Victorian Creative

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

Volume I #21 - July 15, 2022

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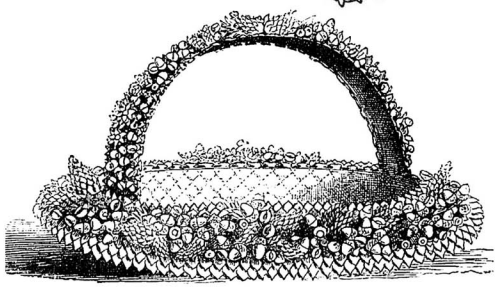

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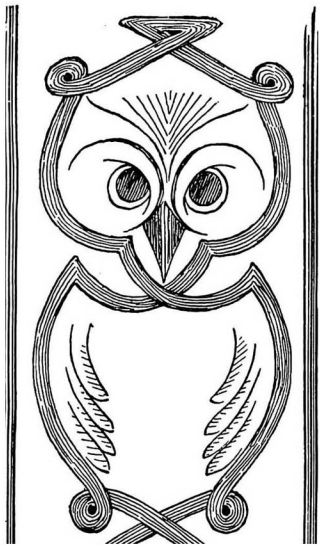
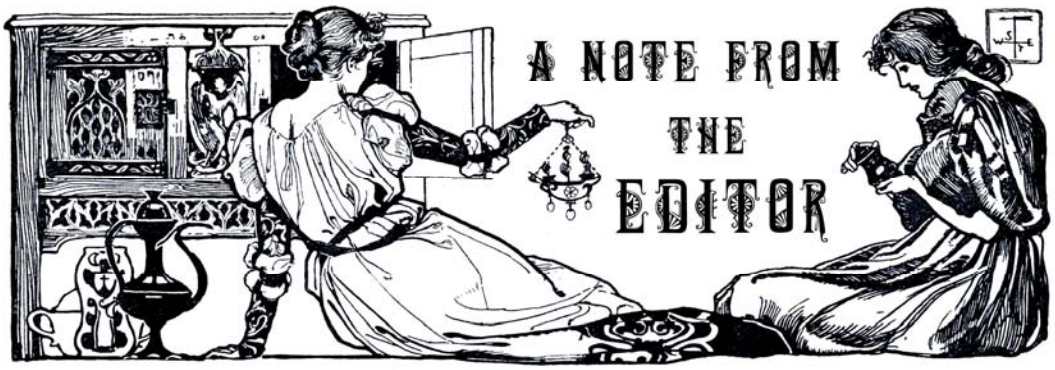


ABOUT OUR COVER: This charming scene comes from a 1902 issue of *Chatterbox*. This print is available in our collection of over 200 full edited art prints from the *Chatterbox*, one of the best-known Victorian magazines for children. For details visit **https://www.victorianvoices.net/clipart/prints/Chatterbox.shtml**



A WORD ABOUT UGLINESS

My sister has never been able to understand my interest in the Victorian period. She's convinced that I have an idealized, glamorized view of an era that was just chock full of ugliness and horrors. How can I possibly say or think anything *nice* about such a dreadful period of history?

She's right, of course. (Not about the idealized view, but about all that other stuff.) Yes, the Victorian era *was* chock full of ugliness and horror. It was a dreadful period of history. It was simply steeped in awfulness. Disease was rampant—in the 19th century, tuberculosis caused 25% of deaths in Western Europe. Cities were cesspools of mud and filth. Poverty levels were appalling. Bigotry wasn't even considered bigotry; it was considered normal. The Victorian world probably isn't a place any of us would really care to visit, let alone live in.

So. End of magazine. Website comes down tomorrow. What was I thinking? Oh, wait…

Here's the question: at what point do we say "this era should be condemned for all the awful things that went on within it?" The answer to that question involves few more, slightly more complex questions. First—did the awfulness *originate* with that era or was it inherited? I know of no era in history that hasn't inherited a whopping mess from the previous generation(s). Second, did anyone in that era try to make things better? (Keep in mind that such efforts can be well-intentioned but backfire—but that doesn't mean people didn't *try*.) Third, have we managed to fix all those awful things today? Can we sit smugly and say, "Hey, we've solved all that; why didn't *you?"*

First off, I'd eliminate disease as a criteria for condemnation. In the case of TB, a vaccine wouldn't be widely available until 1921, and though treatments now exist, TB *still* makes return appearances. I don't know if Victorians should have observed a mask mandate, but they aren't entirely to blame for having troubles with a disease that had already been around for hundreds of years. (They may be *partly* to blame, because poverty and crowding in the cities must have helped spread the infection.) Anyway, I'd rather not point fingers at the Victorians over disease control, because I shudder to think what will be said about us in another 100 years!

Poverty is hardly a Victorian invention, and it's hardly one that we've solved today. Bigotry—hmm. It would be nice to think that no one is complaining about *that* today, but I don't think we have the Victorians beat on that issue yet. Social issues? The Victorians inherited a lovely mess of those, and created quite a few more—but they were the first to institute a vast range of social improvements, including laws about working children, child abuse, animal care, education and many, many others. It was also the first era of structured charitable giving, in which the wealthy began to use their vast sums of money to address various social issues. (Think Bill Gates with a tiara.)

The point is (because I try to keep these little commentaries short) that ugliness is a part of *every* era of human history, including our own. It is inescapable. Humans seem to have an amazing knack for creating, tolerating, or just not doing much about ugliness.

But humans *also* have an amazing capacity to create beauty, to change things for the better, to improve. And quite often, it is the beautiful things that humans create that remain as a legacy when all the ugliness has faded into the past. It's easy to say that ugliness, poverty, bigotry, disease and more will always be with us. But it is the beauty that we create that makes the world better *in spite of* those things—and that gives each era a legacy that is worth celebrating. Including, I hope, our own!

—Moira Allen
editors@victorianvoices.net

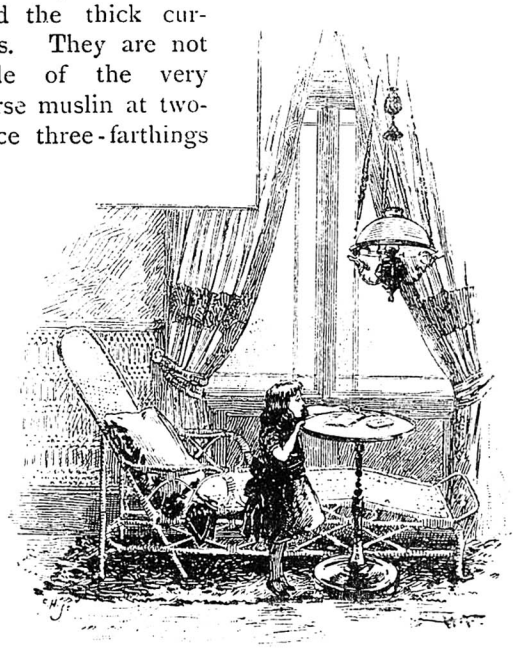
OUR NEW HOUSE AND ITS PLENISHINGS.

RATTAN CHAIR, WORK-BAG, POUFFÉ.

AMONG all the rooms in this house, the drawing-room is my favourite. It suits me; I generally feel happy in it. It is furnished in no particular style, and there is nothing very valuable in it, but I cannot help knowing that it is a very pretty room. I can afford to praise it, because in so doing I am not commending my own taste. Two years ago I happened to visit the Welcome Club at the American Exhibition. All the rooms pleased me, but the smoking-room particularly took my fancy. It was a long, light room, beautifully furnished in walnut-wood, with cushions and covers of dark leather, and hangings of Oriental muslin. As soon as I saw the paper on the walls, I felt I must have it. I should never have chosen one like it. I should not have dared to, for I do not understand enough about wall-papers to know how very well it would look when hung; but seeing it hung, I felt I could not live without it! And if only the "Ruling Powers" would tell me where they ordered it, I would have it forthwith. All the countless strangers who asked favours of the "Ruling Powers" at the American Exhibition know something of the courtesy and kindness with which they were granted.

It was not long before I had my coveted paper, and, like a child, was "made happy for ever after." It is a magic paper indeed for me: gifted with the power of conjuring up delightful reminiscences. But as no stranger can enter into those pleasures, I will try to describe it in prosaic terms. Its colour is what is called cinnamon-brown, and it is easier to say what cinnamon-brown is not than what it is. For one thing, it is not a brown at all. The ground is a pale buff, and the pattern running over it is made with red and yellow mixed together, more of the yellow than the red being used in the mixture. At the top of the paper runs a narrow border of the same colours, with an outer line of brown, and above this the high cornice is divided into panels, just as it was at the club, and is surmounted with more narrow brown lines. I had to think very seriously about what colours would do to go with this paper. I covered the floor with plain China matting, very finely woven and of a lovely buff shade, and in the centre had a soft Axminster carpet in tints of yellow and dull red; it is very lovely, and cost five and elevenpence a yard, so it ought to last for a long time; the border with which it was made up cost a shilling less than the carpet.

There are two windows in this room, and their curtains were a present to me, as was also that dear little spherical pouffé, which looks like a big round ball on castors. It is covered with the same material that the curtains are made of, Capucine satin. Its appearance is that of very thick Roman satin, quite different from the ordinary satin, the "sheen" of which I very much dislike in upholstery. The design is called Honduras, and very beautiful it is. On a background of a deep strawberry shade is a straw-colour line about an inch and a half wide, on which are woven strawberry blossoms in colours of crushed strawberry, yellow, and brown; a narrower stripe is in a darker shade of strawberry than the background, with blue flowers sprinkled on it. It is a material which I think will last for ever. I could not have afforded to buy it, but it is quite within the means of wealthy people. I tied the curtains with bands composed of four lengths of ribbon plaited. The shades were strawberry, pale brown, pale blue, and straw-colour. Close to the window, fastened upon the woodwork above the highest pane, was a piece of copper wire, which corresponded with another piece at the bottom. From these were fastened, by means of tiny rings, pretty curtain-blinds of pale blue Indian muslin, made with tiny frills at the side where they meet. They are generally pulled back so as to allow about an inch to protrude beyond the thick curtains. They are not made of the very coarse muslin at twopence three-farthings



AN IDEAL CORNER.

the yard, with which the shops are now overrun, but of a much finer substance, which is sold by the piece of twelve yards for six and ninepence. Of course I used nothing like a piece for these little curtains, but the remainder came in very useful for other things. Draped over silk it is very soft for dresses. As for the furniture, it is nearly all new, as most of that used in the old drawing-room has gone to the school-room and nursery. Our greatest expense was the couch. We gave seven guineas for it, or, to speak more correctly, not quite so much, for we bought it only in its lining, wishing to cover it ourselves. It is very comfortable, conventional lilies upon a black ground, in colours of blue, crushed strawberry, olive-green, and pale brown. The couch and chair coverings were all made with "petticoats," deep flounces not quite touching the floor, but hiding the legs. Most of them were covered at home; they are not difficult to do if the pattern is first cut in paper, and tried on before being cut in the material. It is a great saving of money to do them in this way. For other chairs, I bought a plain wood rocking-chair with a rush seat for half-a-crown. Also for the same price two cane bed-room chairs, taking care to get them unpolished, and two church chairs at

A CORNER BOOK-CASE.

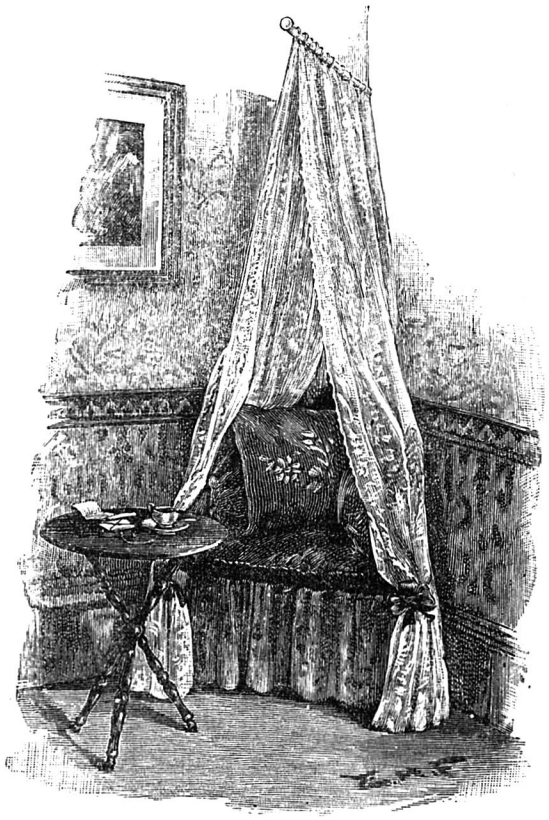
and I feel it a great luxury. I tried to have nearly all the chairs different; I bought a Thoresby settee and elbow-chair. They have rush seats, and are made of ebonised wood with pretty open-work backs: the seats are too pretty to cover. The settee cost thirty-eight shillings, and the chair thirteen and six.

My largest easy-chair is a very good size; it was made for me by a cabinet-maker from whom I have had several of the same sort. It has a nice high back and strong arms made of plain deal, enamelled in white. Without covering, it cost eighteen and ninepence, and covered with my own material it came to a guinea. I bought a smaller arm-chair, called the Eugénie, for one pound four. Some of the chairs were covered with a plain strawberry cretonne, but for most of the work I used a really beautiful cretonne, costing only a shilling a yard. Its design was perfect: a pattern of large two shillings each. These all retired to the painting-room for a time, and emerged looking rather different. The rocking-chair had been enamelled pale blue, and had a pretty cushion of crushed strawberry velveteen, while a little cushion of about eight inches in depth was fastened with ribbon bows across the back. The two cane chairs were stained with a good black staining; they required three coats to make them a really good colour. Their cushions were made of the cretonne. We cut the shape first in strong calico, which we stuffed with mill-puff and then covered with cretonne, making the covers to unbutton for washing. There are many ways of treating the little church chairs. This time we enamelled them in pale blue, but instead of making cushions, enamelled the rush seats a bright straw-colour. They looked very uncommon. Of course we had the little shelf for books

taken off the chairs before painting them. We had also a rattan cane chair with a high back, at eight and sixpence; and two low wicker chairs in white straw, at six shillings each. I had once painted a straw chair, and so I left these as they were! It is next to impossible to paint or stain wicker-work properly; it takes such a time to get the brush between all the straws. At the manufacturer's they are dipped into a great well of staining, and are completely covered; it is not possible to do this at a private house, it is therefore better to keep them in their original state, or to pay a little extra and have them done at the shop. We have a novel seat in one corner of the room: it is simply a corner seat made by a cabinet-maker of deal, but furnished with cushions and "petticoat" of light brown cretonne. Over it, driven exactly into the corner, is a brass pole, such as is sold for French beds, costing about ten and sixpence. From this fall pretty muslin curtains in blue and brown stripes; these are fastened by ribbon bows, which are passed through a small ring that is screwed into each end of the seat. The ribbon is tied very loosely, as an appearance of tight straining would spoil the whole effect. So much for our seats.

As for the tables, with the addition of an ebonised writing-table, we used the same that we had before, the description of which I gave then and copy now. In reference to a tea-table and corner cupboard, I said: "I traced upon the deal a conventional pattern of plums and blossom, then I stained all the background with oak staining, and painted the outline and shaded the pattern with sepia. When this was French polished the effect was of inlaid wood." The legs of the table ought to be stained with the dark staining, and all the outside of the corner cupboard should be dark. Another table was made of deal; the top and under shelf were covered with dark blue serge, while the legs were painted a lighter shade; pretty little tables for tea-cups are painted black, with the letter T scrawled over the top in white paint to represent the writing on a slate. We bought two common foot-stools made of carpet: these were covered in serge, upon which an outline pattern was worked with tapestry wool. There are two fire-places in the room; both mantel-pieces being of walnut-wood. Over one we fixed the dining-room over-mantel, for the other we made a suitable decoration: a piece of wood was cut just the length of the mantel, and about two yards wide, rings for hanging were fastened into the back, and it was covered with brown velvet just the shade of the mantel-piece; the velvet cover ought to be sewn on by means of strong thread at the back. I drove a nail into the centre upon which to hang a pretty old looking-glass with a cut-glass frame, below which was arranged a row of miniatures in ivory.

I also fastened on some very pretty silver sconces, which looked well with two old silver plaques. On the mantel-shelf was laid a piece of the same velvet, on which some cut-glass bottles and Venetian vases stood. These over-mantel-boards are soon made, and are very effective. Velvet or velveteen is better for this kind of use than plush, as it keeps more free from dust. We have a book-case of our own invention for our treasured volumes, without which no room is complete. We exactly copied the outside of a small

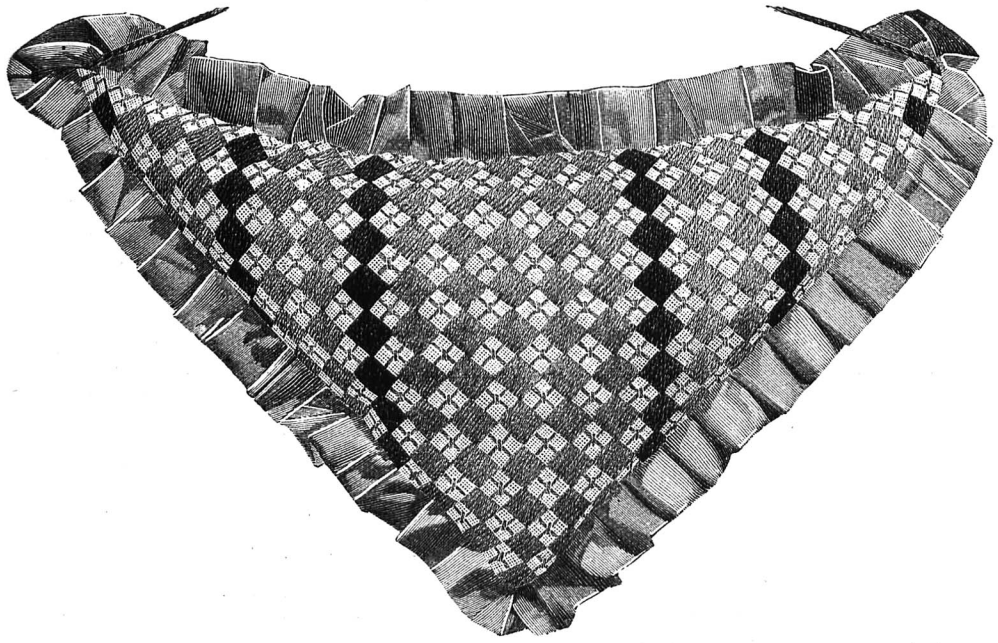


OUR NOVEL CORNER SEAT.

bed-room chest of drawers, which is almost a deep square; only instead of having the usual two corner drawers and three large ones, it was fitted with shelves two deep, three-quarters of the way down, the bottom part being left for big books to lie flat in. The shelves were about an inch back from the front, so that the books were kept free from dust. The top of the case made a nice place for a heavy lamp to stand. The wood was stained black. For three pounds fifteen we bought a pretty cabinet in ebonised wood, with four bevelled glasses, a little cupboard, and four shelves for china: it was exactly four feet wide, and quite large enough. The piano stood against the wall, and at one side of the fire-place stands my work-bag on its own four legs. It is very convenient, being just the height of a chair, and so much more tidy than a hanging bag. I made it out of one of the shilling camp-stools, the legs of which I first painted white; I then lined a piece of strawberry-colour plush with blue sateen, and made it into a bag without a bottom, and fastened it on to the seat of the camp-stool. I then turned it inside out and sewed a piece of the sateen over the ends to quite cover the seat; this formed the bag. Below the camp-stool seat I sewed a deep frill of white Valenciennes lace to hang down; the bag was tied with ribbon to match the velvet. These bags look pretty made of many other stuffs. Chintz pattern cretonne is a favourite and cheap material.

DUSTER WORK.

By JOSEPHA CRANE.



THE common check duster which can be procured anywhere, can by the exercise of a little taste and care be converted into many charming articles of household use.

If anybody is inclined to inquire why dusters should be used in preference to any other kind of linen or material, I would reply that it is simply because they can be had anywhere, which puts the work within the power of all, and secondly, because the correctness of the squares makes it possible to do a great many patterns and be certain at the same time that they are quite straight. To work a flower or spray on a plain ground is easy enough, but those who like doing squares and bars would find it somewhat difficult to get the lines quite straight. A third reason why duster work is to be recommended, is that it is inexpensive. The dusters cost only a few pence each, and though you can work in silks if you prefer it, cottons do quite as well.

Embroidery cottons, flax-thread and especially the soft D. M. C. *coton à repriser* all answer the purpose, and as these can be had in various shades of many colours very charming effects can be produced. Always get the best dusters. The cheaper kind are thin, and it is not worth while working upon them.

If you will examine the illustrations given here you will easily see how to work upon dusters, and it must be borne in mind that neatness is necessary, for simple as are the stitches employed, and easy as are the patterns, neither look well unless carefully executed. Fig. 1 is done upon a section of common red and blue check duster, the piece used being near the border, along which is a thick line which serves as a foundation for the bar of satin-stitching.

The colours used here are terra-cotta and claret, and the material is *coton à repriser*.

Above the bar of claret satin-stitch are vandykes of terra-cotta. As you will see by examining the illustration, half of each vandyke is done at a time.

Above the vandykes are alternate blocks of the two colours, a line of stem-stitch running down the centre dividing them off.

At the top are large blocks covering four small squares and worked diagonally. The two colours are employed, and then the diagonal bar from corner to corner is worked thus:—Take a long stitch across, doubling your cotton and not allowing it to be drawn too tightly, or, on the other hand to lie loosely, both being faults which make the work look bad.

Across the claret your thread should be terra-cotta and *vice versâ*. Then place two back stitches to secure the long thread. These can be in the same colour as in example, or in a contrasting colour. By way of variation you could put more back stitches.

Fig. 2 is done on a plain blue duster. The lower bar is done in satin-stitch over one row of checks. The small vandykes pointing downwards are worked as in Fig. 1, but they are smaller as the checks are smaller. The upper band is done in button-hole stitch worked closely together. The stitch should be worked thus:—Run a few stitches along the upper and lower line of the bar, as that gives strength and makes it more solid. Then work from left to right. Bring your needle and cotton up on the outside guiding line, pressing your cotton under the thumb of your left hand. Insert the needle in the upper line of the bar, and bring it up on the outside line and over the cotton held by the thumb of your left hand. Draw it up and continue, setting your stitches in closely together and all of perfectly equal height.

The colour used here is pale blue.

Red and yellow blocks worked diagonally over four checks is seen in Fig. 3. The cotton is the same *coton à repriser*, and a line of yellow stem-stitch runs down between the blocks one way so as to form lines.

Fig. 4 shows satin-stitch blocks of terra-cotta and claret in the same kind of cotton. The arrangement of the blocks is clearly seen in illustration.

In Fig. 5, red and yellow cotton is used. The stars on the lowest row are in yellow, the long red bars above crossed with yellow and secured with a single back stitch.

Fig. 6 is done in two shades of blue cotton.

Fig. 7 is worked in several stitches on a red and blue duster of a different pattern to those already described.

Stars, wheels, and herring-bone, stem-stitch and satin-stitch are all used.

Fig. 8 is a large block of eight squares covered with diagonal satin-stitch in green cotton. This is crossed with pale pink, and secured with a diagonal stitch where the lines cross. This stitch is often called Arabian, and is found in many Eastern embroideries.

In Fig. 9 a deep bar over two blocks of check is worked in green cotton—the same *coton à repriser* which has been used hitherto. This is crossed with *coton cannelé* in two shades of yellow.

The open-work pattern on the rest of the border is worked in the same yellows, simply little crosses in one shade secured by a back-stitch of the other.

Triangular head-rests are very much used now, and can be made very easily by part of a duster folded across diagonally.

The one seen in illustration is worked in lines of blocks of three shades of pink. The spaces between have pale green crosses going over the lines of the duster and secured by a single back-stitch to fasten them in the centre.

The back is lined with pink sateen, and a frill of the same goes all round, while the head-rest is suspended by a red cord. The stuffing is cotton wool.

As will be seen by what I have already described, all kinds of variations obtain in this work.

You can make cushion-covers in it, bed-spreads in sections joined together, work-bags, sachels and all kinds of things.

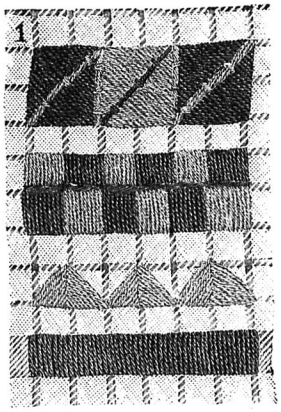
Appliqué is charming done on dusters as a foundation, and flannel binding or ribbon run on can make them very pretty.

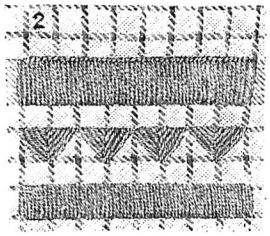
Although my readers will be able to get a great deal of variety with the stitches already named I must mention a few more, and will quote the best directions I have come across for executing them.

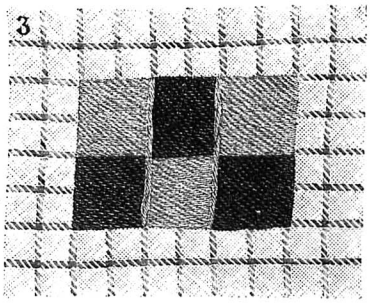
"Wheat-ear stitch. To work, be guided by three perpendicular lines of the duster, and take the centre line as a guide for the chain-stitch, and the outer lines to regulate the size of the spikes. Bring up the needle on the centre line, hold the cotton under the left-hand thumb, insert the needle nearly in the same place as the cotton emerges from, only a thread or two to the right, and bring it up on the same line, only a quarter of an inch lower down and over the cotton held by the thumb, draw through; this forms a chain-stitch. Insert the needle on the left-hand guiding-line at the same level as you commenced the chain-stitch, and bring it out on the lower part of the chain-stitch, draw through, insert the needle on the right-hand guiding-line at the same level, and bring it out again in the lower part of the chain-stitch; next work another chain-stitch followed by a spike-stitch, and continue."

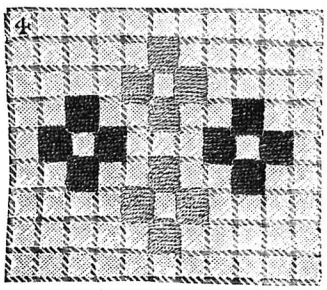
"Cable-plait stitch. Be guided by parallel lines and begin on the left-hand side to work from left to right; bring up the needle and cotton on the lower tracing-line, hold the cotton down under the left-hand thumb and pass the needle from right to left under the cotton so held, and draw up till the cotton still held under the thumb is brought to the size of a small loop; put the point of the needle under the small loop, raising the loop level with the top line, where insert the needle, bringing out the point straight below on the bottom line; release the loop from under the thumb and draw it round the top of the needle, and pass the cotton thence from left to right under the point of the needle and draw through; every stitch is formed in the same way, and the result produces a raised thick plait on the right side of the material, and a series of small perpendicular stitches on the wrong side. A little practice will render this stitch quite easy of accomplishment; but a small knot is formed in the cotton by the process of working it is almost impossible to undo when once the needle is drawn in position, and therefore great attention must be paid to the twisting of the cotton right round the needle, keeping the stitches the same even width all along the line."

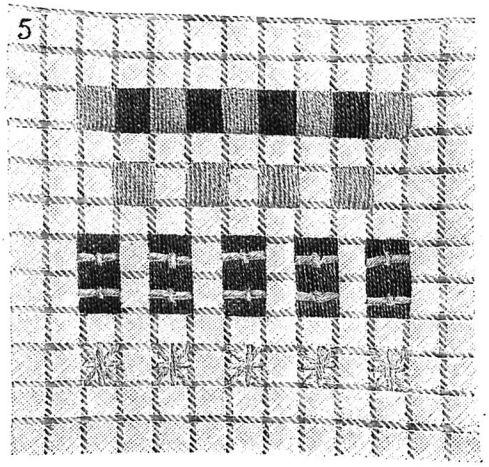
If my readers like to do the duster work in all kinds of colours, they will succeed in getting a very Oriental effect. Odds and ends can be used up very well here, and a cushion-cover done in silks not two checks alike would be novel and pretty.

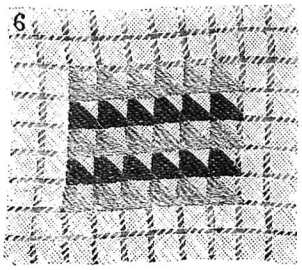


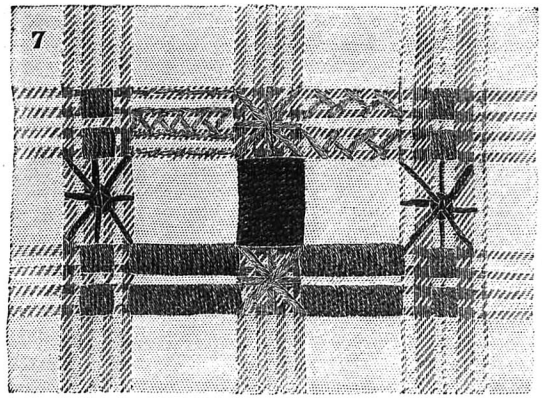


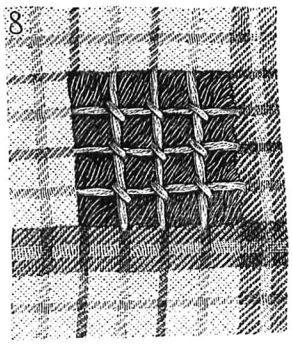


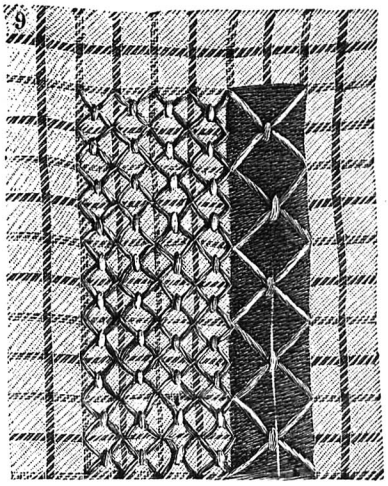












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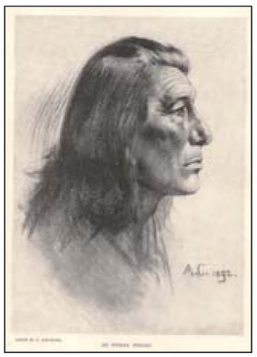
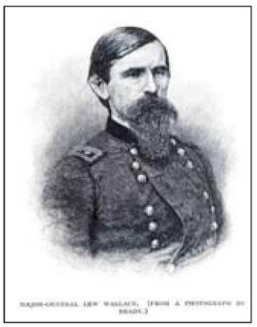
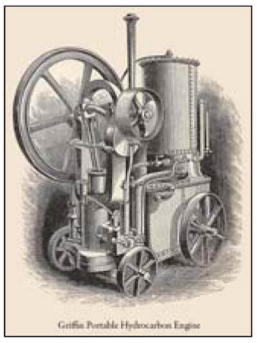


Native Americans

Eminient Victorians



The Civil War



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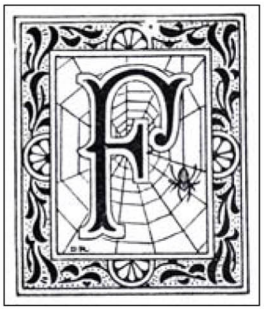

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THE ART OF ILLUMINATION (Continued).

COLORS are emblematical, and this subject should be duly considered by the illuminator. The artists of the Middle Ages always used them in accordance with their peculiar signification.

Red, blue and yellow, the primary colors, when united in ecclesiastical decoration, were emblems of the Trinity, red signifying Love, blue Truth and Constancy, and yellow or gold, Glory. White was typical of Light, and violet of Humility and Suffering. Blue the emblem of Love and Constancy, and when sprinkled with gold signified Heaven. This is not, strictly speaking, an ecclesiastical color, yet as symbolical of Truth and Heaven, is considered a beautiful significant ground for an illuminated text.

Green has been used as the emblem of Eternal Spring, Hope, Immortality and Conquest. Gold or yellow, the type of Glory or Victory, also symbolizes the Goodness of God, and should be used on texts only for the names of Deity.

It should be borne in mind that a dingy yellow is significant of Deceit or Hypocrisy, and should therefore be avoided.

Black, although symbolical of Grief or Misery, is not so when combined with colors. Purple signifies Royalty and Love, as well as Passion and Suffering. It is the color appropriate to martyrs, as well as to kings. Violet signifies Sorrow and Constancy.

As to floral emblems and forms these also have their signficance, as well as colors. The snowdrop and marigold are emblems of Purity and Truth, the violet and lily of Modesty, the pansy of Remembrance and Charity. The holly, ivy, laurel and mistletoe, are Christian emblems; wheat, barley, corn and grapes are harvest emblems, and symbols of Prosperity. The olive branch, of Peace and Harmony; the pomegranate, Immortality; the cardinal flower, Distinction; red clover, Industry; white daisy, Innocence; the elm and nasturtium, Patriotism; forget-me-not, True Love; golden rod, Encouragement; hepatica, Confidence; grape myrtle, Eloquence; laurel, Glory; wild magnolia, Perseverance; the oak, Hospitality. Oats and reeds symbolize Music — why, we cannot say, but as they do, it is an appropriate design for the illumination of a music portfolio. The orange blossom, Innocence and Chastity; the passion flower, Religious Fervor; the poppy, Consolation of Sleep; the rose, Beauty; moss rose, Superior Merit; sweet briar rose, Sympathy; wild rose, Simplicity; star of Bethlehem, Reconciliation — a good motto for estranged lovers, or friends who would send a peace offering; sunflower, Pride. The lily is a declaration of Love; the verbena, Sensibility; and the wall-flower, Fidelity. So we might go on and on, indefinitely, with these typical symbols, but we think we have given enough to suggest a large number of designs, and as we are constantly being interrogated as to suitable mottoes, etc., for society emblems, educational or literary clubs, and ecclesiastical designs, we feel sure the foregoing hints will prove acceptable to a large number of our readers.

In coloring a text or design, various proportions of color may be tried, as an experiment, before the actual work is begun. It is a good plan to keep on hand an assortment of colored papers, which can be cut out and placed in different parts of the design, so that effects can be noted. Brilliancy is not to be obtained so much by color, as by contrast; as for instance, a light color set off on a dark ground. It is also had by gradation of tone.

In a little work we have upon illumination, we find this description of what gradation of tint will do. Suppose an over-curling leaf should be painted in pure orange, with the gentlest possible after-touch of vermilion towards the corner under the curl, when dry, a firm line (not wash) of carmine, passed

within the outline on the shaded side only of the leaf, gives to the whole the look of a bright scarlet surface, but with an indescribable, superadded charm, that no merely flat color can possess.

Or again, a scarlet berry, pure orange, as before, for the first painting, while still

Do not suppose from this that flat color is always undesirable; on the contrary, there are portions of the design in which it is altogether necessary. A dead ground, for instance — that is to say, a ground not at all glossy or polished — for such use the color quite thick and strong, and lay so as to give

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ILLUMINATION.

rather damp drop into this, near but not close to the edge farthest from the light, the smallest possible bit of vermilion. When quite dry finish with a minute globule of white, just where the light is supposed to fall, and the berry will appear glossy.

the surface a smooth, enameled appearance. Spottiness or unevenness should be carefully avoided. Sometimes with a pen a fine hair line of black may outline the whole text. This is a delicate operation, and requires skill to accomplish successfully; but when well

done, gives a most pleasing effect, throwing the dull colors out in a very strong manner.

Some cautions should be observed as to coloring. In laying a ground, for instance, always consider what is to come upon it, or near it, and never have a prominent color repeated in close proximity, nor too much white in relief.

You can get many hints as to methods of good coloring, if you can have access to good examples, as suggested in our first lesson, and yet it is better not to depend too much on any one set of rules.

The mediæval illuminations were not hampered by any fixed rules, as you will see by examining their manuscripts. Do not place different washes of color one over another, but get sufficient body and strength of tone at once, so as not to be compelled to lay two coats.

The paper, or vellum, should be treated exactly as in water color painting — that is, dampened before beginning work; and many of the directions as to the use of water colors, in our previous lessons, will be found useful in this branch of work.

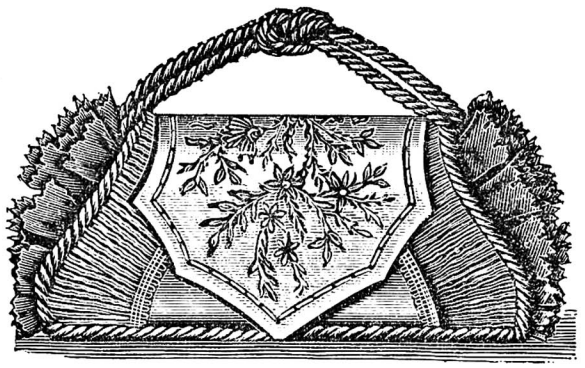
GILDING leather is done in this way: — It is first moistened with a sponge, then stretched and tacked on a board. When dry it receives a coat of thick isinglass solution, then one of white of egg that has been beaten and allowed to settle. Upon this is laid lightly with a brush sheets of silver foil, which are then pressed down with a wad of cotton wool. When this is dry, it is painted over with yellow leather varnish, which gives it a beautiful golden appearance. A varnish for bronze boots and slippers is made by dissolving aniline red in shellac or other varnish.

CANE CHAIRS, painted in colors to harmonize with the furniture of the room, are quite popular. The arm chairs have velvet or plush cushions on back and seats. The rockers are ornamented with bows of bright ribbons.

A NOVEL AND PRETTY PENWIPER.

THE foundation of this penwiper is made of card-board, four inches long by two and three-quarters inches wide, and bound round the edge with black silk braid. On this is sewn a square of stiffened muslin, four inches in diameter, rounded towards the center, so that it only measures two and one-half inches there. It is covered outside with baby-blue satin, on which is sewn a saddle-shaped piece of fine white chamois (flannel will answer), which may be painted or embroidered with colored silks.

Trace the designs upon the chamois, and work the flowers in Kensington or satin stitch, with red, blue, and pink silks, the tendrils and foliage with olive silk, in satin and overcast stitch. Then turn down the blue satin, and sew round the edge a double line of gold thread with overcast stitches of blue silk. A white silk fringe is sewn on under the embroidery. A thick cord of blue and gold is sewn round the foundation, and continued, to form the handles. The ends are then filled up with loose-plaited ruchings



A NOVEL AND PRETTY PENWIPER.

of black cloth, cut round the edge in small vandykes. Similar cloth is then sewn on underneath the card-board foundation.

Girl's Own Paper, 1889

FIG. 1.—*Panel of corner cupboard decorated in stencilling. The centre panel is founded on the iris, with the daisy at base.*

WAX FLOWER MAKING.

To manufacture wax flowers only a few articles are required, and they may be purchased at a slight expense. The most important are some sheets of thin wax, which may either be prepared by a method which will be shortly described, or purchased at ninepence per dozen, or six shillings per gross. The sheets are required to be of white and various colours, to imitate the flowers we wish to copy in wax. Occasionally wax of double thickness is needed, to imitate certain flowers, for which a double price is charged. As many flowers are streaked and variegated, various colours are required for tinting them. These may be purchased in the state of dry powder in small bottles, at one shilling each, or nine shillings per dozen. Some tinting-brushes for applying the colours are also wanted. They are similar in shape to those employed for marking letters with stencil-plates, or for Oriental painting. A representation of one of these brushes is given in Fig. 1. In cases where the expense of these colours is an object, the ordinary cakes of colour employed for painting in water-colours may be used, provided the surface of the sheet has been previously covered with a solution of purified ox-gall, to remove the greasiness of the wax. These brushes may be purchased at prices varying from threepence to sixpence each; a number of them will be required, as it is advisable to employ a separate brush for each colour used.

Fig. 8.

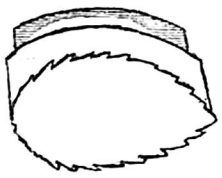


Fig. 10.

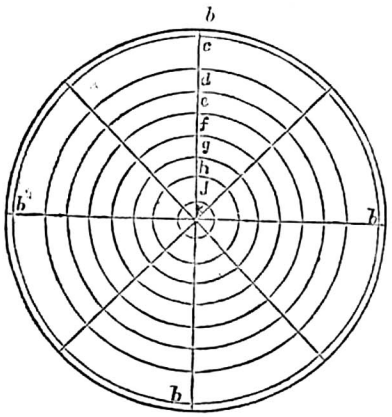


Fig. 7.

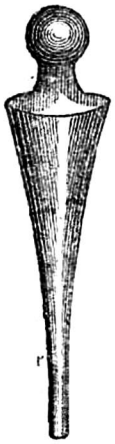


Fig. 6.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

A few curling-pins of various sizes must also be had. These pins generally consist of glass beads attached to the end of a tapering wire, as shown in Fig. 2, but sometimes, when larger, they are made of ivory (Fig. 3). The price of the wire pins is usually three shillings a dozen, while the ivory ones are generally about one shilling each.

Some wooden moulds, represented in Figs. 4, 5, and 6, and which are turned out of hard wood, are also occasionally required for modelling particular flowers. They are usually sold at one shilling each.

Some hanks of wire, covered with cotton to imitate the stems of flowers, are also necessary. They should be of various degrees of thickness, to suit the character of the flower to be imitated. The price will be found to vary, according to the diameter of the wire, from threepence to sixpence a hank.

A few other articles are occasionally required for wax flower making, but these will be mentioned when describing the different processes.

Before commencing to make a wax flower, the learner should procure a piece of cardboard about a foot square, and divide it into circles and angular spaces, as shown in Fig. 7. Now take the flower you wish to copy in wax, remove from it the "bracts," or outer leaves, and arrange them on the card on the outer circle marked *b b b b*. Then take off the leaves composing the calyx, and lay them in the circle marked *c*. If there is more than one row of leaves composing the calyx, the second row must be arranged on the circle *d*, care being taken to arrange the leaves composing the second row either opposite or alternate to those of the first, according to the position they occupied in the flower from which they were taken. Then the petals are to be placed in order in the other circles, those of the first row being placed in *e*, the next in *f*, and so on. The middle circle of the cardboard, K, is to receive the centre portion (seed-vessel) of the flower. The various portions of the flower are to be secured to the card by means of very small pins, to keep them in position.

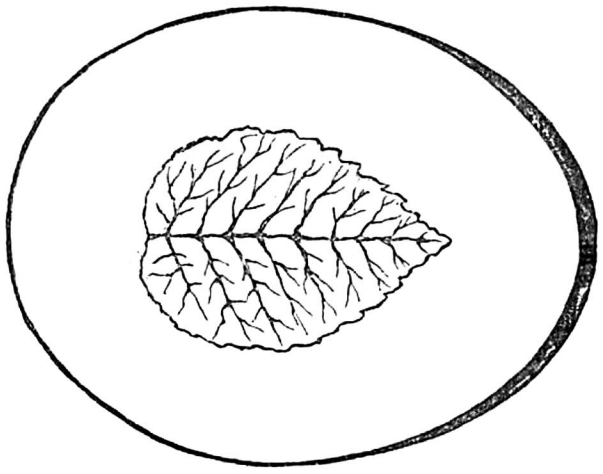


Fig. 9

A portion of the flower from each circle is to be removed, and a paper pattern made from it to serve as a guide for cutting out the sheets of wax. If preferred, however, these paper patterns may be purchased cut out ready for use.

Before making a moss rose from the patterns given, it is necessary to lay a large sheet of clean white paper on the table at which the learner sits. Then some sheets of pink wax are selected, of a similar tint to that of the moss rose, and the proper number of petals the exact size of the patterns, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, *f*, are cut out with a pair of very sharp scissors, the blades of which require to be dipped often in water to prevent the wax from adhering to the steel. It is also necessary to caution the reader

to lay the pattern on the dull, and not on the glossy side of the sheet of wax. By attending to this rule, the cut edge of the dull surface, which should always be the side exposed to view when the flower is completed, will always present a sharp and cleanly cut appearance, which otherwise it would not have. Great care must be taken that the pieces of wax are cut in the direction of the grain of the sheets, otherwise they will not bend so easily when curled into the shape of the flower, and will be also more brittle. As soon as each petal is cut out, it is to be laid down level on the sheet of paper until the required quantities are obtained. The numbers required to be cut are twenty of the pattern *b*, five of *c*, ten of *d*, the same number of *e*, and twenty of *f*.

The small pieces of wax which represent the centre petals of the rose are now to be coloured so as to be of a deeper tint than those portions which compose the outside of the flower. This is done in the following manner :—A small quantity of colour is mixed with water on a palette until it acquires the consistence of cream. The brush is then dipped into the colour, and passed rapidly over the dull surface of the wax we wish to colour, care being taken to hold the brush perfectly upright, and to pass it carefully in the direction of the grain of the wax, and not across it. It is also necessary to remember never to dip the brush in water before use, as it not only injures it, but also interferes with the proper action of the brush when used. Care must also be taken that the paint is not applied to that portion of the petal which has to join the other pieces of wax, otherwise it will not adhere when brought in contact.

A piece of wire covered with cotton, of the proper length and thickness to form the stem, is now selected. One extremity of it is bent into a loop, and covered with fragments or cuttings of sheet-wax until it forms a mass called the foundation, to which the petals are to be attached.

The curling-pin is now taken in the right hand, and dipped in a glass of water to moisten it, and then rolled over the petal contained in the palm of the left hand, so as to curl it, and the required shape is then given by pressing the middle of the piece of wax against the stem of the curling-pin. The small petals are then attached to the foundation in bunches of from three to five pieces of wax, but the larger ones which are employed for the outer portions of the flower must be attached separately, care being taken while arranging the petals that the appearance of the natural flower is imitated as far as possible. Indeed, it will be always found advisable for learners to have before them a real flower of the kind they intend to imitate for a copy.

With reference to the calyx, or the green outer portion of the flower, five pieces of the size and form represented in Fig. 8 are to be cut out from a sheet of green wax, which should be selected to match as closely as possible the tint of the real flower. These pieces are then joined together, and attached to the rest of the flower.

The peculiar mossy appearance, from which the moss rose derives its name is then to be given to it by removing the fibres from some dry moss, and having cut them into small pieces, press them gently on the surface of the calyx.

The seed-cup is now to be made out of some green wax, and inserted into the centre of the flower, being careful to imitate nature as closely as possible.

When placed in position, the seed is to be covered with moss in a similar manner to the calyx. The easiest way to imitate the leaves of the moss rose or other flower is to take artificial leaves made of cambric, and enclose them between two pieces of sheet-wax cut to the proper size. The wax is then gently compressed until it assumes the appearance presented by the enclosed leaf; and at the same time a piece of covered wire to represent the stalk of the leaf is also enclosed between the pieces of wax. These cambric leaves may be had assorted, at prices varying from one shilling a gross. Sometimes moulds made in plaster of Paris are used for making the leaves. The sheet-wax cut into the shape of a leaf is placed in it, and by careful pressure made to assume the appearance presented in the mould. One of these moulds is represented by Fig. 9. They may be purchased for sixpence each from any of the dealers in materials for wax flower making.

The method employed for the manufacture of wax flower leaves where a large quantity is required is to cut them from the sheet of wax by means of cutters. These instruments, which are made of tin, and one of which is shown in Fig. 10, are very cheap, costing from threepence to sixpence each. But leaves made by this method are not equal in appearance to those obtained by the employment of the scissors-and-paper pattern, since in the latter case the edges of the imitation leaves are cut smooth, while in the other they are apt to be uneven; besides which, as, for the flower to look natural, the leaves must of course be made of various sizes, a number of cutters must be employed.

If preferred, imitation wax leaves may be purchased ready for use, from two shillings per dozen, according to the size and quality required.

When the leaves are finished, the other end of the wire to which they are attached is twisted as neatly as possible round the one forming the stem, and they are then covered over with strips of sheet-wax of the required colour.

An Old Bachelor

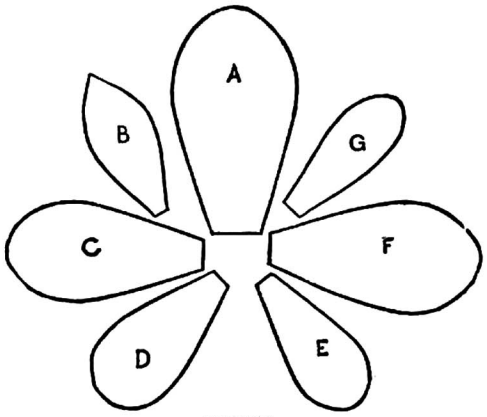
What a pitiful thing an old bachelor is,
With his cheerless house and his rueful phiz!
On a bitter cold night when the fierce winds blow,
And when all the earth is covered with snow,
When his fire is out, and in shivering dread,
He slips 'neath the sheets of his lonely bed;
    How he draws up his toes,
    All encased in yarn hose,
    And he buries his nose
    'Neath the chilly bedclothes;
    That his nose and his toes
    Still encased in yarn hose,
    May not chance to get froze!
Then he puffs and he blows, and he says that he knows
No mortal on earth ever suffered such woes.
    And with Ah's and with Oh's,
    With his limbs to dispose,
So that neither his toes nor his nose may be froze,
To his slumbers in silence the bachelor goes.
In the morn, when the cock crows, and the sun is just rose,
    From beneath the bedclothes
    Pops the bachelor's nose,
And, as you may suppose, when he hears how the wind blows,
    Sees the windows all froze
Why, back 'neath the clothes pops the poor fellow's nose;
For full well he knows, if from that bed he rose,
To put on his clothes, that he'd surely be froze.

—(Godey's, 1867)

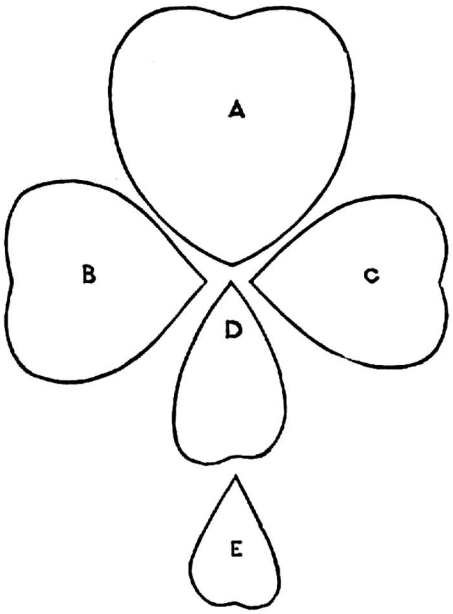
WAX FLOWER MAKING.

(*Continued.*)

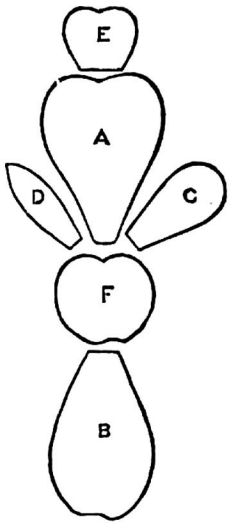
The Dahlia.—The flowers of the dahlia are modelled thus:—Select seven sheets of any coloured wax preferred, except blue, green, brown, and black. Cut from them twenty pieces of the pattern A, the same number of C and F, thirty of E, but only ten each of D and G. (The illustrations are drawn to half scale.) The smallest pieces are rolled round a wire to bring them to the proper shape. The next size are left more open at the top, and the others still more open than the preceding ones. The smallest pieces are then to be fastened round one end of a thick wire, which represents the stalk, and the rest of the petals are arranged round them, the largest sizes being placed outside the others. Then cut out fifteen pieces of the shape marked B from some sheets of green wax, and arrange them round the base of the flower to form a calyx. The wire forming the stalk is then to be covered with sheet-wax, to hide the material of which it is composed.



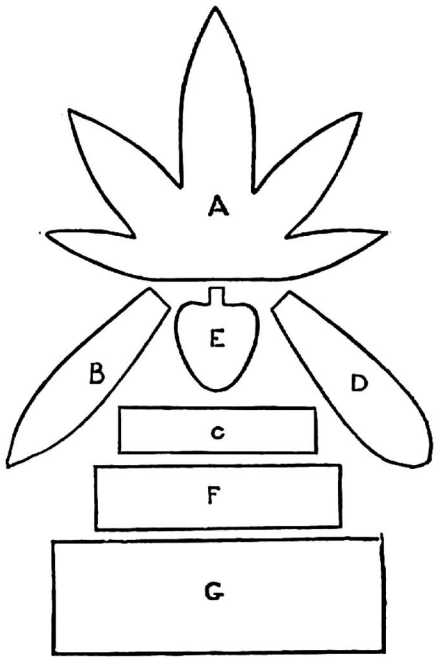
DAHLIA.



MOSS ROSE.



CAMELLIA.



PASSION FLOWER.

White Camellia.—To form this flower, cut from a sheet of thick white wax ten pieces the shape of the pattern marked A, the same number of those marked B, and five each of C and D. Then cut three pieces of E, and the same number of F, to form the calyx of the flower. The wax for this purpose should be of a pale lemon tint, and doubled. The pieces A, B, C, D are then to be coloured at the base with a slight tint of yellow, care being taken to imitate the natural flower as closely as possible. When this is done, E and F are to be tinted with green in a similar manner. The stem is made with a piece of thick wire, one end of which has been bent over several times, and covered with about half a sheet of white wax, compressed into the shape of a plum-stone.

The pieces cut from the white wax, and which form the petals, are then to be curled into shape by the curling-pin, and attached to the foundation of wax at the extremity of the wire. While doing this, great care must be taken to copy the arrangement of the petals in the natural flower, and also to keep the glossy side of the wax directed towards the centre of the flower while attaching the small petals. When the large petals are put on, it is necessary to remember to put them on lower than the others, and also to keep the dull side of the petals directed inwards.

After curling the sepals already cut from the lemon-coloured wax, they are to be applied to the flower, the small sepals being on the exterior. The stem should then be covered with green sheet-wax, and afterwards tinted with a little brown powder, to imitate the real flower as closely as possible. Some leaves should then be prepared in the manner previously directed, and arranged on the stalk.

Passion Flower.—To imitate this, cut off a piece of wire from the hank of sufficient length to form the stalk. Form one end into a loop, and cover it with wax to form a seed-cup. Then form the pistil, and colour it purple to imitate the natural flower as closely as possible. Now cut five stamens out of light green wax, and colour them with light yellow paint, and arrange them at equal distances around the pistil. A piece of white sheet-wax is then to be cut the shape of the pattern C; one edge is to be cut to form a fine fringe, and then coloured a deep purple, and fixed round the seed-cup, taking care to turn the purple surface inwards to touch the pistil. Double a sheet of white wax, and cut from it a piece of the shape of the pattern F, and snip the edges to form a fringe; and after having coloured it purple, roll it round the base of the preceding piece. Then cut another piece like G, and cut the edges nearly to the bottom of the wax to form a deep fringe; colour it to imitate nature, and attach it round the preceding.

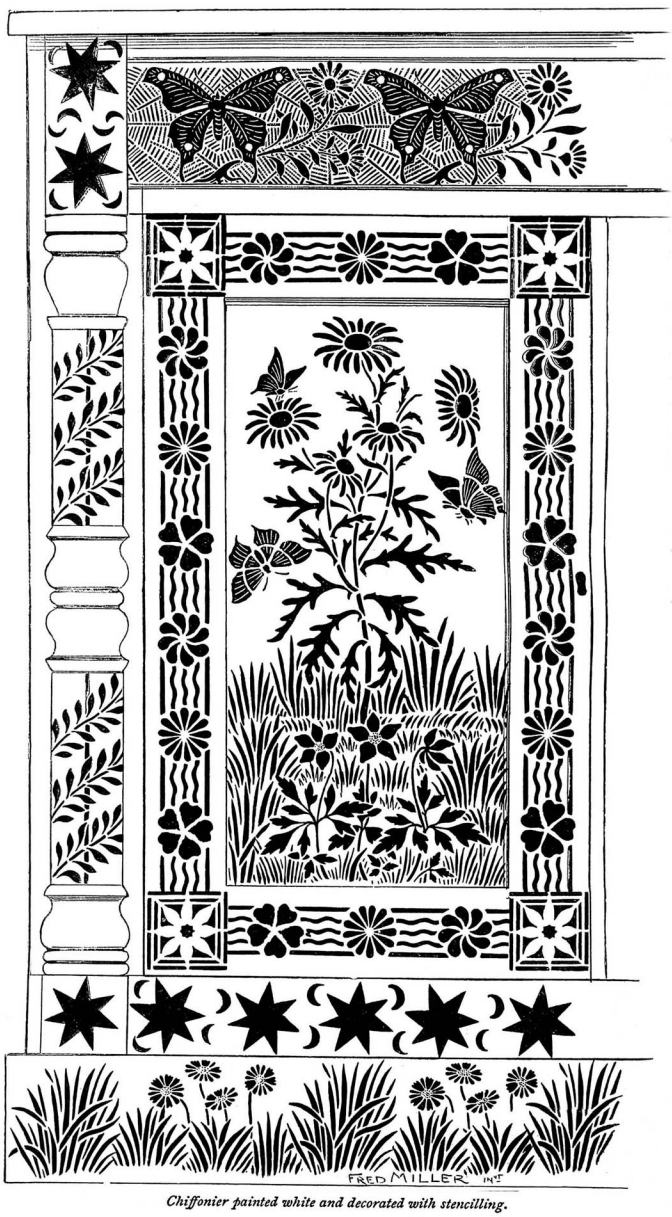
To form the petals of the flower, three sheets of white wax have to be taken. Lay them one over the other, press them between the palms of the hands to make them adhere, and cut from them five pieces like the pattern marked B, and the same number of those marked D. Colour the pieces, on one side only, a pale yellowish green, imitating the tint of the natural flower as closely as possible; curl their edges with the curling-pin, and mark them down the centre with the stem of the curling-

pin, and arrange them round the centre of the flower with the white side inwards. Then take the five pieces marked D, and place them in the spaces left behind the other petals.

We have now to cut out three pieces of the shape E, to form the calyx, which should be done with the same kind of wax as that of which the petals are formed, and they require to be coloured in a similar manner.

To form the leaves, cut them with the aid of the pattern A from two sheets of dark green wax. Then insert a piece of fine covered wire between the two layers of wax, in the manner previously directed when we treated about leaves. Afterwards curl the edges, and mark them down the centre with the stem of the curling-pin. Then attach them to the stem of the flower, and cover the wire with light green wax.

Moss Rose.—The mode of constructing a moss rose was described in the previous article (page 244 of this volume), but the reader is requested to correct some inaccuracies in the references. All the diagrams are drawn to half scale, and for the moss rose there should be twenty leaves of pattern A, five of B, ten of C, the same number of D, and twenty of E.



Chiffonier painted white and decorated with stencilling.

HOUSEHOLD DECORATIVE ART.

CONE-WORK.

WE now propose to offer a few suggestions for adding to the decoration and attraction of home—the result chiefly arising from the experience of a rather lengthy residence in the "Far West." The young ladies of America understand well the art of turning everything to account, as well for ornament as for use. And what has hitherto by ourselves in England been considered as of no value, has by American taste been converted into pretty and useful articles, which make not only pleasing additions to one's own home, but provide an acceptable gift to a friend. The collecting the necessary materials for the execution of this work will be found an interesting pursuit, and will add much to the pleasure of a ramble in the woods. The best season of the year for procuring the requisites is in the autumn. Make up a party to go off on an exploring expedition, and do not forget the children, for they as much as any will enjoy a day in the woods, coupled with the important commission of filling their little baskets. Make as varied a collection as possible of cones, or, as some say, "fir-apples," the husks of the beech-nut, acorns, with and without the saucer part, oak-apples, the cone of the cedar—and, indeed, of all coniferous trees; nuts of different kinds, including the pea or ground-nut; but this particular kind can, we believe, be only obtained in this country by purchasing of a fruiterer. Even the knotted ends of small twigs mix in very nicely—the greater the variety the more pleasing the result. You will be surprised to learn how much lies at your feet of interest, beauty, and use, which hitherto you have trodden upon as worthless, and which is available for domestic ornamentation.

Having collected a goodly stock of what the woods and lanes can give you, the next step is to prepare your supply for working. It is a good plan to sort the different things, putting each kind in a little box or basket: this method will be found to expedite matters considerably. The large cones must be pulled to pieces—that is, strip off singly each scale, as they are needed for the foundation of the work. Take care of the extreme end or point of the cone, as you will find it come in nicely to add to the variety.

We will commence our lessons in cone-work by giving instructions for making a card-basket. Procure some strong cardboard, which cover with brown paper by means of glue or paste—the former is to be preferred; then, having chosen a shape, say Fig. 1, cut out of the cardboard shape A, Fig. 2, about nine inches by seven; by carefully cutting with a knife you will save the centre piece, B, which forms the bottom; a straight strip about an inch and a half wide, and the length of the circumference of B, the centre piece being cut out, will give C. The handle can be straight, or shaped according to taste, as also the height. These several pieces must be strongly stitched together, the straight strip round B on its edge thus forming a sort of tray. Now take C and sew its inner edge to the upper edge of the tray; in all cases sew over and over, and as strongly as possible. After this is complete, with the fingers gently bend margin C, so as to make it curve downwards, which adds much to the gracefulness of the shape.

You now proceed to ornament your pasteboard basket. Begin by stitching, with strong black thread, all round the edge of C, the scales which you stripped off the large cones; they must be put on singly, and should overlap each other slightly. A second row must be added; then two rows the reverse way. You will now have a space uncovered with these scales, on this you must stitch all the various kinds you have in a rich wreath or border—the greater the variety the better. It will, of course, entirely depend upon the taste and ingenuity of the

worker whether a well-arranged border round the basket be the result or not.

Care must be taken to entirely cover the cardboard, as spaces showing the framework would look bad. Many small things can be put in by means of glue; as, for instance, an acorn here and there, a tiny oak-apple, the extreme point of a cone, besides other things which will doubtless easily occur to the fair operator. A little ingenuity will suggest many ideas, which will all tend to the perfection and beauty of the work.

The handle requires to be done in the same way as the other part of the basket; but one row of the scales stitched at each edge will be found to be sufficient; and in making the wreath the smallest of the cones, &c., should be used, taking care to select the variety which has already been brought into use in the basket. It is a good plan to stitch a round bonnet wire along the under side of the handle, which will strengthen it considerably, as well as allow of its being bent to a prettier, or the desired form.

Having proceeded thus far, the next thing to be done is to varnish your work, for which the best copal varnish must be used, applied with a camel-hair pencil of a moderate size, the utmost attention being paid to insert the brush into every little crevice; do not omit any part. Having thoroughly varnished your basket, put it away in some place entirely free from dust, and let it remain a night, so that it may be perfectly dry before lining it. You may now make the lining, which should be of silk or satin, the colour, of course, as taste dictates; some bright colour looks best, such as amber, brilliant green, rose, or blue. If intended for a gift, it is wise to choose a colour which will harmonise either by contrasting or matching the furniture of the room it is going to be placed in. Amber does well for almost any other colour, and contrasts admirably with the brown tints of the cones. Having made your choice, cut a piece of wadding the shape and size of the bottom of the basket, and also of the strip going round. Cover these on one side with the silk, and then stitch neatly together in the form of the basket. Put round the top a quilling of narrow satin ribbon, the same shade as the silk, and after having done the handle in the same way, and stitched it very strongly to the basket, put in this lining, which will fit without any further sewing. The underneath part of the basket must have paper pasted over it to hide the stitches, and render your work perfectly neat and tidy. The basket will now be complete.

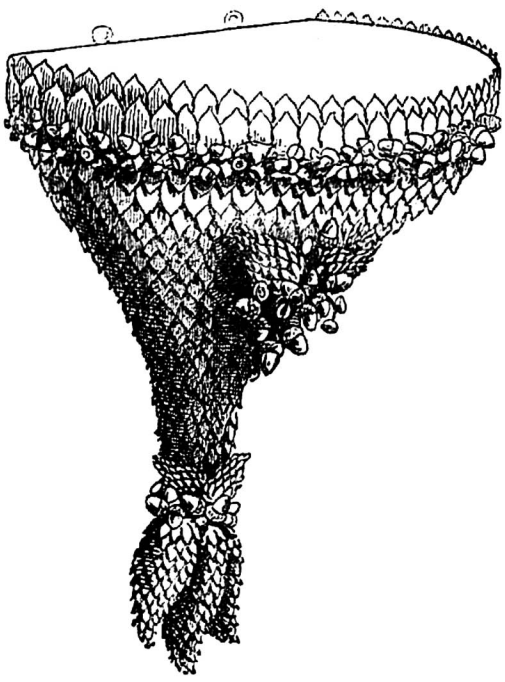


Fig. 3.

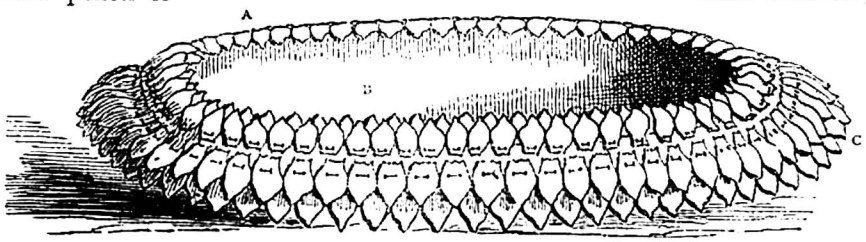


Fig. 2.

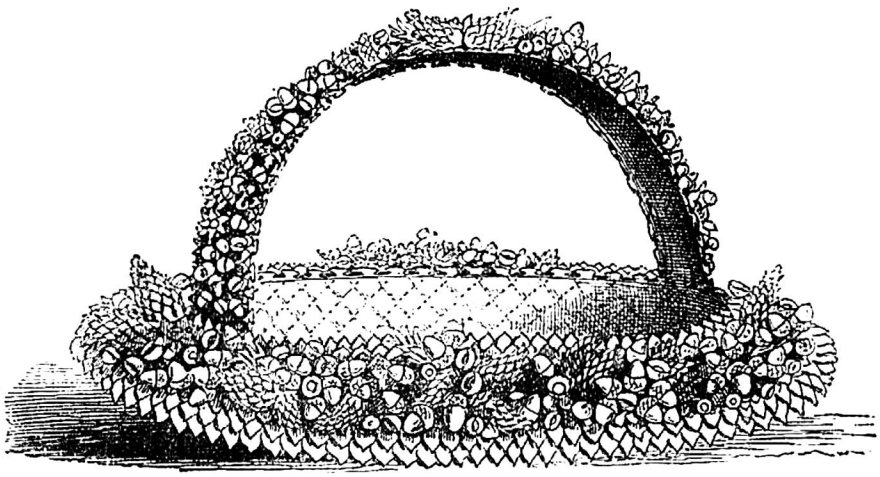


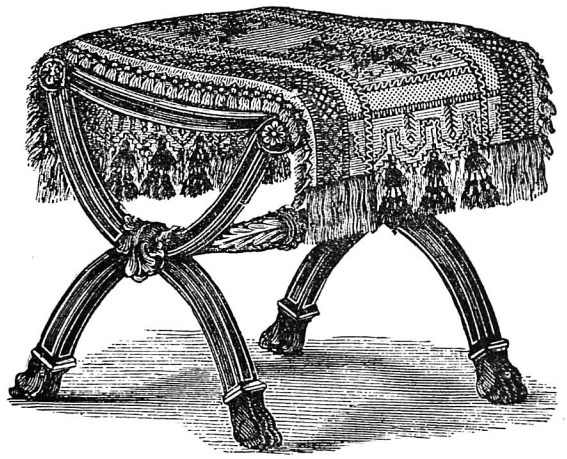
Fig. 1.

A variety of both useful and ornamental articles can be produced in this interesting and elegant work, possessing, as it does, the charm of novelty, in being composed of the productions of Nature. One of the nicest things to be made in it, is a bracket for the wall, which will have the appearance of carved oak. We will give instructions for making one, which will serve as well for other articles where the groundwork requires to be wood.

When you have selected a suitable and tasteful design, get the foundation made in common deal, unplaned will answer quite well, but have it stained a dark brown. Then, with some very strong glue, stick on the different kinds of cones, acorns, nuts, &c., in a tasteful manner. Fig. 3 will give you an idea as to how a bracket looks when finished; but the arrangement must rest with yourself — a cluster of acorns designed to represent a bunch of grapes looks well — care must be taken to entirely cover the wood or foundation of the bracket. Of course, as in the case of the basket, varnish must be applied at the completion of the article.

Very nice spill cups can be made in precisely the same way, using empty wooden boxes. Very handsome boxes for envelopes, stereoscopic slides, &c., can be made by tastefully covering old cigar-boxes. Stands for hyacinth glasses, or vases of flowers can be produced by covering empty boxes in which gentlemen's collars have been kept. In this case the cones must be stitched on, as was done in the basket, using the "scales" as the foundation. In fact, the cones may be applied to the decoration of a great variety of articles which would be otherwise useless, and perhaps meet the fate of household rubbish generally.

FANCY WORK



Piano Stool Cover.

THE stools used mostly at the present date are long and do not screw up ; and the seat being flat allows many ways to embellish it. In our design, the center strip is of plush or cloth, worked with different colored silks to correspond with other furniture in the room. The strips at the sides are likewise of plush with a large open pattern of feather-stitch traced over the entire surface, and finished with a narrow fringe. The ends are slightly vandyked, feather-stitched in patterns, finished with a deep fringe with large silk and wool tassels between each point. Line the entire cover with canton flannel.

Waste Paper Basket.

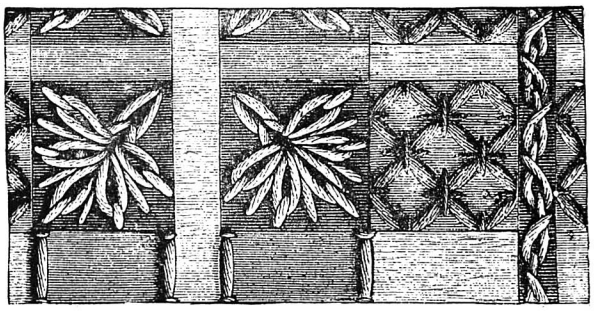
PROCURE an open wicker-work basket, and lace two shades of satin ribbon in and out alternately, then line the basket with silesia ; round the edge is a plush valance, cut in vandykes, and worked with figures of various colored silks. The edge of the vandykes are chain-stitched in several rows with different colors, the upper edge finished with a plaiting of satin ribbon. At the base tie a large satin bow.

Window Seats.

IN many old-fashioned houses there are wide seats to the bedroom windows. These may be utilized by being covered with cushions, either of crash or felt, which may be worked over with fleur de lis or some of the Greek designs. Generally there hangs from these cushion fronts a valance, which can be converted into a shoe-bag, a box-plait of the material being placed at regular intervals on the valance, each plait large enough to hold a pair of shoes, and each displaying either the Greek honeysuckle, a monogram, or a conventional flower. It is certainly a pretty and useful contrivance, and boxes made to set by the windows could be made as well.

Serviceable Fancy Work.

CUT and make a dressing-gown, slippers, combing-jacket, all *en suite*, of pale blue silesia ; then cut cretonne roses out as a border and appliqué on with silk. The roses should be on the cuffs, pockets, and down the front. The slippers have a few roses on the instep. The shape should be first cut out in paper, then of the silesia and lining ; next appliqué the flowers on, and then sew on to the cork soles. The sachet for night-dress is in the form of a large envelope, and has a large cluster of flowers below the flap and a smaller one above. The work will be found very fascinating, and quite worth the time and labor bestowed on it.



Foulard Antimacassar.

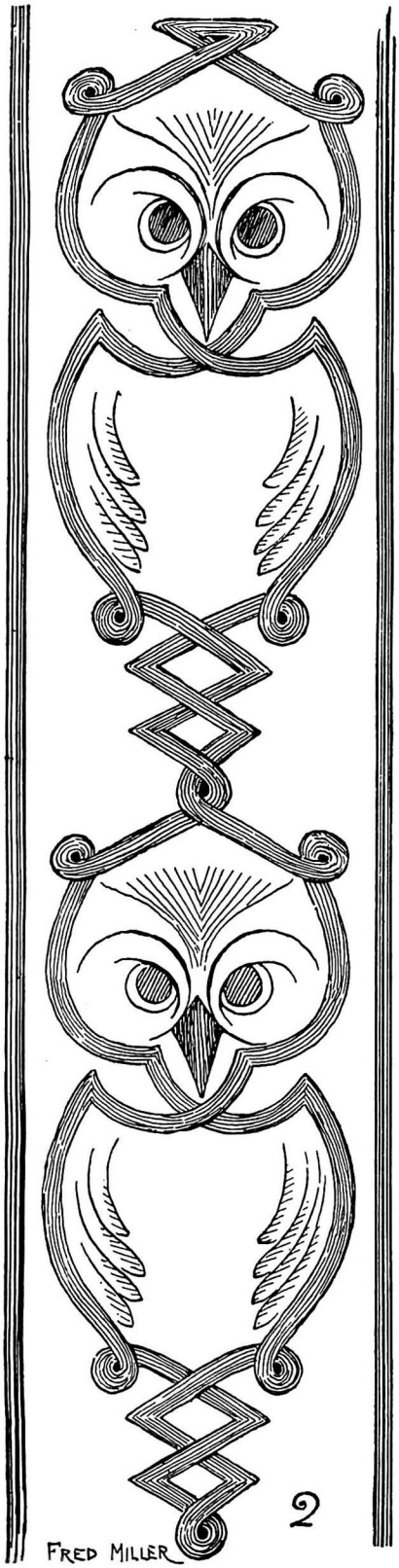
THIS quaint antimacassar is made out of square of black and white foulard, the stripes of which are embroidered with filoselle. The flowers on the black squares are worked with white silk, the picots with red silk. The diamond-shaped embroidery is in two shades of bronze silk, and the narrow stripes are worked in pale blue filoselle. The edge is either fringed out or hemmed, and a light fringe sewed on intermingling the colors that are used in the embroidory. This square makes a very pretty sofa pillow ; in fact, there are no end of ways to which it can be put. If it is made into pillows it would be advisable to put a puffing round the edge, of something with more body to it, as it would also be advisable to line the foulard before working it.

"KELTIC EMBROIDERY."

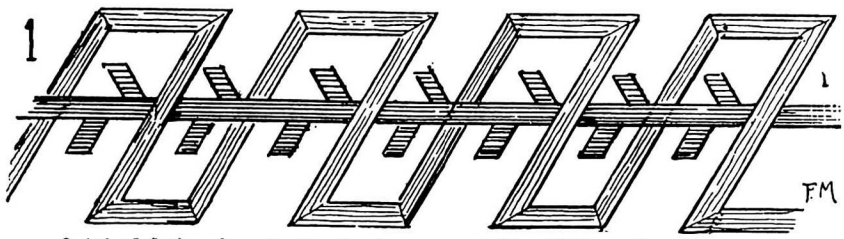
THE suggestions for this article were gained from a visit some time since to an exhibition of Irish embroidery shown at the rooms of The Donegal Industrial Fund, in which old Keltic designs, many of them of the eighth century, were mainly employed. There is something so marked in character and so ingenious about these Keltic designs that endless variations are suggested to the mind, some few of which I have worked out here and in a future number of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER. Take A and B, which are from the Durrow Bible of the eighth century. The suggestion conveyed of extinct monsters is grotesque and ingeniously clever. It is difficult to trace the genesis of such designs. A seems to hint at a mastodon or other elephantine animal, while B has a suspicion of the winged dragon; yet while they and others of this class distinctly convey to the mind the idea of some strange beast, they are at the same time pure ornaments, having no reference to any particular creature.

In C we have a most intricate and ingenious "strap-work" pattern, a class of ornament seen on runic crosses. This style of design is very effective when wrought with the needle. Flax is the material employed by the Donegal peasants.

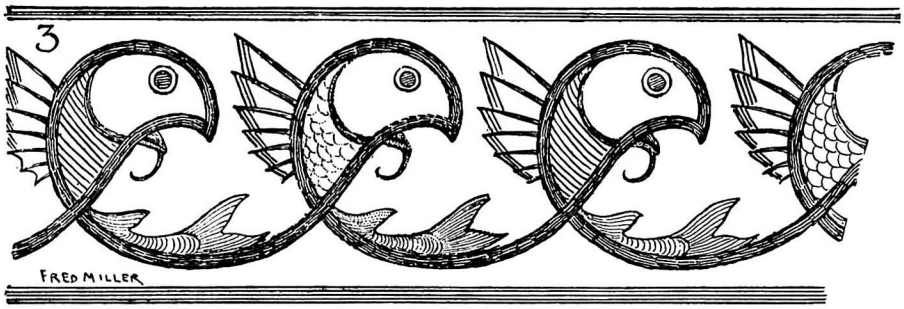
D and E are ingenious strap-work borders, and readers might exercise their ingenuity in evolving fresh patterns on these lines. My attempt is seen in Fig. 1, where the stem running through the strap-work should be in a different and darker colour. Such designs as these would come well worked in red and blue thread on linen, or could easily be adapted for Berlin wool work or canvas In the Donegal embroidery the stitches run longitudinally and are crossed at intervals as indicated in the sketches. They use a woollen fabric not unlike serge, and some curtains I saw were a rich brick-red with the embroidery in yellows and browns. The effect of the shining flax upon the dull woollen ground is most effective, and the tone of the work being yellow produces a fine harmony with the red textile. Schemes of colour, such as yellow on red, are safer than where you get contrast, say green on red. In Figs 2 and 3 I have essayed



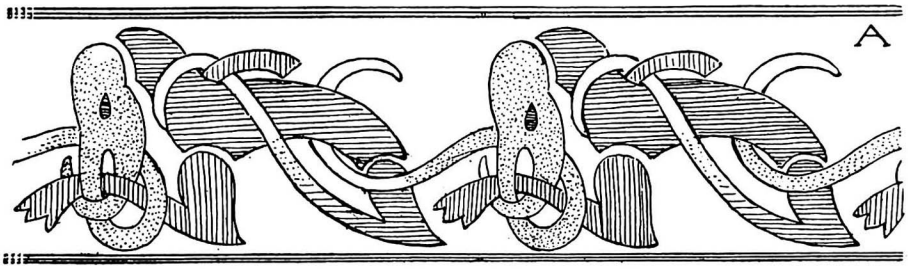
Original design of a quaint owl border, suitable for blue and red thread or flax. Though finished off at both ends it can be repeated ad lib.



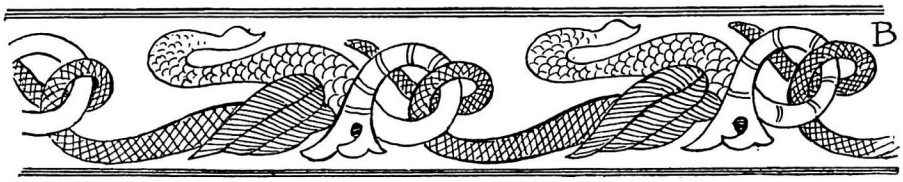
Original design for repeating border, suggested by Keltic work, to be wrought in two colours.



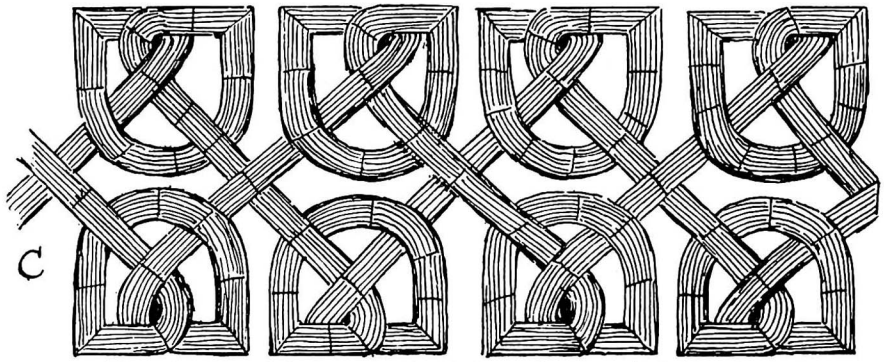
Original design of repeating quaint fish border, suitable for working in red and blue thread on linen.



Design from Durrow Bible, eighth century Keltic work.



Design from eighth century Keltic work.



Keltic "strap" work design. Notice the ingenuity shown in taking the strap over and under.

designs suggested by the Keltic work, for I have attempted to combine the strap-work with the quaint animals. The emphatic parts of the designs are the strap-work, and this should be worked in some distinctive colour, say blue if in thread on linen, or red-brown if in flax on a greenish grey fabric. The details which in Fig. 2 suggest an owl and in Fig. 3 a fish could be in red if in thread, or yellow if in flax. I want the strap-work to first catch the eye, for that is the ornamental portion of the design, and the filling out to be in a softer colour as of secondary importance. Though I have finished off the top and bottom of the design 2 it can be continued *ad lib*. I have a *penchant* for the quaint and grotesque in art, and it is certainly very effective in needlework. In another article I shall give some few other patterns in this style, as I think it is a somewhat new departure which my readers can follow up for themselves.

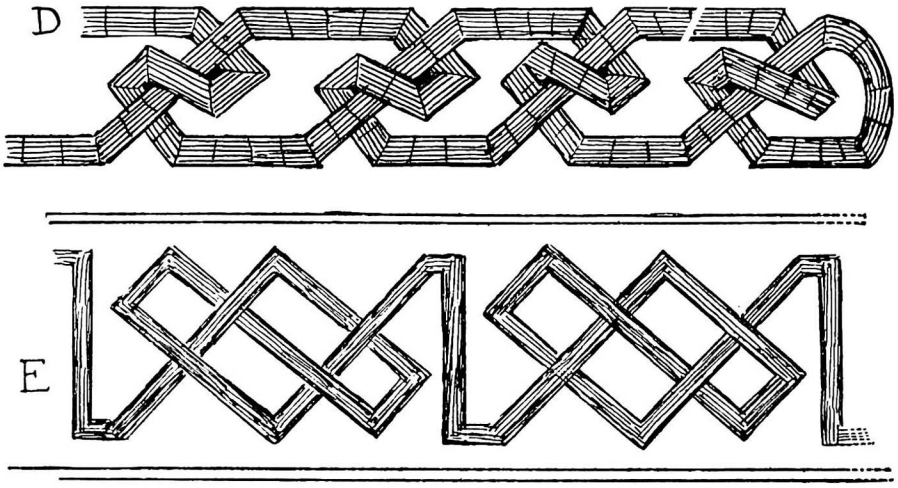
In selecting animals for decorative purposes choose those which in themselves are curious. The John Doree and gurnard among English fishes are so decorative as to require little alteration beyond simplification. Some of those curious Chinese carp with developed fins and tails are also very ornamental.

Among birds, owls are obviously amongst the quaintest. Some of the hornbills too lend themselves to ornamental purposes.

Insects can be drawn upon with advantage, for some of the most curious forms in nature belong to the insect kingdom.

A good natural history will furnish material, but a visit to the Natural History Museum or the Zoological Gardens is more stimulating to the mind. Nature starts the imagination into activity as well as suggesting novel treatments and fresh combinations better than dead specimens or drawings made by others.

FRED MILLER.



Keltic strap work borders for flax.

AN EMBROIDERED BABY'S CARRIAGE COVERLID OF HOUSE FLANNEL.

I WAS recently asked by a lady friend to design her a simple piece of embroidery for her child's pram. The chief thing was, that the design was not to be elaborate, as there was very little time to work it.

The illustration here given is the design I made, but it has a very different appearance in black and white to what it had when worked in two tones of blue worsted on house flannel. Still, those readers who do embroidery will know what allowances to make.

I sketched the design right away in charcoal, and anyone at all accustomed to using a pencil will have no difficulty in doing this. Divide your material in half, and then draw a line in the middle horizontally, and others above and below this. These lines will guide you in getting both sides fairly alike, for, so long as the principal lines are symmetrical, it is enough. I found you can easily sketch in vine charcoal (that is the fine kind) on flannel and it easily dusts off afterwards.

The whole of the forms were produced in outline, and to show the sort of stitch, I have given a leaf full size. The ground is soon covered in this way, and it hasn't a cheap look either. The fault many embroiderers make in carrying out a design is that they miss the "swing" of the lines, get broken-backed curves and clumsy-looking details. To obviate this you ought to keep looking at your work as a whole. Dwelling too long on any part of the design is likely to upset the balance of the whole.

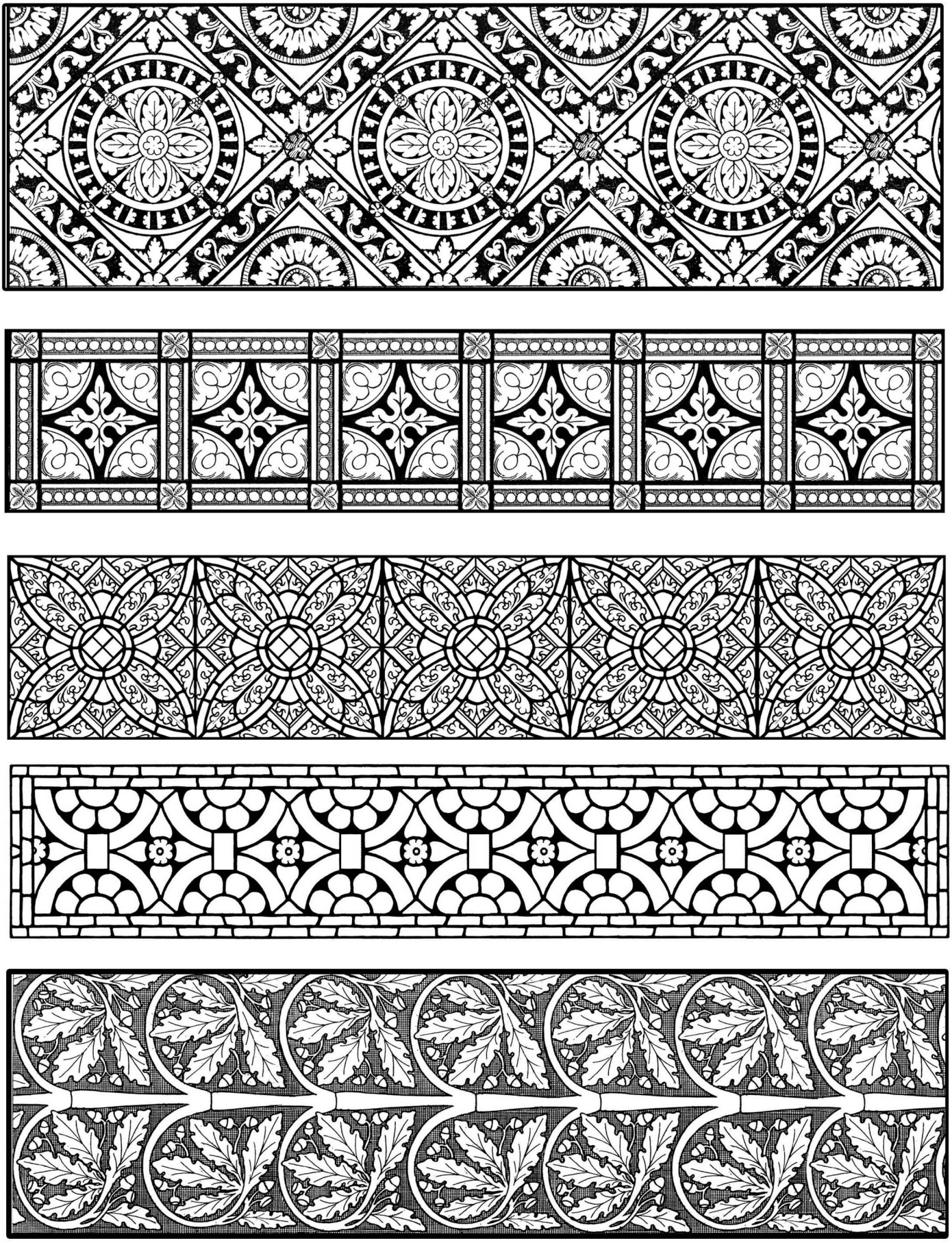
It is obvious that in the design given the stems are the first features to be worked, as the leaves and flowers merely grow from them and are of secondary importance. It will add to the grace of the design to get the lower part of the stems gradually thicker, say two strands wide towards the base, just as in nature we find a plant gradually thickening as it nears the root.

It will be noticed that a separate border is designed for the piece at the top which turns over. The coverlid should have a worked edging, and to get this even a few niches should be spaced out and drawn on a piece of tracing paper and then pricked over with a coarse needle.

All you have to do is to rub a little crushed charcoal, tied up in a piece of coarse linen or muslin, on the reverse side, when the powdered charcoal will pass through the holes leaving an impression which can be worked over at once.

Where a border is distinctly geometrical, it should be done evenly, and the eye is not quite correct enough if left to itself, and much of the workmanlike look of the whole would be marred if this edging were badly done. The right initial or name can be added or left out if desired. In the latter case put in a flower and a leaf or two.

Those readers who have never worked on house flannel will find it a pleasant material, and for portières and short curtains very excellent both in effect and for wear.



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