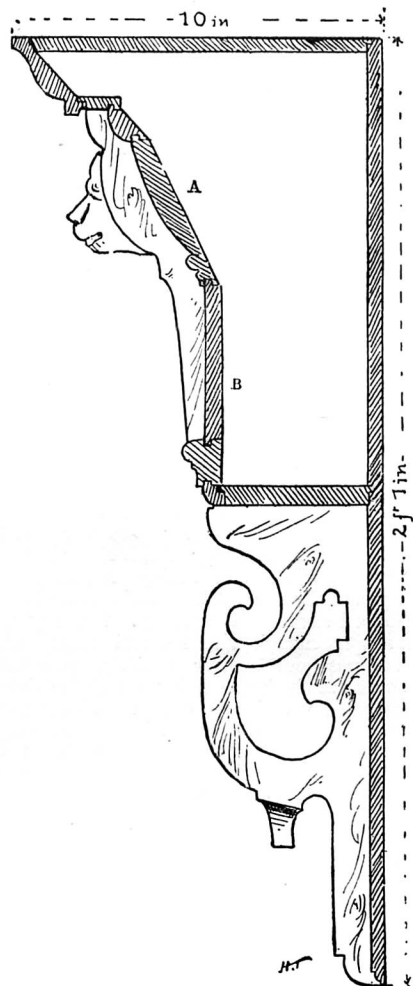


FIG. 5.

With all the advantages of modern tools and of that modern education in art which, moan as we may over the degeneracy of the age, is yet unconsciously imbibed by each one of us, the tyro in wood-carving is on a level with the most advanced craftsman of some earlier civilizations. Thus, in seeking for models and suggestions for the beginner, it is sometimes well to study some of these early examples, which are usually called archaic by writers on art. Wood is so perishable a material that not many of these examples have come down to us through the ages, but, thanks to the energy of the authorities of the South Kensington Museum, I am enabled to give you a sketch of a box carved by some Icelandic carver, which is almost precisely similar to the works (of which we have only casts) of the early

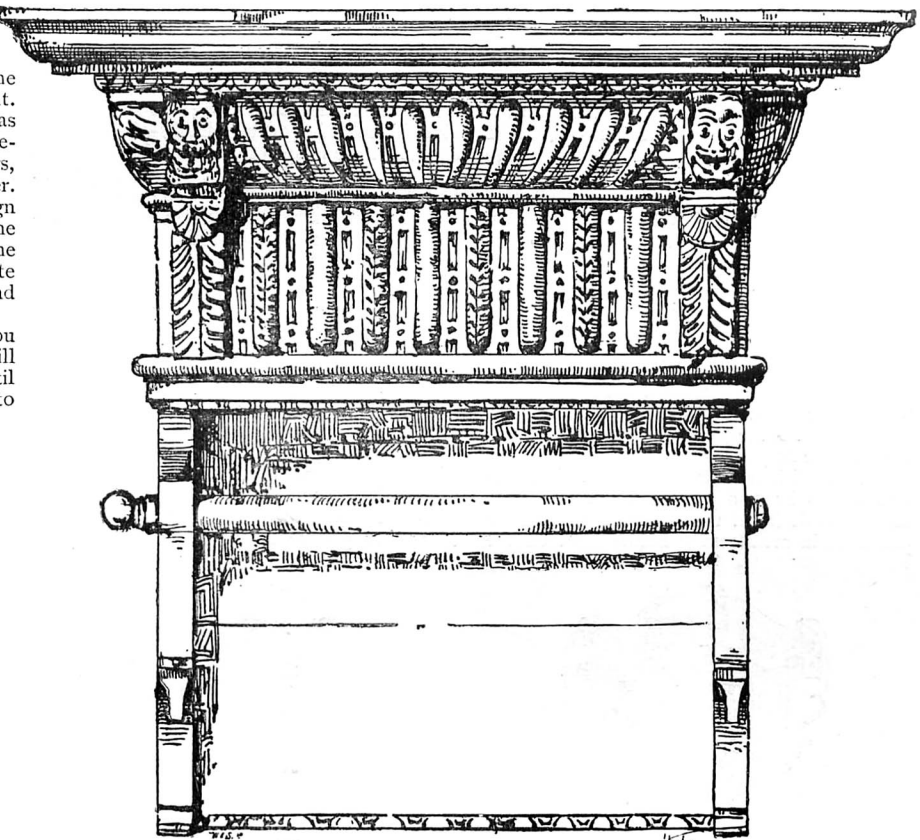


FIG. 4.

Norwegian and Scandinavian craftsmen of a thousand years ago. (Fig. 1.) Note the simplicity with which all the effects are produced, a parting or V-tool, a veiner, and a gouge being the only tools necessary to produce this sample of artistic ingenuity. Without directly copying it, I am sure your own taste and predilection, joined to your sense of what you can naturally and easily do with your tools, will enable you to execute a most satisfactory variation upon this. You can get some friendly joiner or cabinet-maker to put the box together for you in such a fashion that it may be easily taken apart for the purposes of carving, and then permanently joined together. The original is painted green; but I should advise you either to simply varnish it or, if you want a colour effect, to stain it with some of Judson's dyes thinned down with water. You might even try an effect in two colours, treating all the flat surface in one tint and all the sunken portions in another.

But one need not, when searching for motives for simple designs, confine oneself to actual carved work for suggestions. They lie around us everywhere, in every hedge-row, and in every example of artistic handicraft, for both in Nature and Art are to be found countless

hints for those who care to take them. Here, for example, are some Japanese diapers, any one of which with a little ingenuity can be turned into a carving pattern. (Fig. 2.) As I have shown them, they are essentially flat in their treatment and feeling, for they are taken from china decorations, and in some cases have formed, as it were, a frame which by its very flatness has served to throw the panel decoration into greater relief by the force of its contrast. Now it is of course possible to treat these motives in carving so as to preserve this flat effect, for the wood surrounding the pattern may be lowered by an eighth of an inch or less, leaving the pattern itself at the natural level of the wood. The general effect of this, however, would be excessively monotonous, and I think we could do a great deal better with our material. First, we should get at its first principles, as it were, by dissecting it, and finding out the geometrical lines on which it was based. Then we should construct our own design upon this basis, trying to so work it as to bring out all the capacity there is in the material in which we are working, to give, in the case of wood, as much play of surface, as much light and shade, as accords with the tools at our disposal, and with our

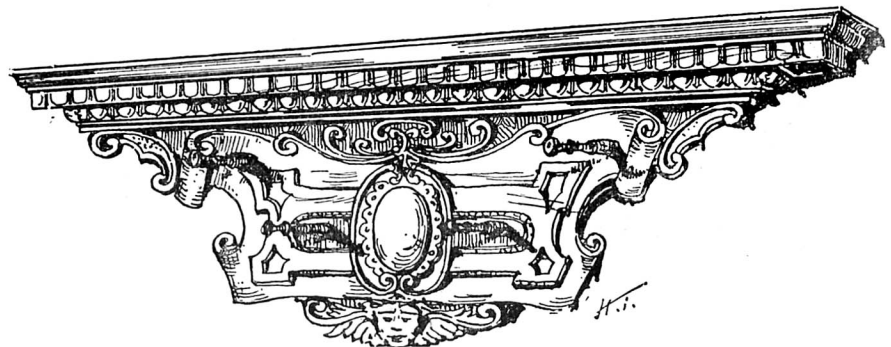


FIG. 6.

degree of expertness in their use. Take Fig. 2 c for example. This, as will be seen at a glance, is based upon the intersection of circles, and was indeed the pattern which gave the suggestion for the panel which I offered as a model in my first paper on this subject. I take it up again, so that the student may see how the same motive may give rise to more than one variation upon it. In the first case I aimed at simplicity. Now I give a suggestion which, while adhering more strictly to the original source of the design, gives us something richer and more intricate, as well as something which requires a higher degree of technical skill to work out satisfactorily. (Fig. 3.)

The wood-carver in the Middle Ages and during the period of the Renaissance of the Arts, as well here as in Italy, has always been one of the most valuable assistants to the architect. To the wood-carver indeed not a little of the surpassing beauty of the interiors of our English cathedrals is due. It is therefore not to be wondered at if the carvers of those periods found themselves applying their ornament in architectural fashion, and on the

few simple architectural mouldings, put them together with a touch of true architectural instinct, and has then set to work to ornament the different members in accordance with architectural precedent. He has not wasted himself on unimportant details—indeed, his craftsmanship is open to censure, for the carving is rough and almost archaic in character. But he gets a thoroughly harmonious effect, and no fault can be found either with the proportions or the general outline of this little piece of ordinary household furniture. It is, I think, a model of what such things should be.

Should you wish to follow out the ideas so cleverly expressed by this dead and gone wielder of the gouge and chisel, you can easily do so, no matter what degree of skill you have attained. You can, on the one hand, simplify the thing still further, bearing in mind, however, that you can do no better than adhere to the original proportions and the general outlines of the mouldings. (Fig. 5.) In place, however, of the raised ornament to the first deep member of the cornice (marked A in the outline section taken through the centre which I give you),

tions are thoroughly understood. An old carver once said to me: "The fellow what can carve a hacaanthus leaf as it ought to be carved can carve anything," and he was not far wrong.

Here (Fig. 6) is a thumb-nail sketch of another article of furniture, which is as suggestive as the last. This is Italian, however, and a century or so earlier in date than the towel roller. It is a hat-rack, and, like all bits of good design, is not only beautiful in itself but thoroughly adapted to its purpose. Its execution is exquisite, so that the modern student may not, as in the last instance, find anything to better. On the contrary, something will probably need simplifying, and I should suggest that the cherub's head might be omitted, and the scroll which forms the groundwork brought down in a somewhat similar fashion to the sides, so as to follow roughly the same outline. In this example, as in the former, it will be found that all the mouldings will be found in stock at any carpenter's or cabinet-maker's shop, and I should advise their being roughed out and put together by professional hands, as in the case of the little box described at the beginning of this paper. One of the most useful, as it is perhaps the most widely employed, of decorated mouldings, is the "egg and tongue," or "egg and dart." This, as you see, is based on a plain ovolo moulding, and can be reduced to the extreme of simplicity as regards the cutting necessary to produce it, while at the same time it affords a maximum of light and shade effect.

Finally, let me suggest the advisability of employing your talent on worthy objects alone, by which I mean, that you should not fritter away such talent and knowledge as you may possess in useless prettinesses, but try to execute works which may be both beautiful and useful at the same time. Here (Fig. 7), for instance, is an old chair from a church in Surrey, which dates from the latter part of the seventeenth century. Any carpenter could easily get you out a copy of this either in oak or "white-wood" at a trifling cost, for there are practically no mouldings, and absolutely no "shaped work," as it is called. The turning is simple enough too, the real beauty the chair possesses coming entirely from the carving, which, from a technical point of view, presents no difficulty even to a beginner. Notice, too, that the pattern bears out what I have said above as to the ease with which forms of decoration other than carving may be pressed into the wood-carver's service. This incised pattern is quite evidently taken almost bodily from a piece of brocade, and yet it is eminently suited to the purpose to which it is put. I give a sketch of one-half of the chair-back to a rather larger scale, from which, if you are clever with your pencil—and the first duty of a carver is to learn how to draw—you can without much trouble work out a full-sized drawing.

I could go on for a long time giving you examples similar to those to which I have called your attention, but that would not aid me in my purpose, which has been simply to try and suggest to you the lines on which you should proceed in order to design your own patterns intelligently and with meaning. No one can teach you originality, but there is a knack of assimilating what is fitting for one's purpose, which comes with the habit of keeping one's eyes open and bearing constantly in mind one's artistic aim. If I have helped you to understand this I am satisfied.

HORACE TOWNSEND.

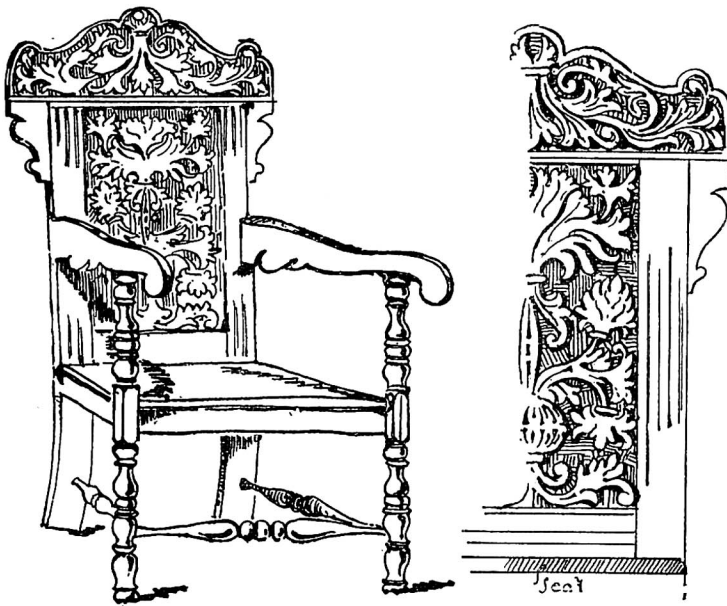


FIG. 7.

lines of architectural mouldings, even when the article they were decorating was not strictly of an architectural character. Nor were they wrong in so doing, and I think that one of the most regrettable features of the present very apparent revival of the art is that instructors and others who have been the guiding spirits therein have lost sight of these traditions, and have made use of the principles, either of flat decoration or of naturalistic forms, in their work of education. Take, for instance, this towel roller (Fig. 4) which is to be found in South Kensington Museum. It is English, of the seventeenth century, and is about 2 feet 1 inch high by 2 feet 3 inches wide. A student of to-day, if asked to design a similar object, would produce something pretty enough in its way no doubt, and with much ingenious ornamentation about it. But I venture to say that in nine cases out of ten that ornament would be misapplied, and that there would be a want of harmony between the various parts. See, on the contrary, what our carver of two hundred odd years has done. He has taken a

you can simply enrich it with an incised figure, following the same lines which radiate towards the centre. The same thing can be done with the frieze B, while the grotesque heads can be omitted, and simple mouldings with a few cuts of the V-tool on the surface be put in their place. The form of the acanthus leaf on the angles can also be merely suggested with some curved V-tool cuts.

On the other hand, you can improve on the model if you feel equal to it. The grotesque heads may be more carefully modelled, the frieze treated more delicately, and still further enriched, and the acanthus leaves where they occur can be modelled with a closer fidelity to the classic original. I may remark here that the acanthus leaf takes so leading a place in the scheme of all Renaissance ornament that no time need be considered lost which is spent in a study of its form or in mastering its lovely curves and involutions. A simple acanthus leaf should be the first lesson in foliage taken by the student, and it should be worked at again and again until its modelling and radia-





Coloring Page: *English Illustrated Magazine*, 1895

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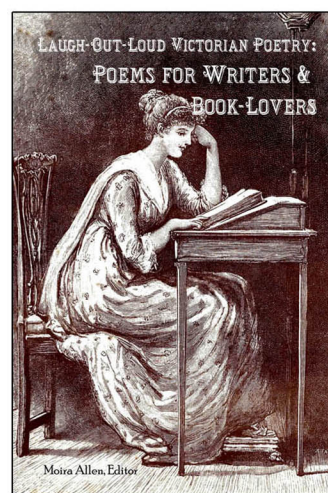
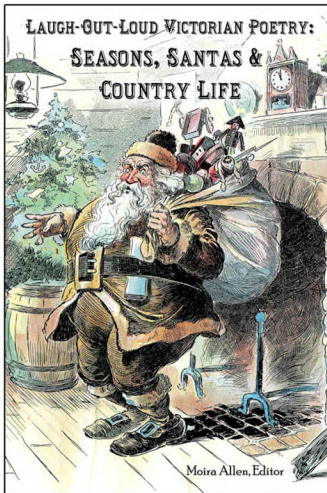
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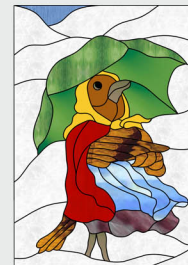
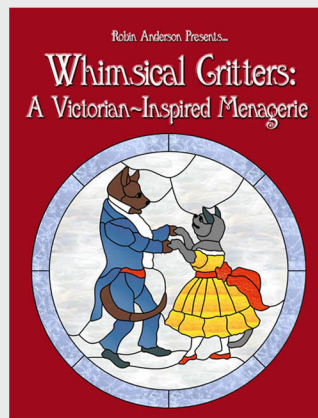
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