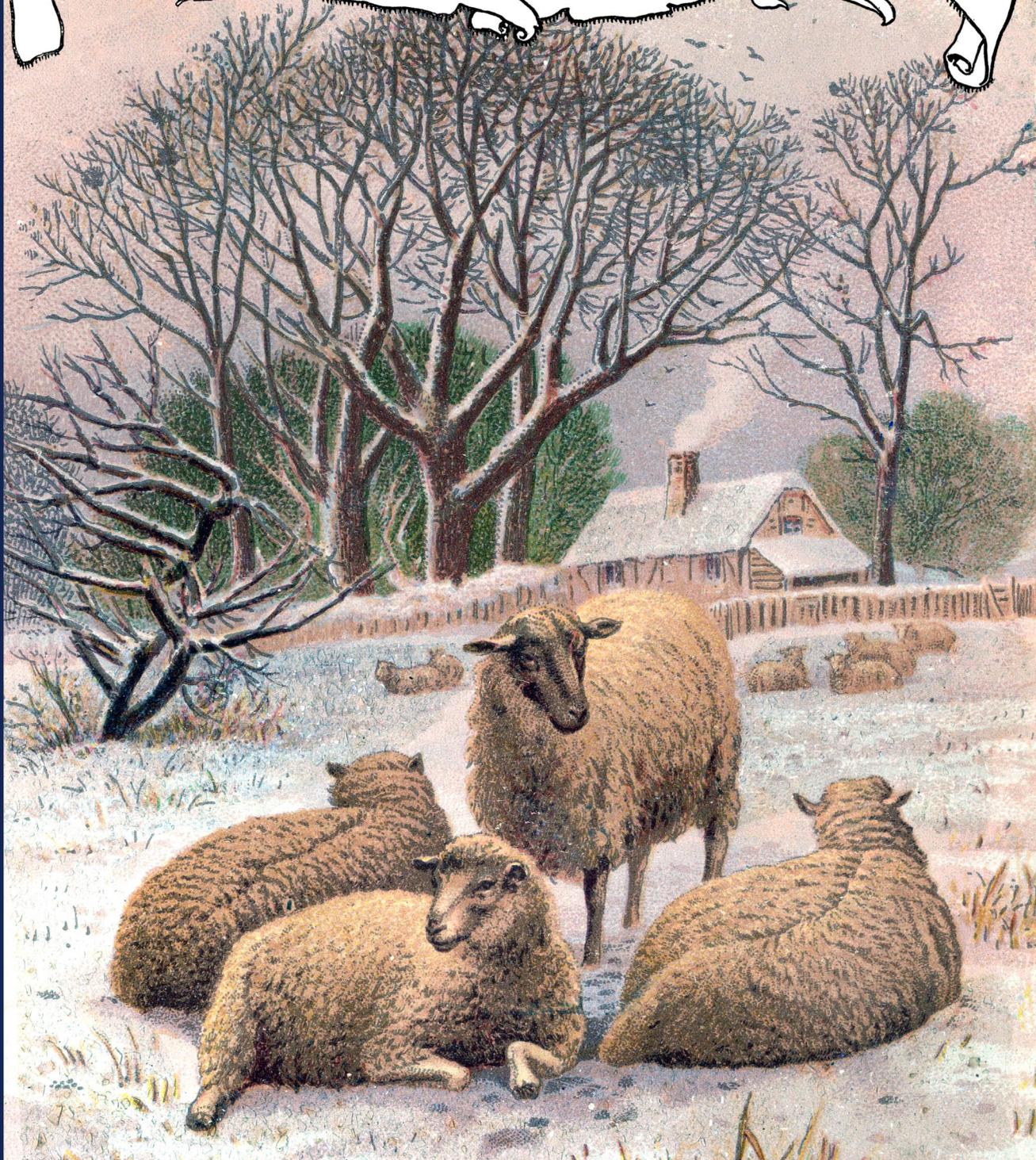
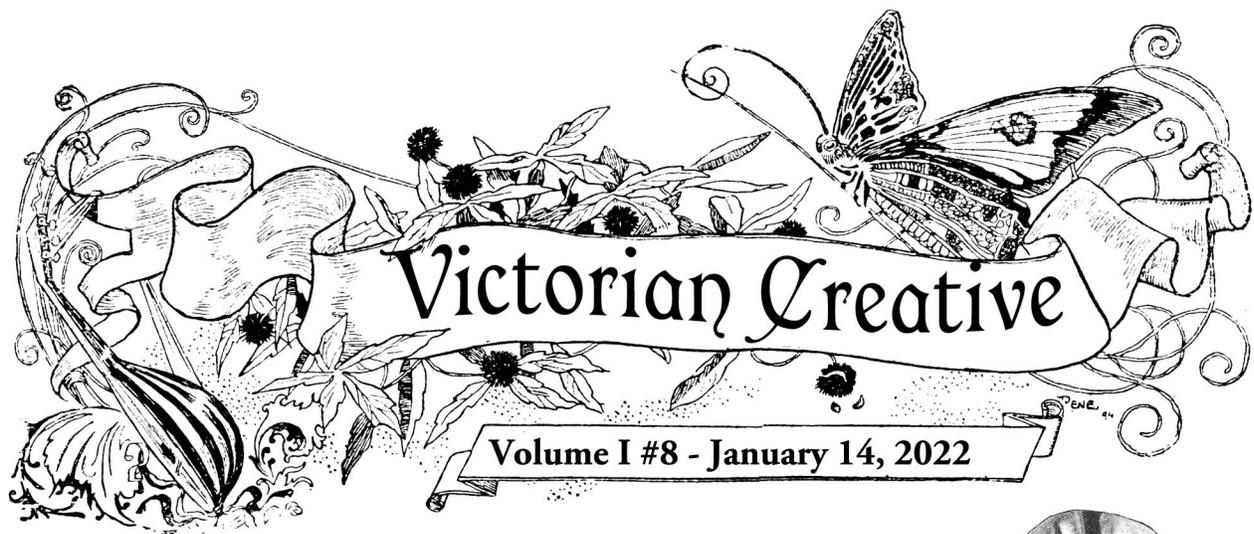


# Victorian Creative

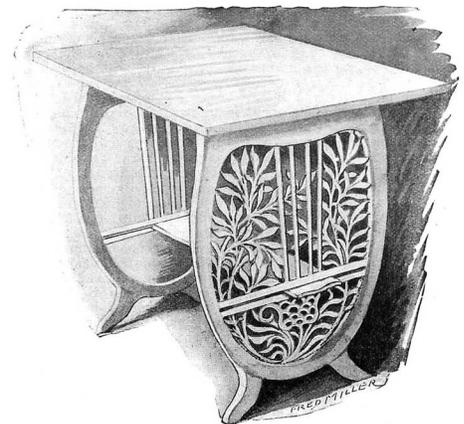
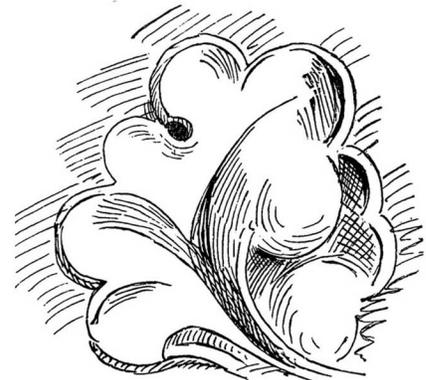
Tips & Tools for Victorian-Inspired  
Arts, Crafts & Decor



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**ABOUT OUR COVER:** This wintry scene is actually a British Christmas greeting card from a Victorian scrap album. It probably dates from the late 1880s or early 1890's. This image is available in our collection of **Seasons & Holidays Clip Art & Ephemera**, at [www.victorianvoices.net/clipart/seasons/holidays.shtml](http://www.victorianvoices.net/clipart/seasons/holidays.shtml)

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## A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

**T**raditionally, this is the time of year for resolutions. This is the year, we tell ourselves, when we will finally lose those extra pounds, start exercising, and do a host of other things that are better for us (and for others) than what we are doing today. Sometimes we keep them. Sometimes we don't. Sometimes, we make the same promises to ourselves year after year, until "resolutions" become more of an exercise in guilt than of hope.

So let's change the pattern a bit. I suspect that 90% of the time, our resolutions are about making unpleasant changes in our lives to fix real or perceived problems—such as being overweight or spending too much time in a chair in front of the computer. Typically, this means that when we start making those resolutions, we're focusing on our problems, and only the pain of making tough decisions and difficult changes. Such issues may indeed need to be addressed, but such resolutions aren't bringing a lot of joy and anticipation into our lives—and right now, I think we need a hefty dose of joy and anticipation! So what if we spent a little time this month focusing, instead, on resolutions that would make us feel happy and fulfilled, rather than filling us with a sense of obligation and dread?

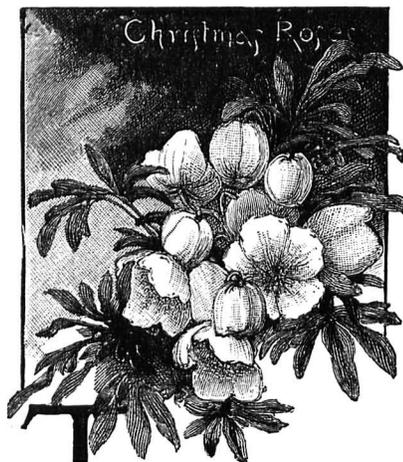
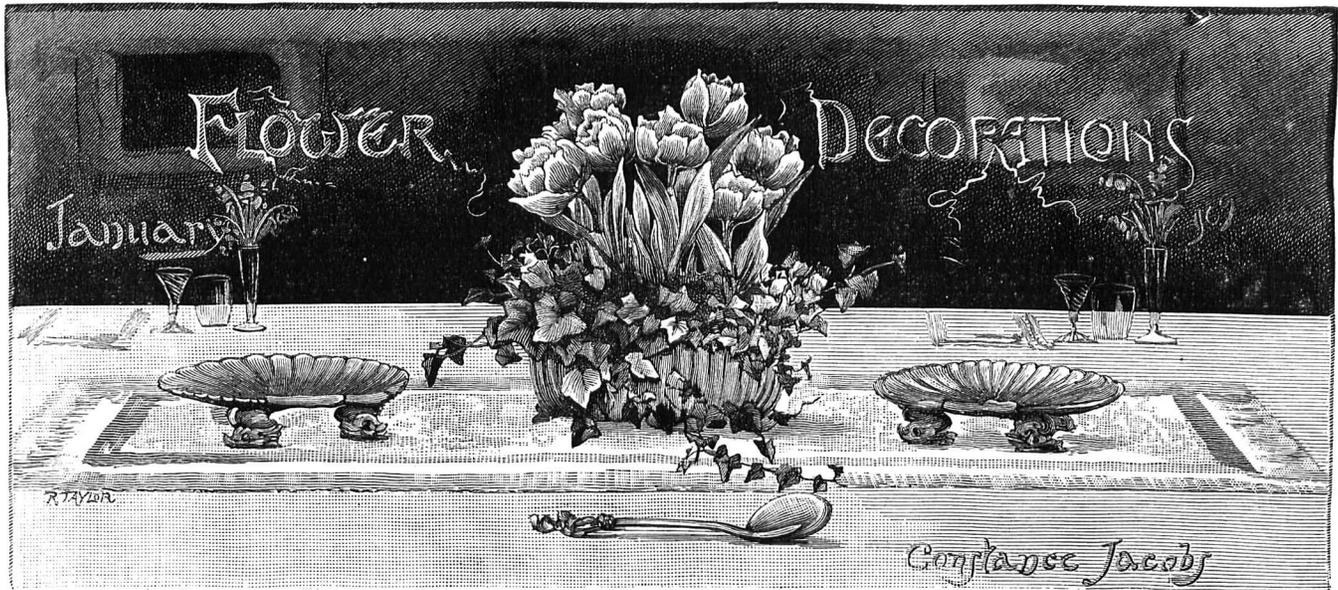
In my book, there's nothing like a dose of creativity to do just that. One doesn't have to have a degree in fine arts to create something wonderful. One only has to have *resolve*. Nor does one need anyone else's definition of just what "something wonderful" should be. One of the glorious craft projects I've always wanted to undertake is to create one of those holiday light balls that is made from a string of lights and a bunch of clear plastic cups. It isn't exactly museum-quality work, but the result is *de-light-ful*.

So here's my proposal for some joyful, fun-filled resolutions for the New Year:

- 1) Resolve to start and *finish* a creative project. Starting is easy—but how many of us have a box in the closet that's crammed full of unfinished craft projects? Resolving to *finish* means resolving to take time out of your busy schedule for something that is creative, fun, and has meaning to you for *your* sake, not the sake of the bottom line.
- 2) Resolve to re-engage in some art or craft that you used to enjoy, but have let slide over the years because you're just "too busy"—or perhaps because it no longer seems to mesh with your adult persona. I'm going to try embroidery on perforated cardboard, which was something I absolutely loved as a child—and I was delighted to discover that the cardboard, at least, still exists. Now all I need to do is see if I can print it with a pattern. I'll let you know how that comes out, because that's truly a classic Victorian technique!
- 3) Resolve to learn one new creative thing. I've been saying for years that I want to learn how to crochet—well, I think a good resolution this year would be to make *this* the year that I do it. (I'll let you know how that comes out as well.) What have you always wanted to try? What's stopping you?

The world has changed for all of us in the past two years. We're still wondering what the "new normal" is going to be. Whatever it is, I think we're all pretty sure by now that it's going to be different. But why wait for the "new normal" to impose itself on our lives and dictate the next twenty or thirty years of our future? Let's make some joyful resolutions that put *us* in control—and let us decide for ourselves what we want our futures to look like!

—Moirra Allen  
editors@victorianvoices.net



THE flowers of January are not difficult to enumerate, even in these days when florists merge the floral seasons into one another.

In the garden a few chrysanthemums may have survived the frosts; but they are mostly imperfect specimens, fit only for large bunches in the corners of rooms, where their colouring is of value, and where they will not be closely examined. Those in shops are better, but all alike are past their prime. Laurestinus and arbutus are better than last month, and are a great resource where they are to be had for the cutting, but are not often to be bought. Christmas roses ought to be plentiful. In shops, tulips, hyacinths, freesias (all forced), and mimosa are the cheapest; but roses, lilies-of-the-valley, and azaleas can also be had.

Perhaps in this barren month the cheapest flowers in the end are the tulips. They are forced and sent into the market in large quantities, the entire plants, bulbs and all, in the boxes in which they are grown. And this is much the best way to buy them, provided that the stalks are not too long, as, placed bodily in a bowl of water, or in very damp moss, they will sometimes with care last for a fortnight, opening wide in the lamp or gas-light, and partly closing again during the day. Of course with good china the mould which adheres to the bulbs might scratch and other-

wise injure the inside of the bowl, so that it is best to use an inner basin of common earthenware or glass, placing a mat or paper between the two, and hiding the device with plenty of ivy, box, or barberry foliage. This is a much prettier and a less heavy arrangement than merely re-planting three or four bulbs into an ordinary flower-pot, as it can be varied by the admixture of other cut flowers or foliage. At West-end shops the bulbs cost from three halfpence to twopence-halfpenny each, and three, with ivy, in a punch-bowl on a pretty table-mat, are quite sufficient to dress out an ordinary-sized table, or to form the principal ornament for a drawing-room.

The following are some of the variations which I have made on the above lines with the aid of these flowers, and so gained some little commendation.

Five large pink blooms in a Lowestoft china bowl with brown ivy, whose colour made a delightful harmony with the delicate tints of the tulip leaves and petals. Two of the flowers fading after some time, I put the remaining bulbs and ivy into a low Austrian china basket, and added about half a dozen sprays of freesia, which cost fourpence.

The same basket held, another time, five scarlet tulips and four sprays of lily-of-the-valley, with sprigs of myrtle foliage in between. But this came to one shilling and ninepence, the lilies costing three halfpence each; and the effect was neither so good nor so lasting as another, in which two scarlet and three pink were mixed with box in a dark green bowl.

Three scarlet flowers, with no other leaves than their own, in a cream-coloured terracotta pot of classic shape with high handles, made a quaint group for an occasional table.

Yellow tulips look well with barberry, brown ivy or mimosa in an old blue-and-white bowl, or a white china basket.

The freesia, which has only become common during the last two or three years, is very sweet-scented, and a congenial companion to almost any other bulbous flower; or is pretty in small olive-green glasses, with its own grass and some dark leaves, particularly box or myrtle. Such an arrangement would show to most advantage on a light green and brown table-mat. Sufficiently large bunches of freesia cost from sixpence to eightpence.

The strawberry arbutus, bearing its little pendant ivory blossoms at the same time as

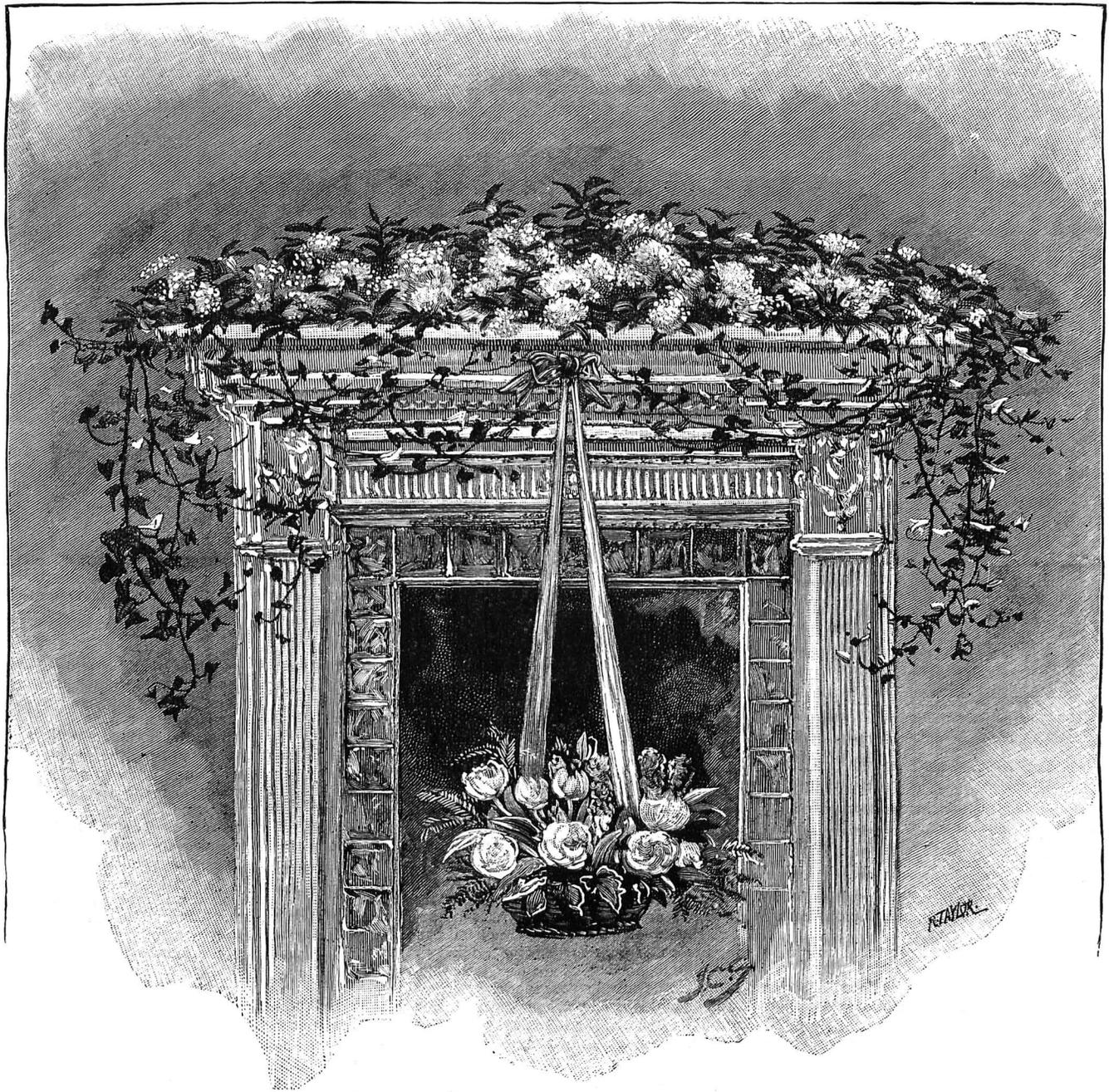
the red fruit—which, by-the-by, are more the shape and size of cherries than strawberries—is a very decorative shrub, and sprays of it in celadon or blue-and-white china or dark green glass, are pretty for the dinner-table by themselves, or in conjunction with lower vases holding Christmas roses. A large bunch of it is also effective for a drawing-room corner.

Laurestinus looks best in masses, and may be prettily arranged in a bank down the centre of the table, or to fill glass troughs in the way I suggested for ivy last month.

I have made extensive use of this shrub when in full bloom for the adornment of a room turned out for a party, banking it up on the mantelpiece, the top of the piano, and other shelves, from which all ornaments had been removed.

I formed the bank first of all with damp, not wet, moss, laid on waterproof paper, sticking the laurestinus and a few sprays of arbutus lightly in. The room being small for the number of guests, there were no available corners for groups of pot plants, but a few palms, some early tulips, and Roman hyacinths, were made into a very picturesque group on a landing where there was still space for a couple of chairs. Trails of ivy hung down from the mantelshelf over the sheet of glass which, in this instance, concealed the fire-place, and over the back of the piano. From a hook just under the shelf I suspended by yellow ribbons a basketful of yellow tulips, Roman hyacinths, begonia leaves, and mimosa. On the same occasion the centre of the long supper table was decorated alternately with sprays of mimosa in tall specimen glasses and low banks of ivy. These latter were studded with yellow, red, and white tulips; and whereas some had all the colours mixed, others had only one, all having a little mimosa intermingled. Another time the banks were composed entirely of laurestinus in full bloom; and old champagne glasses, taking the place of the specimen glasses, held yellow or red tulips as well as mimosa. The tulips might have been pink and white, and in that case the mimosa would have been discarded in favour of asparagus plumosus.

The banks were arranged with a contrivance which has lately been introduced by a London firm of nurserymen, and consists of concave pieces of wire netting, which are placed on the table, fitting tightly over a heap of damp moss,



A FIREPLACE.

waterproof paper being laid under all to protect the cloth from injury. Some of these wire frames are of a triangular shape, and look extremely pretty for the ends or corners of tables. The flower stalks put into the moss are held firmly in position by the wire, which it is easy to hide by foliage, or by pulling some of the moss through the interstices; and it is always desirable to start with a fringe of fern fronds, ivy, or something as light, of irregular lengths, to droop on to the tablecloth, and so avoid a straight, formal edge.

I have no doubt that the holders advertised by Carter in his seed lists would answer the same purpose; but I have never tried them, and should imagine that the effect in amateur hands would be more stiff. Christmas roses and the tiny yellow winter aconites would look extremely well in these banks, with ivy as the only foliage.

Greenhouses are gay now, and a favourite flower in many is the camellia, which per-

sonally I consider quite unfit for cutting for decorations. If, however, it is desired to use them for such a purpose, the blossoms should be laid with some of their shiny leaves in plates of moss, together, if possible, with some exotics of a light feathery growth, such as deutzia and some delicate ferns, to lend a little grace to these essentially artificial-looking flowers.

For a large dinner an excellent plan is to dress the table entirely with little ferns and other foliage plants growing in small celadon china or copper pots. Down the centre should be a row of the taller ferns such as pteris (or spider), or miniature specimens of dracena and aralia sieboldii, while on each side should be a lower row of maidenhair. The table-centre most suitable to use would be a very bright piece of embroidery; and with copper pots, silver should be prominent in its design, with the celadon red and gold. If embroidery cannot be had, a strip of red silk

fringed at each end and side will serve for the one arrangement, and two or three yards of crumpled-up pale green muslin stamped with silver devices, to be bought cheaply at most oriental shops, for the other.

I have carried out a similar scheme with a silver basket for the centre, and my favourite decanter-stands for the sides, and used them with a table-centre of heliotrope silk richly embroidered in cream, lemon, and orange tones, the lamp shades being yellow. The centre mat might equally well have been yellow, or salmon colour, with lamp shades to match.

None of these arrangements are so expensive as they sound, as small ferns and other plants can be bought for a few pence each, and are really permanent properties. The celadon pots are also cheap, the copper ones more costly; but both will be found constantly useful.

A few years ago everybody tried to grow

small ferns in so-called Liberty pots of blue-and-white china with pierced sides; but I do not know anyone who succeeded very well. Probably there was too much ventilation, and the roots could not be kept sufficiently moist.

Now, however, one can buy little blue-and-white or other artistically coloured pots which have only one hole, and that at the bottom, and otherwise resemble in form the common garden flower-pots, but are quite pretty enough for any purpose; and I believe

that, with care, most small plants thrive in them very well.

Many people also plant ferns for the table in white china receptacles of more or less artistic design, and all these plans are useful at a season when flowers are scarce and very dear.



### DAINTY SCENT SACHET IN SATIN.



THE pretty article here illustrated is no sooner seen than coveted by most of the fair sex, either for their own use or as a tiny present for a friend. White satin of good quality is used for the front of the bag, which is further adorned with a delicate spray of ribbon embroidery arranged in the form of a slightly oblong wreath lightly outlined, around which diminutive flowers and leaves are placed. Pale blue, yellow, or green pongee silk is suitable for the back of bag, which is added when the embroidery has been completed, previous to being filled with wadding containing scent powder, and being closed with strings of the delicate ribbon used for the embroidery.

*Materials required.*—White satin, pongee silk, each four inches wide and six inches long, three layers of wadding same size, pot pourri or other scent powder, half a yard each of cornflour blue, yellow and leaf-green ribbon, such as is used for ribbon embroidery. A thread of green filoselle is used for the tiny stems and to outline the wreath, which should be worked first.

a tiny spray, and first attempts may be made by drawing it on paper until satisfied that the arrangement has been satisfactorily copied. After that the attempt should be made upon the satin with or without pencil tracing, according to the worker's ability.

*To work rosette flower.*—Take four inches of yellow ribbon, a single thread of fine sewing silk or cotton, a common fine sewing needle, and a large-eyed ribbon or crewel needle. Draw or imagine a circle the size of a small glove button. With the large-eyed needle draw one end of ribbon through the edge of circle. Take second needle and thread, sew the end in place with one tiny stitch and gather along one edge of ribbon, which should be on right side of satin. Then draw second end of ribbon through to wrong side and draw in the gathering thread very tightly to form a rosette as small as possible. Stitch the centre in place, taking the stitches through the extreme edge of gathers only. Fasten off on wrong side.

To work star, flowers and leaves but few

directions are required. Work with large-eyed needle and a short length of ribbon. Draw ribbon through to right side of satin, leaving a short end at wrong side. Lay a bodkin or other flat instrument in front of ribbon; work one stitch over the bodkin and draw it away. Work three more stitches in the same way and finish centre with a large French knot worked with silk or filoselle. The foliage leaves are formed like the star flower petals. The bodkin is used to keep the ribbon flat and untwisted and from being drawn too tightly. It is advisable to fasten off the ends of ribbon on wrong side with needle and thread after each length of ribbon is worked up.

The reeds, which are most effective, consist of a nicely-worked French knot, made of coloured ribbon, on the top of a tiny green stem. These knots may be worked in the usual way, but some workers prefer to make a tied single knot with an inch of ribbon by hand, and then to draw each end through the work with the large-eyed needle.

When the embroidery is completed, lay the satin and silk together to make up the bag, having right side of embroidery inside. Turn down two inches of silk and satin together at the top of bag. Keeping them in this position, run the edges together along sides and bottom. Raise the upper layer of turned-down top and turn it over on opposite side, and you will be pleased to find a neatly-finished hem ready made, as it were, without any further trouble. Next turn the work right side out, lay some scent powder between the layers of wadding, fold them in half cross-wise and slip all together into the bag. Next take twelve inches of green, blue, and yellow ribbon, and tie them round the bag about one inch from the top, having first arranged the back and front into artistic folds, if possible, without the assistance of gathering threads, which somewhat detract from the desired effect of immaculate freshness indispensable to work of the highest order.

Last of all, in the centre of embroidered front form a smart, crisply-made bow, using the three ribbons together so as to produce a soft bunch of loops and ends bristling out at each side.

Nothing then remains to be done save to admire the pleasing result of your labour, which, unless I am much mistaken, will greatly exceed your expectations.

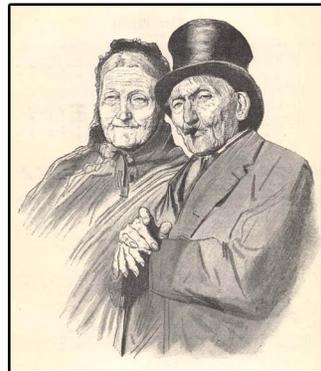
There is one more hint I cannot resist giving you. It is this, three-sixteenths of a yard of satin is a small amount and only costs a little money, but it will make ten such scent-bags. What a happy idea for those of you who work for charity, and make their own little birthday gifts! Won't you try it?

L. E. C. L.



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## A Very Old Art.

### EMBOSSING IN METAL.

"There is nothing too arduous for mortals to attempt."—HORACE, *Ode III.*

"Work is the condition of man."—CARLYLE.

HAMMERING in metal has come down to us from antiquity. Of its birth and early gradual development we have no history; in many aspects its working reminds us of the potter's-wheel, itself prehistoric, which to-day is the same as before man made records and wrote books.

The most ancient history records Tubal-cain as an artificer in metal; Genesis tells us simply in the fourth chapter, that he was an artificer in every article in brass and iron; legend following with the story that his sister Naamah was the first woman to spin. Nor is this all, for though we would assent at once that the word artificer implies a skilled workman, we further learn from Exodus of work by Bezaleel, the first goldsmith, and his fellow-worker Aholiab—and of not only the skill of their manipulating in metal but the beauty of its design—again especially the detail of the ornament. Modern research has confirmed this: owing to the labors of a Botta and a Layard, the great museums of the world have examples of the excavations at Nineveh, the bas-reliefs of which show the metal-work of the period of Ninus to have been "beautiful," as we use the word to-day. "The bracelets, armllets, on the sculptured figures, were adorned in a style worthy of the exquisite chasing of the Middle Ages;" and if you turn to the book from which I quote, Layard's *Nineveh*, and compare the early Assyrian ornament at Nimroud, and later at Kouyugik with the later Greek honeysuckle ornament, observing carefully the conventionalizing in both and (in combination) the honeysuckle and tulip in the Assyrian, it will be seen that the later Greek treatment has not so much the advantage in grace, while, if one allows himself the freedom in taste (which that gentle conservative Sir Joshua Reynolds yields in that much disputed quality) many will be found to award the grace to the earlier Assyrian for its lily-like uprightness and suggestions of fresh naturalness.

In Exodus the writer seems to revel in sheer enjoyment of describing the purity of the "beaten gold"—beaten into lilies and almonds; of knobs (boxes) and flowers.

"Of beaten work shall the candlestick be made; its shaft and its branches, its bowls, its knobs, and its flowers shall be out of one piece with it.

"And six branches shall come out of its sides; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side.

"Three bowls, almond-shaped, shall be on one branch with a knob and a flower, and three bowls, almond-shaped, on the other branch with a knob and a flower; so on the six branches that come out of the candlestick."\*

And although the writer distinctly gives us to understand that these details were of divine inspiration, many, however orthodox, will incline to the *naïvete* of a later writer who says, "It is probable that the metallurgy of the Hebrews was not very unlike that of the Egyptians."†

As there has been so much doubt about the semi-branched candlestick (arch of Titus) being partly of Roman restoration, I will not describe it, but a really beautiful metal work, one of the bronze lions excavated by Mr. Layard of the time of Sennacherib is interesting from this fact alone as well as showing the love of ornament of these people who adorned such merely useful things as weights and measures, for this lion is one of a series of sixteen copper-weights.

\* Exodus, Chap. xxv. (Mr. Leese's trans. of Hebrew Scriptures.)

† Pollen.

In Solomon's reign the magnificence of the hammered gold and silver and copper is simply awe-inspiring. Owing to the abundance of gold, the state or royal furniture was made of it. His throne of ivory was partly covered with gold; two large golden lions supported it and twelve smaller golden lions were placed two and two on the steps that led to it; and in the house that Solomon built "on all the walls of the house round about he carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and opening flowers in the debir and in the temple." "And also upon the two doors of oleaster wood he carved figures of cherubim and palm trees, and opening flowers, and overlaid them with gold and spread the gold by beating upon the cherubim and upon the palm trees."\*

Of Hiram of Tyre we only know of him outside of his skill, that *his* father was a worker in brass, but that he was filled with wisdom and understanding and knowledge to make every work in brass," and that his ornaments were nets of checker-work, and wreaths of chain-work; network of pomegranates; also that the capitals of the pillars were finished with lily-work. The rim of the laver that held "two thousand baths" was "wrought like the brim of a cup with lily-buds," and the bases had borders and the borders were of pendant wreaths of plated (metal) work.

Indeed, the full and enthusiastic description of Hiram's skill has only a parallel in later times in that Michael Angelo in metal work—Benvenuto Cellini—whose boyish admiration of his own ornament causes the reader to smile as well as wonder.

The copper work, the homely vessels of domestic use in Solomon's reign, were richly polished as well as beaten. In the time of Joseph and Moses (reign of Thotmes the Third) the Egyptians were skilled in the making of statues and vases of beaten gold.

A beautiful example of *repoussé*, an Egyptian poignard with a gold blade, still extant, in the collection of the Khédive of Egypt, is of the date of 1,500 years B.C.

Some archæologist expresses his doubt that the gold used in antiquity was an alloy known (later) to the Greeks as *arichalcum* of copper and other metals, but the sacred writer ever insists upon the statement, and even reiterates it, that the gold was pure, and with him partly agree Dr. Birch and Mr. Layard, the former adding the fact that the toreutic work of Asia largely influenced the Greek work at a later period, rivaling and at length gradually superseding it.

In the time of Phidias gold was beautifully engraved on its modeled and hammered surface. The Homeric heroes had gold shields; nor can these be put down to poetic imagination, for it should be remembered that the poet wrote at the period of Ionian immigration, and the splendor was "painted from the life." The gold belts, etc., discovered by Dr. Schliemann are believed to be of this early date.

The British Museum was offered in 1876, 1,500 specimens—gold objects of Egyptian, Babylonian, and Asiatic-Greek workmanship, dating 1000 years B.C.

After the long struggle with the Persians, the Greeks became great by commerce. Then followed the great age of Greek art. Their sculpture, the perfection of which we know, was kindred to their metal-work—their great sculptors worked in metals. Phidias made statues of gold and ivory of colossal size (chryselphantine), and these gold parts were *not* cast (as has been asserted) but hammered. Darius erected to his favorite wife a statue of hammered gold, so also did Cressus; for this devoting wealth to religious shrines was not confined to the Greeks, "but attracted royal devotees to Greek sanctuaries." When Phidias was accused of

\* 1 Kings, chap. vi., 29-32. Same trans.

embezzlement of the gold of the statue of Minerva, he insisted on its being weighed. It was estimated at about forty-four talents—£118,000 English gold.

Only few specimens of ancient Greek art in goldsmithy remain. These few are now in St. Petersburg and a few other collections; some have been dug up in Italy and Cyprus. Ancient Greek gold vases are very rare. The first place in working in gold among the Greeks belongs to Mentor, who is said to have been an immediate successor of Phidias.

Phidias, Mys, Mentor, and Polycletus cut the *relievos* on the most celebrated vessels, and the work of these *toreutae* were eagerly sought for in classic Rome.

The description of the Egyptian *salon* of a Roman house of wealth and taste reads:

“There was a cup by the hand of Phidias, ornamented with fishes, that seemed only to want water to enable them to swim. On another was a lizard, by Mentor, and so exact a copy of nature that the hand almost started back on touching it.”\*

“There was a bowl, the color of opal,† surrounded at the distance of the fourth part of an inch by an azure net-work, carved out of the same piece as the vessel and only connected with it by a few fine slips that had been left. Beneath the edge of the cup was written the following inscription; the letters were green and projected in a similar manner, supported only by some delicate props: ‘*Bibe, vivas multis annis!*’ (‘Drink! Mayest thou live many years!’) Antipater (of unknown date), says Pliny, engraved a sleeping satyr on a bowl so perfectly that it seemed laid on in relief.”

Pytheas was a generation later than Pompey; his famous work was a bowl in *repoussé* of a composition of figures representing Ulysses and Diomed stealing the Palladium. His works were so delicate that they could not be cast from, nor in Pliny’s time were there artists capable of copying them.

Of ancient Greece “in those seats of Royalty (the cities of Macedonian rulers) were made an unusual number of chased and embossed silver vessels.‡

The Romans were not, it appears, a race of artists, but they figured as art patrons. Rich men, patricians, or mere money-makers, went to sales and paid prices simply enormous for old gold and silver works made by famous artists—prices far beyond any given by modern buyers of the celebrated art and bric-a-brac dealers of our day. Lucius Crassus, the orator, gave nearly five thousand dollars (over £900) for two cups chased by Mentor. The celebrated bowl, by Pytheas, fetched about one thousand six hundred dollars *per ounce!*

The welding of iron (by the Greeks) is attributed to Glaucus, 600 B.C.§

In the first century of the Christian era, there still remained in the Greek cities, artists, second-rate as compared with the great names of the past, but of great skill. In reproducing traditional designs they were unsurpassed. “They] were inheritors of all kinds of methods of fusing, damascening and in-laying and tempering the metals used in founding, sculpture and decoration, whether of statues, vases or decorative furniture, the after-growth of a creative age.”

Wars, conquest, pillage, fire, and theft have left few of the beauties in precious metals extant. The most of them have been melted down for the value of their material; a few have been dug up at Rome, and one hundred silver vases at Pompeii. A rare vase of *electrum* is at St. Petersburg; a beautiful cup found at Antium is in the Corsini

\* GALLUS.

† Probably of *electrum*, esteemed by the ancient Greek workers and found in the washing of the Italian rivers, whiter and more luminous than gold, and said to betray the presence of poison.

‡ MULLER’S *Archæology*. § GROTE’S *Greece*. ¶ Pollen.

collection; “a vase with the representation of the apotheosis of Homer is in the Bourbon collection in Naples. The South Kensington Museum has a beautiful vase found at Vicorella. The British Museum has a few in silver and gold; of the latter one, a *patera* is embossed on the inner-side with four bulls. The silver cup belonging to Sir William Drake, made in Augustan times, is an example of the best period of the later Greek art. All the details of ornamentation are admirably designed, and a number of accessories, such as offerings on an altar or table in front of a small sylvan deity, are of extraordinary delicacy. These offerings are cups and vases of nine different shapes and sizes, most of them two-handled, so that with the vase itself no less than ten of these shapes are recorded by it.”

When I asked an artificer in London, himself one of the first chasers of the day and of a family who have been workers in metal in London for over two hundred years, what there was to prevent women from being art-workers in metal, he replied, with emphasis:

“NOTHING.”

Meaning, of course, that a woman’s equal success depended only upon her application and skill and taste, and that if she wrought as industriously as a man she would, in time, be as skilled as he; and he went on to say that the delicate handling of a woman, might give her the chance of superiority. He cited the example of a young lady now employed by the first English goldsmiths on their best work—race cups, trophies and the like—who, a pupil of a splendid chaser, her father, had now distanced him in his own craft.

But at the outset let me warn the reader who would learn embossing, either as an accomplishment to rejoice in merely as a possession, or as a means of support, that she must shun advertised “new processes” and patent methods for learning in a little while. It is quite true that with a few good lessons she may obtain a correct insight—the a. b. c. of procedure—by which she may begin at once to work from a simple design, but she had best steer clear of amateur and half-taught teachers and go at once to a workman in brass, copper, etc., and buy her tools of him. Art-workers in metal make their own tools *because they must be well made*. The tools sold in the shops are worthless—an imposition; they are not made of tempered steel, and a very important tool, an elastic hammer, has (this hammer “that goes with the set”) a handle that baffles the “spring” necessary to perfect ease and skill in hammering.

Get the metal embosser to make you a few tools “out of hours;” and if you can get him to give you a few lessons “out of hours,” do so. Be earnest about learning if you wish to work at all. (Be as persistent as the little girl who, though naturally naughty, *wanted* to be good, and after asking God to make her “a good little girl,” added, “and if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”)

Three or four lessons from a good workman will be of great benefit to you and enable you to decide if you would go on as a thorough worker. If you think it *infra dig.* let me remind you that that sensible and practicable healthy-minded man, the late Prince Consort, gave every one of his children a trade, by which, if the royal family were turned out of England to-morrow, every one of them might earn their living comfortably.

“Learn from a common mechanic?” say you. Well, I don’t call any one who does good work “common,” but, for the sake of talk, let us say he is a “common mechanic;” but if you find him employed by the Tiffanys, or Gorham, or in any other good American workshop, do you secure his services for a few interviews at the outset. His time is worth so much an hour, his “labor” is his “capital,” pay him for it, don’t “sponge” information out of him, for you are not nearly as interesting to him as you are to yourself,

and some of these days all the good Anglo-Saxons on both sides of the water will believe, as a few good people do now, what it says in the old catechisms, that "defrauding a laborer of his wages is one of the sins crying to heaven for vengeance."

You will be glad to watch his skilled labor and *practice*, and congratulate yourself that you did not go to a few fine lady and gentlemen *dilletanti* for their theories.

You can at least buy your tools of him for this lesson, and your piece of thick brass, not thin, good modelers do not use thin brass—to begin upon.

This simple ornament is a bit of embossing of the thirteenth century (German), and chosen for its applicability to what I have first to say. (See first illustration.)

For this you will require three "blunt tracers"—one long, one shorter, and one smaller, "half round;" also three plishers, also a "ground-mat," a "grain-mat," which is a texture tool, a "riffle," and a scraper.



The face (or blade or point) of the first long tracer has an appearance like A. The same of the shorter like B. The half-round tracer like C. The point of the plishers used in this design are first, No. 1, D; No. 2, E; No. 3, F.

Do not imagine these numbers are arbitrary, nor that they are so numbered on any "list," nor by the workman. I use them simply for our own convenience here and for you to recognize the "points" when you buy them of the workman, which, remember, you *must* do if you wish proper tools.

You will use ten tools (and a hammer) for this first lesson.

The "ground-mat" has a point indented so as to produce complete or broken circles in a background, these surfaces depending upon your method of shifting the tool.

A "ground-mat" is like G, the circle outside the indentation faintly corrugated.

The "grain-mat," which is for "tooling" the surface of ornament, a solid broad curve, the petal or leaf of a flower, etc., has a point like H—a broadish oval *very* faintly stippled.

A "riffle," a tool that has to be most carefully made by the workman, is brought to a tapering point each end; the points are like I, and finely engraved (this best describes the texture at the points) to the depth of an inch, with fine grooves that are like the finest cross-hatching in engraving.

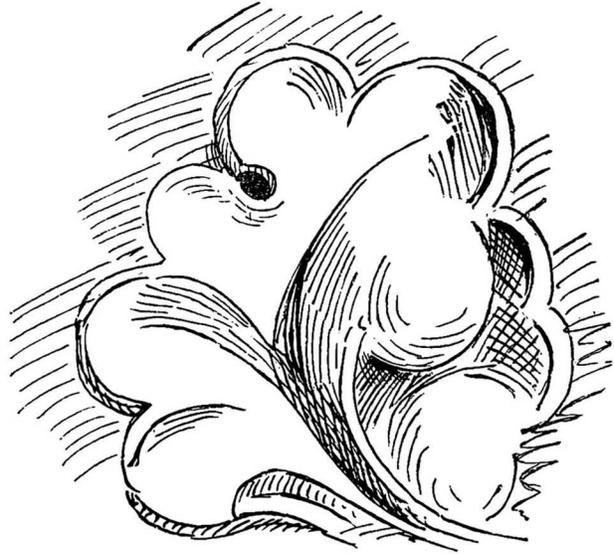
The "scraper" is a long tool, turned in a point one end and the "scraper" end is a three-cornered blade or triangular knife.

These last two tools are for finishing stalks and certain other surfaces.

You will also require from the workman a proper hammer and a pitch cushion. Buy your pitch prepared at the workshop. Do not attempt to make it; but perhaps the composition is pitch, plaster, rosin, and tallow. This composition you melt and cool as the exigencies of your work require. For instance, you melt the pitch on the top of your cushion by passing a red-hot poker over it; this you do in order to fix your metal on which you are working securely in its place (on this cushion). You supply yourself with extra pitch, say when you need it, to build up a mass on the cushion under the concave hammered parts to fill them from an iron ladle; this is a shallow cup with a long handle, in which your pitch can be melted when you need it.

For the ornament here given, the pitch on the surface will be high enough.

Sketch the design in pencil on your bit of brass, and with the first tracer go over the outlines.



Have the light fall on your left hand. Hold the long half-tracer perpendicularly on the line of the design, between your thumb and forefinger of your left hand, the forefinger almost as high as the head of the tool, the thumb an inch or thereabouts below it; your second finger rests on the nail of the third finger, *as on a cushion*, the little finger thrown aside from your work. Do not drop the little finger toward you on the third; if you do, constant hammering will deform it. Do not get into the habit, and you will not need to break yourself of it.

In the right hand grasp the hammer by dropping the thumb and fingers about the handle. *Do not pass the right forefinger down the length of the handle.* (You perceive that I am warning you against the beginner's bad habits.)

Tap lightly but uniformly on the traced line, *moving* toward you; the tracing-tool is urged gently along by the thumb and forefinger, the second and third following it intelligently, but not *dragging*.

Your brass being of proper thickness, you will not, even if hitting too hard, pierce the metal, and the effect should be a line deep enough to show the pattern cleanly outlined when the brass is lifted from the pitch cushion or block. Accommodate your tools to the metal, and the metal to yourself, by using the half-round tracer when you turn a curve, the longer tracer in fainter curved lines, and the still longer tracer in the longer curves, or lines that are nearly straight, and shift your metal (or rather your pitch-cushion) in any way that may enable you to do your work with more ease, remembering always to move the tool toward you in hammering the metal.

When the outline is traced, melt the pitch from about the metal by means of your hot poker, turn the metal to the other side, fix it again on your pitch-cushion, and begin to model (hammer). This do with the plishers. Hammer the metal, moving toward you, pressing the metal to a cup-like shape, following the line of construction after you have cup-shaped (or saucer-shaped) the petal-like form. If you have ever modeled a rose petal in wax or clay, this will be familiar to you; in fact any *real* knowledge you have gained in modeling flowers in wax will be profitable here, for the effect desired is often the same, though the means and material differ. Approaching smaller spaces in the metal (within the outline of your design) you use the different-sized smaller plishers. When this design is hammered up melt the metal from your pitch-cushion, then refix again the convex side uppermost. Go over your outlines again sharply, that they may be well defined with your tracing-tools.

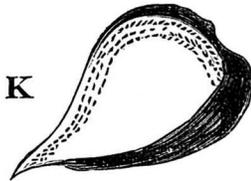
For the background, *i. e.* the metal outside your design, use your "ground-work," moving in curves and producing whole curves on the surface by pressing the point completely firmly down on broken curves by allowing a little of this (circular) point to be slightly raised, tipped up, so to speak.

For tooling the surface use the grain-mat (a soft texture tool) *following the line of construction of the ornament moving toward you.*

For example rose petal K.

You will see that the track of the "grain-mat" tool follows the curve of the petal. Begin again at the top of the petal on the other side and finish the track the inner stippling of course being

Soften the stalk of the design the blade flat on it) with the additional smoothing is required scraper, using one edge of its blade.



of the petal on ing similarly, nearly straight. by scraping (lay "riffle," and if scrape with the three-edged

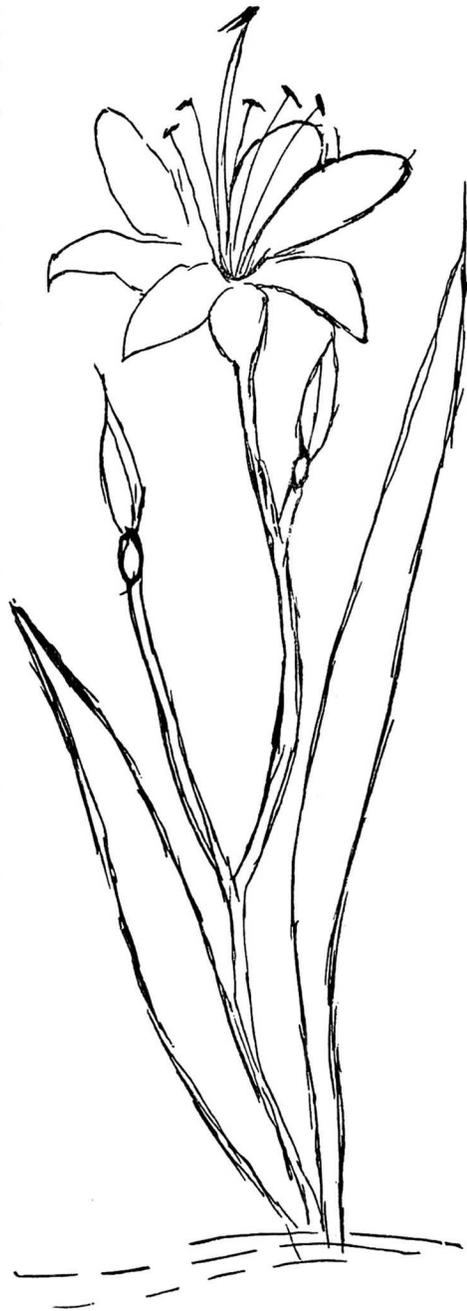
You will need to go over your "tooling" on the petal and background with each of these tools (the ground-mat and the "grain-mat") but when you have practice you will have got beyond this, for this is at best but patchy and your work will approach *success* when you know and can use your tools as freely as *if you were drawing with them* and getting effects in light and shade as if it were "as easy" as it is to the pencil in the hands of a draughtsman.

Clean off your work with turpentine and fine sawdust; work in the former and dry in the latter and with a *coarse* plate brush.

To polish send to the jeweler's or brass founder's where it must be done in your case (as with the professional embosser) by other hands guiding a machine for the purpose.

Do not grudge the time to practice tracing. I give here a group of *fleur-de-lys* blades as a piece of tracing work; it is excellent for acquiring skill in moving the tool, and in a later lesson on chasing you can use the same design and metal to chase on, for I am taking it for granted that the reader wishes to work thoroughly and not as some fine ladies I know of do, *copy* another's design—merely trace the outlines, hammer up the surface, leaving the fine tooling and delicate chasing for the silversmith to do and calmly exhibiting the work to their admiring friends as their own!

I beg of you to do all the *repoussé* yourself. Consider these first illustrations, if you like, as drudgery like the multiplication table or your musical exercises in velocity; they are to teach your hand cunning in tracing a simple "hammering up," which will be all clear gain when you



attempt your first complete object, which I shall give you in the next lesson. In fact, later you may finish the yellow lily here given and it will make a pretty ornamental bas-relief, which you can frame in sapphire-blue velvet or use as the finger plate to a door (with a brass knob).

It may be of use to you to know that the three pieces of brass for this lesson should cost about 20 cents. Go to the foundry for brass; it is about 35 cents a pound, perhaps a trifle more.

You can repeat these practice lessons on other bits of brass and this practice will serve you in good stead, especially the exercises in *fleur-de-lys*, as it is the movement both in tracing and chasing, of which "more anon."

It is not necessary you should be a genius. Be of good courage and to your industry I can promise success.

KATHERINE ARMSTRONG.

## USEFUL HINTS.

**SALAD DRESSING.**—A useful and valuable help to one's table is a good salad dressing, and when well made will be found to keep good for some weeks. Take two eggs, thoroughly boil them until quite hard, put them into cold water and when quite cold take the yolks only and pound finely in a mortar; add to this a tablespoonful of sugar, ditto of mustard, and dessertspoonful of salt, mix this thoroughly with a very little cream; when quite smooth add the remainder of the cream, in all one pint, add to this very slowly one pint of vinegar. It will require shaking before using; it is very good for lobster salad. This recipe we have always found most useful and appreciated by the superior members of our family circle—the men folks, I mean—so therefore hope it may prove of use to others, and especially so to those dear girls who try in every way to brighten the life of the bread-winners by their loving care in seeing to the small comforts which help so much to brighten and lighten the greater trials of life. I fear there are many dear husbands, fathers, and brothers who often return home to very badly cooked dishes, and not much better arranged tables, all of which might be different if our women folk studied more the comfort and taste of those to whom they owe, perhaps, everything. Only when the earthly ties are severed does the thought dawn of the many things that might have been done.

**TO MAKE A SATIN POCKET.**—Buy an ordinary stiff and plain palm-leaf fan, ten inches wide and ten deep without measuring the handle; three yards of two-inch wide reversible satin ribbon for handle, three yards of narrow ribbon the same colour, half a yard of black satin or velvet in the piece, a quarter of a yard of maize satin also in the piece, twelve inches of whalebone, a quarter of a yard of Victoria lawn, and a bunch of velvet pansies. Take the maize satin, lay it on the front of the fan and shape it, cutting it out larger than the fan, and curving it inwards in

the centre so as to leave exposed the fibres of the palm-leaf as they near the handle. Put a piece of wadding under the silk, and quilt it either in a succession of circles or in a diamond pattern, then stitch it on to the fan round its edge, leaving the edge neat, but not turning in any satin. Take the narrow ribbon, box-pleat it at one edge, and stitch it round and over the satin so that it comes half an inch beyond the fan. Take the velvet or black satin, cut it in a length of twelve inches one way and three-quarters of a yard the other, and line it with fine Victoria lawn, turning its upper edge down for two inches. Gather the upper edge with two runnings, put in the first an inch from the edge, the second three-quarters of an inch below the first. Draw the gathered part until it is twelve inches long, but leave the running threads unfastened, putting the fulness to the centre; gather the lower edge to the size of the lower part of the fan and shape it by cutting away the sides, turn it inside out, and stitch it to the fan over the top of the box-pleated ribbon, keeping the fulness to the centre of the fan: then turn it right side outwards and run in the whalebone between the two gatherings at the top of the velvet; draw these up to twelve inches and fasten off securely. The whalebone will make the flap of the pocket stand out well from the inside. Finish the pocket by fastening on one side the bunch of pansies and then ornament the handle. Cut off half a yard of the ribbon, find the middle of the rest and tie it twice round the very bottom of the handle, then bring both ends to the centre of the handle and secure them to that height by tying the half yard of ribbon cut off at first round them there as a loop and as a pretty bow; tack on both ribbons for seven inches, and then tie them together with another pretty bow. This last loop and bow is used to suspend the fan from the wall. The cretonne fan is made like the satin one, either with one or two coloured sateens or cretonnes, but instead of the edging of fine quilled ribbon the second part of the pocket is sewn over the first, and is then trimmed

with peacock feathers. Thirteen peacock feathers are required round the fan, a split feather to edge the inside of the pocket where it joins the palm leaf, and four or five to make a side ornament, to which a bow with ends is also added. The back of both the pockets should be made tidy by being plainly covered with material.

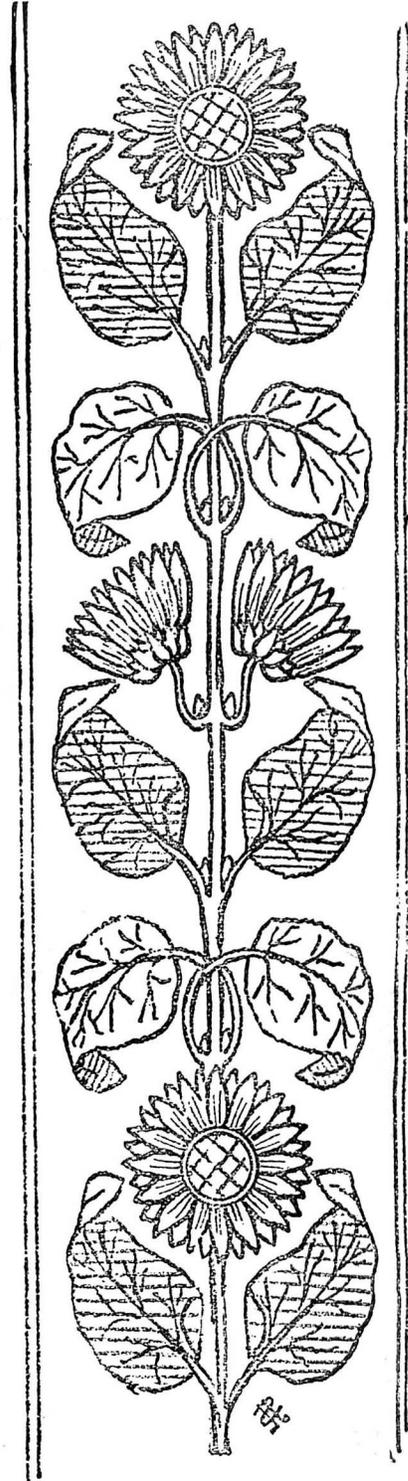


FIG. I.

## DESIGNING FOR EMBROIDERY.

By FRED MILLER.

IN my former article I confined my remarks mainly to giving some practical hints in connection with embroidery for curtains, and it is my purpose now to study the subject of embroidery from another point of view, viz., the principles of design as applied to work wrought with the needle. Designing for embroidery is as important to the worker as knowing all about the stitches and wools and silks, for good needlework is the result of practice; but designing, unless understood theoretically and studied as a distinct subject, is not to be so acquired. The need of good designs is a much more frequent want than a knowledge of how to do the work, as I constantly hear it said by skilled workers in wool and silk that their chief difficulty is how and where to get suitable designs. My answer to this need is, emphatically, make them for yourself. "But I can't." Then learn to do so, for, believe me, your work will never be as interesting, nor even as good, until you are your own designer. The few hints I am about to give, and which have aided me in designing for needlework, may be not unwelcome to my readers. They are the result of my own experience, extending over some few years, and are of value in proportion as they are the

embodiment of my own practical acquaintance with the subject under consideration.

It is as well in all art crafts to see what has been done before our own time, and by various peoples in the special craft we are engaged in, in order that we may note their successes—and failures for that matter, as it must not be supposed that because a work is old or foreign it is necessarily good—and learn by them what to strive for and what to avoid. And in this craft of needlework we happen to have countless fine examples, which are very easily approached, produced in a country which has never been excelled for its embroidery; and that country is Japan. Japanese work has become too common for us duly to appreciate the marvellous skill of workmanship and knowledge of the principles of decorative art, which are to be seen even in the humblest production of that artistic country. And we shall note in Japanese work that they never seem to make any mistake about what they ought to do, and never falter or hesitate in carrying out what their unerring artistic instinct dictates. It is now acknowledged by designers that the Japanese, and in a lesser degree the Chinese, are the best masters of decorative design, as applied to textiles, pottery, painting,

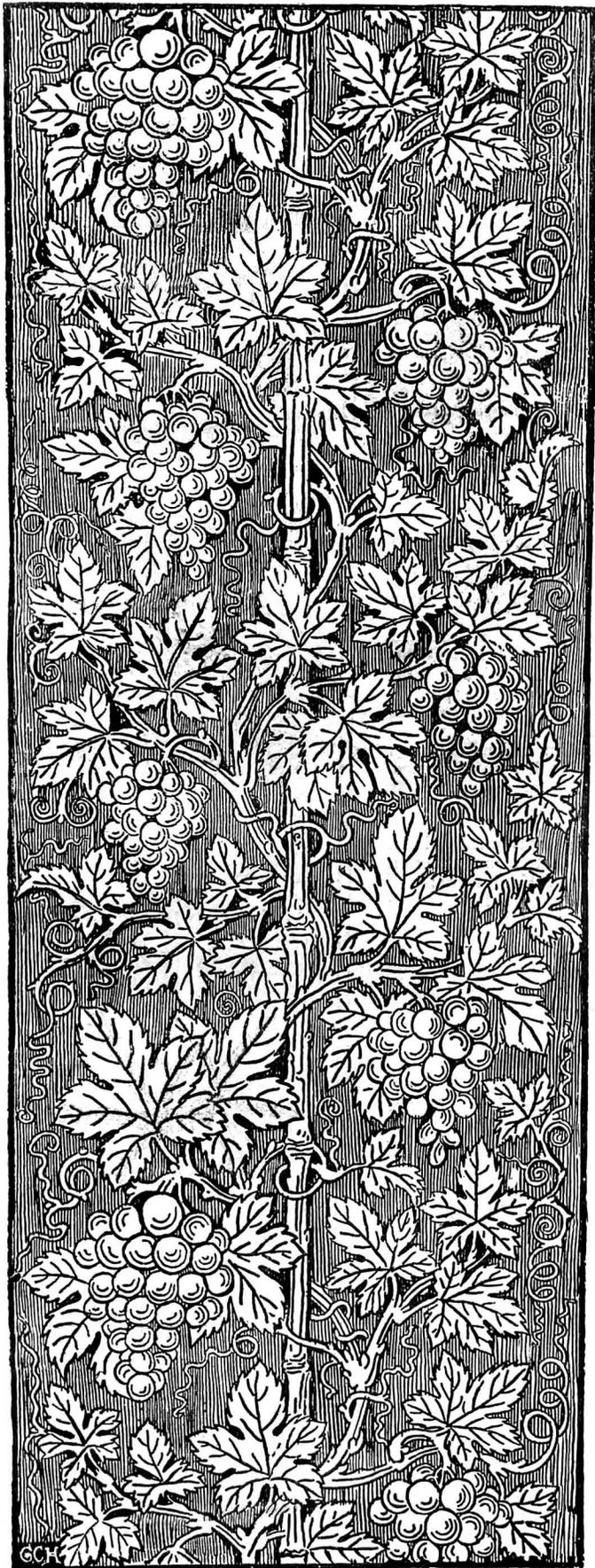


FIG. 2.



FIG. 4.

embroidery, and other kindred crafts. And the secret of this success is that they know all about the material for which they design, what can best be done, and what should never be attempted. And this knowledge of your material is at the root of all good designing. All the arts have their limitation, particularly the decorative arts; and to realise this limitation is the first step to success in decorative design. There are certain effects which can be wrought with the needle, which cannot as well be produced by any other means, and if we are to do the best with our material, we must direct our efforts to bringing out its particular and individual qualities, and not be continually striving to do what cannot well be done, such as trying to produce the effect of painting by the needle. More failure has resulted by this attempt to imitate one art by the means of another than any other cause, therefore let us be sure in our own work we are not striving after a vain shadow, a will-o'-the-wisp that leads nowhither. Whether it be pottery painting, glass painting, embroidery, wood-carving, or whatsoever craft we work in, be sure that you are doing the best for your craft, by bringing into as strong relief as possible the special qualities possessed by it, and what is more, not possessed in anything like the same degree by any other.

The effects which are suitable in a picture cannot be reproduced by the needle, though many have endeavoured to copy the effect of an oil painting in wools and silks. And the reason for this is pretty obvious. Colours are much more readily blended and spread over a surface than wools or silks, which have to be applied stitch by stitch with a needle; and, therefore, what is by no means difficult to obtain in colour, a great diversity of tint and subtle gradation is next to impossible in embroidery, be the worker never so skilful. Bearing

this in mind, therefore, the effects obtainable in colour are not to be thought of in needlework, and yet in all probability if a painter, who had never studied the craft, were asked to design for embroidery, he would draw something that would be spoilt in its translation by the needle, as he would think too much about his own art, and not realise the great difference between painting and needlework. His idea might be a good one, but it would have to be translated into the language of the art it is to be reproduced by, and to translate this requires a knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the language of the craft; each craft having its own special language.

I will even incur the charge of being prolix rather than not make myself understood in this matter, therefore I will just take an illustration. Many of my readers have doubtless visited the Royal School of Art Needlework at South Kensington. There are to be seen panels designed by Selwyn Pinage, representing figures from classic story, such as Juno and the peacock, executed in outline embroidery in just one colour. Now, the artist has drawn these figures expressly to be reproduced by the needle, and consequently they are a great success; but suppose he had painted figures such as he would put into a picture, and the needlewomen had endeavoured to reproduce the pictorial effect, I am thinking the result would have been anything but successful.

The *motifs* most frequently seen in embroidery are derived directly or indirectly from plant forms, and as the majority of my readers adopt a more or less floral style of design, I shall direct my concluding remarks mainly to this branch of the craft. First comes the question of the plant you select as your *motif*, and your decision should to a certain extent depend upon the nature of your work. If you were going to design a running border, you should try to choose a plant whose growth seems to suggest a prolongation of form. For this reason the honeysuckle would be more suitable than the daisy, as without even departing from nature you would have no difficulty in adapting the former flower to your purpose, whereas the latter would be at best disjointed and broken.

Or, again, if you wanted to fill the panels of a screen, it would seem better to employ such plants as the lily, iris, crysanthemum, foxglove and sunflower, than plants suggestive of an all-over treatment, such as the blackberry, jasmine, or rose; though I am aware that the Japanese often choose a plant like the rose, and make it run through all the panels of a screen; but then they are always careful to suggest this kind of growth, and frequently emphasise it by putting a few small plants at the bottom, or indications of water and water plants.

Having selected your plant, make, if possible, a few drawings of it in various positions, for nothing makes one understand a plant so thoroughly as drawing it. One often does not grasp the characteristics until one has drawn the plant again and again, and one cannot employ it to the best advantage until the plant's characteristics are thoroughly learnt and felt. I prefer to design from drawings made from nature, than even from nature itself, and for this reason—that one is apt to be bothered by the peculiarities and accidentals of the specimen before you, instead of being occupied only with the characteristics of the growth generally. In a blackberry, for instance, there is such infinite variety of small differences, that the main features are apt to be lost sight of; whereas by drawing various distinct pieces of bramble from different plants, you gain in time a knowledge of the principles of its growth; and in conventionalising it for the purposes of embroidery, we may say that you give a general rendering of the blackberry, suggestive of its natural growth in all main particulars, and yet made so simple that one at once sees and lays hold of its salient points.

Let your design fill out, or seem to fit, the space it occupies. In borders, don't clip off the leaves and flowers because they seem to come in the way, as if you exercise a little skill and ingenuity you ought to be able to make each part of the plant fit in as though it were made for that space, and that alone. The notion that the design is too large for the space, or the wrong shape, mars any work. You must adopt one of two methods in designing for almost any kind of work—either to entirely fill or cover the space with the design, or else to occupy the surface decorated without in any way filling it. The Japanese are very skilful in this latter style of design, often apparently filling a space with just a branch thrown across the panel. Great skill is required to produce this effect, as the work having to occupy a comparatively large surface, must be put on exactly in the right place; and it will be generally found in the best Japanese work that you cannot take away a single form or add any further detail without damaging the whole design. Their embroidery is almost always designed on this plan, as they are enabled to make a little work go a very long way, a great consideration at all times, and especially the case in needlework. As an example of the filled or covered work,



FIG. 3.



FIG. 5.

may be mentioned a good deal of India and Persian silk embroidery. Great richness is produced by this covered work, but the enormous time necessary to cover a large surface with needlework is in these days the chief obstacle to this class of design. The effect of an all-over pattern is much more pleasing in such articles as chair-covers, coverlids, hangings, and other textiles which are intended to hang in folds, and where part of the pattern is consequently frequently hidden. Here you must exercise your skill, and endeavour to produce the effect of a covered design, without really covering the surface. You will find that outline embroidery can be introduced with good results among filled-in work. For instance, where one leaf comes at the back of another, you can get much more relief by just outlining the back leaf and wholly covering the front leaf, than filling both in with stitches.

In designing from plant forms it will be necessary to materially simplify the plant for the purposes of the needle. The plant naturally has perhaps a confused growth of leaves all in one place, and may be bare in another. This is probably the result of accident, the pressure of some other plant, loss of light or sun, or other cause; but whether caused by accident or not, you must adapt the natural form to the exigencies of your work; for if you attempted to produce the exact effect of the natural plant you would simply achieve a meaningless jumble. It is not departing from nature to simplify her—indeed, it shows much more appreciation and love of nature to evince in your work that you have mastered the peculiarities of growth and

characteristics of the plant you choose for your *motif*, than to attempt to copy some isolated bit of plant form thrown on without thought, and reproduced without discrimination. What you ought to carefully avoid is introducing wrong growths into your work—putting, say, five petals to a lily when you ought to know that it always has six; or notching the edges of the leaves when they ought to be smooth. There is nothing gained by such departures from nature; they only show carelessness or indifference.

The further you simplify nature the more ornamental your work becomes, and some of the cleverest designs are those which suggest nature without reproducing any particular plant form. The Greek acanthus and honeysuckle patterns are instances of where nature has been shorn of all its individualities, and only its most rudimentary points emphasised. The ornamental treatment of plants might almost be said to be the rendering of the most simple structural divisions—the skeleton, so to speak; and even the source from whence the design is drawn may be hidden, and only the two simplest facts about flowering plants—its flower and its leaf—insisted upon. The more you eliminate the distinguishing characteristics of plants, the nearer you approach pure ornament, until at last you merely have left the geometric basis upon which they are built.

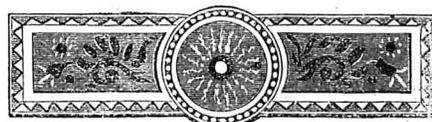
In Fig. 1 the two barest facts relating to the sunflower only are insisted upon—the flower and growth of leaf. Such a design would naturally suggest either outline embroidery or appliqué, for to fill in the whole of the leaves and flowers with stitches would be a work of immense labour, and would not improve the effect of the pattern.

In Fig. 2 we have a much fuller rendering of nature, many more of the characteristics of the plant being introduced, and yet a certain formality of growth and regular disposition of masses gives the design a certain special character, makes one feel, in fact, that it is a design, and not merely a sprig of vine thrown on anyhow. Further, it fills its space exactly, showing that it was drawn to cover the place it is meant to occupy, and would not do as well for any other purpose.

Fig. 3 is a much more elaborate rendering of nature, a great deal of detail being insisted upon. The poppy is a most decorative plant, its leaves being especially beautiful, and hence a great deal of attention has been bestowed on them. The design is intended as a repeating border, and the artist has not thought fit to form it on a geometric plan, so has just put each flower on separately. Many might object to this want of continuity, and would prefer to see a much more ornamental rendering of the plant than this, only insisting on the peculiarities of the flower and leaf, but making the growth arbitrary; that is, follow some set plan, such as a wavy line or scroll. Here, again, the design would be more effective in outline embroidery, or even in appliqué than in filled-in work.

Fig. 4 is perhaps too literally a transcript from nature to be termed a design, the only departure taken being to arrange the flowers in twos, and slight modifications of this kind. My readers might practise themselves in eliminating the accidents of growth, such as the excessive twisting of the petals, and making the whole thing simpler. Those who wish to exercise their skill with their needle might reproduce Fig. 4, much as it is, for many things are tolerable as a *tour de force* which would not be legitimate in any other way.

In Fig. 5 we have a combination of ornament with a more natural growth. The basis is ornamental, the more naturalesque portion of the design being supported, as it were, by a scroll, which was appliquéd while the rest was worked. A large number of designs are wrought on this plan by having an arbitrary foundation, upon or around which is worked the more natural forms. Much of the Renaissance work has a geometric or ornamental basis, and in a very large number of designs the skeleton of the work is of an ornamental character. Indeed, it is absolutely necessary to start with some structural lines where the design has to be repeated a number of times, as in borders; repeating designs requiring to be of an ornamental rather than of a natural character. It is no mere figure of speech to speak of the structural lines as being the skeleton, for just as in the human form the muscles and flesh are built up on the bones, so the details of the design are added to and built up around these main lines. As an instance, the structural lines in Fig. 2 are—1st, the main stem in centre; and 2nd, the stem which twines around the main stem—all the rest of the work built upon this skeleton.



# HOUSEHOLD DECORATION.

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CONDUCTED BY LIDA AND M. J. CLARKSON.

## INEXPENSIVE CONTRIVANCES FOR HOME FURNISHINGS.—DECORATIVE HINTS, ETC.

THERE are few of our readers, doubtless, who do not at times tire of their regular routine of work, and whose fingers do not tingle with a desire to get at some home-made knick-knacks which do not demand too elaborate work, nor too great an expenditure of time or money. To such our columns now offer many tempting possibilities, as we are constantly encouraged to believe by our host of correspondents, nor do we imagine that idleness or *ennui* will find any place in our busy household. Suggestions for work and decoration are forthcoming each month, and hereafter we propose to answer some of our inquirers more at length through this department, where queries are of interest to the general reader.

"Ruthie" wants to know now she can make a plain old-fashioned room look cosy and modern with her own hands, and at not too great an outlay. First of all, she has an old mirror, a good plate glass, but the frame is shabby, and the veneering chipped off in places. This, she wishes to hang horizontally over her mantel, but it is hardly long enough to look well, and besides there is the frame. Now all this is easily remedied, as the frame can be covered with a pretty linerusta border, setting in at each corner a square medallion of the same, the whole to be ebonized and picked out in gilt. The mirror is now a handsome ornament, and can be placed over the mantel, but not in the middle; hang instead so that the space will all come at one side. Up this vacant place next arrange a set of pretty wall brackets. These can be made at home, or if "Ruthie" can afford it, she will do well to purchase a set of Japanese shelves or brackets, in ebony and gilt, or gold lacquer. Filled with pretty ornaments, they will make a most attractive addition to the mantel. Now at the other side over the glass drape a pretty Madras or India silk scarf. This, if wide enough, can be suspended from

a slender brass rod above the mirror if preferred, looping back at the side opposite the brackets. The mantel should be draped with a harmonizing color. A pair of satin, or plush covered bellows makes a pretty ornament to hang at the side of mantel. This can be painted or embroidered, and finished with a full rich bow of ribbon. A palm-leaf fan, handle uppermost, covered with satin, and having a bag sewn on to hold a dust brush or broom, makes a pretty companion to the bellows. The bag may be of figured India silk, lined with cambric or silesia, sewn on full to the edge of the fan, and left open at the top just below the handle. An elastic is



SUGGESTION FOR A SCREEN.

run in with a frill or ruche to hide it. Look up some pretty receptacles for growing ferns or foliage plants; old jars, little oyster

kegs, even small butter firkins and pails have been converted into pretty articles for use as well as ornament.

Paint a color that will harmonize with the furnishings of the room, and as "Ruthie" is handy with the brush, she can decorate with bright designs, such as poppies, yellow daisies and golden rod, wild asters and carrot, sweet briar or single Scotch roses. These will help to fill odd corners and bare places.

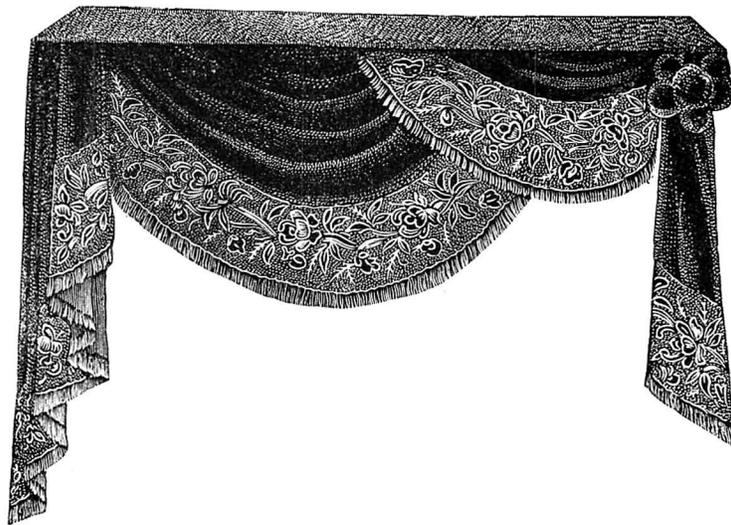
Another pretty fancy is to fit a handsome wall-pocket, with a tin box to hold an ivy, which will grow in dark corners, and can be trained over pictures and door mouldings with very pretty effect. We once had one with several branches, trained around three

Smaller easels are made of rough sticks, rustic fashion, then gilded or bronzed.

A screen always contributes much towards the attractiveness of a room, besides breaking the monotony of the wall paper or set furniture. Suitable suggestions have been given in our columns of late, and we show another design for an inexpensive one here, which is simply mounted with curtain holland, and decorated with a moonlight scene, either in monochrome, or subdued gray tints. For this procure the gray-green holland, which gives a tone of itself for the ground or local tint. The frame in this instance is a gilded bamboo, but a less expensive one can be made at home by clever hands. The moonlight scene can be painted from directions given in February number of *Brush Studies*.

We give also a suggestion for a pretty mantel drape, where the plain straight valance is not desired. The material is plush, with a band of a contrasting shade, painted or embroidered, as shown in illustration, and edged with a narrow silk twist fringe. A rosette of the plush is added at one side, while the other is draped in box and side pleats. The arrangement is simple, and unlike the stiffness of the more formal Vandyked lambrequin. The top of mantel

and border stripe may be of the same shade of plush, while the drape itself is another color, or a darker shade of the same color.



DRAPÉ FOR MANTEL OR BRACKET SHELF.

three sides of a room, making a charming wall decoration.

We suggest this to "Ruthie," especially as her wall paper is a dull and undesirable pattern, and she cannot renew it at present. If she does not mind driving tacks in the wall, she can train it very artistically, using the double matting tacks, being careful to give the branches growing room.

An ordinary pine easel can be transformed into a handsome holder for a picture or a large portfolio, by enamel, bronze, or lin-crusta. Sometimes the common easels are covered neatly with plush, making very handsome pieces of furniture at a trifling cost, as the amount of material required is small, and an easel when neatly covered in this way, is rich enough to grace any room.

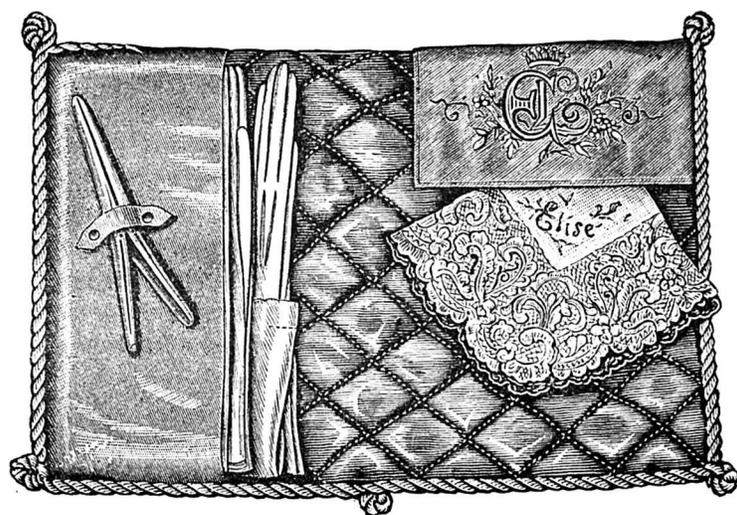
#### Decorative Hints.

TERRA cotta panels are very pretty framed in plush, using a rich terra cotta shade, deeper than the panels. The frames for these panels can be made of wood, about four inches deep, and the panels put in at the back to give the necessary depth or sunken look. The whole is suspended to the wall either by hooks, or by a bow of broad, soft ribbon of a harmonizing color. These panels are also handsome hung over a mantel, or at the sides over flat projections. Any carpenter, or person familiar with the use of tools, can frame the panels.

It is a very pretty fancy to cover the ordinary pottery flower jars with moss, secured with a string tied tightly around the flower pot in several places. The moss will last a long time and gives a window a very pretty, bright appearance. One of our readers sent us recently some specimens of moss which would be very beautiful for this purpose, and much better than the imitation article sold at the florists.

TAMBOURINES are mostly painted in oils as the easiest method, but, if plenty of body color is used, there is no reason why water-colors are not suitable to the parchment. It is not absolutely necessary to decorate the woodwork, but it is an improvement to paint

appears to be lowered in price, for the time, to add to its universal popularity and ready sale. Certainly the aprons of it are dainty and pretty; the sashes for both small and grown-up girls, dressy and becoming; the draperies for pianos and valances, tablecloths, cushions, cosies, and, lastly, the whole costumes of it, are both artistic and graceful, so that pongee silk is not to be looked upon slightly, though it may not please the taste of those who prefer richer materials, after the style of "silks that stand of themselves." [This silk can be had of J. F. INGALLS' Supply Department, of this Magazine.]



SACHET FOR GLOVES AND HANDKERCHIEFS.

round with a wreath of flowers or distinct bouquets, with birds or butterflies. The tambourines are used to hold letters ready for post, or any cards or notes; they are hung against the wall for ornamentation. Now the latest thing is to fill them in with a silk bag and use them for a work bag; cords, tassels and ribbons are tied to the surrounding holes to make them prettier. Occasionally a network of ribbons is made to meet together in the center.

FRENCH FANCIES.—One of the materials of the day appears to be pongee silk. Everybody almost seems to be buying it for purposes of all kinds, decorative and personal, and pongee silk, though up in the world,

A SOMEWHAT novel way to trim a table scarf is to put three-cornered pieces of silk or satin on each end. Have these pieces half a yard deep at the longest side, in the corner embroider a spray of flowers; where the satin or silk ends joins the center part of the scarf, put a row of fancy stitches. A dark crimson felt scarf with one end light blue, the other crimson shaded to brown, is very handsome.

BE sure and read the page that gives the Special Wholesale Price List of Fancy Work Materials.

#### Sachet for Gloves and Handkerchiefs.

A VERY pretty novelty in the shape of a sachet for gloves and handkerchiefs, appeared lately in the *London Queen*, which we think will please lovers of dainty fancy work. It is thus described:

The outer covering is of rose-colored satin, on which an appropriate ornament has been painted. Blue satin forms the lining, which is quilted over a thin layer of scented cotton wool. The pocket for the gloves is made of cream satin, with a strap for the glove stretcher on top. The same satin is used for the handkerchief pocket, on which a monogram has been embroidered. Front and back of sachet, thus prepared, are joined and edged with a red silk cord.



HENRI THIRD EMBROIDERY. FOR CHAIR SEAT, SCREEN, &C

## PRETTY YET INEXPENSIVE FURNITURE.

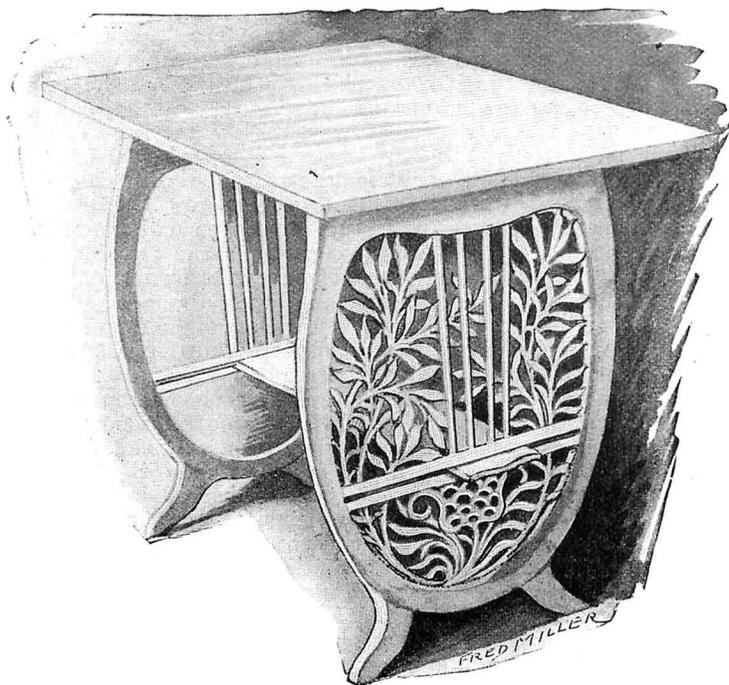


TABLE WITH FRETWORK FILLING TO ENDS.

THE three sketches accompanying these notes were all suggested by articles I saw in 1900 at the Paris exhibition. Great use was made of fretwork, and though many people, at the mention of pierced wood, think of those vapid photo frames and other puerile nicknacks that people who do fretwork seem pleased to cut out, fretwork can in itself be most effective, and when rightly used in the decoration of furniture can give it an elegant and original appearance.

Take the table. The two ends can be cut out of one piece if the table top is not more than thirty inches wide, as the American bass-wood can be obtained two feet wide. Of course it is easy to get wood any width by having it jointed, and it would probably be better to use wood made of pieces about a foot or so wide jointed with glue than choose a very wide plank. A carpenter or joiner would get these done for you, as a glued joint must be accurately made to be strong. The wood, too, must be nicely planed and glass-papered to give it a good surface.

The fretwork design should be got out on paper, full size, and then transferred to the wood, and as both ends should be identical, the same design will only have to be transferred twice.

The fret-saws must be fitted in a frame, but the saw itself must be capable of being taken out of the frame, as the end has to be passed through the holes bored in each space which has to be cut out. The top itself should certainly be made of jointed wood, and to prevent it warping or twisting, the ends should be glued to the top and also screwed through from underneath and further strengthened with blocks glued into the angles. The shelf running along underneath, and made to pass through the supports, will materially strengthen the work, as it will take off the strain and prevent the ends getting out of the perpendicular if it be glued in position.

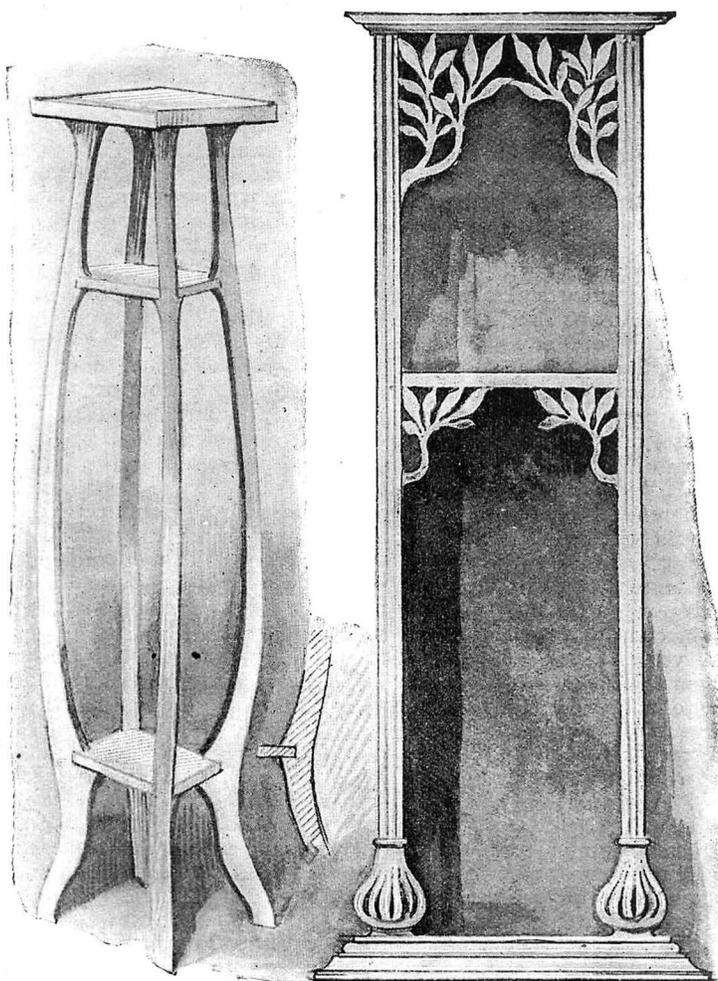
White furniture is elegant in appearance, and

unless good wood be used, such as oak or walnut, when it can be polished, is better painted. New wood should have three coats of colour and can be finished with a coat of enamel. The colour must be put on thinly and evenly, for it makes a poor surface if an attempt be made to get an effect by putting the colour on thickly and so dispensing with one or more coats. Each coat should be allowed to dry hard, and it is advisable to rub it over with some fine glass-paper to take down any roughnesses before putting on the next coat. A wide flat hog-hair brush should be used unless you can borrow or hire a good house painter's brush. Unless you use a good brush, your paint will look smeary and rough.

The vase or lamp-stand is composed of shaped uprights supporting shelves. Here, again, the four uprights should be exactly alike, so in drawing one full size, all four can be marked out from the one design.

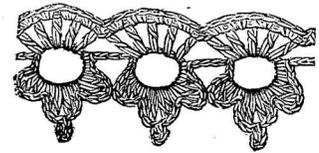
The pedestal is simple in construction, and the fret-cut brackets supporting the shelves just relieve the plainness and give a certain character to the article. The bulbous-like terminals of the two uprights should be turned. One is enough, as, if cut in half, one can be glued on each side.

In the table design, I have left one end simple, showing how it might be treated if the fretwork is thought to be too difficult.



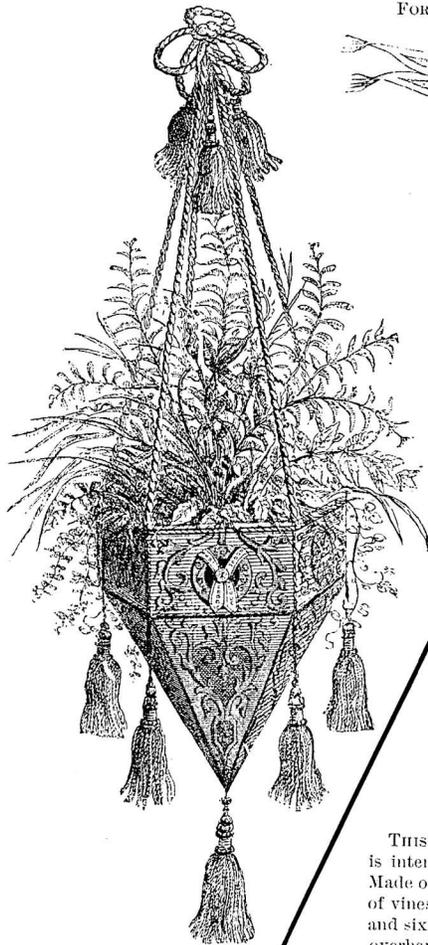
TWO PEDESTALS. (Suggested by *L'Art Nouveau*.)

FORGET-ME-NOT design for corner of pocket-handkerchief.



Crochet Edging.

1st row: 15 chain, close into circle, with slip stitch in 4th stitch, then in the circle 2 double, 1 vandyke of 2 chain, 2 treble, 2 chain, 1 double; then 4 chain, 2 treble drawn up together, 1 purl of 5 chain, and 1 treble in first stitch, 2 treble drawn up together, 2 chain, 1 double, then 1 vandyke as before, 1 double; repeat from \*, joining as required. 2d row: 5 long treble, with one chain between each in the free stitches of the next circle. 3d row: 2 double in wing chain stitch; repeat.

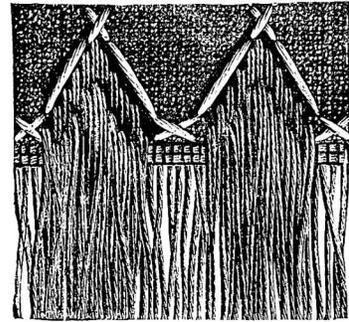


HANGING FLOWER BASKET.

### Hanging Flower Basket.

THIS hanging basket is cut hexagon shape, and is intended to hold artificial flowers or grasses. Made of silver perforated paper, with fancy figures of vines, etc., pasted on. Cut six pieces of No. 1, and six of No. 2, bind each piece with ribbon, then overhand them together, to form the design. Put a wire round the top, and bend at the proper angles. This design is also effectively made of cloth, with *appliqués*. The tassels and cord are worsted to match the colors on the basket. Fill the basket with moss first, and then stick the flowers or grasses in it, and by that means all are held in place.

HANGING BASKET NO. 2.



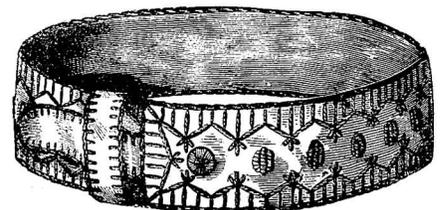
### Pattern of Fringe.

THIS design for fringe is intended for canvas tidies, etc. Take the worsted double, and start your work from the under side. The fringe is worked in two shades of worsted and the heading of canary-colored silk floss.

In making the tidy or mat, no other work is necessary on the canvas, unless in the center is embroidered monogram.

### New Book-Markers.

SOME novel book-markers are made with inch wide ribbon, fringed, a small colored paper figure, such as are seen on crackers, being pasted on to them above the fringe.



### Fancy Belt.

THIS belt is made of white velvet, worked with black floss. The pattern through the center is of jet beads. String seven beads and form a loop of it, and on each side string five beads, which gives it the form of a button. Line the belt with wiggins, and be careful to hold it a trifle tighter at the bottom, as it will fit the waist better.

### Little Gifts.

IN the way of little gifts, there are pen-wipers made of rounds of wash-leather, the outside a circle of dark morocco, with a floral spray, painted with gold or mixed colors. A parasol pen-wiper is also a pretty shape. It is made of bright-colored silk, attached to an ivory handle, and filled inside with cloth.

### Baby Balls.

OVER the baby cots in the Nursery and Infant Asylum in New York are canopies of coarse mosquito netting which protect from the flies, and from the center of which hang large, soft balls made of colored wool, in scarlet or blue, with which a child will lay and amuse itself for hours.

### Work Bag.

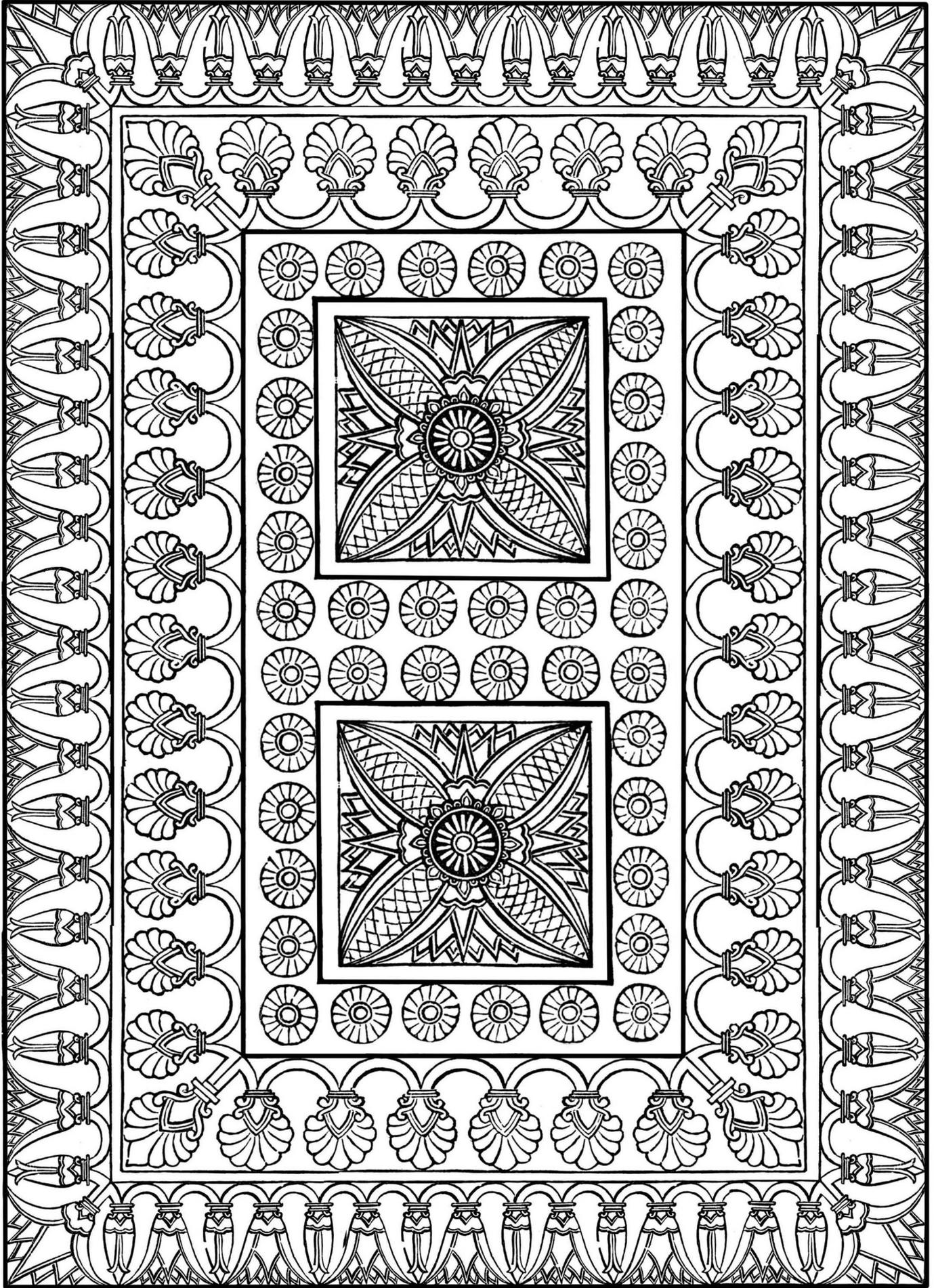
MAKE a bag of blue silk, cover the lower part with fancy straw braid, embroidered with blue chenille in feather and fancy stitch. Round the straw put a full ruffling of satin ribbon. On each side of the bag, make a rosette of silk cord and chenille; draw the bag up at the top with a thick cord and tassels.

### Hat Tray.

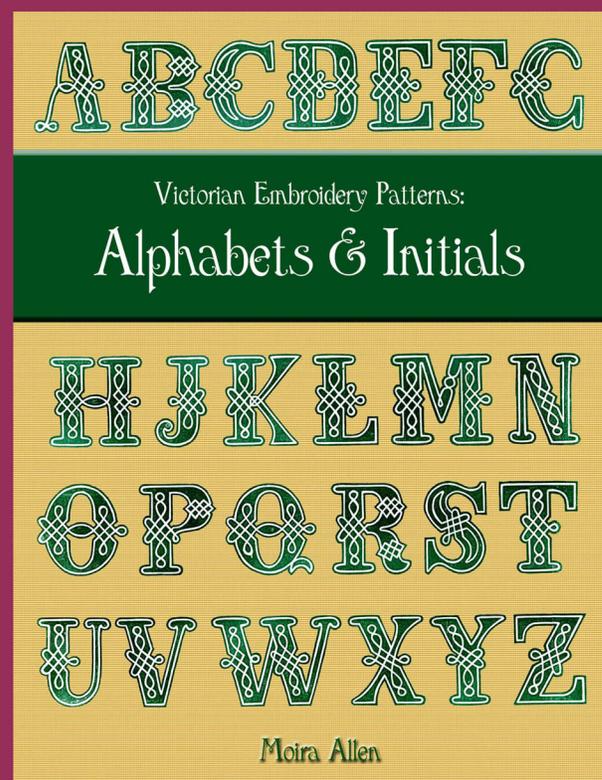
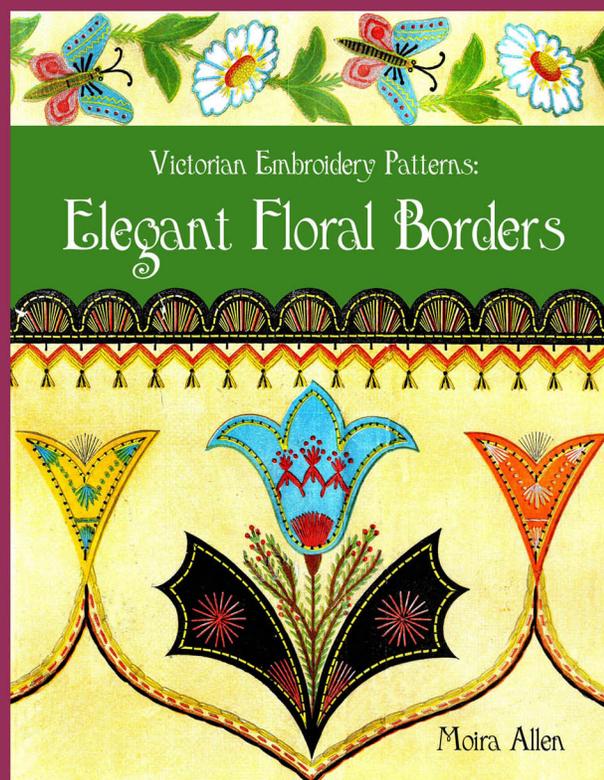
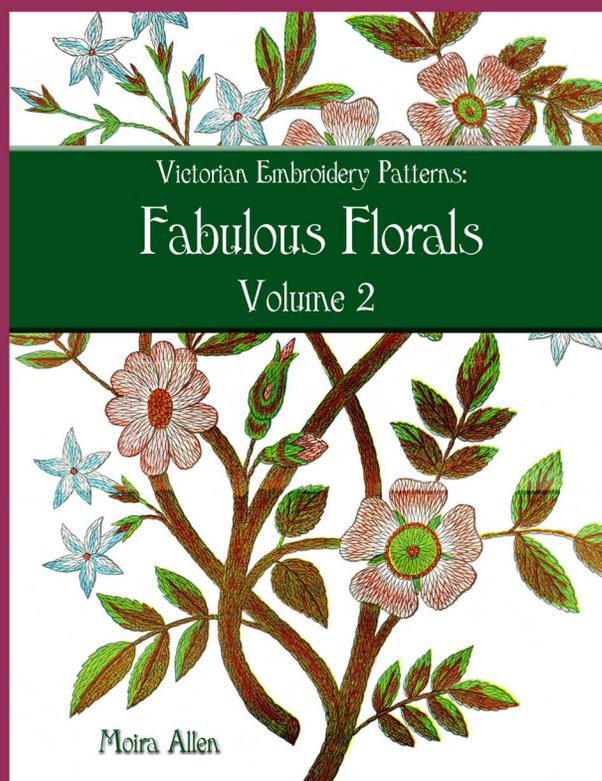
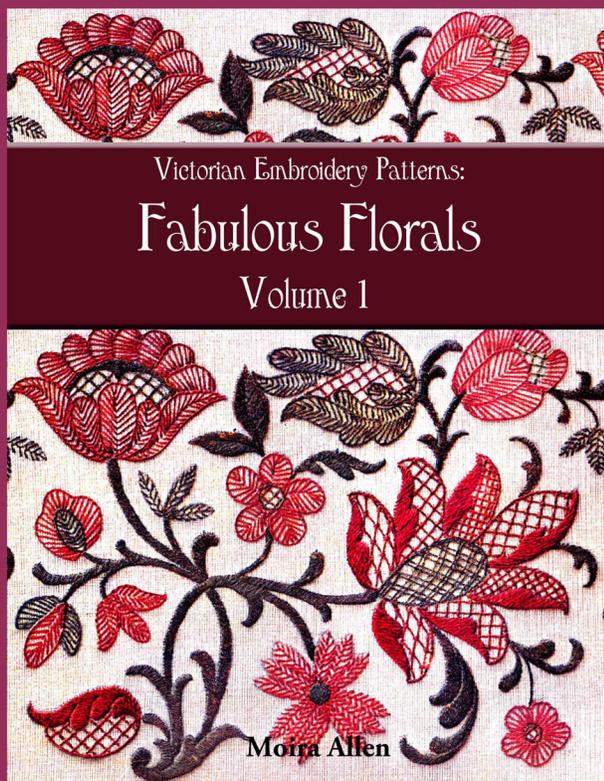
TAKE a tray of carved stained wood, make an embroidered border worked on canvas with yellow silk floss in cross-stitch; fasten the border to tray with brass-headed nails. This is very convenient for other purposes and can be varied according to fancy.

HANGING BASKET NO. 1.

Pattern based on Assyrian floor, from *A Victorian Floral Fantasy*, by Moira Allen



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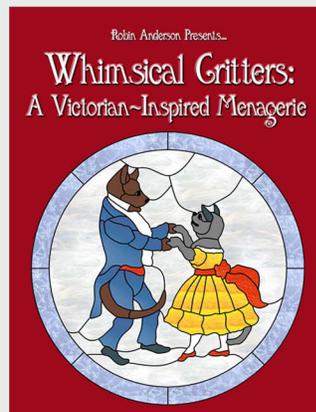
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