Victorian Creative

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

Volume I #22 - July 29, 2022

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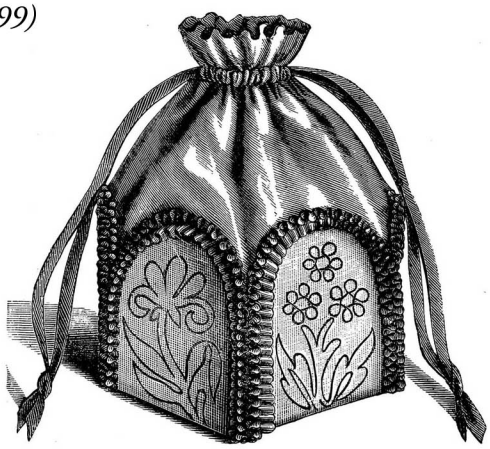

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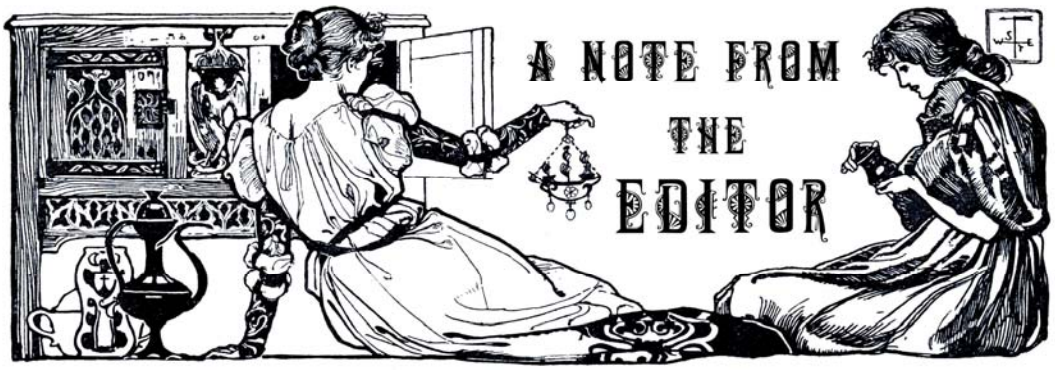

IS BEAUTY A LUXURY?

My previous editorial got me thinking a bit about the issue of beauty and, for lack of a better term, social status. Are beauty, creativity, arts and crafts, and all that, a luxury? Are they trappings of privilege? Are they only for those who can "afford" them? Is the whole concept utterly elitist?

I will, of course, give you the *definitive* answer here… not! But perhaps I can provide some ideas to chew on.

Let's start with the premise that we're not just talking about today's arts and crafts, but those of yesterday—because, after all, that's what this magazine is all about. Now, today, I can drive to a Michael's or a Hobby Lobby, and spend lots more money than I intended on stuff I probably don't need. That presupposes that I have, in fact, the money to spend—if I needed it for food or rent, I wouldn't be shopping at Hobby Lobby.

However, 100 years ago, giant craft stores like this didn't exist. A Victorian crafter didn't have the option of going out and spending loads of money on craft supplies, kits, etc. By the late 19th century, one could obtain a variety of basic supplies, such as "Berlin" needlepoint canvas, embroidery silks, knitting yarns, needles, etc. Artists could obtain canvas, paper, paints, and most other supplies. But "kits" were pretty much unknown, and the vast majority of what one finds in today's craft stores wasn't even a gleam in a retailer's eye.

Go back another 100 years, and you don't even have this much "luxury." If you wanted to knit something, you might have to spin the yarn yourself—or you'd better know someone who could. You might also have to dye it yourself. (Today, obtaining the supplies to spin or dye your own yarn requires a considerable amount of spare cash!)

Thus, in the Victorian era, and any other era prior to our own, creativity frequently meant taking what you already had, and making it into something else—preferably something better. Quilts, for example, weren't made from a kit. They were pieced together from scraps of old clothing, or the leftover bits from making new clothes. (Actually, in the Victorian era, you could, for the first time, actually buy batches of "quilt pieces" from fabric sellers.) Other fabric scraps might be made into a braided rug—something both useful and beautiful.

In the days of life before craft stores, creativity started with the simple premise that you just didn't throw anything away, if there was any hope of re-purposing or recycling it into something useful, beautiful, or both. When we visit a quilt museum today, we aren't likely to be gazing at the work of the privileged rich. We're looking at the work of ordinary hands—quite often *poor* hands. We're looking at the efforts of someone who believed that beauty was something anyone could enjoy, if they were willing to put in the effort.

Think about "folk art" for a moment. That word "folk" is in there for a reason. In nearly any country that one may visit (assuming one can ever visit other countries again), one is most likely to pick up beautiful souvenirs that are hand-crafted by "ordinary" people—not *rich* people. We look for the arts and crafts that speak to the traditions of a culture—the patterns and designs *created* by just plain everyday folks, no matter where (or when) they live.

In short, beauty and creativity aren't just *for* "everyone," they are the very soul of expression *of* everyone. There's nothing elitist about seeking and creating beauty. In doing so, we are following in the footsteps of the very best of humanity.

—Moira Allen
editors@victorianvoices.net

OUR NEW HOUSE AND ITS PLENISHINGS.

THE LIBRARY AND THE NURSERY.

A CORNER OF THE NURSERY.

IN this house there are four rooms on the ground floor; the library joins the drawing-room, while the smoking-room is at the end of an inner passage. Although not luxurious, it is a very comfortable room; the carpet goes all over the floor and is an Oriental-patterned Brussels, with a wide border, which cost two and eightpence a yard. The upper part of the walls is painted in oils a shade of sage-green, while a dado is formed of a piece of China matting in pale green and straw-colour, which is fastened tightly to the wall and finished by a narrow wood moulding. The curtains are made of Madagascar mats, which cost about two and sixpence each. They are made up with a wide border of gold Imperial plush, a band of which is sewn across the centre to hide the join. This plush is fifty inches wide, not fifteen as I said in my first paper. It is well to double the border so as to have it alike on both sides, as the curtains do not look nice lined. A border made of Indian Dhurrie looks quite as well as one of plush. An arm-chair from the old drawing-room is used here, and is covered with a Madagascar mat. Plainly used, these make very nice coverings, but made up with scraps of red velvet and plush they altogether lose their character.

Most of the furniture in this room is of the Indian rattan kind; it is very strong, and does away with any need of upholstery work. The lounge cost twenty-six shillings, while the high-backed arm-chair was eighteen and nine. We have two wooden arm-chairs, six shillings each unpolished; they are ebonised now. The other chairs and tables are very simple. There is no gas in the room, but the exquisite wrought-iron hanging lamp gives a beautiful light through its coloured glass. It cost thirty shillings at the Italian Exhibition of last season. The library is wonderfully characteristic of its owner; you enter it, and feel yourself in an old-world room full of repose and calm, and yet when you see that high desk piled with papers you know that you are in the workshop of a literary man; there is no feeling of newness about the room: everything might have been there for generations. All the wood-work is of brightly-polished mahogany. The walls are covered with an unpatterned drab paper; a drab felt carpet at three and threepence the yard covers the floor; it is lined with a material called cedar felt. The curtains are of drab serge, made with a wide band of velvet at top and bottom; the chairs are also covered with the same thing. The old drawing-room bookcase stands here; it has had other shelves joined to it, so that it now goes all round the room. It is only four shelves high, and the black wood top makes a pretty shelf for blue china, which with the varied colours of the books gives tone and warmth to the room. The high desk of black wood stands in the centre; the dining-room writing-table is in the window. In one corner stands our greatest treasure and last acquisition, a Chippendale corner cupboard. The writing-chair is a revolving one, and cost twenty-five shillings.

We have two carved wood Flemish chairs at seventeen and sixpence, and a comfortable arm-chair with springs. The other chairs are of black wood, and cost from four to six shillings; they have rush seats and no cushions. At one end of the room hangs a circular mirror in a black frame; the pictures are all framed in black, and are principally prints and etchings in red ink.

Most Englishmen have their special hero, and this man has hung a print of his over the mantel-piece. It is in a wide oak frame, upon which daffodils have been painted in oils. There are no photographs near it, but on the wall just in front of the writing-table, where during his "leisure" moments so many books have been planned and written, hangs a miniature of his wife, and at its side, in all the serenity of a beauty

HALL WINDOW CORNER.

which even that wife thinks unequalled, is a little water-colour sketch of the girl who was to have been his wife, if only death would have spared her to earth and to him. There is no shadow of coming trouble upon her face; her eyes are so full of joy that the picture would do as a representation of happiness. And sometimes in the firelight-time, when the woman whom he married is not painting furniture, or covering chairs,

THE HALL, FROM THE LIBRARY.

or cutting out children's pinafores, she steals into that quiet library, where, gazing at that lovely face, she wonders and thinks of many things.

The hall is a very large one, with a fine window at one end. It was paved with stones, which we found so cold that we resolved to have it covered with linoleum. As it is an expensive thing to buy, and we did not wish to have to renew it, we took pains to get a good one, and therefore chose a make with the pattern stamped right through it, down to the fibre at the bottom, so that if the top gets scraped or worn off there is still a pattern beneath. It is called the "Granit Linoleum," and is three and sixpence the square yard. The walls of the hall and of the stairs and landing have been distempered deep orange. It was a bold experiment, but it has answered. The wooden dado is painted black, as is all the wood-work. We have a beautiful painted frieze, which is fastened to the wall with a black wood moulding. Painted upon a ground of Pompeian red is a conventional pattern of horse-chestnuts, with yellowish-brown leaves—just the thing for the orange walls. Had I had time, I could have painted it all myself, but as it was I drew out the pattern upon the different strips, painted a quarter of a yard as a copy on each, and found some ladies who could paint, and who were willing to do it for me at about three and sixpence the yard. We drew the pattern in chalk, and the material used was called "Pompeian Linoleum." It is better than anything else for the purpose, because it is so smooth to paint on and so thick in substance. A great deal of white was used in painting the chestnuts to make them look raised up, and white should be used with all the paint.

No fine work should be put into these friezes, as the bolder the style the better for this kind of decoration. We bought our linoleum by the square yard, and cut it, which gave us a great deal of trouble. But since then the firm from whom we obtained it have begun to keep it for this purpose, and will cut it in long strips of exactly the length required, so that it only has to be joined at the corners. They also supply these friezes painted, and sell the wood moulding and prepared paste for fastening them up. They ought not to be varnished till after they are fastened upon the

wall. They take a high place in home decoration, as anything hand-painted is far more artistic and valuable than the most expensive paper. The hall ceiling was washed a pale Pompeian red. The furniture which looks best with this style of decoration is old oak, and we mean to furnish the hall with it, though at present we have not very much. We have a nice old settle and a black oak hall table, also an arm-chair, but we must wait for the rest till the ships come home! For the present our old dining-room chairs are used in the hall. They are made of strong wood, with rush seats, stained black; and are quite good still, and only required a new coat of staining before they began their new work!

Our hall window, which has a nice window-seat, looks north, and in the winter it requires a thick curtain. We made one out of the thick brown felt which is forty-eight inches wide. To give some colour to the bordering, we had a fringe made of Cameron pottery and crewel wool. It is quite new and very pretty, and is composed of a quantity of little tassels, which are sold separate at threepence three-farthings each. They are about five inches in length, and are made of yellow pottery and wool of all colours. Some people make their bordering of many colours, but I found the effect was best if only two sorts were used, and if they were arranged in twos. For instance, on the curtain I sewed two pale blue, then two orange, then blue again. That gives four colours in the fringe, as each tassel is composed of two. They should be sewn on with crewel wool of the same shades, and when used on muslin curtains it is as well to line the edge with a false hem. The hall curtains are looped back with bands made of the same pottery balls.

The window-seat cushions are made of thick felt, but when the summer comes they will have loose covers of chintz, and striped Syran curtains will take the place of the thick ones. Till we can get an oak umbrella-stand we use a high round one made of plaited rush, which cost six and sixpence. At each door is a pretty Smyrna mat, for which we gave half-a-crown. The stair carpets are dark blue Wilton, and the first landing is covered with the same, but for the other landings and passages we have used a material which I am very fond of, though I am not sure if it is called hemp or cocoa matting. It looks like plaited string. Ours is in two shades of buff, with a narrow black line between each. It cost one shilling and a penny the yard. The nursery floor is carpeted with it, but in front of the fire is spread a thick soft Axminster rug, at seven and elevenpence, and in the centre of the room a Barnsley crumb-cloth is laid down. A pretty paper decorates the walls: it was ninepence the piece, and is a well-drawn pattern of roses and jasmine in china-blue, upon a white-satin-looking ground. All the wood-work is enamelled white; it is rather more expensive than other kinds of paint, but can be washed for ever and ever, and wears for years. The blinds are of a pattern very like the paper, while the curtains are of white dimity, lined with a blue-and-white cretonne.

The furniture is of the usual nursery kind: two good deal tables, a toy-cupboard, a work-cupboard, an arm-chair on rockers, children's high chairs, &c. The doors of the cupboards are decorated with large bunches of blue corn-flowers and ox-eyed daisies, painted on the deal and French-polished. All the furniture is of polished deal; I like it better for a nursery than stained or painted wood. A tiny dresser stands at the end of the room, upon which the blue willow-pattern cups and saucers shine. The lower shelf is covered with a blue-and-white sideboard-cloth, which I bought for two and sixpence.

The Rainy Day.

BLEST drizzle that keeps prudent people
Shut tight in-doors,
And blots the town roofs and the steeple,
And builded shores,
Wipes out all bounds and limitations,
And leaves but vaguest intimations
Of his or thine! My old vexations
Depart by scores;
Abstract, I am, without relations,
Whene'er it pours.

What are to me the wretched changes
Of human life?
Here, hemmed by mists, my being's range is
All closed to strife.
Despair may tackle me to-morrow,
And I may share the whole world's sorrow,
Or others woe from me may borrow,
But not to-day,
The sphere I walk in is too narrow
To breed dismay.

The woods and fields I roam about in,
Wet as an eel,
At every step the water spouting
From toe and heel,
The traveling seeds of weeds and grasses
I furnish gayly with free passes,
They board me singly and in masses,
By hook and crook,
And, being of the clinging classes,
Cannot be shook.

But night comes on; I'm stiff and weary,
The storm grows rude,
The landscape all is wild and dreary,
And so's my mood;
The task assigned by the Creator
To me, as weed-disseminator,
Is done; I'm ready now my fate for,
And I would fain
A gust of wind exchange my state for,
Or drift of rain.

Roger Riordan.

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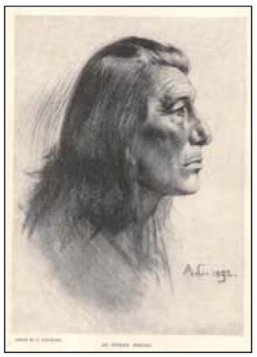
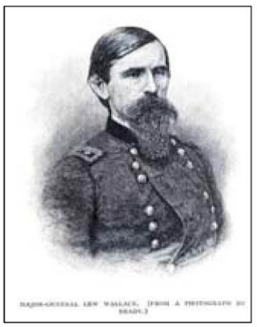
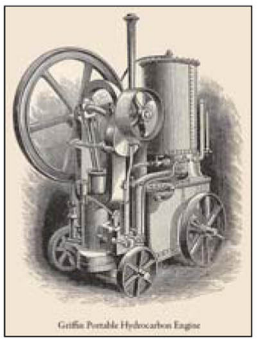


Native Americans

Eminient Victorians



The Civil War



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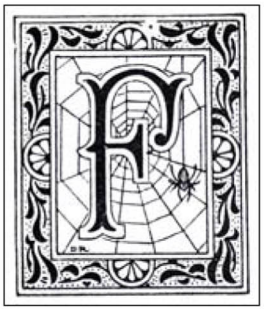

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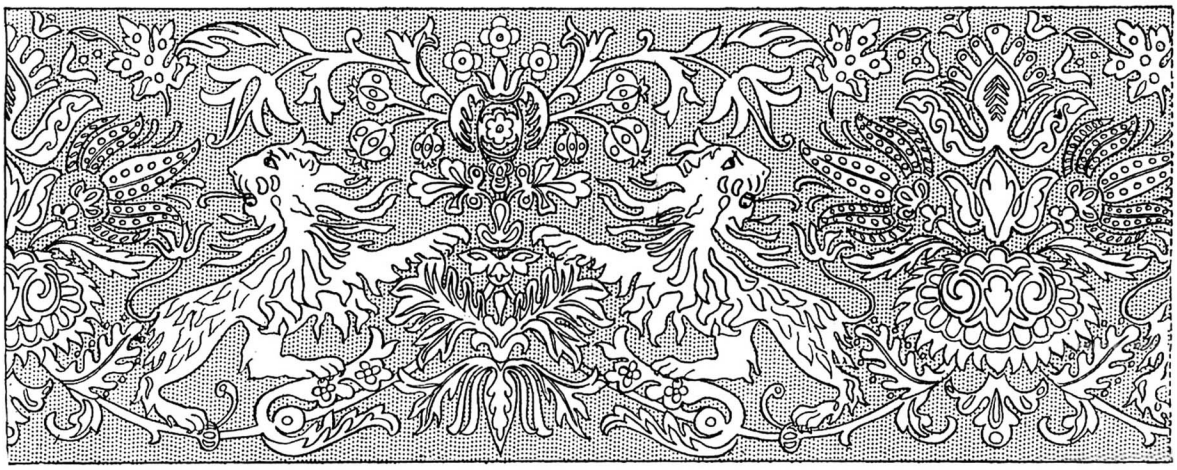


FIG. I.

RUSSIAN CROSS-STITCH EMBROIDERY.

THE subject of national embroideries is a very interesting one, and as an index to national character it is by no means to be despised. Unfortunately, as nations advance in civilisation these national embroideries—many of which are very beautiful—are too often lost. Here in England we have no special national embroidery of our own, but, like the French, we do all sorts and kinds of needle-work, ancient and modern.

In these days, too, Russian ladies do not restrict themselves to their national embroidery any more than Bulgarian and Hungarian ladies do to their own beautiful national embroideries. Russian cross-stitch embroidery, however, suits the Russian woman exceedingly well, though at first sight one would think just the reverse, for it would seem to require almost as much perseverance and industry as the tapestry of our ancestresses to cover entirely a large piece of linen like the sofa-back we are able to reproduce (Fig. 1.) with cross-stitch.

A second glance, however, will show the back-ground only is in cross-stitch; the design is simply worked in outline-stitch. And we may be quite sure very few and far between are the Russian ladies who will trouble to work the background themselves; they will either buy it worked or hand it over to some one else to do it for them.

The material on which this work is done is a coarse linen, unbleached; it can be obtained with designs traced on it, and the proper cotton, at Messrs. Friedberger's, 150, Brompton Road, who have some very handsome pieces of finished work. The cotton is very soft and not very coarse, and is sold in balls, which do not go very far, for it takes a good deal to ground a large piece of work; it is called simply Russian cotton, and can be had in black, yellow, and any shades of red and blue.

The design itself is, in most of Messrs. Friedberger's work, outlined in a rich thick silk, which has a very handsome effect; but flax thread can be used instead of the silk if preferred, and looks exceedingly well too. Outline-stitch is to be used for the design: the flowers, leaves, or animals are not filled in, they are, as it were, sketched in; just the principal veins of the leaves and flowers and markings of the animals are put in, all in outline-stitch, leaving the bare linen to represent the body of the design. The general effect, when finished, is of a *bas-relief* on a coloured background.

The background can be of any colour: black, yellow, red, or blue are the most effective, but

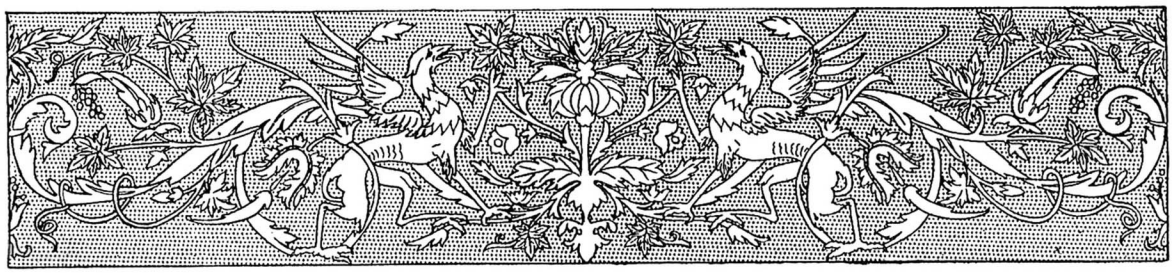


FIG. II.

there is really no hard and fast rule about it. The Russian national colours can be used ; but this is not *de rigueur*, as it is in some national embroideries. Very much depends, too, on the use to which the work is to be put : red makes a warm background for cushions ; yellow is very effective for sofa- or chair-backs, and black for mantel borders.

The cross-stitch does not look so even as the cross-stitch of Berlin wool work done on canvas, or as German cross-stitch done in coloured cottons on canvas cloth ; but this is one of the features of this work. All Messrs. Friedberger's designs are marked out in cross-bars, each square of which represents a stitch, so there is no counting of threads ; all that has to be done is to work a cross-stitch in each little square marked out for that purpose.

For the designs one or two colours are generally sufficient, simplicity being one of the characteristics of the work ; and, indeed, the general effect would be destroyed if too many colours were employed. Great care must be taken to keep exactly to the outline and to fill in all the markings accurately, as on this the artistic character of the work depends.

The subjects of the designs are all conventional : flowers and leaves when used are conventionalised ; the work would not lend itself to natural flowers well. Among the principal features of the designs are the animals which are introduced into almost every piece of embroidery ; of these, lions, griffins, and dragons are the most popular, and they are all highly conventional.

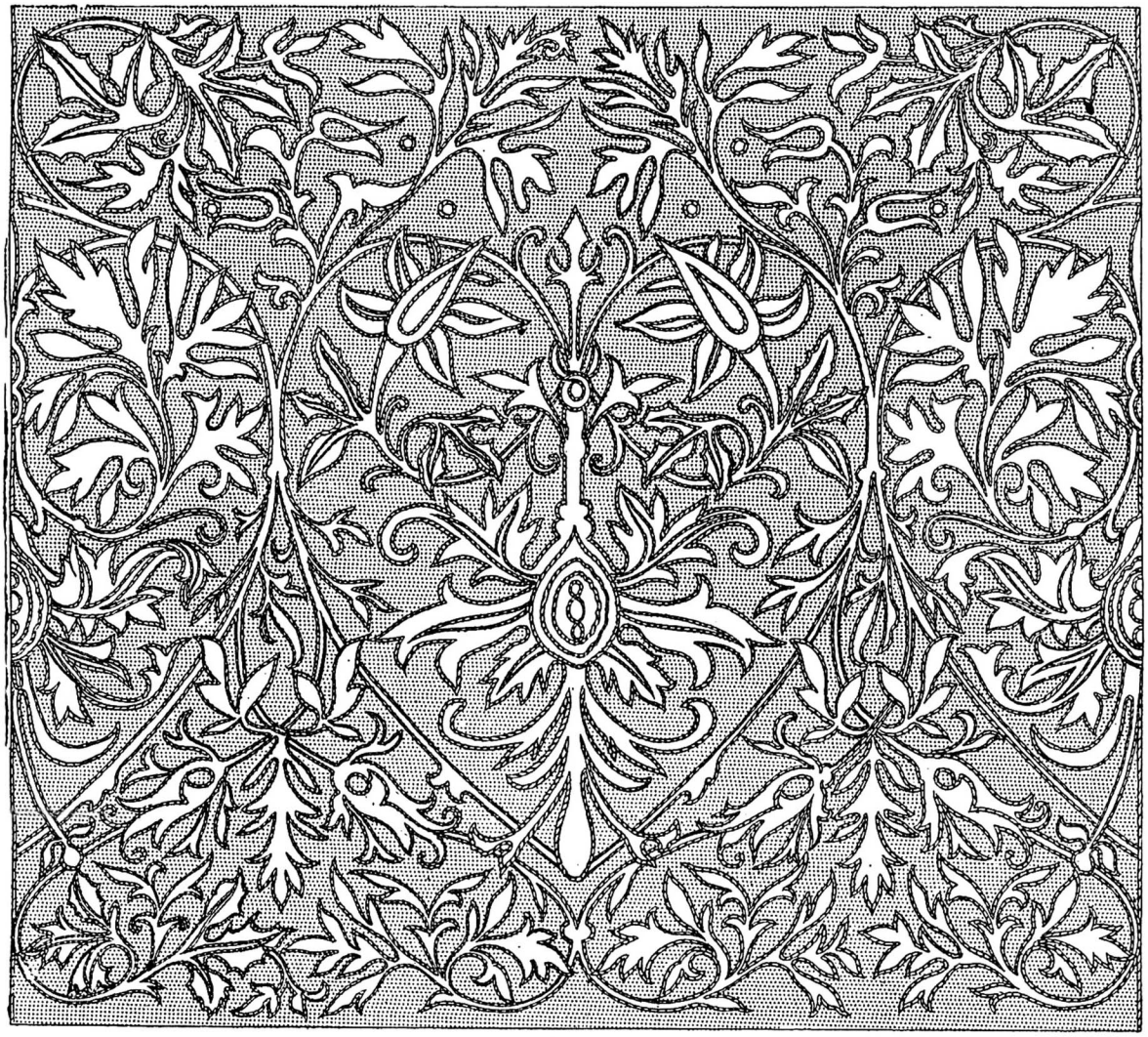


FIG. III.

One of the handsomest pieces of finished work at Messrs. Friedberger's was a sofa-back (Fig. I.). This is a very handsome design and contains the characteristic lions, which are produced in a conventional scroll reaching to the end of the design, which, as will be seen, is all highly conventional. The background is worked in cross-stitch in red Russian cotton, the design and the somewhat

FIG. IV.

elaborate markings in rather pale green silk. The general effect of this beautiful piece of work is excellent.

Another sofa-back (Fig. II.) was quite as effective, but had not quite so rich an effect. In this piece griffins are the creatures which make the principal feature of the design. They and the conventional scroll of leaves which proceeds from their wings—the emblem of their swiftness, as their lion-like bodies are emblems of their strength—are worked in red silk ; the very conventional vine, the leaves and grapes, and the conventional flower intertwined with it, are all worked in black silk, while the background is done in cross-stitch in gold-coloured Russian cotton.

The third design which we are able to reproduce is of a sofa-cushion, and is entirely conventional ; the design is worked in outline-stitch in green silk, the background in cross-stitch in red Russian cotton.

Squares which can be joined together for counterpanes and bedspreads can be had, and make very handsome objects. Tablecloths of various sizes are also to be had at Messrs. Friedberger's : these and the articles we have mentioned above are subjects for which this work is best suited ; it is less easily adapted to smaller objects. If preferred, designs for counterpanes can be traced on a large piece of linen, as it is made sufficiently wide for the purpose ; the squares, however, are much less fatiguing, as they are so much less cumbersome.

The square (Fig. IV.) is a very good size, as it just takes a good lion ; it shows clearly how the work is traced and done.

Peacock Transfer Embroidery Pattern
Ingalls' Home Magazine, 1888

Easy Lessons in Drawing and Painting.

CONDUCTED BY LIDA AND M. J. CLARKSON.

THE ART OF ILLUMINATION (Concluded).

THE limits of this department will scarcely admit of the detail upon which we might enter as to this interesting subject, we can only skim over the surface, just enough to give you the desire to dig deeper for yourselves, and fortunately this is a branch of study easily carried on when once the general principles are fairly understood.

We presuppose that you have already acquired some degree of proficiency in drawing and coloring, and so are prepared to face some of the difficulties of ornamental design and more elaborate work.

Landscape is a feature very often introduced for purposes of illustration, and is very effective when taste is displayed. We find much of it in good examples of both ancient and modern illumination. In these specimens, opaque color seems to have been used in preference to transparent color, that is to say, white is mixed with the tints, giving greater body and brightness. In this respect the mode differs almost entirely from the usual water color method, where opaque tones are studiously avoided. It will be seen at a glance that work of this kind must necessarily involve greater detail, and is intended for close examination, whereas water colors generally speaking show a handling exactly the reverse. Landscapes in illumination are built up by introducing one color over another. The effect is delicate in the extreme.

In examples of mediæval art, and it is always well to look to these for hints and helps, even if we do not follow in all points, we find the blue of a landscape sky delicately graduated with subtle effect, by this study of one color over another, the upper tints, however, being pure and unmixed. As a rule the upper tone is blue, leading gradually down to white at the horizon, broken perhaps by filmy clouds. Lights are emphasized with white, and shading in blue of a darker tone than the sky itself. Upon this blue sky the sun, stars or other luminous objects are often introduced, the rays of light emanating from them represented by a nimbus of gilt or gilded rays. This has a striking, yet a very beautiful effect. The sky in fact is the feature of the landscape, and should be so gently graduated in tone as to give an effect of calm repose. Pastoral scenes are for this

ILLUMINATED INITIAL.

reason very appropriate and suitable. As a rule the mountains and rugged scenery of these specimens would strike us as too pronounced, distances being given generally in stronger tones than we feel to be proper, but this we can modify to suit our own perceptions of truth.

High lights we find too, picked out in gold,

while distant buildings, such as towers and church spires, are strongly outlined against the sky. This is sometimes very effective. Another of the most pronounced features of illumination is the introduction of figures.

We find this description of the figure painting of illuminated manuscript of the fourteenth century. By close examination of manuscript of this period we find the utmost delicacy in delineation and tenderness in coloring faces. The painting is found to be laid in with white, and only the cheeks touched with rose color.

The eyes, nose and mouth are drawn in a delicate yet masterly manner, the hair with

ILLUMINATED INITIAL.

such skill as to be almost inimitable. Not so more modern specimens, which show much of the outline sketched in quite boldly with pen and ink, being quite elaborately shaded and stippled in strong tints, or else the vellum simply left for the flesh, the shading in brown or sepia, and the lights white.

The draperies and costumes of figures give ample scope for very effective and beautiful work.

We would advise the student to copy at first some good specimens, and to this end the following hints will be found useful. The first step will be the printing in of the text or type, which can be done ei glossy, black ink, a preparation o black, gum water and India ink, in blue inks. It is doubtless better to p these ready prepared for use than to mix them for yourselves. After t comes the large initial letter, to be t carefully, then the figure or landscape embellishes it. You must be careful your outlines as delicate as possible.

You may next proceed to the lesser all the outlines being made permane India ink well diluted. After this co coloring. If the vellum or paper d take the paint readily, a little powde gall may be mixed with the color. A ing should be applied first, as the bur should be done before the coloring.

You may then proceed with the c applying one tint throughout, wherev needed, as for instance, all the blues illumination, all the reds, etc., laid proper places. The solid colors la next proceed to shade and embelli finally if there is a figure or landsc may introduce that in the manner suggested, which will contribute the fi and most telling features of your wor

Having made a number of such copies, you will soon be enabled to for yourself. In conclusion we w some suggestions upon design from lar author, which will be of value branch of the work.

"I would advise you to make grea leaves in your design. Wonderful a fect as is all Nature's work, yet it as if the stamp of perfection and beauty were more strongly impres leaves than on any other of her prod The thousand changing forms of beau which she clothes the woods, the ba the very ground we tread upon, ough to all, especially to lovers of beauty an objects of the purest joy and delight.

"Make very frequent use of them in ing, but remember always that in them, it is of as much importance to h form and outline quite right and tru imitate or approach their varying col

"Remember also that their power better felt by a somewhat sparing th constant use of them, I mean as rega over-crowding your page, so that thou

Editor's Note - I apologize for the damage to this page, which occurred during scanning. Hopefully the gist of the lost material can still be gleaned from what remains.

may habitually employ many leaves you will have but few of each. Play your flowers and leaves about boldly and freely, putting them in like bright gems of color, just as you need them. If you want to introduce animals or birds, as for the sake of grotesqueness you may desire, do not trouble yourself too much about their species, or try to count all the spots on a leopard's coat before painting it. Let them tell their own tale simply and boldly, and it will not matter that they are not exact zoölogical specimens.

"Do not, however, go to the other extreme, and violate Nature's laws altogether, for neither is this allowable.

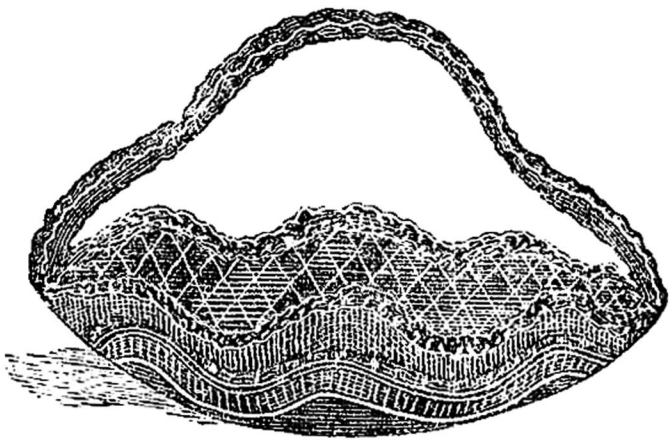
"Another rule of design is, that there should be a general purpose and meaning running throughout the ornamental detail. You should endeavor to carry out some idea, and to this end should reflect well. First, what idea you wish to convey; next, how and by what means you may best convey it.

"I will not say that your meaning will at once be plain to every one, but still the working with a deliberate idea in your mind, will give a unity and a completeness to your design, which will entirely be wanting to one worked out at random, or with a view only to prettiness, the rock upon which so many modern illuminators make shipwreck. Accustom yourself to ask, not 'is this pretty?' but, 'is it right?' and this habit will, I think, be a safeguard to you."

"Careful study of the best manuscript you have an opportunity of examining, will be a great advantage to you, as we have before remarked, in helping you to acquire a correct taste. Do not, however, let it deter you from attempts at original design. There are differences of taste the world over, but as long as you are persevering, and cling to the highest and best of aims in any branch of art you are always safe, and your work is almost sure to be crowned with success."

WORK-BASKET

BY MRS. JANE WEAVER.



Cut a round or oval of penelope canvas the size you wish to make your basket. Work any simple pattern in Berlin wool or bead-work to cover it. Quilt a piece of silk or satin the exact size of your work. Tack the two together, and sew as firm a wire as you can bend with your fingers round the extreme edge, bending it into the waved form of the model; then cover the edge with a ruche of quilled ribbon. Get a piece of plait or chip, and sew a firm wire on to it to form the handle. Cover it with the same material as that with which you have lined the basket, and put a ruche on the upper side.

FANCY BOXES—LARGE AND SMALL.

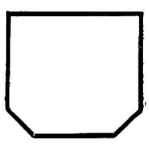
RUTH HUBBARD.

MANY have a horror of boxes, that is, the home-made kind, and no wonder, for a more forlorn looking article, to be classed in the category of fancy work, cannot be found than a box poorly made. We all have been disgusted and discouraged more or less with our attempts in this line. Try ever so hard, it seemed as though the box had seemingly no backbone, and no ribs, as if for want of proper strengthening, it had, so to speak, caved in and weakened in the joints. Now all this can be overcome if the proper material is used, and the work is done in the right manner. The first essential is heavy cardboard. This is the most important part of the box, for if ordinary pasteboard is used, it will soon have that dilapidated appearance which is to be avoided. Making a box is something like building a house. The foundation and frame play the important part, and though they may not show when the structure is complete, we know that the substantial character is due just to these good beams and walls. So with our box — no matter how elegant the plush, and beautiful the adornment, if the foundation and sides are weak, we will always look upon it with contempt, and handle it as though it might come to pieces at any moment.

A box that was made for the holiday season, and one which has elicited much admiration, not only from the ladies, but also from the sterner sex, will be a good one for us to take to pieces and see how it is made.

This box is made of bright olive marbleized plush, bordered with heavy chenille cord, pink in color. It was intended for a collar and cuff box, but was thought to be rather fine for that purpose, and being a little larger than necessary, it was promoted to the parlor and now adorns a little ebony table, and has an excuse for its existence, in that it holds stereoscopic views. Indeed, it is not a bad idea, to have a nice box for these views, where they can be kept together away from the dust.

This box is composed of eight pieces, and the measurements must be accurate. The top and bottom pieces are alike, only it is a good plan for the top which forms the cover to be made a trifle larger, so as to shut *onto* the sides. I have seen boxes where this precaution had not been taken, and in consequence the cover was always sinking in the box. These pieces are nine and one-half inches square; but the front is cut off on each corner. The back edge is nine and one-half inches long; the sides seven and three-quarters inches, and the front five and seven-eighths inches in length; the corners being cut across two and one-half inches, forming a shape like diagram. The side wall for back is nine and one-half inches long by five and one-half inches wide. The two sides seven and three-quarters inches long, same width. Front five and seven-eighths inches long, and same width. The two corner pieces two and one-half inches by five and one-half inches.



Now the pieces are all cut, and you will find

the best way in cutting, is to lay them all out with pencil lines and cut with a sharp knife.

The covering of the pieces is the next in order. Heavy Canton flannel is nice for this purpose, there being more body to it than ordinary silesia. Cut the material half-inch larger than pieces, then using linen thread, cover neatly by catching sides together. After this is done, take sheet wadding and put three layers smoothly on the other side of pieces, covering up the thread that holds the Canton flannel, and stretching thin muslin smoothly over this, of course remembering sachet powder. Now comes the lining; in this case it is a bright pink. The Canton flannel side of these pieces are for the outside, the padded side for the inner part. Instead of using cotton and satin, one could use quilted satin which is not expensive, and is very pretty and much less work than the other. The lining must have the edges turned in and neatly hemmed with fine silk. It is well when covering anything of this character, to pin the corners securely, so that the lining will not get all awry. Take the cover and put the plush on the Canton flannel side in the same manner as the lining, sewing with dark silk. Put the rest of box together, overhanding securely with very strong linen thread, fastening the sides to each other and sewing on the bottom last. You will wonder why the plush is not cut and put on each piece before joining; but this is the improvement, which forms a more finished piece of work. After the sides are all fastened — the box is complete, excepting the lid — take a tape measure and find the number of inches it will take to go all around the box, then cut the plush in one continuous piece that length, one yard long and six inches wide. You see this makes one joining only, and that can be on one of the back corners. A more economical way, if plush is limited, would be to cut it long enough for the front portions, and a separate piece for the back, making two joinings.

Just here I would like to say one word concerning plush. I find that this material, when made up nicely, is more satisfactory than satin. It wears fully as well, besides having such a pile, it will not show stitches, if neatly made, and admits of rich adornment without being gaudy.

Before we commence the decorative work, the under side of the box must be covered with dark green silesia. Next the cord; this is quite heavy, because the box being large, would not look well with a smaller cord. This outlines the lower edge as well as the cover. The back of cover is securely fastened to back of box. Two small bows on either corner, with a small loop fastened on the front beneath the cord, to lift the cover by.

The box has a painted vine of wild clematis around the sides, as well as a spray of same on the cover. Artistic license allowed the vine to be pink, instead of white as the vine is naturally. In painting on plush, if white and yellow are used freely in the high lights of the leaves, they seem to show up nicely, and have a prettier effect. If one cannot paint, embroidery will be quite as pretty only more work; the needle-work being completed before the plush is made up. There are many other pretty vines for decoration. The wild woodbine in Autumn colors, looks nicely on olive. The box is handsome with only the cord. If nice material is used, and the work is well done, articles made thus will always present a good appearance, and when made of smaller proportions, is suitable for gentlemen's collar and cuff box. Of course other colors are just as pretty. Peacock blue and lemon yellow, mahogany and cream color, or delicate apple green, all form pretty combinations.

FANCY BOXES—LARGE AND SMALL (Continued).

RUTH HUBBARD.

WITH good material and some ingenuity there is no end to the pretty boxes that can be made. All good workmen require good tools and material. If these requisites are lacking, the pleasure of working is gone, and that would be too bad, for when a person is making a thing of beauty, one likes to see it grow beautiful as it progresses.

A charming handkerchief box is made of olive and pink, though other contrasting colors are quite as pretty. Blue and cream, mahogany with salmon pink, or apple green, are all good combinations. Of course the bureau accessories have to be consulted and something in harmony with the prevailing color of the room is always appropriate. The size of our box is six by eight inches, and two inches deep. The pieces are covered separately, and the manner of working just the same as the box described in previous article. Only for a handkerchief receptacle it is well to have the inner portion of the box nicely rounded, and one can be very sure that the dainty linen will be well perfumed after it has had a sweet repose within its well sacheted walls. The cover is rounded quite high, and if wished, it can be easily converted into a pin-cushion. Jewel boxes are often made this way. Ten long scalloped points are slightly fulled on the edge of box over which the cover closes. These points are of plush, lined with satin, and pendant little pink tinsel balls hang at the lower parts and where they join at the edge of box. Right here are fastened pink silk tassels as long as the depth of the box. These are partly concealed by the plush points. This style of border is very pretty for the large pin-cushion. The cover is outlined with gold cord twined with pink ribosene. This material is very nice for this purpose. And now we are ready for the brush, *i. e.*, if the embroidery needle has not already done the decorative work. The cover would look well with two triangular pieces of plush and satin put diagonally across it, and then there would be no need of either brush or needle. However, our box happens to have a spray of old-fashioned grass pinks for its bit of suggestive sweetness. These are pretty and easily painted, though daisies are just as easy, and have the good quality of being satisfied to decorate anything and any color. Buttercups and wild grasses, as well as forget-me-nots are sweet little decorators.

An elongated box made similar, would serve for the companion glove box. Twin jewel boxes for holding bracelets in one and pins in the other, could be made square and placed diagonally together, with a bright bow where they join, and from which the covers lift, being fastened to the box only at that corner. These, of course, are well padded on the inside, and are better for jewelry when lined with chamois, which is used extensively just now for all decorative work. The top of cover is pretty made of this material, the edge hanging over in odd shaped points and squares, the whole either prettily painted or embroidered. This would be the easiest way to make these little cases. If plush is used, then the cover can be simply bordered with cord; or if a more elaborate trimming is liked, either a full ruching of silk or a fall of lace are appropriate.

A dainty, sweetly perfumed box for holding visiting cards, is very pleasant to have. Then when the lady of the house is in a great hurry, which she generally is when about to make her social calls, she will not cause a small cyclone to go through her *lingerie* and ribbons in a vain search for those dreadful cards; but will always have them ready to slip into her card case, "A place for everything," especially a sweet one, is more likely to have "everything in its place," than some corner, or old dilapidated box.

There are numerous boxes for bon-bons, stationery, etc., now made of grass, reed and willow. To say the least, these are pretty, and have one merit, in that they are easily trimmed; some needing only a gorgeous bow to render them elegant and attractive.

Other boxes, for shoes and scraps, made of wooden boxes, such as soap and cracker boxes, can be so wonderfully converted by using cretonne, sateen, raw silk with fringe, etc., that they will forget their former duties,

and rejoice in holding *Harper's* or perhaps INGALLS' HOME MAGAZINE, and condescend to take care of our shoes, or may be, hold baby's playthings. These make pretty window seats, and with the cover hinged, baby can open and make one dive, and rummage to her heart's content. For keeping one's periodicals in order, nothing can be better.

If closet room is scarce, a square box to serve as an ottoman, can hold the weekly mending and patches, stockings, etc., doing duty for that dreadful old terror — a patch bag. A window seat box can be covered on the side with Brussels carpet, and have a small sized Smyrna rug tacked on the top, looking quite like a Turkish divan on a small scale. Lincrusta is extensively used now in decoration, and when properly gilded and painted, is very handsome.

A long box for holding potted plants, when covered with this material, makes quite an addition to a bright sunny window. For the kitchen, there is the good old wood box, with its bright wall paper, and a box similarly covered, will not be amiss for holding dusters, brushes, etc.

One good woman we know, has a great faculty for converting her husband's cigar boxes (which he kindly bestows upon her when they are empty) into all sorts of pretty boxes, by covering them with embossed paper that comes in sheets, and which is really very pretty; but my advice is let cigar boxes alone, for no matter how much washing they get, that tobacco odor will somehow cling to them, and that is a perfume we poor benighted women do not, as a rule, like to have our dainty handkerchiefs and laces scented with; though we sometimes do have to inhale a little of the smoke. However, cigar boxes are very nice for holding the silver cleaning appliances, and tacks and hardware do not mind the smell at all, and even garden seeds will stay in there cosily.

The old-fashioned wooden chests, that our mothers and grandmothers all rejoiced in, when upholstered with springs and sateen, make comfortable seats, and their capacity is wonderful. What memories the dear old chests awaken; with what childish curiosity we handled the keepsakes and olden garments of a long bygone day, that they contained.

Table-Scarfs and Washstand-Splashers.

TABLE-SCARFS and bureau-scarfs are still popular forms of covering. A very effective table-scarf is composed of maroon felt cloth finished at either end with a deep fringe of felt, cut in very narrow strips. A bureau-scarf of cream momie has for ornamentation at either end two bands of dull blue plush bordering a twelve-inch insertion of loose meshed linen, which is embroidered in golden olives, partly filled in lotus blossoms, with buds and foliage in the same colors on a ground darned in with pale blue. The ravelled momie below the plush forms a fringe with a deep-knotted heading; bunches of blue and olive silk tied in with the ravellings brighten the fringe. A word as to the splashers; much handsomer than the Japanese splashers with their mechanically painted flowers, are the pretty splashers made of a breadth of Canton matting suspended by small gilt rings from a brass rod bannerwise, and, if desired, painted artistically with branches of wild roses.

IF you have any old cane-bottomed chairs which want re-caning, you may make the seats useful with thick colored wool twine. Cut away the old cane first, and thread a long stout darning needle with the twine. Knot the ends, loop it through the holes backwards and forwards, crossways from side to side, right and left, and, every hole being filled, work them back again, weaving as you would for cloth, so you must be very careful not to draw the threads very tight the first time over, or it is more difficult to weave. Finally, press the pair of threads together.

IF you care to have everlasting flowers for Christmas decorations, plant the seeds now. The helichrysums are the best. When the flowers open, they should be cut with a long stem, and hung head downwards in an airy place, and then put away free from dust in a dry place.

MY WORK BASKET.

ORNAMENTAL WORK FOR CLEVER FINGERS.

FIG. 1.—TRAVELLING AND SHOPPING BASKET.

A CHEAP plaited straw basket may be made exceedingly pretty by the addition of a trimming composed of eight pointed scollops, cut out of any piece of coloured *beige* or light cloth. The size round the top must be ascertained, and divided into eight parts, which will give the width required for each scollop. These scollops can be braided with bright contrasting colours. The pattern should be traced on tissue paper, and tacked on the cloth: the braiding is then an easy matter and the paper can be pulled away when the work is finished. The scollops should have a narrow band of black, or some dark suitable shade of cloth or velvet, sewn round the edge, leaving the same width of cloth beyond, worked with a braid on each edge, and pattern of cross-stitching in netting-silk. After attaching the scollops to the basket, a full ruche of satin ribbon is fastened round the top with a cord formed of twisted braids or wool. The tassels are made of wool with knitted silk tops. The handles of the basket are better made of string, as they are stronger than straw, and can be easily covered with ribbon, or strips of cloth, and recovered when shabby. Strings of the same ribbon as the ruche are stitched on at the handles and tied across the basket.

Fig. 3.

inside is slightly wadded. Sew four parts together, and add another for the bottom of the box; the sixth part forms the lid, the outside of which is covered with a pattern embroidered on canvas, and well wadded. The edge is trimmed with ribbon leaves and a thick cord to match. A frill of satin ribbon is neatly sewn on the upper edges of the box, and hangs loose at the bottom. The box is mounted on four gilt balls.

FIG. 3.—WORK BAG.

This bag is made of écru-coloured canvas, and *de laine* or merino to match; the bottom is a round of canvas 18in. in circumference, to which the bag of merino is fastened. The lower part of the bag is covered half way up by six pieces of the canvas cut in rounded scollops embroidered with narrow woollen braid in blue or violet. A closely-plaited ruche of blue *de laine* or fine merino trims each scollop. The bag is finished with a frill, and drawn with ribbon to match the ruches.

fancy work, but have not much time to devote to it.

The cushion is covered with the same material as the sofa and chairs, &c. The band of Penelope canvas, with designs cut out of brocade and worked on the canvas with fine yellow silk, gives it the appearance of hand embroidery. A running wreath, worked with shaded green silks for foliage, and blue forget-me-nots, greatly aids the delusion. The edges of the brocade are covered with a fine yellow silk braid, and each side is bordered with a bronze chenille crossed with silk of the same shade. The lozenges which appear on each side of the medallions are made of bronze-coloured merino, starred across alternately with yellow and blue silk. The outer edges of the band have a border of lozenges in the same style, but smaller in size. The face of the cushion may be made of bronze-coloured furniture

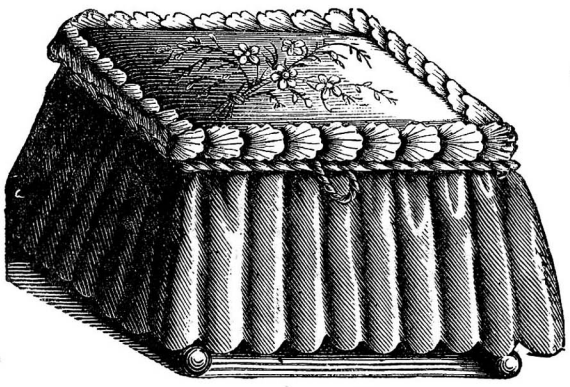


FIG. 2.—TRINKET BOX FOR TOILET TABLE.

The box is made of cardboard. Cut the board into six pieces, 5in. in length, and 3in. in depth; cover them with blue, or any coloured satin to match the toilet. The

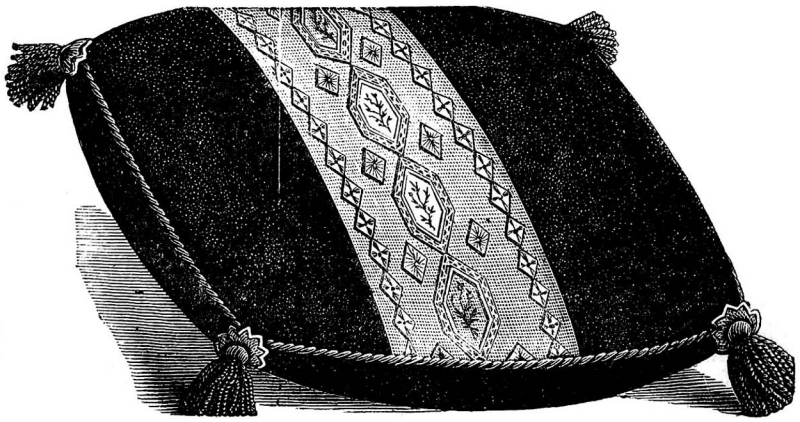
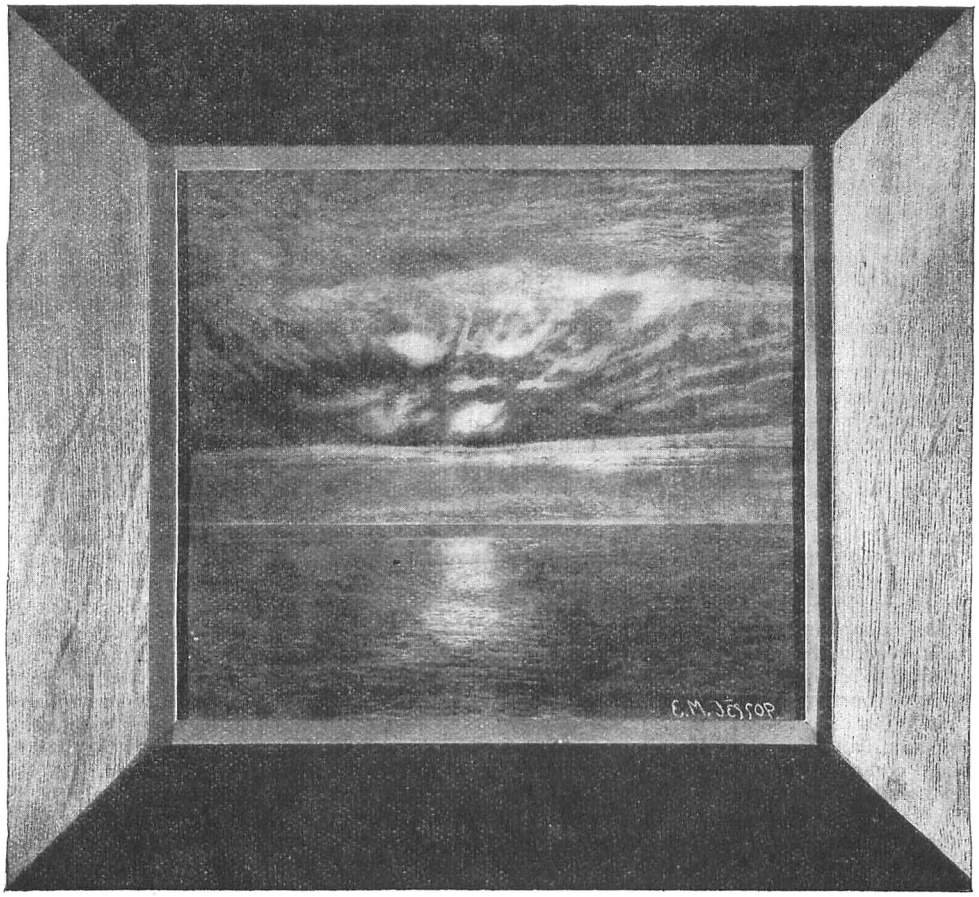


FIG. 4.—SOFA CUSHION.

The novel and effective band of embroidery on this cushion will be welcomed by our young friends who are fond of velvet, and corded with a thick twist of yellow and bronze. The tassels should match the colour of the cushion, and have good silk tops firmly sewn on each corner.

BURNT WOOD DRAWING.

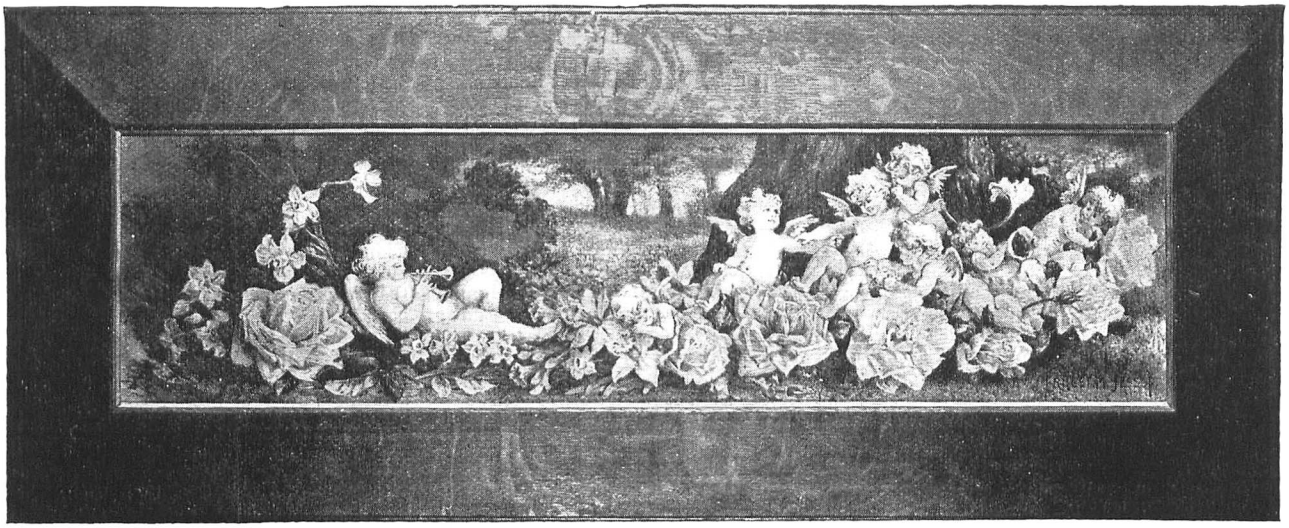


SUNSET OVER THE SEA. (*Burnt wood drawing in oak frame, by E. M. Jessop.*)

Of all the graphic arts this is probably the most useful and durable. Under its old but ridiculous title of "poker work" it has flourished from time immemorial; gifted by some unknown genius with the modern name of Pyrography, it bids fair to become a universal favourite among the amusements of art-loving amateurs, but, owing to want of support, has not hitherto been much adopted by the professional artist who alone possesses the graphic skill, the power of technique and the breadth of execution which would do justice to such a beautiful art.

When we consider that nothing but fire or wanton mischief can really damage the pictures which may be produced in this work, and that the original cost of the materials for its production is so very slight, one marvels that so fine a medium for wall and furniture decoration has been so much neglected.

In the specimens which I have recently had the honour to submit to H.R.H. The Princess of Wales, and which she was pleased to greatly admire, the materials used were of the very simplest. To be epigrammatic, were I asked how I did them, I could only reply,



A SUMMER IDYLL. (*Burnt wood drawing in oak frame, by E. M. Jessop.*)

"With a few boards, two old chisels and a little intelligence."

So now to our wood-work's foundation. In the first place never commence a drawing on any but sound, well-seasoned wood, as nothing could well be more trying to the temper than seeing the result of a month's work curling up like a roll of paper or splitting across in a manner which places it beyond repair. Any good whitish wood is suitable for burnt drawing; holly on account of its close grain being the best, but, like the best of everything, holly of the width required is also the rarest of woods. Next to holly comes sycamore, a fine hard wood; then chestnut. In one of the specimens here illustrated (the child's head) I have used an old drawing-board made of poplar with beech clamps at either end. Never use wood of less than three-eighths of an inch in thickness, the thin plaques sold by most shops being quite useless for works of any size on account of their liability to split and cockle. By the way, the cockling of a wood drawing can to a certain extent be remedied by exposing the concave side to heat and leaving it to cool between two flat surfaces with heavy weights on top.

And now to our tools. For drawings of any size suitable for the doors of cabinets or rooms, plaques to insert in oak dadoes, etc. (and it is in these we shall get our finest effects), the little machines heated by spirits of wine and other mediums are not of much use. It is, in fact, like using the smallest sable brushes for fresco painting. For my own work I mainly use wood-carving tools. The broadest chisels and gouges are the best, and the thicker the steel the better the tool, as it retains the heat for a longer period. Again, I always heat my tools in an ordinary coal fire, but it should be quite possible to get a small gas stove to give all the heat required in a perhaps more convenient manner.

I might here mention that your most used tool, which should be a broad blunt chisel, say three-quarters of an inch in width, ought to have its sharp corners carefully ground down before using it, as it is otherwise liable to burn ugly little black spots on the drawing.

With these explanations we will now proceed to the drawing itself, and here it is necessary to give a very strong caution at the outset; this is, always bear in mind that whatever marks you burn on your wood must absolutely remain there. There is no way of rubbing out, and to erase with a knife is to spoil the surface of your wood, as you cannot draw properly over a scratched surface. For this reason also you can only copy either your own or other people's drawings in burnt wood-work.

Having selected your copy first draw a careful pencil outline from it on the wood plaque. We will here, for example, say it is the drawing of the child's head reproduced. Heat a small tool sufficiently to mark a very light brown line on the wood (to ascertain heat keep a small piece of waste wood by your side), then carefully go over the outline of the head and mark in all the features. Now with soft india-rubber erase all pencil marks from the parts you have burnt, and make a fresh pencil indication of the shape of your shadows, and proceed slowly and carefully with the hot tool to build up coat by coat from the lightest to the darkest these same shadows, never forgetting that lights cannot be applied afterwards, but must be left out. A darker shade can always be added, but a light never. Now once more remove your pencil-marks and proceed to draw in your figure in the same manner as above described. Next comes the background to be lightly sketched in by the hot irons; and, after this, all pencil-marks may be removed and the picture carefully worked up tone by tone from the copy.

In holding the tools (the handles of which may be covered with cork, or some non-conductor), it is necessary to remember that they should never be used to make pen-like strokes, but more of a pastel effect must be sought, as the soft-blurred appearance produced by gently drawing them along the wood gives the effect of old carved ivory, which is one of the chief charms of a fine burnt wood drawing. For instance, in the drawing of "Sunset over the Sea," I spent many hours in simply drawing a heated chisel slowly along the wood from end to end until I got the yellowish tone which now goes so well with its green oak frame. Here and there a white light had to be left. Its position was indicated to me by a pencil outline. For this drawing I had no sketch, it being entirely executed from memory. The main difficulty was to get the flat tones, without which it is impossible to indicate atmosphere and distance.

FRIVOLITY.

(*Burnt wood drawing in ebony frame, by E. M. Jessop.*)

In the "Summer Idyll," given on the opposite page which is in size some thirty-six by ten inches, a great deal of the background effect was produced by using a small gas flame. This has to be done very slowly and carefully, as one is apt, if at all careless, to burn too deeply into the surface.

In conclusion, I may say that burnt wood drawing to be properly done requires both time and thought, it being a much more satisfactory result to produce one fine specimen by a month's labour than several odds and ends, which can only be compared with the daubs so often exhibited in shops as "painted by hand."

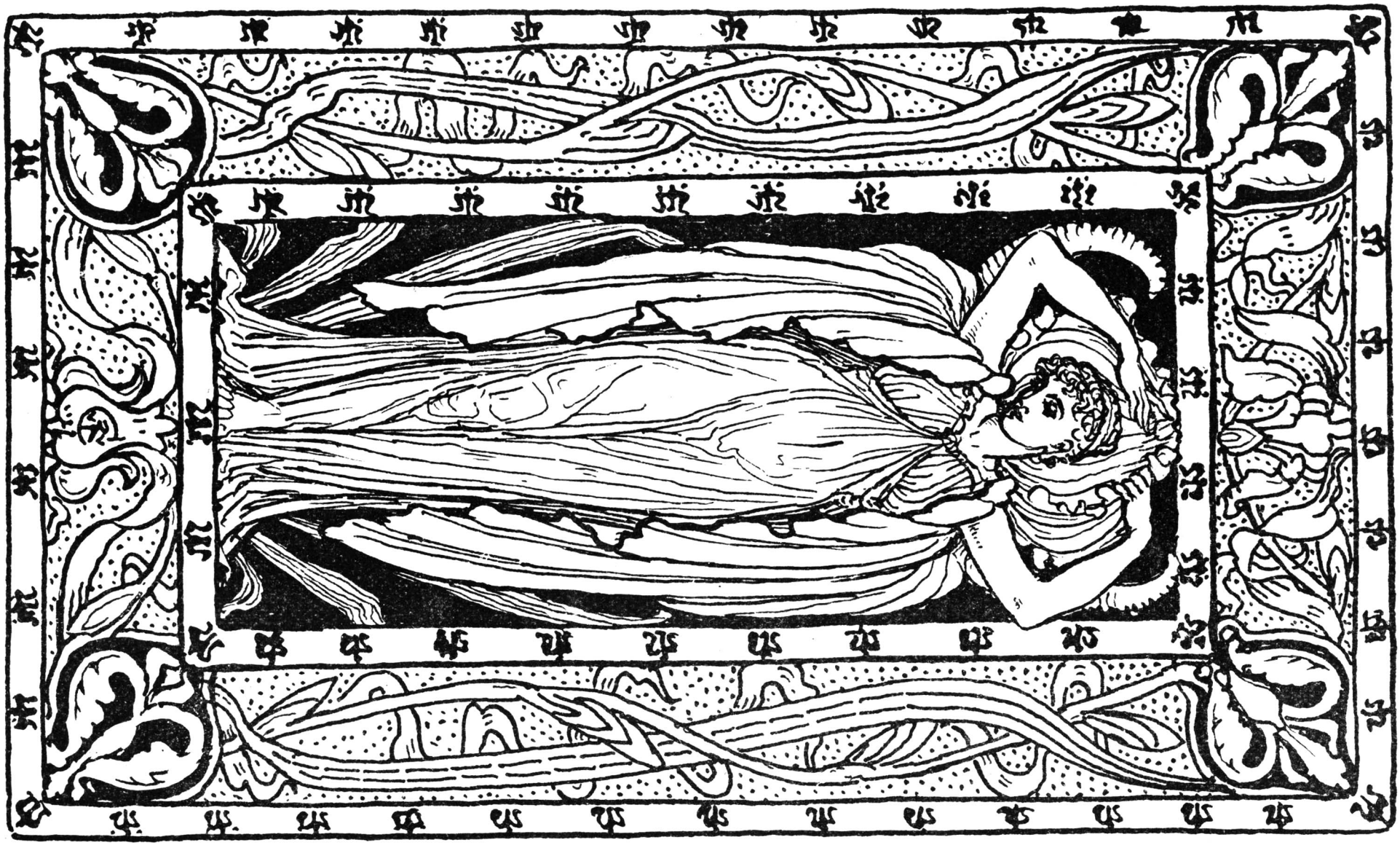
As to the applications of burnt wood work they are practically endless. Look, for instance at the mouldy, rickety, ill-designed, so-called antique chests so often sold at four times their original cost. For a very small sum a good carpenter will make you a really serviceable article with a framework of oak and white wood panels, which you can decorate with hot irons in such a manner as to make a truly beautiful piece of furniture. Again, for corner cupboards and cosy corners, panels of doors, etc., where is its peer to be found?

My last word is try but one carefully executed plaque, and I feel sure that you will not rest until you are making your home truly beautiful.

ERNEST M. JESSOP.

*** The original drawings from which these illustrations are taken were recently exhibited by desire to H. R. H. The Princess of Wales at Marlborough House, and H. R. H. was pleased to say that she had derived great pleasure from her inspection of them.

"Fleur de Luce," from *Nature in Ornament,* by Lewis Day, 1892



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