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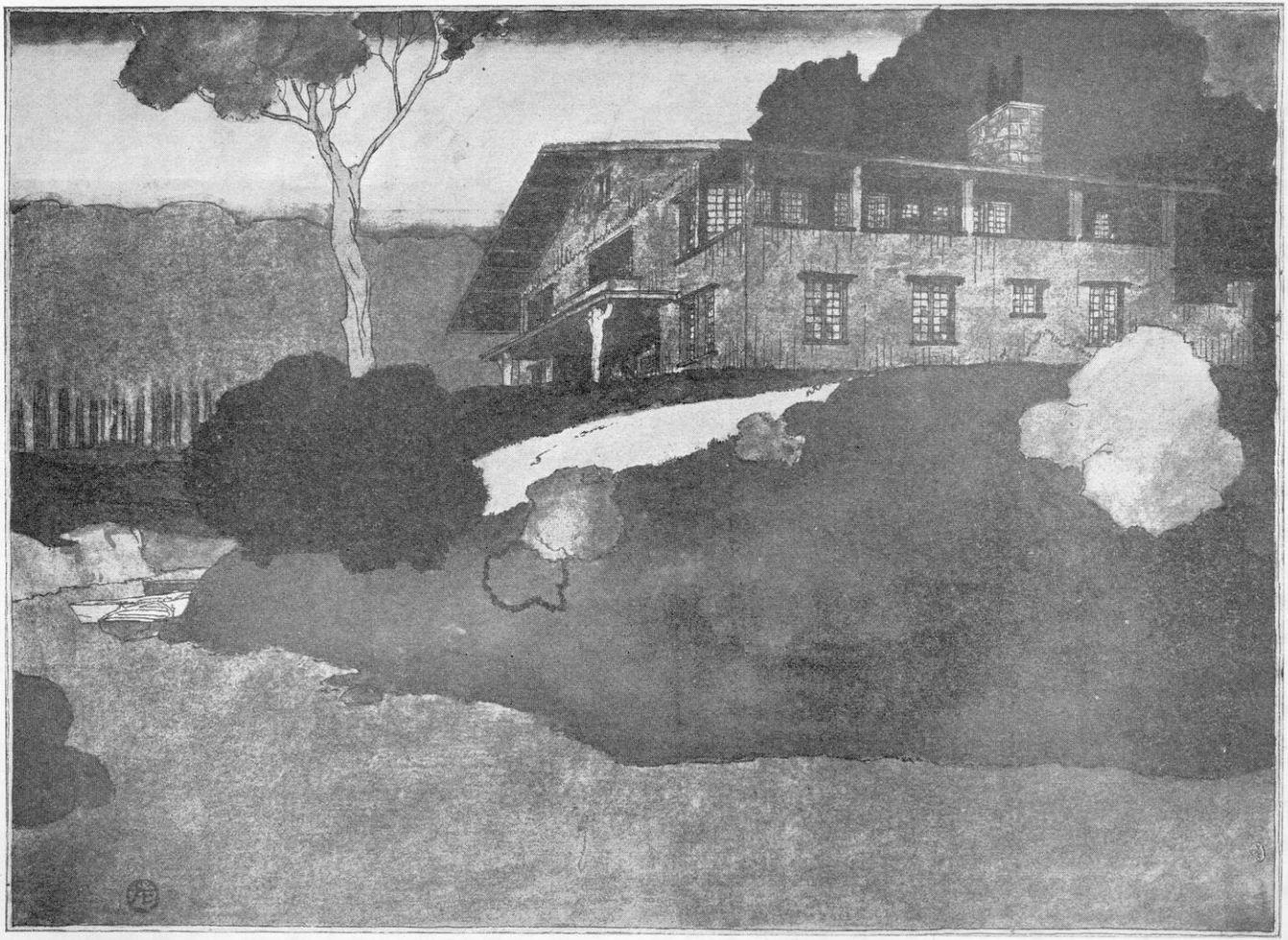


An Adirondack Camp

# THE CRAFTSMAN

Vol. IV July, 1903 No. 4

## L'Art Nouveau: An Argument and Defence

Translated by Irene Sargent *BY JEAN SCHOPFER*

THERE appeared in The Craftsman for December, 1902, an interesting article upon *l'Art Nouveau,* signed by Professor A. D. F. Hamlin of Columbia University. From the point of view of documentation: that is the citation and comparison of authorities, the article is remarkable, and leaves little or nothing to be added. Furthermore, every man of taste will concur in the criticisms of detail made by Professor Hamlin. The eccentricities, the errors, the atrocities even (for example, the *Cartel Bérenger*) which have sheltered themselves beneath the banner of *l'Art Nouveau* have found in this writer a severe judge, who must be praised for his decisions.

But it is precisely because we agree with him upon almost all points of detail, that we note with regret the judgment which he passes upon the movement as a whole. It would seem that the subject which he has treated might be resumed from a different and more extended point of view. The revival of the decorative arts now in progress, is a thing so important in itself, that one may return to it without fear of exhausting the material. In this so important, so vital question of the existence of the decorative arts, and in view of the immense riches and infinite variety which are contained in these words, it is necessary to coördinate our ideas, to question the past intelligently, to investigate the life and development of the decorative arts, at the time when there was still an art of decoration. This is the task now before me. And the historical study of the question will lead me to conclusions diametrically opposed to those reached by Professor Hamlin. The preliminary examination of the objections made by my opponent, which are those often formulated in the criticisms upon *l'Art Nouveau,* will establish the premises of the debate.

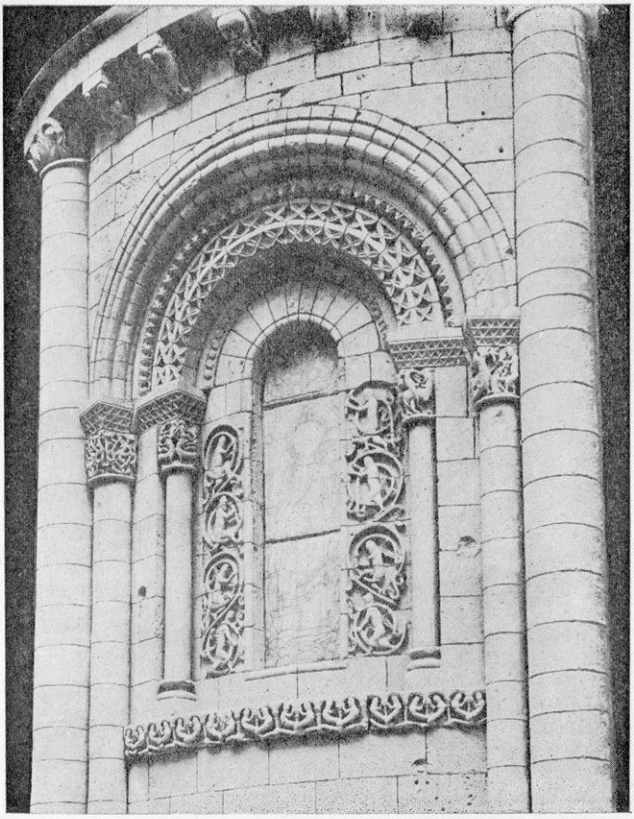
I quote: "*l'Art Nouveau* is chiefly a negative movement; a movement away from a fixed point, not toward one. . . . It must acquire and represent positive principles. It must point toward a single, recognizable goal, if it is to live."

I reply: I am ignorant of any single, recognizable goal toward which aimed and moved the decorative styles of the past.

When the mediæval sculptors in the eleventh and twelfth centuries succeeded in creating an admirable decorative style, the richest perhaps that has ever existed,—the Romanesque—I do not believe that they set themselves these singular questions: "Whither are we going?" "What is our aim?" Such is not the natural course of things. These sculptors belonged to an age which had a certain taste for ornamentation (this is a very important point), and, further, they held direct traditions (a second and equally important point, as we shall see when we reach our own time). At present, when we study the history of this style, we say: There were then barbarous influences, the art of an iron age, and Byzantine influences. Behind these, we find Oriental influences, Persian, Assyrian, and others. Finally, there were Roman influences. But in saying this, we are assuming the task of the erudite. The Romanesque sculptors were ingenuous. They had no idea whence they came, and they knew not whither they were leading art. They would have been greatly astonished, had one asked them to indicate the goal at which they were aiming; and astonished to a still greater degree, if they could have been shown the Gothic decoration which followed their own style.

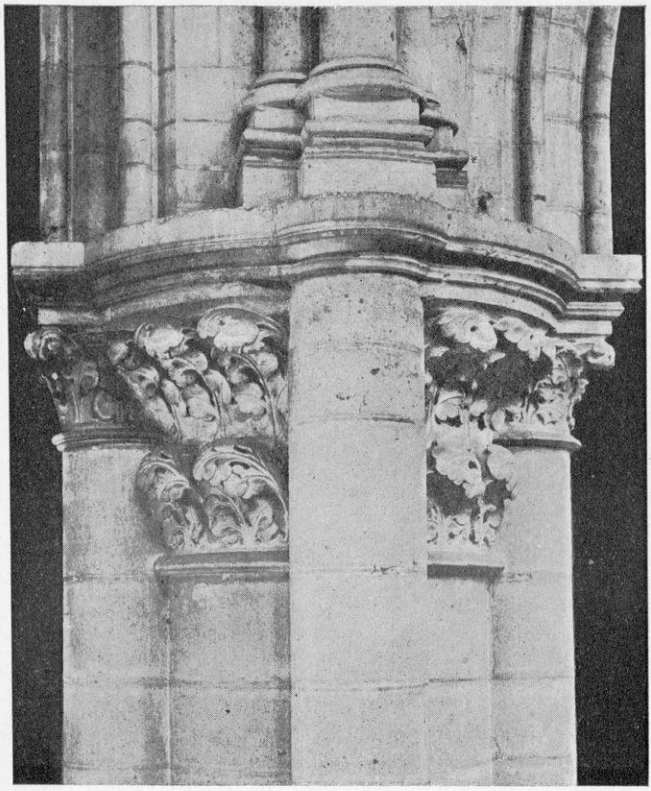
One has not the right to command *l'Art Nouveau* to point toward a single, recognizable goal. It will be the proper task of our descendants, when a century shall have passed, to study *l'Art Nouveau* historically; to analyze the different influences which have acted upon it, and to show its accomplishments. As for ourselves, we can not read the future.

Professor Hamlin is right when he notes the revolutionary character of *l'Art Nouveau*. Nevertheless, it is evident that there are restrictions to be made; that many artists, Mr. Ashbee in England, M. Dampt in France,—to cite these few only—receive their inspiration,—and often in a happy manner,—from the styles of the

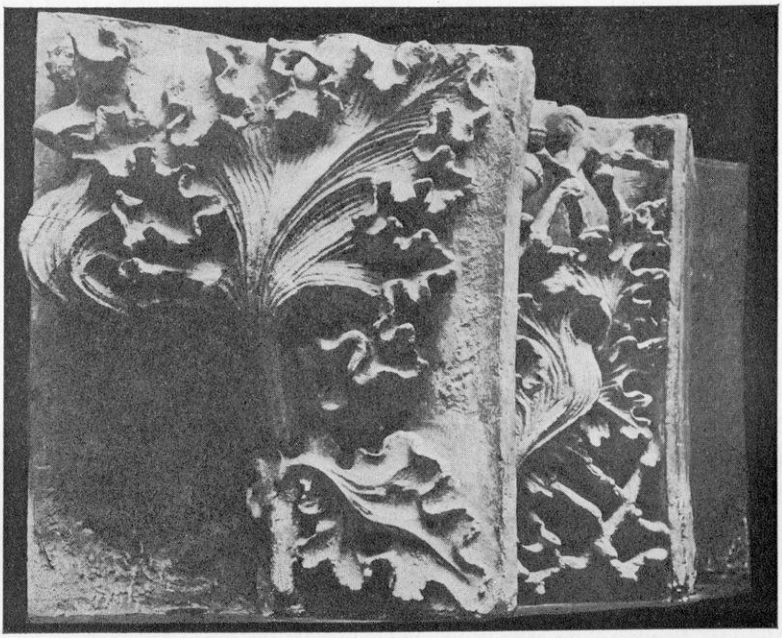


Window : Saint Pierre d' Aulnay ; beginning of twelfth century

Moissac : Capitals of the same period, in the Romanesque style ; grotesques, birds and figures in the scrolls



Capital from Notre Dame, Paris, thirteenth century



Keystone of a window-arch from Notre Dame, Caen, fifteenth century: Gothic decoration; foliage studied from nature and rendered with extreme truthfulness

Middle Ages. I know that these styles are little favored by the best architects of our day, and, least of all by those who have received the high culture of the *Ecole des Beaux Arts,* where the accomplishments of the Middle Ages are not honored. But Professor Hamlin is too learned not to appreciate the beauty and richness of the Romanesque and the Gothic decorative styles.

Still, it may be affirmed that, at the beginning (a thing no longer true), *l'Art Nouveau* was distinctly revolutionary. For what reason? And should we attach the blame of this fact to those men who have sought to renew the decorative arts? This is a question of prime importance and to answer it, we shall be forced to take our readers upon a short journey through the history of art. But I believe that from this excursion we shall bring back general ideas of importance, and that we shall be then in position to judge impartially *l'Art Nouveau* and the revolution; since in truth it attempted such a movement.

The sculptor, who, in the twelfth century, worked upon one of our Romanesque portals, upon that of Moissac, or that of Saint Pierre d'Aulnay, sought to satisfy a personal taste for decoration, which was also the taste of all the men of his time. His technical education, which he had received from the master sculptors, under whom he had served his apprenticeship, had refined and perfected in him this innate taste for certain decorative forms. He varied up to infinitude scrolls, rosaces, fantastic animals. For nearly two centuries this taste persisted. Then, there ensued a certain lassitude: the flowering had been so rich that in some measure it had exhausted the field. The interlaced ornament, the rosaces and the fantastic monsters had been carried to perfection. It became necessary to modify the decorative forms, under penalty of falling into repetition and imitation, and of telling with constantly diminishing originality what had already been excellently expressed.

Then arose a new style to which I shall allow the name of Gothic. On one hand, monumental sculpture, whose beginnings in the Romanesque period were already grandiose, attained its fullest development in works which have no rivals in history, except those of the Greeks. On the other hand, ornamental sculpture was clearly evolved.

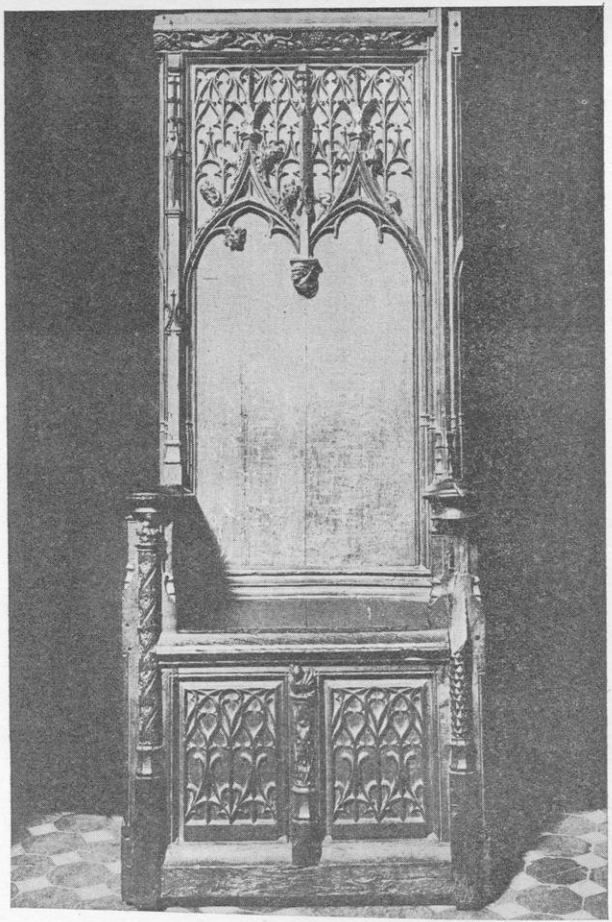
Where did it seek the new forms of which it had need? In the realm of Nature. Instead of the geometric designs, interlacings and monsters, there burst into life on the capitals of the clustered columns of the Gothic churches, crowns of foliage, the models of which the sculptors had found in the woods and meadows. In the plates accompanying my article I give capitals of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is an art possessing other beauties than those of the Romanesque art, and it is nearer to Nature. It was by returning to the inexhaustible mother of all beauty that art found a new youth.

In its turn, Gothic art became exhausted. It repeated itself. It prolonged its existence upon formulas. It died. But even in its death agony, it produced decorative works of great richness. Of these I shall cite only the tombs of the church of Brou.

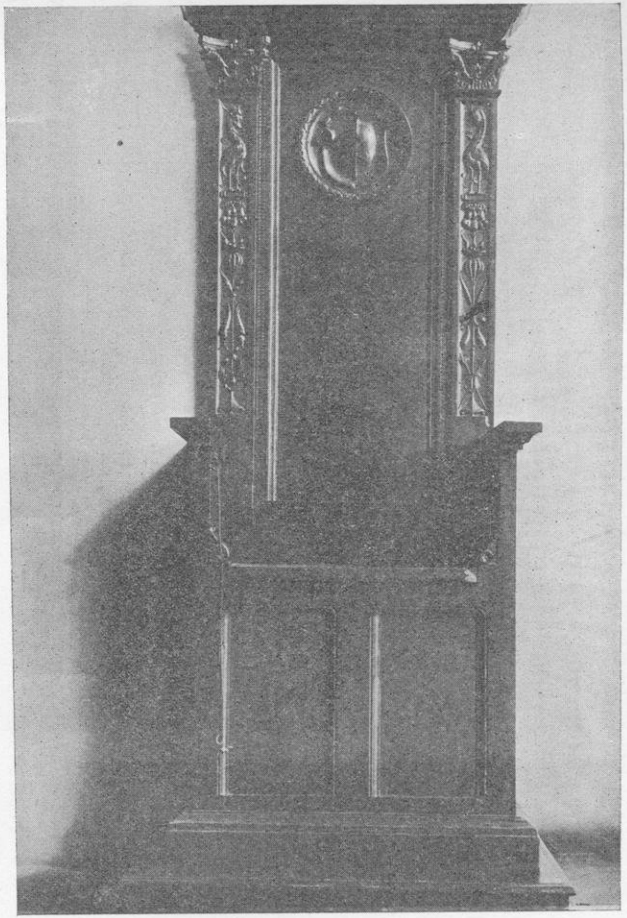
Its death was not, however, a natural one. It was hastened by the coming of the Renascence.

If there was ever a revolution in the world of art, it was the Renascence which occasioned it. And I question the right of architects and professors of architecture to speak severely of revolution: they who, for four centuries have been subsisting upon a revolution the most complete, the boldest and perhaps, if all be considered, the most disastrous to architecture that the world has ever seen. But at all events, there was a revolution. To infuse blood and life into the impoverished Gothic art there was no return to Nature, such as had been made by the sculptors of the thirteenth century, at the decline of the Romanesque. No, instead, recourse was made to an art disinterred from excavations, and which had been extinct for more than thirteen centuries,—to the antique: not indeed to the admirable Greek art, but to one which was in itself but an imitation, at best mediocre—to the art of the Romans.

Yet for a long time, the forms remained Gothic. Decoration conformed itself to the Renascence. In this connection I give several models of chairs which show upon a Gothic structure arabesques copied from the antique. But from so many centuries of original work, there remained a sense of proportion, valuable habits of craftsmanship, and inventive faculty: the component

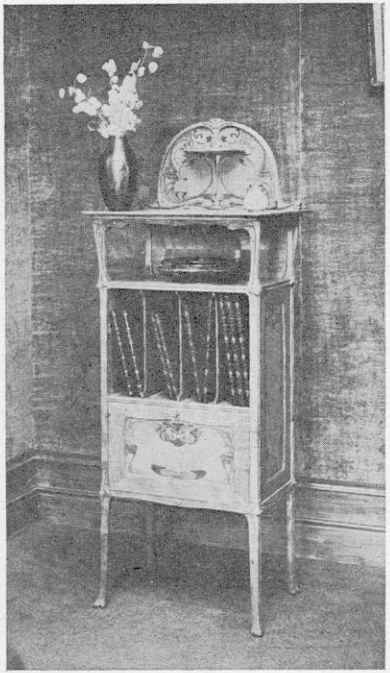


Chair from a nobleman's mansion, Gothic, fifteenth century



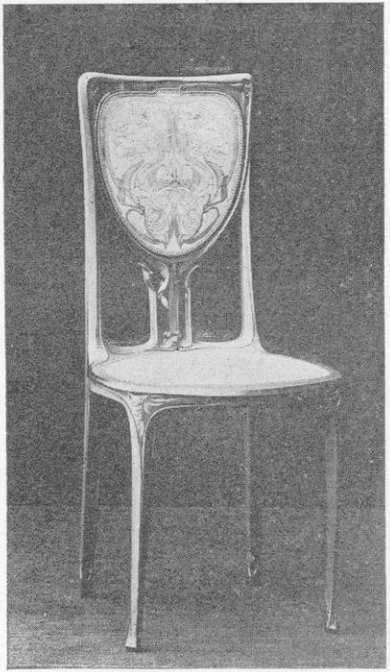
Chair from a nobleman's mansion, Renascence, sixteenth century

The chair remains structurally the same. The only changes consist in the arabesques in the classic style and in the composite capitals which replace the Gothic architecture



Buffet: *art nouveau*. It may be stated here that the title of *Art Nouveau* was devised by Monsieur S. Bing, who gave the name to the building in the *rue de Provence*, Paris, where he installed a number of artists desirous of producing decorative work. *L'hôtel de l' Art Nouveau* has remained the most active center for the propaganda of the revival which is now in progress. This buffet is well designed, and is not in the least revolutionary. It is a substantial and elegant piece of furniture.

Music cabinet, (Maison Bing); orange wood, with inlay in natural woods.



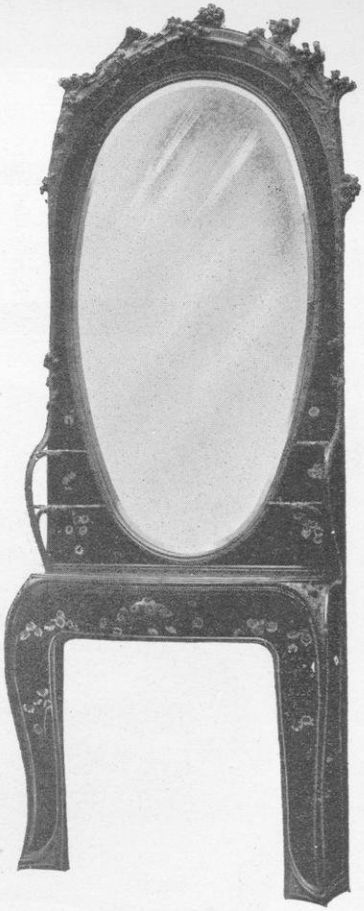
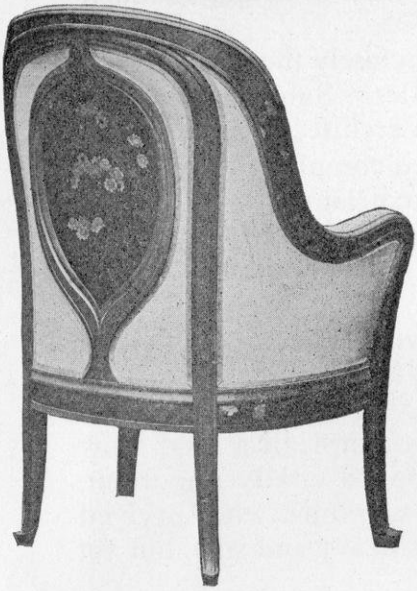
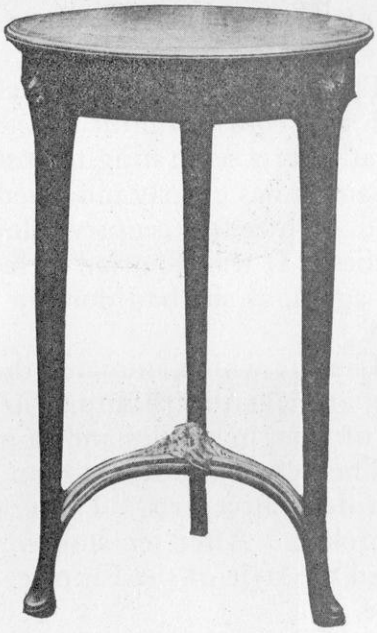


Table in orange wood (Maison Bing), with inlay in natural woods

Reception chair (Maison Bing); carved and gilded wood, tapestry *au petit point* (a stitch by which the needle takes up a single thread). All these examples of *l'Art Nouveau* have, in common, a certain element of refined elegance, and of ingeniously designed arabesque ornamentation





Boudoir furniture by A. Charpentier; light boxwood with inlay of natural woods. In these pieces the ornament is more realistic; the flower *motifs* are rendered with exactitude. Further, from the architectural point of view, it is to be noted how closely the arm chairs resemble Louis XV forms. The ornament is everywhere applied with delicacy and charm. Music cabinet by A. Charpentier in cherry and oak, with applied ornaments in gilded bronze

parts of the French Renascence in which there is withal so much liberty, ease and grace.

Then, the desire of approaching more closely the antique produced the cold magnificence of Versailles. Subsequently, the decorative arts separating themselves from architecture, as Professor Hamlin has clearly indicated, recovered complete liberty, and, in the eighteenth century, flourished luxuriantly in all their branches. It was a period rich in grace, delicacy and refinement. Once again, as she had done in the Middle Ages, France led the world.

The life which animated the decorative arts, revealed itself in all departments: in furniture, in tapestries, in the crafts of wood as those of iron, in textiles and in porcelains.

Then came the Revolution of 1789, which dealt a fatal blow to the decorative arts. The craft tradition, so vitally important, was broken. After ten stormy years, the workmen who survived created the style of the Empire, oftentimes heavy and stiff, but yet a style.

And since that time, since 1815, what have we had?

Nothing, absolutely nothing.

The honest mediocrity of Louis Philippe, the plush horrors of the Second Empire.

The decadence was as general as it was complete. But as there was always an opulent class who demanded luxurious furniture and *bibelots,* artists proceeded to do what had never been done in any creative period: they copied old models, and, above all, the admirable models of the eighteenth century. I well know how perfectly legitimate it is to draw inspiration from works of the past; but there is a wide abyss fixed between copying a work, and drawing thence inspiration in order to create anew.

In the nineteenth century decorative artists and craftsmen copied literary, servilely, and, soon, in order to procure low-priced models, the machine was taught to replace the workman. If a millionaire in New York, London, or Paris, wished a costly desk, he was told: "Very well, you shall have the original desk of Louis XV., which is preserved in the museum of the Louvre. And we shall imitate it so perfectly that only connoisseurs will be able to

distinguish it from the model. You desire furnishings for a *salon?* Why should we weary ourselves in devising graceful forms for cabinet-making? Have we not Louis XVI. *bergères,* Louis XV. armchairs and *Régence* chairs, which are the extreme of elegance? It is useless to seek farther."

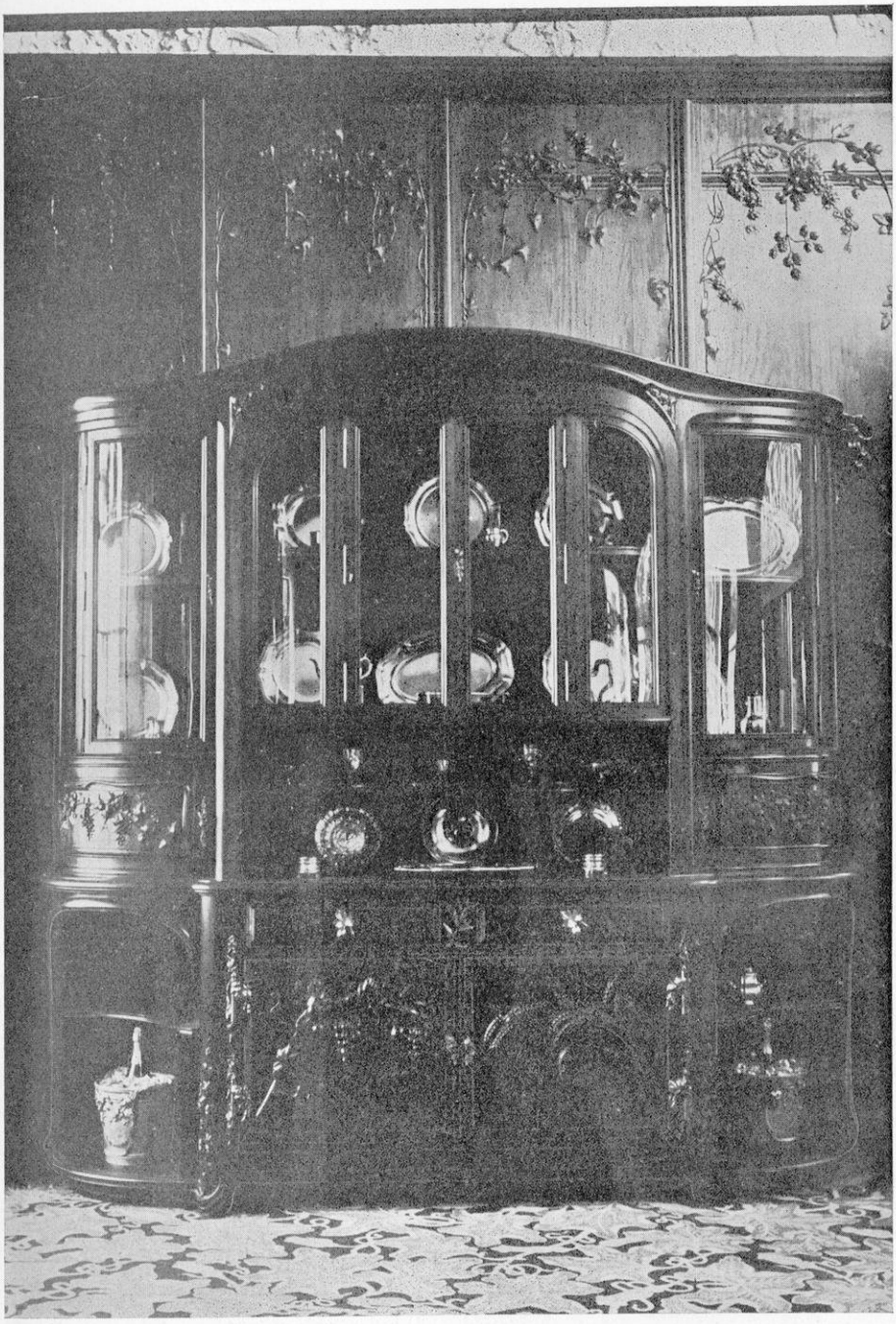
And no farther search was made. The decorators did not weary of copying. There were imitations which were costly, and those which were cheap. Louis XV. *salon* furnishings were sold at three hundred francs; Henry Second dining-rooms at three hundred fifty francs; and to complete the apartment, there were added a Louis XVI. bedroom and a Louis XIV. settle for the antechamber. The results were horrible. Imitation dishonored styles beautiful in the originals.

This state of things was general. For such decadence, the architects have a heavy responsibility. They also erected for us modern houses of which the decoration revealed no inventive quality. They repeated, like workmen, over and over again, the same decorative themes. In this connection, the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* has had the most disastrous influence. I know nothing poorer and more mediocre than the architectural decoration of the greater part of our apartments, whether simple or rich.

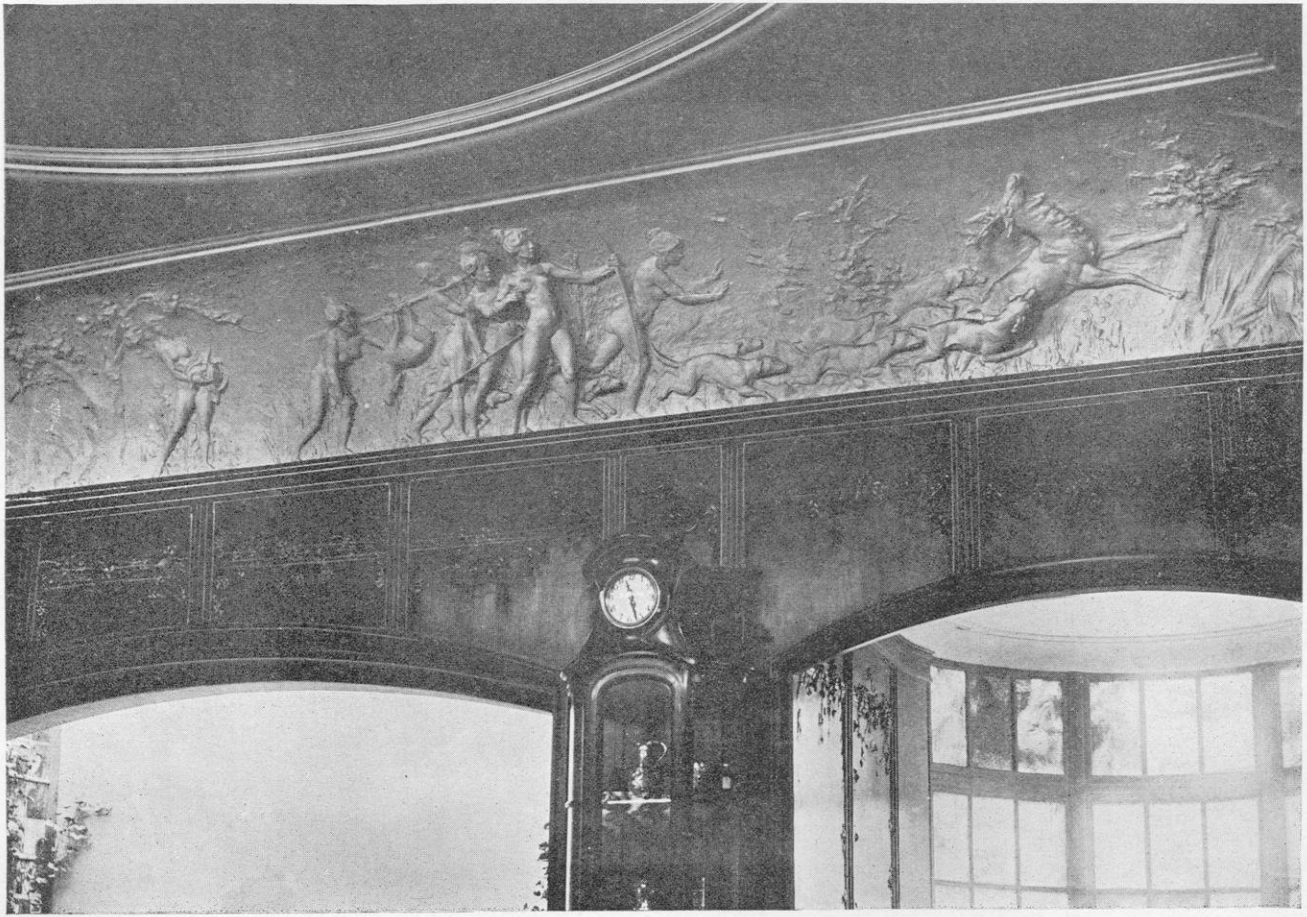
During almost the entire nineteenth century, furnishings, textiles, bronzes, porcelains and jewelry were copied from old models.

From this point of view, the decadence was greater in France than in the other countries. Neither Germany, nor England, nor the United States, was, like France, the slave of historic styles. There remained in each of these countries the power of original combination and of free work in the decorative arts. There was no obligation to conform to fixed styles.

The most disastrous aspect of the case was that through the endless agency of copying, all desire of invention became extinct in the workman, whose coöperation is necessary in the creation of the work of art. The command was given: "Let there be no enthusiasm!" The best workman was the closest copyist. Now, there can be no work of art which does not bear the impress of a personality. The art-workers lost all desire to create, and became mere executants.



Dining room by A. Charpentier, who designed the wainscoting of the room, the frieze, the furniture, the table service, the porcelain, glass, silver, rugs, etc. The great buffet is severe in style. The ornaments of wheat and clusters of grapes are very happily conceived. The decoration of the wainscoting possesses exquisite freedom and grace



"The Hunt," a frieze in the same room. The whole forms an unique combination in which *l'Art Nouveau* displays all the richness which it possesses and indicates the new way which is opening for the decorative arts

This was the very death of the decorative arts.

I do not exaggerate in the least. They offered the most disheartening spectacle for all those who desire an element of beauty in their material surroundings: in furniture and textiles, in objects of use and in ornaments.

Were we then to be condemned, because the things of the eighteenth century were beautiful, never to possess anything but copies of these originals? The nineteenth century had subsisted upon them, but what of the twentieth? To the end of all time was society to sit in Louis XV. armchairs, and to hang its walls with Louis XVI. silks, progressively copied more poorly?

It was thus that about 1890 began the movement known as *l'Art Nouveau,* of which Professor Hamlin has briefly traced the history. It was a revolution. It was inevitable. And for a simple reason.

When the Louis XV. style followed that of the Regency, and the Louis XVI. style that of Louis XV. what did the art-workers do? They modified slowly and insensibly existing forms. That was evolution. But in 1890 (I quote this date, although it is inaccurate to fix a year) the artists and art-artisans who sought to restore the decorative arts, had no point of support. Indeed, instead of works of art, there remained only copies. Therefore, they could not modify a style which did not exist. It was then necessary to create from nothing and to make a revolution. The fault lies, not with those who desired a new art, but with those who, for eighty years, had left the decorative arts to perish. It was not necessary to efface and to destroy. The effacement and destruction were already accomplished. Nothing was left.

That this condition was regrettable I do not deny. That the revolution was a deplorable event is undeniable. But whose is the responsibility?

An understanding must be reached upon this point. It will be said: Behind *l'Art Nouveau* there was the entire past. Yes, but it was too distant. Even if there has been an Egyptian or a Gothic art, that is not to say that we can create in the Egyptian or the Gothic spirit. That could be done if the arts and crafts were taught in the schools, as the greater part of the professors believe

them to be. But such is not the case. The artist only translates into form the innate taste of a period. Now, in the nineteenth century, there was no special, distinctive taste in decorative art. The taste was only for bric-a-brac. There were also connoisseurs in Japanese, Gothic or Renascence art. But the effect of our historic pleasures was to deprive us of an individual taste.

Furthermore, all craft traditions had been lost in the workshops. The creations of *l'Art Nouveau* did not find among the workmen the necessary collaborators. The workmen were nothing more than adroit copyists. Time is necessary before there can be produced a generation of art-craftsmen who dare to invent. This is a state of things which can not be improvised.

The difficulties encountered by *l'Art Nouveau* were, therefore, immense. The movement was revolutionary through necessity. It was imperative for it to form at once a style and to produce art-craftsmen.

In calling this fact to mind, I am not surprised at the plain, gross errors which have been the despair of those who maintain the cause of *l'Art Nouveau* and the joy of those who assail it. All the absurdities, all the exaggerations, all the follies which it has committed, I realize, and I do not seek to extenuate them. But it must be considered that *l'Art Nouveau* came to its birth only ten years ago, and at the worst moment. It would have been impossible for it to find its way immediately and to create masterpieces. It would be lacking in judgment to make this demand of it. But I am assured that *l'Art Nouveau* is about to win its cause. Confidence may be placed in it, for it is based upon principles excellent and positive, as we are about to demonstrate.

What, then, are the positive principles that *l'Art Nouveau* brings with it?

First, that every copy is a negation of art. That was necessary to be said in our time, as we have just seen. I prefer a piece of furniture, simple, perhaps even crude,—but one made by a workman who seeks to express his individuality in his work,—I prefer such an object to a copy, however skilful, of an old masterpiece. Efforts made by innovators are often abortive. That matters little. It is in the attempt to create that life will be given to the decorative arts.

Beside, during its decade of life, *l'Art Nouveau* has gained wisdom. Several modern artists derive inspiration, as our illustrations show, from the forms of the eighteenth century. Their inspiration is free. They do not copy. Thus, after a long interval, a broken tradition is renewed and once more is valid.

Second, the invention and the coöperation of the workman have been accepted as essentials by all those who are interested in *l'Art Nouveau.* In the workshop of the artists who lead the movement, art-craftsmen will be trained and craft-traditions will be formed. Without the anonymous coöperation of the workmen *l'Art Nouveau* would be nothing, in reality, but an amusement of the rich and a wholly individual art.

Third, *l'Art Nouveau* has reverted to Nature, that it might discover new beauty. Instead of copying antique ornament, the artists have once more looked about them and have copied the beauty of flowers, grasses and foliage from our gardens and our forests. During the nineteenth century it was not thus. The infinite richness of living forms is returning to the decorative arts. I illustrate a dining-room designed by M. Charpentier. It is neither in the antique style, nor in that of Louis XIV. But it is eloquent with the new life which pulses through the decorative arts.

Fourth, *l'Art Nouveau* favors beautiful materials. This taste had been lost, together with many other desirable things. What were the woods employed in the nineteenth century? Mahogany, oak, beech, walnut and pine in veneer. *L'Art Nouveau* has accepted the ash, the poplar, the box, the maple, the orange tree, and it is hostile to the deception which the period just preceding us so boldly practised. There are no more false woods. And in architectural decoration there are no more of those execrable *pastry-cook* ornaments, made in the mold, with which architects disfigured the ceilings of our apartments. It is preferred—and rightly —to allow no decoration, rather than to admit those atrocious molded ornaments so favored by builders and contractors. A new pleasure is derived from the charm of simplicity and of graceful lines. In this simplicity and this grace of line reside the great advance made by *l'Art Nouveau.*

Fifth, *l'Art Nouveau* includes the entirety of the decorative arts and has even revived several branches long since dead. It is a general revival. This is significant and shows that it is not a factitious movement. There are, to-day, independent artists who work in wood, copper, iron, bronze, tin, silk and cotton textiles, tapestries, rugs, jewelry, leather, porcelain and stone-wares. And these are not isolated attempts that we see about us: it is a general activity which promises us in five, ten, or twenty years, a development of art rich and harmonious.

Sixth, *l'Art Nouveau* is absolutely free. The influences which have acted upon it are numerous, but predominant among them is Japanese art, which has been well known in Europe only for a period of thirty years. The Japanese is an admirable decorative art. Its influence has sometimes been too direct upon the innovators. But the latter are rejecting imitations and the lessons which can be given to us by the Japanese are excellent. The art of producing stoneware (*grès à grand feu*), which is so flourishing to-day in France, under Delaherche, Bigot, Chaplet, and others, would not exist if the Far East had been ignored.

Thus *l'Art Nouveau* is not that negation which it is represented to be. It is, on the contrary, based upon positive and excellent principles. If it were suppressed, by what would it be replaced? Is it wished that we return to the former state of things? Is it desirable to begin anew the sterile imitation of the past? If so, let it be courageously said.

On the contrary, it is necessary to encourage *l'Art Nouveau* and to acknowledge it. It is a thing of yesterday. Taste will become refined, and will make a wise choice among the so great diversity of productions that are offered to it—a chaotic mass—I will acknowledge. The important thing is that the attempt to create be made, even with the danger of falling into error. There is but one really formidable thing: that is sterility, that is death. I love *l'Art Nouveau,* since it is the hope of life.

# The Plant in Decoration

Translated from the French with added comments by *IRENE SARGENT*

AS a telling and significant evidence of the dominant characteristic of the new art, whether it be studied in France, Germany, England, or America,—a careful criticism of some recent German work, written by a French expert, and published in *"Art et Décoration"* for May, is here presented almost in its entirety.

The very existence of the work criticised, is a proof—although none is needed—that conventions are dead; that the impulse of the times is toward the study of life: whether this study be pursued to preserve the race, to further civilization and morals, or to solve the secrets of creation for the pure joy of discovery and possession; or yet again, in order to delight the eye with subtile suggestions of the forms occurring in Nature. It is brilliantly evident that science, philosophy and art are united, as never before, in one common movement, spontaneous and irresistible, which should make our time illustrious in history, as a unified, organic period, comparable with the thirteenth century, so honored by students, but yet far exceeding it in permanent services to humanity.

The sources of life and of activity are sought to-day with the same intensity that characterized the mediaeval search for the fountain of youth, or the philosopher's stone. And viewed by modern light, the alchemist and the wizard were the forerunners of the practical scientist who now, in some measure, controls the forces of Nature most hostile to man and has gained the most signal victories over disease; who has annihilated space and constructed the most subtile instruments. As Victor Hugo once said, "the fables of yesterday become the truths of to-day." Paracelsus and Leonardo da Vinci, condemned by their own age as charlatans, scoffers or dreamers, are justified after the lapse of four centuries. They, guided by the intuition of genius, groped amid intellectual darkness, suspecting and divining relations between things which, by means of experiments and methods slowly and progressively followed, stand at present clearly revealed, and are seen to constitute the working basis of all useful human endeavor. Abstract sciences, once considered quite apart and remote from the world of matter, are now studied by comparison with other sciences treating of things having actual existence. The sociologist and the biolo-

gist labor side by side, recognizing that they are helpful and necessary, each to the other, and that each is dealing with a complete organism subject to laws of life which prevail equally in the visible and in the invisible world. Kropotkin, in tracing the development and ramifications of the law of "mutual aid," in which he sees the vital principle of society, reasons by analogies drawn from the polity of bees and ants and other of the smaller peoples of the animal kingdom. It will be remembered, too, that Darwin and Sir Henry Maine, working in widely different fields of research and labor, traced almost simultaneously, the one the origin of species, the other the formation of society through the evolution of a very restricted number of legal principles. Indeed, evidence is overwhelming to prove the unity of impulse and thought which has prevailed for the last half-century and which has given these years a high place among the significant periods of history. And from such existing conditions, it follows that the trend toward unity, the impulse toward Nature must be expressed in art, which is but the reflection of contemporary life: a reflection dim and wavering, if the times themselves be agitated and stirred with conflicting purposes, but clear and sharply defined, if the underlying depths be permeated by a single thought-element.

It can not be—it is not—impractical and visionary thus to explain the new phase of art which is manifesting itself with the same intensity, although with varying expression, among all the aesthetic nations of to-day. The rejection by them of historical precedent and influence; the simplification of theme and form found in the work of all eminent contemporary artists; the return to Nature, as to the primitive, unfailing, overflowing source of inspiration: all such indications reveal a mood and movement grave and grand; a thing not to be explained away by the unsympathetic and the short-sighted critics, who misunderstand the new art as a creative and convention of the studio, pure and simple: ignoring and denying its broader meaning and its higher character; misinterpreting those who profess it as experimentalists more or less skilful, seeking a new variation of the undulating line. Such, indeed, there are, as well as many who put their technical powers to an ignoble use in efforts to produce the uncommon, the

striking and the grotesque. These last are but the mercenaries of the cause, enlisted under its banner, while having no part or lot in the principles which it involves.

The new art has an incontestable place among the important phenomena of the times. It can not be ignored any more than the great advances in physical and social science. It merits and demands attention, as it reveals itself in manifold forms and among peoples widely differing from one another in race, traditions, education, and customs. It is, therefore, interesting to meet with the report of a recent art exposition held in Saxony; more especially as the report comes from the pen of a Parisian critic, enlightened, appreciative and untinged by the Chauvinism with which the French are often taxed, but for the most part, of late years, without foundation of justice.

The critic of the magazine *"Art et Décoration"* thus writes:

"An important manifestation of art has just occurred at Leipzig: one which may be classed as a consultation, as well as an illustrated lesson. Both as an evidence of the new orientation of decorative art, and as an example of the teaching of that branch among our neighbors, the exposition was too important not to receive notice. Further, we can, in France, profit by the lesson which it offered.

"After the incontestable success of the German section at the Turin Exposition of 1902,—a success which well repaid the efforts of the estimable artists who produced it—the belief in a national German style in process of formation was generally felt to be inadmissible. On the contrary, individual tendencies were strongly revealed, with no appearance of artistic bonds other than those created by the very spirit of the race. Such bonds gave indeed a family air to the objects exhibited, but yet between this general resemblance and a style proper the difference was great. These conditions became a source of anxiety to the artistic element in Germany.

"It can not be asserted that our neighbors would wish wholly to suppress individual initiative. However, the ardent desire of creating a national style appears to induce the artists of that country to submit themselves to a general rule. For such action they

can not be censured, and this new manifestation of the strict discipline under which our neighbors produce their artistic work, ought to serve us as an example: since it is well known to what extreme lengths we Frenchmen are led by our exaggerated cult of artistic individualism, which allows so many undeniable talents to be wasted in efforts sterilized through isolation.

"The methodical German mind naturally noted with concern the conditions which we have described as observable at the Turin Exposition. To modify them efforts were made rationally, and, for the most part, through the medium of instruction given in the decorative arts. The work of Herr Meurer upon the systematic study of the plant was the point of departure, and the Leipzig Exposition had no other end than, by showing results, to record the progress already made.

"The idea of exerting these efforts of centralization upon talents in process of development, rather than upon those in full control and possession of themselves, was judicious and practical. The same idea led to the formation of a complete scheme of instruction in the decorative arts, which we will here rapidly outline.

"Herr Meurer, as we have before said, seems to have been the precursor of the present movement. It was he who formulated, in several works, the rules for the rational and systematic study of the plant, making of it almost a branch of architecture; since he discussed warmly and at length plant-construction considered in itself. Following this division of the subject, the artist not only derives from the plant themes of ornament; but further: from the architectural forms of the plant he deduces the architectural forms of objects which he will afterward decorate. Yet he will do this in a new and rational way, quite unlike the system which gives to a vase the realistic appearance of a bulb or a bud.

"In studying the plant according to the new system: that is, no longer from the point of view of the picturesque, the artist seeks to discover in its various constructive parts rhythms (measures) of form, relations of volumes or proportions, and treatments of line. The eye refining itself by this study and these researches, is afterward more liable to create in a rational manner, since the original, inspiring idea will have been drawn from the study of nature.

Therefore, admitting that nature is the basis of all logical construction, the artist, guided by her, will compose in perfect safety. He will not, after the manner of his predecessors, give to an object the form of a flower or a fruit; but from this flower or fruit he will logically deduce an architectural or a purely decorative form.

"Thus, as is evident, nature here serves only as a basis for decorative developments, varied to infinitude, derived incontestably from her, but no longer giving the natural object an exact or even a faint and distant representation. Such evolution is noted, not alone in ornament proper, but in construction also. Naturalistic ornament is now avoided; that is, ornament in which the representation of a natural object—even though it be very much conventionalized—is recognizable. For example, we are weary of the iris or the poppy taken as decorative themes, for their realistic and too frequent interpretation has, of necessity, fatigued us, and this in spite of their beauty of form. On the contrary, we can not grow tired of ornament constantly renewed, of which these flowers shall be the first inspiration, but in which nothing shall recall their natural forms. This is, therefore, the reason why artists employ the details—even the minor characteristics of the plant, or the flower, —rather than the plant or the flower itself. For instance, from the stamens, or from cross-sections of the flower, they derive ornaments possessing undeniable character and accent.

"The new ornament is, therefore, a question of form and not of objects.

"Let us add that the plant is not the only source of inspiration; animals and even minerals furnish numerous themes: the wings of a butterfly, the feathers of a bird, the scales of a fish, the most widely differing crystallizations, invite study, and afford an almost infinite scope for ornamental derivations.

"The school following Van de Velde, and professing a line which may be compared with the curves described by a whip-lash, no longer exists. This was a linear ornamentation absolutely without basis, without logic, for the most part without reason for existence other than the caprice of the decorator: a style which quickly grew wearisome. The basis of the new school is stronger, and if its aspect is slightly severe, slightly monotonous, a firmness and

security are there recognizable, which before were unknown.

"The points to be summed up are, therefore:

"No more exact representation of *natural forms.* But from *elements occurring in nature* ornament is logically derived, in forms which oftentimes show no traces of their origin.

"To what end this new conception will lead German decorators it is at present difficult to foresee. Meanwhile, it is certain that they are deriving from it lessons of which the interesting results have already been shown in the Leipzig exposition."

From this point, the French writer just quoted, continues his criticism upon the study of natural forms in decorative art: devising schemes of instruction to be put into practice in his own country, and comparing the work of various German professors and decorators. He proceeds:

"It would be well that the idea of an exposition founded upon the study of the plant—which idea originated in France and was developed in Germany—should be resumed among us.

"It would be well to determine where we ourselves are, and a general appeal made, not only to the schools of applied art in Paris, but also to those situated in the provinces, would enable us to decide whether the instruction there given really bears the fruit which we have the right to expect from it. The consultation thus made possible could not fail to be useful, and a general participation of artists would assure the success of the enterprise."

Regarding instruction in Germany the French critic writes:

"Herr Richard Graul, director of the Art-Crafts Museum of Leipzig, frequently arranges in his own institution expositions of decorative art. During the past winter, exhibits of ceramics and needlework have permitted the public to inform itself regarding the condition of these branches of decorative art in Germany.

"Taking up anew the idea put forth in France fifteen or twenty years since by Mr. Falize—a valuable idea, which, unhappily, could not be realized among us,—Herr Graul, in organizing an exposition of the *Plant in Decoration,* wished above all to emphasize the principles which we have already outlined. He succeeded in showing a whole extremely interesting, although not so complete, as might have been desired. But completeness was not an essen-

tial, since the exhibitors were expected to indicate the direction which they had followed, rather than to present finished works. For this reason, the exposition was better fitted to interest professionals than the public in general. The object of the organizer was to show that the employment of the element drawn from nature must entail that conventionalism which in turn produces valuable ornamental and architectural effects. Further, the title of the *Plant in Decoration* was taken simply to restrict the too extensive field offered by nature to decorative interpretation, and not to indicate a preference in the source itself of this interpretation.

"Not the least interesting part of this exposition was the ready response to the appeal thus made to the schools of applied art. It is with their participation that we shall deal, more than with the works of the matured artists, in which the new tendencies are affirmed with less precision.

"Three among those schools claim special attention: the Royal Art-Crafts School of Dresden, the Art-Crafts and Mechanics' School of Magdeburg, and the Royal Academy of the Graphic Arts and Bookbinding of Leipzig.

"The Dresden School appears to sum up the modern tendencies, and excellent instruction is there afforded by the professors Naumann, Preissler and Gross. Professor Preissler would seem to direct his students toward a study of the plant seen somewhat from the Japanese point of view. The instruction of Professor Naumann is more systematic. He presents to his students the separate elements of the plant, and, even in this first presentation, he already conventionalizes the parts. Then, from a succession of drawings in which he conventionalizes progressively, he derives interesting decorative forms. He finds his themes everywhere: transforming the flowers of the *dielytra* by changing proportions; deriving from the scales of fishes varied units of decoration; seizing ideas from the general effect or from the detail of buds, stems, flowrets, flowers, and ears of wheat; studying the stamen, the pistil, the seed, and the vertical or the transverse section of the seed-vessel.

"But it must again be insisted that all this work is directly inspired by nature. The student conventionalizes from the plant, producing thus an interpretation personal and decorative, made

with the express purpose of serving as a basis for later and successive developments of the theme, not only in form but as well in color.

"The third instructor of the group, Professor Gross, also devotes himself to the study and the systematic conventionalizing of natural growths. The models produced by his pupils are of the highest interest; they are finely architectural, and show an original, rational inspiration. The same method as that employed by Professor Naumann develops from a bud, a vase, a capital, or a frieze purely architectural. For these models, also, the source of inspiration is left without restriction: embracing flowers, fruits, fresh foliage and even withered leaves.

"Together with the above-described studies, there were shown examples of lithography, decorated porcelains and book-covers, which placed before the spectator practical work produced from theoretical teaching. Whence it resulted that the Dresden school was the one best represented at Leipzig. It also appears to be the one enjoying the strongest and most vitalized instruction.

"Another interesting feature of the exposition was the work of the Leipzig school of book-decoration, which is an institution very recently founded. Devoted to the training of craftsmen of the book, the instruction there afforded is at once practical and very artistic, while the courses are exceedingly well conceived and carried out. Thus the students receive, printed in its final form, the page for which they are to make an ornamental border: a method of work which allows them to harmonize their details; which does not force them, as is too often the case with book designers, to compose a border, without having regard to the text contained within it. The examples exhibited included excellent designs for head and tail-pieces, decorative letters in black or two colors, commercial bindings, and also bindings destined for the cabinet of the amateur. To all those designs were joined preliminary studies, showing the sources from which the student had taken his decorative element.

"Among other fine exhibits was that of the Royal Academy of Design of Hanau, which excelled in designs for work in the precious metals and jewelry. These were modern in conception and

showed plainly the influence of Lalique. The representation on a single sheet of paper of the plant giving the inspiration and of the piece of jewelry derived from it allowed the spectator to follow the artistic process by which a branch of cypress was transformed into a pendent, a brooch, a necklace, a clasp, and a paper-knife.

"Other schools of decorative art and ceramics showed specimens of creditable work, all contributing to an exposition which was essentially theoretical: the studies of the plant, of flowers and of fruits being much more numerous than the objects executed; the whole appealing less to the public than to professional artists."

From this critical report and résumé, which is without national prejudice, which is sympathetic and appreciative in the extreme, it would appear that Germany now leads the other artistic nations as a propagator of the sound and real principles of the new art. The French critic, with racial acumen, notes the value of this widely disseminated instruction, this thorough training of students; finding in these methods the sincerest promises for the development of a national, or rather a universal modern style. He would seem to favor the introduction of the German system into his own country, which is the parent of the decorative idea now threatening the extinction of the effete historic styles. His suggestions, attractive at the outset, have the quality of deepening in interest, as they are more carefully studied. He indicates the value of a direct inspiration from Nature, and of the repeated and cumulative conventionalizing of the natural object. From this suggestion we can easily deduce that the function of art is not to imitate but to represent; also that the designer, conformably to his purpose, choosing some suitable decorative element, must needs make that element dominant, by increasing its power through successive drawings, until his climax is reached; just as a plant or an animal, by the development,—even the exaggeration—of an organ or a function, slowly fits itself for its surroundings.

The French idea, to be propagated by German methods, to be developed and chastened by Anglo-Saxon severity, undoubtedly contains the promise of the future. Why, then, should not the study of the *Plant in Decoration* be followed in America, with the same earnestness that is now displayed in the older countries?

# Some Potters and Their Products

*IRENE SARGENT*

THE CRAFTSMAN for June gave the story of a New England enthusiast, who, leaving the field of the fine arts, succeded, by the sole force of courage and patience, in mastering the technicalities of his chosen branch of ceramics. Another chronicle of equal interest lies in the history of a more recent and more easily acquired success attained in the same section of our country. It is an interesting fact that the Puritan State has given birth to a large majority of the most eminent American artists; that the very pursuits and pleasures which were denounced by the old worthies as snares of the Evil One are become the distinction and glory of their descendants. It is also noteworthy that the New England spirit turns naturally to the classic in art and in literature; that it is attracted by chaste, severe, clear-cut and subtile form, whether it occurs in statue, vase, or verse. Thus, as in the Low Tiles we saw the Italian art of the Renascence restrained, purified, simplified, until it was almost resolved again into the Greek; so we find in the Merrimac terra-cottas an equally close apprehension of antique beauty.

The place of the latter pottery, Newburyport, ranks among the most beautiful of Massachusetts towns; the character of the landscape with its secular trees, winding river and clear, pure atmosphere, is in itself an inspiration to the art-worker: being individual and unique, yet, at the same time, recalling sites of tranquil loveliuses in the Old World which are noted as the birth-places of artistic achievement.

The pottery, named from the Merrimac river, along which the town is built, is a very recent enterprise. Perhaps it were better to say that it is of recent establishment, since that event was long and thoroughly prepared by the founder and president, Mr. Nickerson, through a series of experiments made by him in England, with Sir William Crookes, and later alone, at his home in Newburyport.

The colors and glazes obtained by Mr. Nickerson first attracted public attention: both having a wide variety, while a single potter or pottery is generally known by a distinctive color, or one peculiar glaze.

In producing this extended gamut of color, Mr. Nickerson showed himself to be a thoroughly instructed and scientific potter: the modern advance in European and American ceramics being due to the increase of knowledge in chemistry and mineralogy. Equipped with the new power and having unmistakably in mind the Oriental masterpieces, the New England experimentalist sought with great success various tones of green, soft dull grape and violet hues, old rose, blues and purples with metallic iridescence or sheen, like that of gold, copper, or polished iron: the last two colors assuming in special pieces of a dull, crackled surface, the rich and varied effects of the plumage of the dove. Nor must certain other colors, textures and enamels be passed without mention: such as the examples of brownish red, like some of the most ancient Japanese pieces, the dull blacks, similar to costly Chinese vases, together with soft, light yellows and a much darker orange which, according to critical testimony, are unlike any other glazes produced in America.

These pastes so pleasing to the eye, and withal so varied, since they range from dull to highly vitrified surfaces, are left without painted decoration: beauty, according to the modern principle, being sought in a simplicity which embraces the entire work, extending to the form, as well as controlling the color.

From the small objects intended for interior decoration, which had been produced in 1901 (the first year of the re-organized Merrimac Pottery Company), Mr. Nickerson passed to an enlargement of his field of work, under a demand which had arisen for garden pottery of a high class. For this use an excellent clay, lately discovered, was employed to produce a pure white ware of great strength; although the deep red or natural terra-cotta color, so favorable to effect in the formal garden, was retained in the greater number of pieces. It also appears in the recent, exact reproductions of Etruscan pottery which have already won for Mr. Nickerson appreciation from the highest artistic sources. Concerning the larger vases, destined to contain shrubs, a critic has expressed himself by saying that in them their designer has wisely imitated the antique; since no other shapes capable of resisting wind pressure exerted against the shrub, have

been evolved by the potter, within a period of two thousand years.

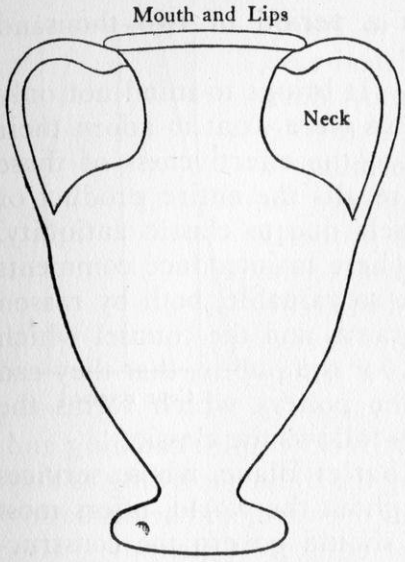
The remark is a suggestive one. It brings to mind not only the great vases with which the ancients were wont to adorn their villa gardens and so to add largely to the effectiveness of those places of refined recreation; it also recalls the entire product of simple, elegant, beautiful fictile vessels due to classic antiquity. And although it will be a digression here to introduce comments concerning them, these comments are so valuable, both by reason of the source from which they are drawn, and the counsel which they contain for the potter as well as for the public, that they can not be out of place: especially as the pottery which forms the subject of the present article so closely follows the classic.

The authority mentioned, M. Charles Blanc, whose services to art-criticism are recognized throughout the world, offers most ingenious and logical reasons which should govern the construction of objects of ceramic art. He asserts that the creations of men are not beautiful in their own eyes, except upon the conditions that they conform to the laws of which the human figure is a living image. Finally, he shows how closely these laws were followed in the type-vases of classical antiquity.

His argument in substance may be reduced to the following statements:

Man has created architecture by embodying the laws of proportion, unity, and harmony into the edifices which he has built for the needs of life. By the application of these same principles to his own material and medium of expression, the potter has created the ceramic art. The correlation of this art with the human figure is not a presumed and fanciful relationship, as may be proven by the terms which designate the various members of a vase; as, for example: the mouth, neck, ears, shoulders and feet; which terms, applied since the beginning of the records of the potter's art, show that the human figure has always been present in the minds of those who imagined and perfected the form of the vase, and who gave it a language.

As the human being is an organism in the fullest and philosophical sense of the word, that is: developed from within, having

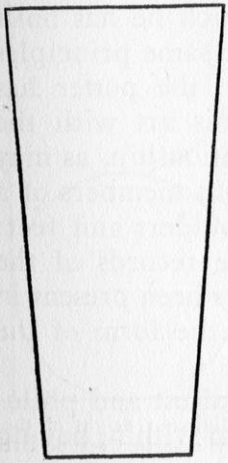


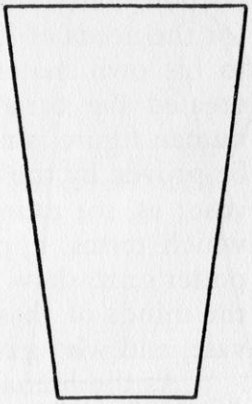
Terms describing a Vase

its end or purpose in itself, and without useless or superfluous members or parts; so the clay vessel which has retained its place in history and art, embodies one dominant thought to which all other considerations are subordinate.

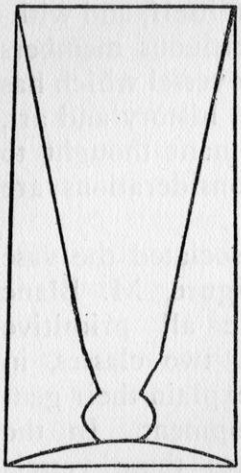
Having thus associated the vase with the human figure, M. Blanc proceeds to divide all primitive ceramic forms into two classes, in order that he may explain their generation and development. In the first class he places those vessels whose contours are formed from straight lines; in the second class, all whose outlines are curves. The vessels with straight outlines, being solid figures, are generated from the cylinder, the cone, or the cone reversed; those whose contours are curved, proceed from the sphere or the egg.

Another French writer, M. Ziegler, somewhat earlier than M. Blanc, and one following the same line of thought, gives the correct proportions of the cylindrical vase, as a height equal to three times its radius. But these figures M. Blanc criticises, since, in his opinion, they would increase the natural heaviness of the cylinder. Successful vases, as M. Blanc indicates, when they follow architectural lines, can not avoid the laws of architecture.. Therefore, the cylindrical vase, if symmetrical, will approach the proportions of the door, whose height varies from four to five times half its width.


Cone

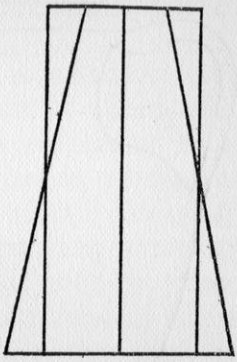

Canopian Form

M. Blanc further points

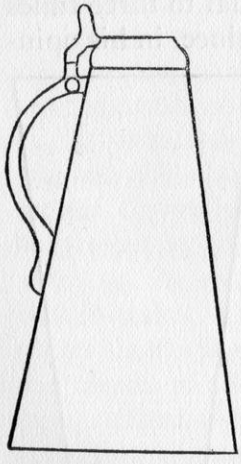


Base equal to the Diameter

out that in order to insure beauty in the cylindrical vase, the dominant line must deviate at one or both of the extremities; thus forming a molding, either concave or convex. This will properly finish the form, and serve the purpose that is filled in architecture by the same device. These moldings are a strong feature of antique vases, as they are also of the Greek temple: catching and holding, or reflecting the light, according as they are curved inward or outward, and accentuating the principal lines of the vessel or the edifice. Oftentimes, also, convex moldings encircle at intervals the body of the vase, especially when its form is based upon the reversed cone. This ornamentation, which is structural, and, therefore, commendable, is found skilfully used in many of the garden vases produced at the Merrimac Pottery; several illustrations of such treatment occurring in the plates accompanying the present article.

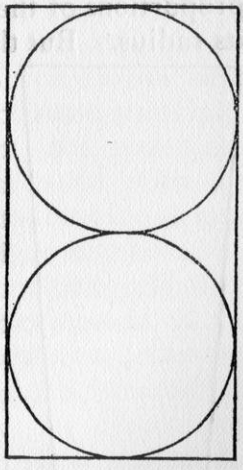


Cone reversed

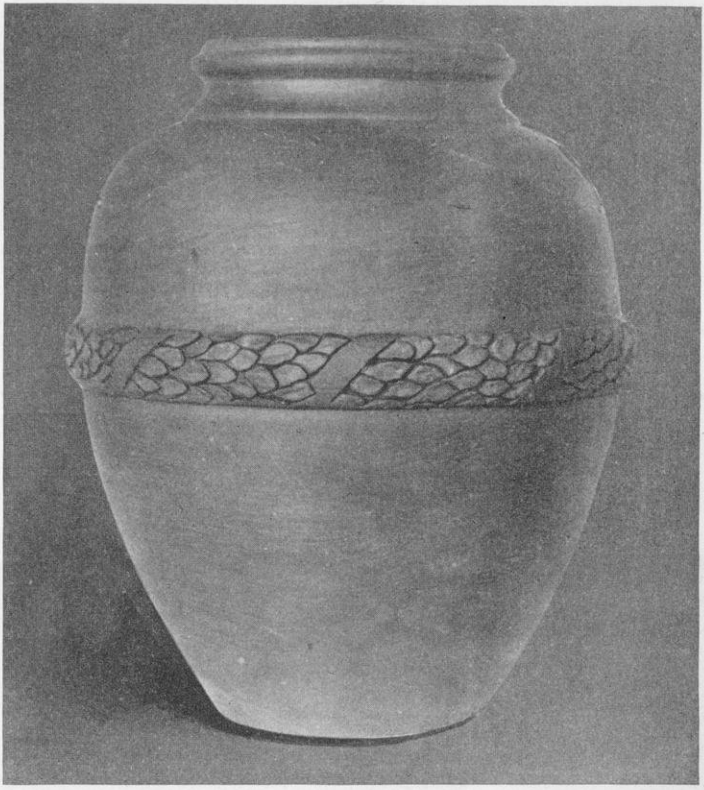


Proper position of the Handle

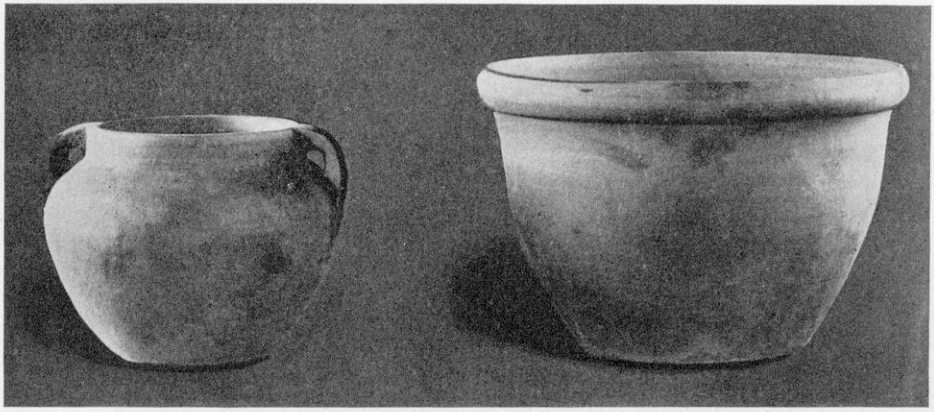
The handle of the vase, its position and shape, receives the attention of both French critics. They state that when a vessel is made for use: that is to carry, or to pour a liquid, it is necessary that the handle be placed, so as to assist, or, at least, appear to assist in carriage or in pouring. If the vessel is intended for pouring. rather than for carrying liquids, M. Ziegler observes that the handle should be arched, or that it may reach from side

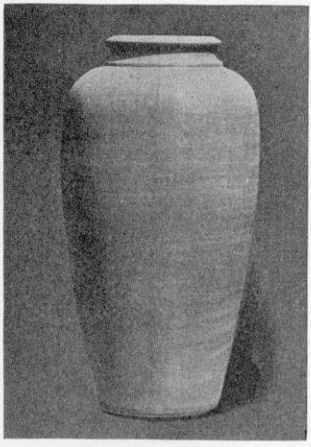


Minimum height of the Cylinder in Ceramic Art

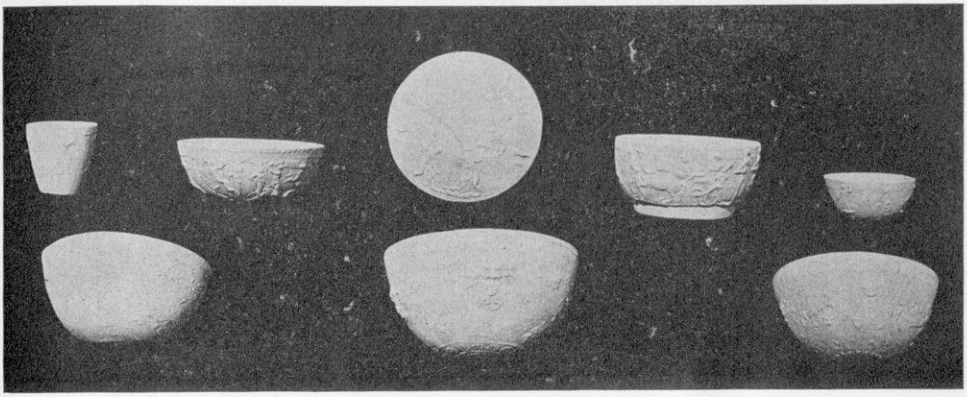


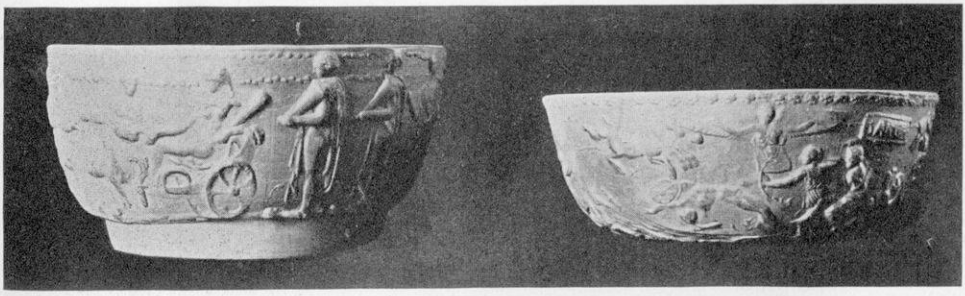
Vase by the Merrimac Pottery Company



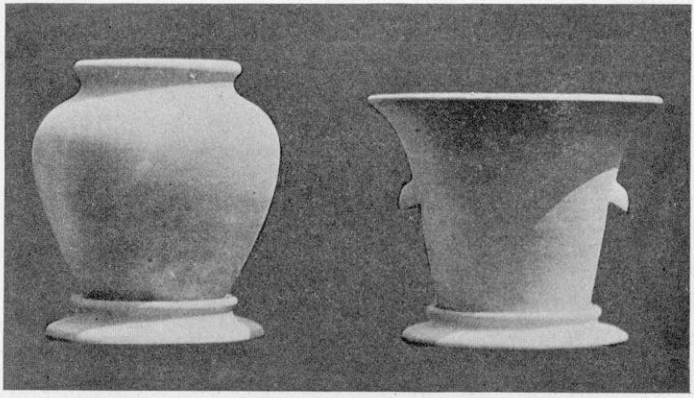


Examples of Merrimac Pottery

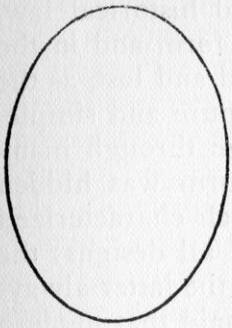




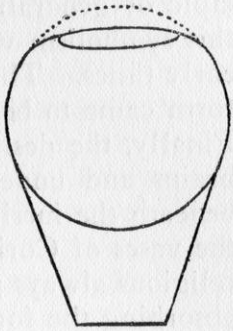
Reproduction of Roman Terra Cotta, by the Merrimac Pottery Company



Examples of Merrimac Pottery



Egg shape



Claviform

to side, like the handle of a basket; while if the vase is destined for the double function of pouring and carrying, the handle must be adjusted with great care as to its proper height, so that the liquid may not be spilled from the filled vessel, and so that the latter may be emptied of its contents, without a too great contortion of the hand.

These vessels of use are, for the most part, based upon the cylinder and the cone, which generate the straight line in elevation. They correspond to the Doric style of architecture, and, like it, while possessing strong elements of beauty, they are severe, dignified and of weighty appearance.

Other ceramic forms, equally as primitive as those based upon the cylinder and the cone, are the sphere and the egg: the first of these giving shapes resembling the pear and the apple, which are liable to be wanting in grace. And it is a noticeable fact that while the Romans, who were luxurious rather than artistic, favored the spherical derivatives, the Greeks in obedience to their delicate apprehension of form, designed their vases upon subtile curves like the parabola. As examples of this difference in the visual perception, or what would commonly be called the taste of the two peoples, we have only to compare the shape known as the *olpe,* or gladiator's oil-bottle, round, easily seized in one glance, totally unsuggestive, with the *leukothoe,* or perfume vase of the Greeks, with its ovoid body, slender neck, calyx-like mouth and beautifully arched handle. Other peoples, especially the Orientals have compensated for the convexity of the spheroid forms by lengthening the neck, or by the addition of two wide handles artistically adjusted as to place and angle.

Beside giving full praise to the ovoid forms as the most graceful expressions of the potter's art, M. Blanc also notes the significance of the egg as both the symbol and the visible sign of the prin-

ciple of generation. In accordance with a fixed historical law, this symbolism was strong only in the primitive form and in the early times. The symbolism was slowly obscured and lost, as the form came to be regarded as an artistic design pure and simple. Finally, the design itself disintegrated by passage through many brains and under many hands, until the egg-form was hidden beneath the intricacy and luxuriance of line which characterized the vases of Corinth. Such is the life-history of all designs: the religious always preceding the artistic phase, and the latter always absorbing the former. Furthermore, it may be said that modern criticism is too liable to read symbols and meanings into what is pure artistic expression. And had the egg been received into the ceramic art simply because it was recognized as a beautiful and adaptable form, because it was familiar and therefore generally pleasing, its use would have been more than justified.

Having thus discussed the primitive vase-forms from the point of view of mathematics, M. Blanc advises with much earnestness that potters should include these studies with those of chemistry and mineralogy. He declares that the examination of Greek pottery, so exquisitely regular in its contours, proves that the artists who made it had studied conic sections; that forms which are often supposed to be the result of caprice, were, in reality, generated by geometry. To this statement more might be added in acknowledgment of the fine, keen, aesthetic sense of the Greeks, which often served the purpose of our patient, laborious research of modern times; as, for instance, when the sculptors of the athletic types, such as the Discobolus, rendered with absolute perfection the anatomy of the figure from the mere study of the nude in action at the great National Games, and without having ever dissected the body.

Therefore, the modern potter, striving to produce worthy objects of his art, studies these forms, the least ancient of which count two thousand years, and the oldest of which owe their origin to a far remoter antiquity. He finds that he can not improve these forms, since they are based upon mathematical laws and involve the most delicate use of beautiful forms occurring in Nature.

This study has been successfully pursued by the founder and

director of the Merrimac pottery, who has not only apprehended the aesthetic qualities of the classic vase, but also its practical value, as in the case of the garden pottery already described. His successful conduct of a still more recent series of experiments claims a more detailed notice. These experiments resulted in the "reproduction," in the technical sense, of certain pieces of Etruscan pottery, the original molds of which are now owned by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Cast from the antique molds, formed of a red clay the same as the old in color and texture, finished with extreme accuracy, the new pottery is in every way identical with the pieces of the same design which issued from the kilns of Arrhetium. It is precisely as if these kilns were still producing and distributing their wares. Those curious regarding the arts of Etruria will find ample information and illustration in Victor Duruy's "Rome," and may there learn of the great debt owed by the conquering race of the Italian peninsula to the centrally located people whose civilization was ancient and advanced, while yet the Romans were barbarous. Gold-working and clay-working, as well as the science of government, augury, occultism and secret fraternities were the things in which the Etruscans delighted, and the tombs on the sites of the cities of the Etrurian League being unsealed, have witnessed that certain processes of these old craftsmen must be counted among "the lost arts."

Regarding the vases reproduced at the Merrimac Pottery, Mr. Nickerson has offered the following notes of explanation: "The Arrhetian, or as it more properly may be termed, the Arretine ware, was produced in considerable quantity by the Romans under the early empire, in several places in central Italy, but principally at Arrhetium or Arrezzo, where large collections had been found. The original ware is characterized by its very deep red color and its decorations in low relief, which give it an especial interest, because these being copied from vases of the finer metals, thus reproduced in clay the gold and silver vases of the Roman patricians. Examinations of the pieces which we have illustrated, as well as fragments of others in the principal museums,

will show that these designs were often of exquisite delicacy, and were evidently the work of Greek goldsmiths, although they were made in Italy."

It is to be remarked that neither the metal-work nor the pottery mentioned by Mr. Nickerson in his note, can be counted among the examples of the arts of the Etrurians. These flourished at a much earlier date: producing in the first craft marvels of gold filigree, and in the second the so-called Italo-Greek vases decorated with black, or red paintings, and destined to ornament rich mansions, like our *bibelots* and *curios* of to-day, or to adorn luxurious banquet-tables, just as the wares of Sèvres, Minton and Meissen add costliness and elegance to the modern dinner.

The red ware of Arezzo, as Mr. Nickerson states, must be considered as a Roman product. The potteries were established at this point both because of the very hard, excellent clay and of the old-time fame of the potters of the region. The fictile objects there made under the new enterprise were wrought with care, supervised no doubt by master craftsmen whom the political disasters and the degeneracy of Greece had driven into Italy. According to Jacquemart, the first French authority upon ceramics, the red ware of Arezzo became the prototype of an industry carried into all the Roman colonies, and which flourished especially in France. Many of these earthen cups and bowls, rich in artistic merit, but having small intrinsic value at the time of their production, were modeled from the gold and silver vessels of the Roman patricians, as Mr. Nickerson has also stated. But this fact does not witness to any innate artistic sense belonging to the middle, or the humbler classes of the Romans. It testifies merely to a desire on the part of the dependent or client, to imitate his luxurious patron, just as we see to-day the house and the apparel of the rich imitated in the dwelling and the dress of the poor, with the exception that with the Romans the result was artistic, while among ourselves we find the worthless caricature.

From the time of Cicero, as is attested by his orations and letters, the Romans were eager, nay rather feverish, in their attempts to gain possession of objects of Greek art, while the rapid increase of the public wealth, as a matter of course, developed the instinct

of luxury and the taste for, rather than the love of the beautiful. The names of famous Greek sculptors and vase-painters became, so to speak, the shibboleths of culture, and all ranks of society sought after objects bearing their signatures; just as to-day the man who can not own an Alma-Tadema canvas, chooses a conspicuous spot in his home in which to display a print bearing the curious autograph of the artist.

In this way we can account for the signatures on the red clay bowls of Arezzo, which names are those of the exiled and perhaps enslaved Greek artificers who wrought the patrician vessels of precious metal. And this public madness of possession served in many instances a most useful end; since often the object of great intrinsic value succumbed to the greed and lust of the barbarians, while the thing of humble, fragile material, but of superior and unique beauty survived to immortalize its maker.

In reproducing these simple and artistic antiques, Mr. Nickerson is diffusing correct models which will have an educative effect upon our own people, similar to that produced by the work of Marcus Perennius, the craftsman who wrought the originals at Arezzo, in the early days of the Roman Empire. The New England potter is contributing his part toward the formation of a cultured, critical public, which shall permit no crimes to be committed against the Beautiful, which is also the True and the Good. To quote the sentiment of a noted Boston journal:

"The hope of New England lies in just such work—work of positively artistic character, which shall be regarded as standard all the country over, and which shall contain something of the personality of the artisan."

# Gilded or "Cordovan" Leather

*MARY WARE DENNETT*

OF the various sorts of leather wall-hangings, the most glorious are those called "Cordovan." The word "Cordovan" in modern times has come to have a meaning that has no bearing whatever on the old-time sumptuous art of Spain. It is a curious and unfortunate fact that so little is known of an art that held so high a place for many centuries, and it is still more lamentable that so fine a craft ever degenerated and finally died. There is some hope to be had from the experiments of modern workers that it may yet be revivified and come to a real renascence.

The golden glint, the richness of color, the fascinating variance of the texture, the wonderful durability and the fact that the age improves them, all combine to give these leathers a beauty and value that are unequalled by any other wall-hangings save tapestries. There are still large quantities of fine old leather hangings in existence, but it is sad that most of them have long ago been removed from their original homes, and are now in the hands of dealers and collectors, or in museums, or in the houses of wealthy Americans. The two countries where the leathers were made in largest quantity and finest quality, Spain and Italy, have both seen such unhappy days of poverty that little of it now remains in place to show the glory that once was theirs. In the one Venetian palace that yet has leather-covered walls, it is pathetic to discover that either the straightened circumstances of the family or the greed of caretakers has led to the disappearance of a neat square of leather behind each portrait hanging on the wall. A helpless shrug of the shoulder is the only reply to the amazement of the visitor.

"Gilded leather" is a somewhat misleading term, for there is no gold used in the whole process of making. The golden color comes from a transparent yellow varnish laid over silver-leaf. This is, on all accounts, an advantage over real gold: first, there is the obvious advantage of economy, and then the fact that the mellowing and deepening of the color of the varnish which age brings gives a softness and richness that can come in no other way, a quality by which many an old painting is glorified, and acquires a beauty beyond anything it had originally.

# Gilded or "Cordovan" Leather

The connoisseur or craftsman who would probe into the history of this wonderful work finds a disappointingly small amount of literature on the subject. There are many mentions of the leather, many items in the inventories of the personal property of ancient notables, but very little that gives an adequate idea of it as a craft. So far as I know, there are but two really helpful books on the subject in America. One is a portion of a volume belonging to a series, published in the last part of the eighteenth century, by the French Academy of Science. Unhappily, this is an account of the art in its decadence, almost in its very death, and so gives the various methods of cheapening and degrading the once honorable work. The other—and this is by far the most illuminating thing on the matter—is a small volume by Baron Charles Davillier, published in Paris in 1878, called "Notes sur les Cuirs de Cordoue."

The origin of the industry is shrouded in mystery, but there seems to be reasonable certainty that it was introduced into Spain by the Moors before the eleventh century. The Spanish word for these leathers is "guadamacil," or varying forms like "guadamecil," "guadamaci" or "guadameci." It is by this name that Baron Davillier traces the ancestry of the leather back to an African village, on the edge of the Sahara, called Ghadames. He quotes a twelfth century writer of Tunis who speaks of the already famous leather from Ghadames (cuir ghadâmesien"). The etymology certainly seems most reasonable, since the Spanish Moors were formerly African Moors.

However this may be, from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century, this leather work was one of the chief industries of Spain, giving great commercial importance and renown to Cordova, Barcelona and Seville, and furnishing livelihood to scores of lesser Spanish towns. The Cordovan workers especially became so well known that leather work of this kind was thenceforward called "Cordovan." A sixteenth century author of Cordova,* writ-

*Ambrosio de Morales, 1575.

ing upon the gilded leather industry, says that it "brings great wealth to the city, and gives to the principal streets a beautiful aspect. As the leathers are exposed to the sun, now gilded, now

colored and tooled, and as they are spread upon great tables to dry, truly it is a beautiful sight to see the streets thus hung in such splendor and variety."

Almost the only definite information as to just how this work was done is contained in the following quaint extract, quoted by Baron Davillier, from a French translation of an Italian account of the work, published in the "Specchio Universale," in Venice in 1564. Being thus twice translated, doubtless much is lost in both substance and accuracy, but the modern craftsman who would learn the secrets of the glorious old industry must be truly grateful for even this meagre account:

"THE ART OF GILDING LEATHER, AND HOW IT IS DONE.—He who discovered the art of gilding leather was surely a remarkable man, and one of rare judgment. I do not believe, and shall never believe that one man alone invented it and brought it to the perfection which we see to-day, and I believe that it originated in Spain, for the best work here was brought from that country. Great people own much of it, and it is frequently seen at Rome, at Naples, in Sicily, at Bologna, and in France, Spain and other places. And because it is of great importance and worthy to be described, I am disposed to set forth the order and manner of making it, although I do not believe that any but the best workman could do that properly. Here, then, is the method of doing it: Take the skins from which the shoemakers make shoes; place them in clear water for the space of one night, and then beat them all, one after the other, on a stone to soften them well; then wash them thoroughly and take them from the water. This done, it is necessary to have a polished stone, larger than the skin; draw the skin well over it with an iron made for the purpose, and let it dry thoroughly. Then take some glue, made from clippings of parchment, and spread it well over the skin with the hands, and then take silver leaf, and cover all over the skin, and hang on a cord to dry; afterwards, nail it to a wooden table to dry entirely. Then take it off, and cut away the part that is not silvered, and burnish it on the stone with a burnisher made of hematite or blood-stone, till it becomes brilliant. That done, it is necessary to have a block, cut from wood in the pattern in which one wishes to make the leather, and to have

ink made of sandarac and lamp-black, and spread it with even strokes on the block. Then place the leather under the block and print it, and having printed it, let it dry. Afterward, nail it to a table and give it the varnish which makes the golden color. This is made from four parts linseed oil, two parts resin and one part aloes, boiled together till it becomes the color of gold. Spread the varnish on with the fingers, as I have directed." (In the volume referred to above, published by the French Academy of Science, directions are given for applying the varnish with the fingers, by using the finger-tips as a brush, and drawing them in wavy lines over the silver surface. The varnish is then spread to an even coat by a skilful beating with the palms of the hands. The naive remark is added that the craftsman who uses his fingers for a brush has the advantage of economy as well as having his tools always with him and ready for use.) "According as the workman wishes to show silver or gold, he scrapes away the varnish from the silver part with a knife. When the skins are dry, they are painted, if desired, and then decorated by square irons. The pieces are made true and are sewed together, and in this way, the work is achieved. This is an art of great profit and learning, by means of which one makes friends with great personages, for the larger part of those who use this are illustrious and great men, of the opinion that this is an art of great beauty and most delightful to behold; it is also very profitable for those who make it, and it is called 'the golden art,' not without cause, for to work in gold and silver makes wealthy those who do it, provided they conduct themselves as they should."

If the ancient writer's conclusion is true, it must be that the modern craftsmen have *not* conducted themselves as they should.

This brief recipe is enticing in its simplicity and directness, but the carrying of it out is anything but simple and direct, and is the despair of even a hopeful worker.

The industry spread rapidly from country to country,—from Spain to Italy, where in Venice, perhaps as fine work was done as ever came from Spain, then to France, and then to the Netherlands and to England. In Paris, a whole quarter of the city was devoted to the work. In Valladolid, there is to this day a street called

"calle de Guadamacileros." Large quantities of the leather were exported from Spain to the Spanish American Colonies. It has long been a cherished hope of the writer sometime to hunt the untravelled ways of Mexico and the West Indies to find if some of these indications of former grandeur are not still remaining.

The best work was done in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and then, like many other crafts, it degenerated and finally died out entirely before the dawn of the nineteenth century. The account published by the French Academy of Science makes mention of various attempts to cheapen and quicken the process, all of them bound to be unsuccessful, for, just as at the present day, worthy handicraft required good materials intelligently and conscientiously wrought by an able man. Tin or brass was used in place of silver leaf, with disastrous effect, for the tin foil blackened in two or three years, and the brass accumulated verdigris; the tooling was carelessly done, the colors used were muddy and cheap, the leather was carelessly tanned. Sheep-skin was used in place of goat, and altogether, the art in its decay, presented a sorry appearance, when compared with the work of the great period, when standards were high and the industrial conditions favorable. In all the work there is great choice, as would be but natural, being the product of many individual hands, varying, of course, in skill and devotion. In the finest instances, the tooling is clear and crisp, giving an unsurpassed beauty and charm of texture. In less good work, it was vague and ineffectual, and added little quality to the work.

There was a very beautiful sort of gilded leather made that was not tooled at all, but was embossed and painted. It was a later production than the tooled leather. The pattern was made by the imprint *of a wooden block, carved in relief, upon the dampened leather after the silvering was done.* This was done by a hand press. The Dutch did especially beautiful work of this sort. The finest specimens of tooled leather are those where the pattern is printed in one color—or at least very few colors, whereas the embossed leather permits the widest range of color, and in many cases, gains thereby.

There have been several attempts in Europe, and at least two in America, to imitate the fine old tooled leather by machinery.

Such efforts must always fail, for no machine can give the spirit and vitality of hand tooling. The modern work also has shown the fatal error of imitating the effects of time. The result has been merely to dim, and not to glorify the color. The embossed leather lends itself far better to modern machine production, for if a pattern be well designed and the block or roller well modelled, and if afterward the colors be painted on with taste and skill, the result may be moderately satisfactory. However, no truly great work of this kind can be expected to come from the modern factory system. The beauty of the old work corresponds exactly with the relative justice of industrial conditions and the freedom and responsibility of the craftsman. Baron Davillier gives some very enlightening extracts from the old rules of the Spanish gilds, that give one a vivid realization as to the difference between the conditions of ancient and modern craftsmanship. The following are selections from some of these regulations:

"ORDENANZAS DE SEVILLA, 1502.—First, we order and decree that each year, on the day of St. John the Baptist, all members, or a majority of them, shall come together, and that in their meeting they shall name two artizans of the said handicraft as inspectors; after they have been thus elected, they shall conduct them before the 'Chapitre de la Cité,' to receive from them the solemn oath required in such cases: and this under a penalty of two thousand maravedis, etc.

"*Item.*—We order and decree that after to-day no artisan of the said handicraft shall open shop in this city, without having been previously examined by the inspectors of said handicraft, who shall inquire if he knows how to design a 'brocado,' (a term often used for gilded leather) and to cut the pattern according to standard; if he knows how properly to place the colors on the ground, for gold or for silver; if he knows how to gild well and perfectly as becomes a craftsman; if he knows also how to use the irons (tools) and to do it according to usage and custom. If this is not the case, he shall not be permitted to open shop, but if the said inspectors find him sufficiently skilful, they shall bring him before us that we may acknowledge him a master of said handicraft, and give to him a certificate with permission henceforth to practise said handi-

craft. Otherwise he shall not keep his shop, under penalty of two thousand maravedis and the loss of his work."

It is interesting to note that while these regulations were issued by the city authorities, the decisions for or against the craftsmen were made by their own elected representatives.

"*Item.*—We order and decree that the skins worked by the artisans of said handicraft shall come from an animal freshly killed, and not dead from disease, and if other skins are used, they shall be set apart as false, and acknowledged as such, under penalty of six hundred maravedis.

"*Item.*—We order and decree that henceforward none of the said craftsmen, nor any one representing them, shall be so bold as to use the skin of an animal too young, be it for cushions or altar frontals, or any purpose whatsoever, on pain for the first offense, of losing the work thus done, and staying fifteen days in prison, and for the second offense, the penalty will be doubled; for the third offense, the same penalty, together with exclusion from the aforesaid handicraft.

"*Item.*—We order and decree that no one shall be so bold as to use skins badly joined together; but they must be well sewed on all sides, under penalty of six hundred maravedis, and nine days in prison, for the first offense, and for the second offense the same penalty, together with the loss of the seized work.

"*Item.*—We order and decree that all work which does not appear clean and clear after the impression from the block, shall not be sold without first having been submitted to us, in order that we may decide what is just, on penalty for the first offense, of losing the work or its value, for the second offense the same penalty with fifteen days in prison, and for the third offense, the same penalty with exclusion from the handicraft."

As early as 1316 account is found in Barcelona of two "guadamacileros," who were members of the municipal council, a plain indication of the importance of the craft in the life of the town. By 1539 more or less disorder and fraud had crept into the industry, "due to the lack of inspectors and the absence of rules for examination, and the poor work resulting from incapacity or bad faith." This meant a distinct detriment to the commerce of the city. To

remedy the situation, the municipal magistrate issued the following ordinances:

"First, within the city of Barcelona, no person shall exercise the handicraft of 'guadamacilero,' without having first passed an examination, and those who already have an open shop must submit to an examination within two months, on penalty of closing the shop. The examination should take place in the house of the brotherhood of Saint Etienne, or at the house of one of their experts. The operation and experiments to be made by the member-elect are specified, whether it be to color the skins or to stamp the gold or silver; the Corporation furnishes the necessary materials to those who have not means to procure them for themselves. The fee for the examination, fifteen sous, is for the benefit of the Brotherhood. The sons of masters are exempt."

Then a three years' apprenticeship with a master is ordered by the town authorities, and a certificate from the master is required. As in Seville, it was forbidden to use the skin of very young animals, to use tin or pewter instead of silver leaf, and the annual election of two representative inspectors was provided for. In case of falsity in the work, these inspectors, together with three other experts gave their decision, and if it was adverse, the work was burned, according to the general custom of the handicrafts of Barcelona.

The stringency of all the foregoing regulations is astonishing to the modern workman, who, generally speaking, is responsible to no one but his employer, who, in turn, is responsible to no one but his customers, and if his wares be merely good enough to sell, no further questions are asked.

Whether or not the time will ever come when we shall have a society so ordered that craftsmen are spurred to good work by any such method as this, we may still gain much help toward a solution of the future problems of handicraft, by a careful study of past conditions and past work.

The criticism has many times been made that this is not a craft worth reviving, since gilded leather is distinctly a luxury, and could only be bought by the very wealthy; that it smacks of royalty and state apartments and the like; and has small place in a democratic

country. However, there are so many public and semi-public places where so glorious and permanent a wall-covering would be right and proper, that there seems to be a real place in modern life for the "guadamacilero." State-houses, city-halls, perhaps hotels and theatres, surely churches, schools and libraries, and assembly rooms of many kinds, offer most appropriate opportunity for the use of gilded leather wall-hangings, along with mural paintings and tapestries.

That they last for centuries, with always increasing beauty as the years roll on, makes them one of the most fitting wall-coverings for public buildings.

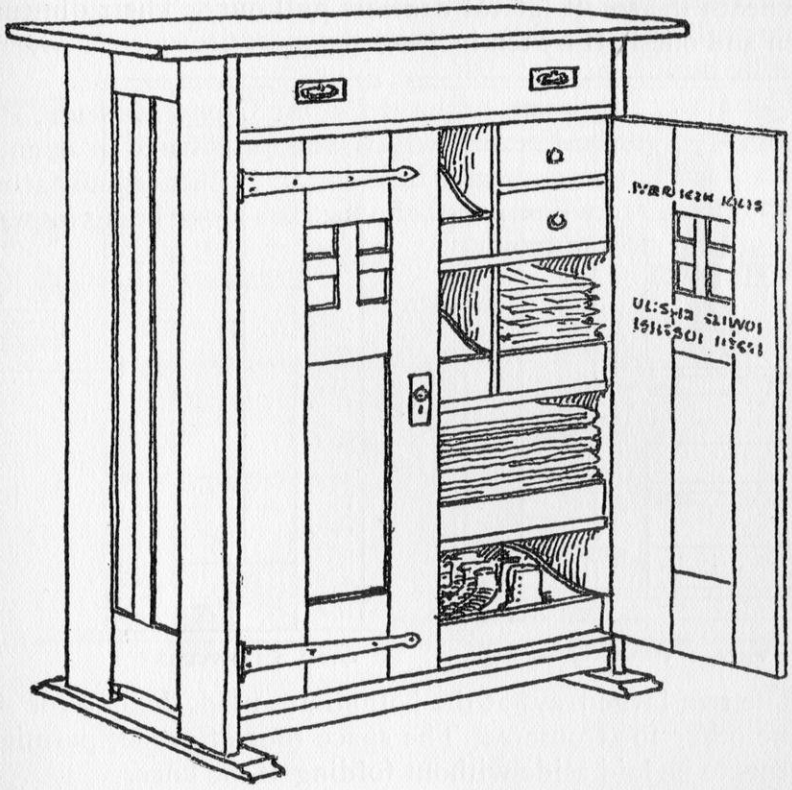
There are, at present, preserved in the Cluny Museum, Paris, examples from the best period, which were discovered in an ancient house in Rouen, whose interior fittings and furniture had fallen to complete decay from dampness; the leathers alone being in perfect condition beneath the mould.

IT IS BY WORKING WITHIN LIMITS
THAT THE ARTIST REVEALS HIMSELF

GOETHE

# A Man's Dressing Cabinet

ONE seldom finds a more simple, convenient object of household use than the man's dressing cabinet here illustrated, which combines the functions usually filled by two or three pieces, by uniting them into a compact whole. The cabinet has the additional advantages of being pleasing in appearance, and so simple in construction that any craftsman may easily build it, in accordance with the subjoined directions.

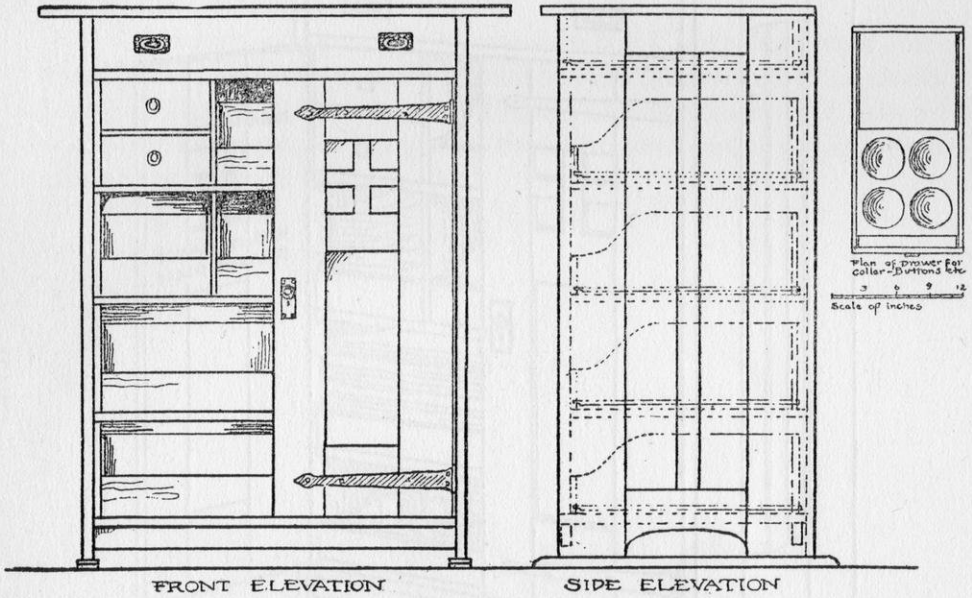


The dimensions of the piece are fifty-four inches in height by thirty-six inches wide and twenty-four inches deep, with a framing of seven-eighth inch stuff, as indicated, and with one-half inch panels. The doors are provided with strap-hinges, and, on the inside, are lettered with such inscriptions as may suit the fancy of the individual builder.

# A Man's Dressing Cabinet

The large, topmost drawer, running the entire length of the piece, is five inches deep, and is designed for a general utility place. The small upper drawer at the right, is fitted, like a change-drawer, with six saucer-like divisions for shirt, collar, and sleeve buttons, and other small objects which are easily lost. Behind lies a space for handkerchiefs. This drawer, the one beneath it, and the two on the left are five inches deep.

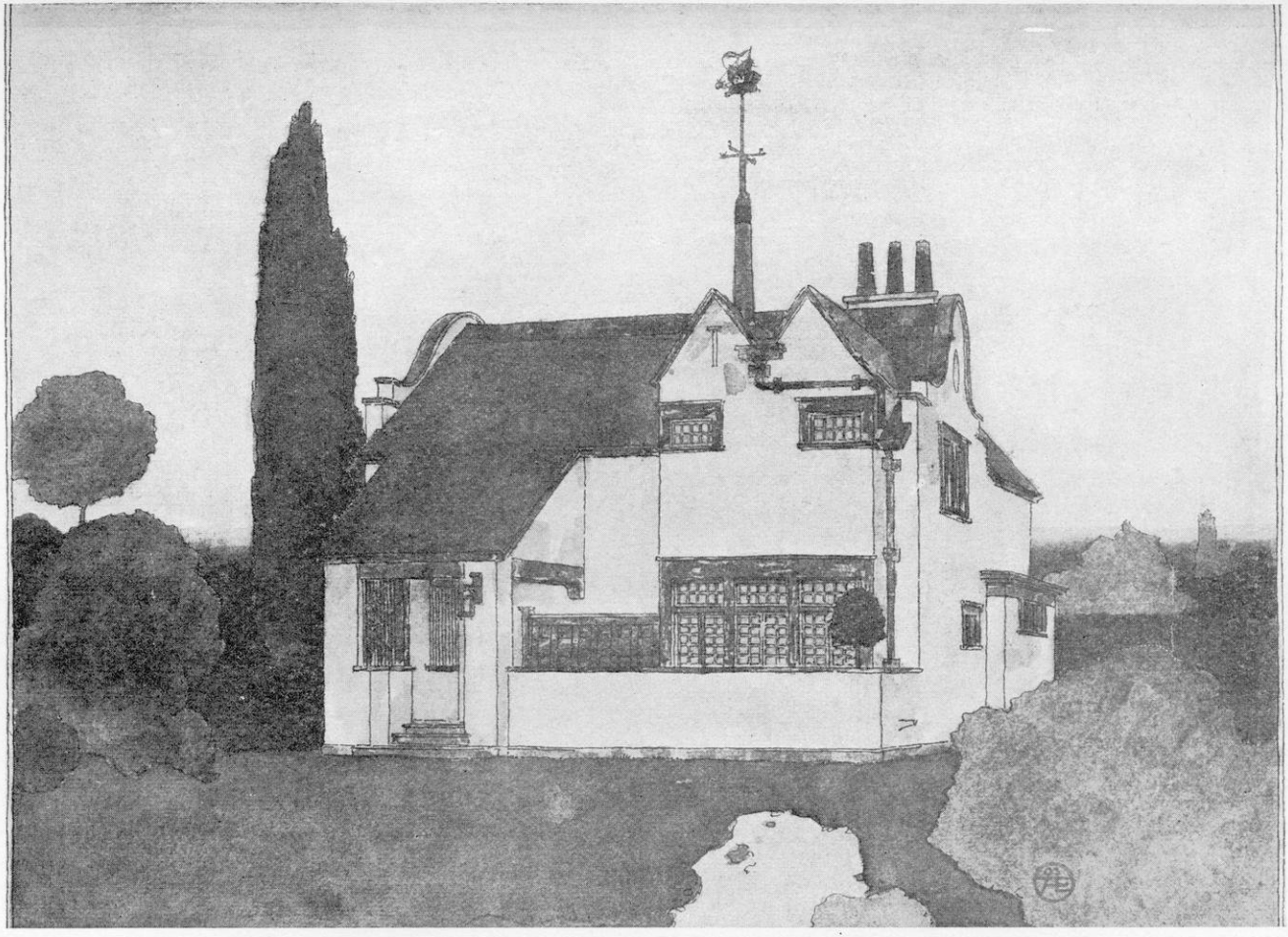
The compartments in the center of the cabinet and those which are beneath the small lateral drawers pull out. Their dimensions are ten and one-half by ten inches.



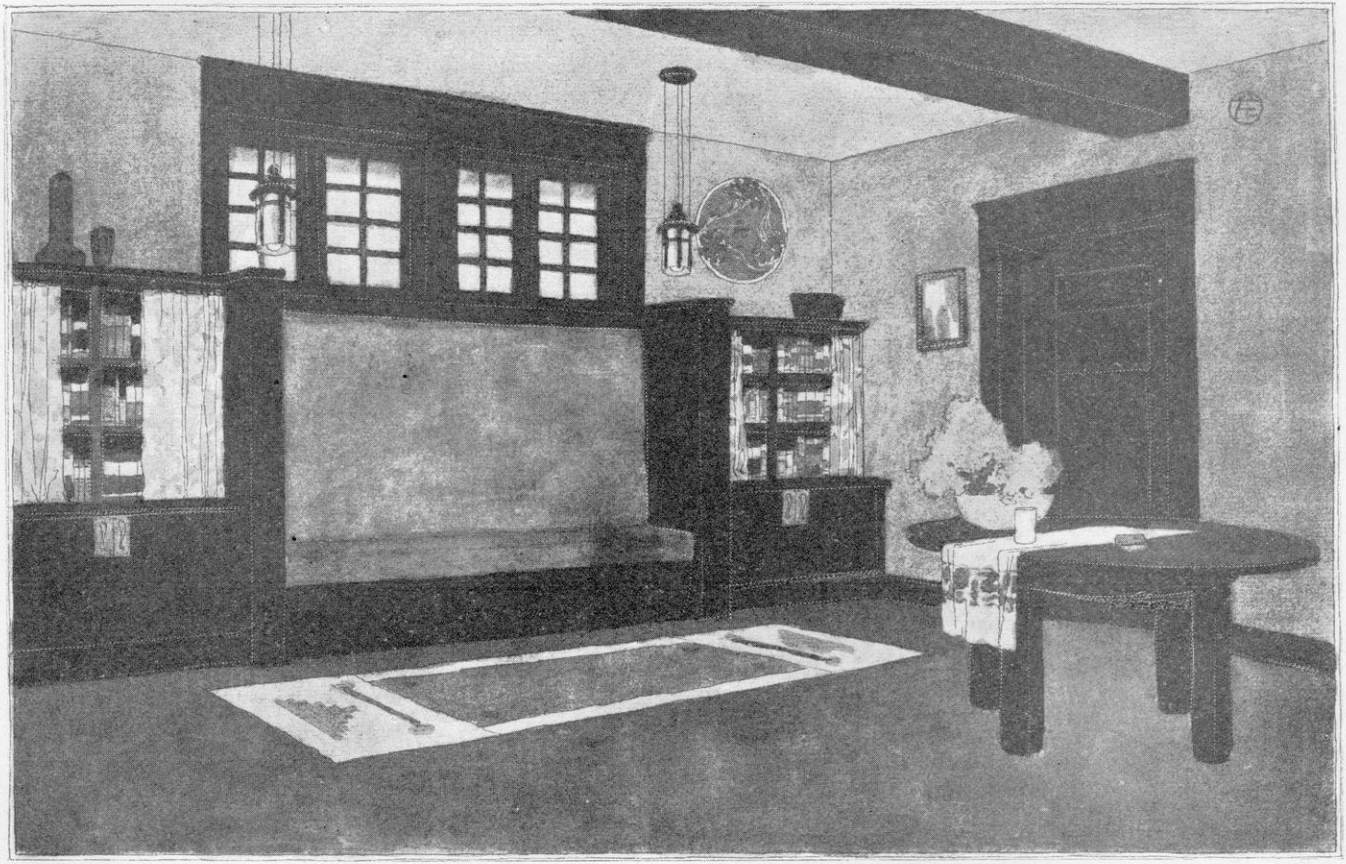

FRONT ELEVATION SIDE ELEVATION

The two large trays at the bottom are used, the one for shoes, and the other for trousers. The space thus afforded, permits the garments to be laid aside without folding at the knee.

By this device, as well as by the other provisions of the cabinet, all folding and rumpling of clothing are obviated. Furthermore, when the doors are opened, the wardrobe lies ready for use: a saving of time which will be appreciated by the hard-working business or professional man of many engagements, for whom a minute saved is sometimes a fortune gained.



A Craftsman House



Bookcase and Seat in Living Room

# A Craftsman House Design

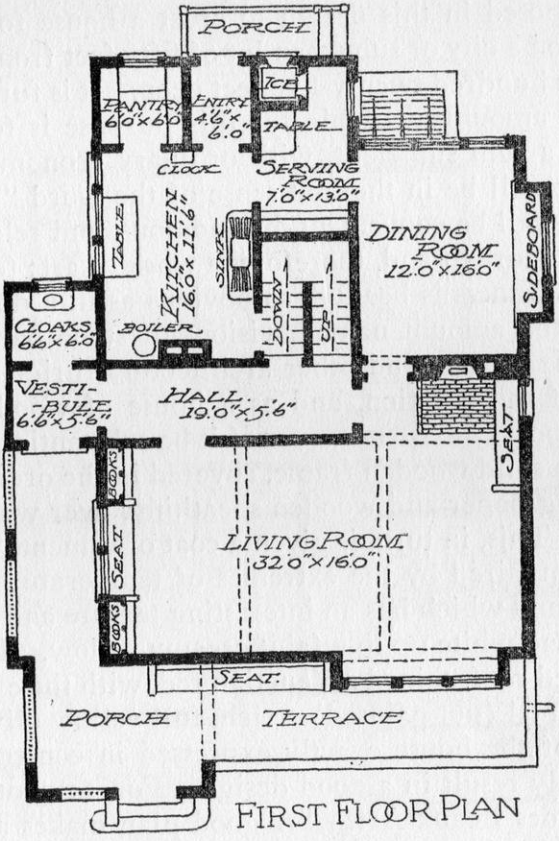
*HARVEY ELLIS*

IT is purposed in this design to erect a house for an average family, on a city or suburban lot of fifty feet front and not less than one hundred twenty-five feet deep. It is further assumed that the amount available for this purpose is four thousand dollars, a sum sufficient, with ordinary economy, to build a structure that will be in the best sense of the word "homely." A house which shall be convenient, harmonious, and related in all its parts. A structure fit and, therefore, a work of art; for nowhere is the axiom of "fitness is beauty" so obvious as in a domestic structure. With the amount named, visions of stone baronial homes, miniature Elizabethan and other architectural bric-a-brac, are, of course, out of the question, and as a house of wood has always a look of temporary existence, even if it be substantial, it is deemed best to build a solid wooden frame, covered in the ordinary manner with sheathing paper and wooden sheathing, over which is placed metal lathe. This, in turn, is given a coat of cement, "rough cast," which is unimpaired by the extremes of temperature or weather, rain or frost, and which has an interesting texture and a color varying from a dead white up to a faint creamy yellow. This, together with a shingled roof stained a Venetian red, with the exterior woodwork also stained (not painted) a rich, full yellow olive green, and the interior of the house exactly expressed in constructive terms, will reasonably result in a good design. For, to quote an old saw of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts—"A good plan makes a good elevation—," and this is true, if the designer is honest and frank with himself and with his material.

Varying with local conditions, the foundations of the proposed house may be of brick or stone; care, of course, being taken in any event, that they are so constructed that anything like a damp cellar is an impossibility. This, with a competent builder and a proper overseer, is a matter of little difficulty.

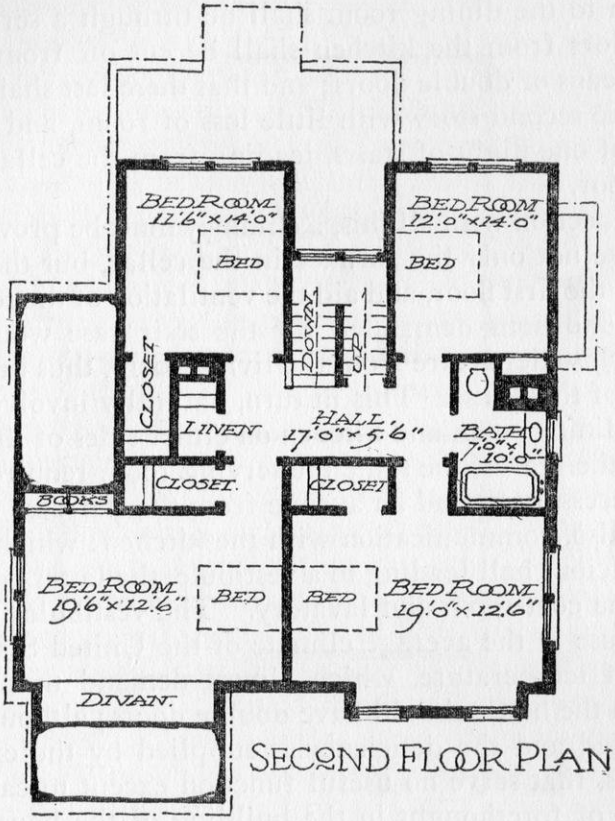
The framing of the house depends also on local conditions, and may be of either spruce or hemlock, and, in order to obviate shrinkage and consequent settling and cracking of plaster, preferably what is known as balloon framed.

It seems desirable from motives economic and aesthetic to make the interior finish of selected chestnut, the floors of hard pine




and to leave the plaster with a sand finish. The material being chosen, the plan may be taken up. At the outset, let us abandon precedent as much as may be, and try, if possible, to think of no house as ever having been designed before. This, of course, brings us back to first principles: What is a house for and how may its various functions best be accommodated to the all-important consideration—the price?

The width of the house makes it desirable that little, if any light shall be taken into the house on either side, such provision resulting from the desire for privacy. This would seem to indicate that the long sides of the house should face respectively to the front and the rear. Let us then lay out a big, generous room, which




shall be the gathering place for the family. This will be the great room of the house and, for the reasons just stated, should be placed with its long axis parallel to the street. Allowing for a means of communication with the front and the rear of the lot, we find that we are able to give to it the extreme length of thirty-two feet, and this determining, to a certain extent, the width of the room, gives a hall thirty-two by sixteen, which are generous proportions for a house of this class. It is natural that the dining room, which is second in importance in the house, shall be of easy access from the living room, and that the dining room, in turn, shall communicate rapidly with the kitchen; also, that the kitchen shall communicate directly and privately with the front door; that the service from

the kitchen to the dining room shall be through a serving room; that all odors from the kitchen shall be cut off from the living room by means of double doors; and that these last shall be easy of access to the second story with little loss of room, and if possible, by means of one flight of stairs, leading from the cellar bottom to the attic floor.

In connection with all this, a chimney must be provided which shall relieve not only the furnace in the cellar, but the grate and range from the first floor, and aid the ventilation of the second story.

The conditions demanded for the stair case would seem to indicate a close departure from the living room, thus bringing it to the center of the house. This in turn, naturally involves the placing of the dining room and kitchen on either sides of the staircase; leaving in the rear of the same the serving room required. It now becomes necessary to find an avenue from the staircase to the front door, and also, communication with the kitchen: which is done by a fairly spacious hall leading to a vestibule, the latter communicating with the coat-room and lavatory. The vestibules are insisted upon, because in the average climate of the United States we find extremes of temperature, which almost demand that all outside openings in the house should have double doors; although they are often omitted and the deficiency is supplied by the exasperating storm doors, that serve no useful function except to call attention to the lack of forethought in the building of the house to which they are attached.

The landing of the staircase on the second floor arranges it so that no other disposition of the bedrooms, closets and bath rooms, is possible. The advantage of the center staircase is now obvious, as the maximum of bedrooms is obtained with the minimum of hall: all the doors in the second story being practically at equal distance from the head of the staircase, and the bathroom convenient equally to all. Therefore, without the sacrifice of too much space in the bed rooms, closet room is obtained of sufficient quantity to satisfy the most exacting housewife. In the attic, if it be desired, an extra room may be "finished off," leaving ample room for storage, trunks, etc., a provision which seems to be indispensable in the average American house.

The interior walls are all rough plaster and have color applied to them with a large flat brush while they are still wet: a process which incorporates the color in the plaster and gives it an agreeable texture, by reason of the markings make by the brush; the result being a beautiful tint of the color employed, free from the painty look so often seen in colored walls, and making the observer question the material. This method is identical with the old Italian *buon fresco,* used by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, a fact which is a sufficient guarantee as to its practicability and permanence. It may be said in passing that an artistic descendant of the great master is not needed to apply it, as no greater talent is required than that possessed by the average plasterer.

The skeleton of the house now being obtained and the necessities of the house provided, it is time to turn our attention to the finish, conveniences, and the many little arrangements which make for comfort, and which, if properly restrained, produce what is described by that much abused phrase, "an artistic interior."

As has been noted, the living room is of unusual size for a house of this class, and it is laid out in such a manner as further to enhance this quality. It will be seen by the accompanying illustrations that the fireplace is treated in a large, open way; faced with large square tiles of uneven surface and of colors running from dark green blue through blue green to the normal green, indiscriminately. In the center of this facing is set a plaster cast after one of the Della Robbia terra cottas, tinted in faint tones and finished in wax. This, together with the dark red brick hearth, forms a strong color note for this end of the room. The woodwork throughout the room is "fumed" to a rich brown; and the walls are tinted a pale, sappy green; while the leather seats in the fire place and book case are of a pale golden yellow. The floors are of yellow brown and the ceiling of the gray of the plaster. This somewhat quiet scheme of color is enlivened by the placing of an arras hanging on the wall, opposite the bookcase. This hanging is designed expressly for this particular place and is intended as a manifestation of a return to the more straight-forward decorations on honest wall hangings of the time prior to the Renascence and the establishment of state tapestry factories: events which have left no

choice between the hangings of palaces and the stupid machine made wall paper, following the prevailing mode, without regard to what the surroundings may be. The hanging in question is of tan "open mesh linen," with the designs in heavy outline, and some of the more important spaces filled in with pale greens, blues and faded rose; the whole making a most pleasing and quiet piece of decoration, which really decorates, and which has the additional advantage of being within the means at our command; the expense lying almost entirely in the design, expressly made and never to be duplicated.

The opposite end of the room has an attractive arrangement for a generous seat, flanked by bookcases and cabinets on either side, and with a high, wide window over the center of the composition. The seat is upholstered with a warm, golden yellow leather, and the curtains of the bookcase are in tints of white, gold and blue. The varying hues and tints of the room are brought together by a large Donegal rug, the color of which is largely made up of grass green, with a border of blues, greens, pale reds and white; the white predominating.

The windows in this room, as indeed are all the windows in the house, save the window in the sideboard alcove in the dining room, are casement windows, cut up into small panes, as shown by the illustration, and glazed with ordinary double thick American glass, without any suspicion in the house of "plate;" for while plate glass has no doubt, uses which excuse its existence, it would absolutely nullify the homely quality desired in this structure.

Pictures, as pictures, have been avoided in the design and furnishing of this room, as being superfluous and discordant. A small mirror, however, is placed at the proper eye-height by the side of the door leading into the hall.

The dining room, being used at special periods, rather than continuously, admits of a trifle stronger and more brilliant treatment. Here, the walls are a strong golden yellow, the ceiling the gray of the plaster, and the woodwork a rich olive green; the visible wall in the alcove for the sideboard is a dark, dull Indian red, and the floor a golden yellow, with a large moss-green rug in the center. Extending about the room is a small pseudo-frieze,

which has for its color a bright Venetian red. The windows are hung with a fabric akin to India silk, whose color is, largely, a creamy white, old rose and gold. The leaded window over the sideboard is framed with broad bands of blackened copper; while the martins in the designs are of a dark gray blue, with circles or halos about their heads of a bright yellow, and all against a background of cloudy, milk-colored opaque glass, which has faint streaks of dull turquoise blue running through it.

The hall of communication between the front door, the living room and the staircase being the first apartment entered by the visitor, naturally calls for a cheerful treatment that shall give a presage of the hospitality to be found beyond. In view of this, the general tone of the hall is golden, running from a full dark orange to a pale lemon yellow, which should be contrasted at the extreme end of the hall by some object of pottery, or a fabric of a dull violet. In this hall, if the owner is fortunate enough to possess, or can obtain two or three Japanese prints of a good period and by approved masters, such as Hokusai, Hiroshige, Toyokuni or Utarmaro, he would do well to have them framed in parchment mats about five inches wide, enclosed in dull ebony frames not to exceed one-half inch in width, and hung at irregular intervals and heights, with two supports to each frame. What little furniture is to be found in the hall should preferably be of the finish known as Flemish oak, and any rug or rugs used ought, if harmonized with the scheme, to carry a large quantity of dull red and purplish brown, with some white, and with accents of dark turquoise blue. The kitchen,—that too often neglected room,—has had volume after volume written upon its practical side, but seldom, if ever, has a voice been lifted up for its aesthetic aspects; and, as a formula for a practical, successful working kitchen is so well known, it is not necessary to study this branch, save with the plumber and range maker. But for those who think that the chemistry of cooking is somewhat influenced, and possibly elevated, by proper surroundings, the color treatment of the kitchen generally is a matter of some moment.

If the owner desires to do something verging on the extravagant, there is no better covering for a kitchen floor that what is known as rubber interlocked tile, which is agreeable to the eye, easy

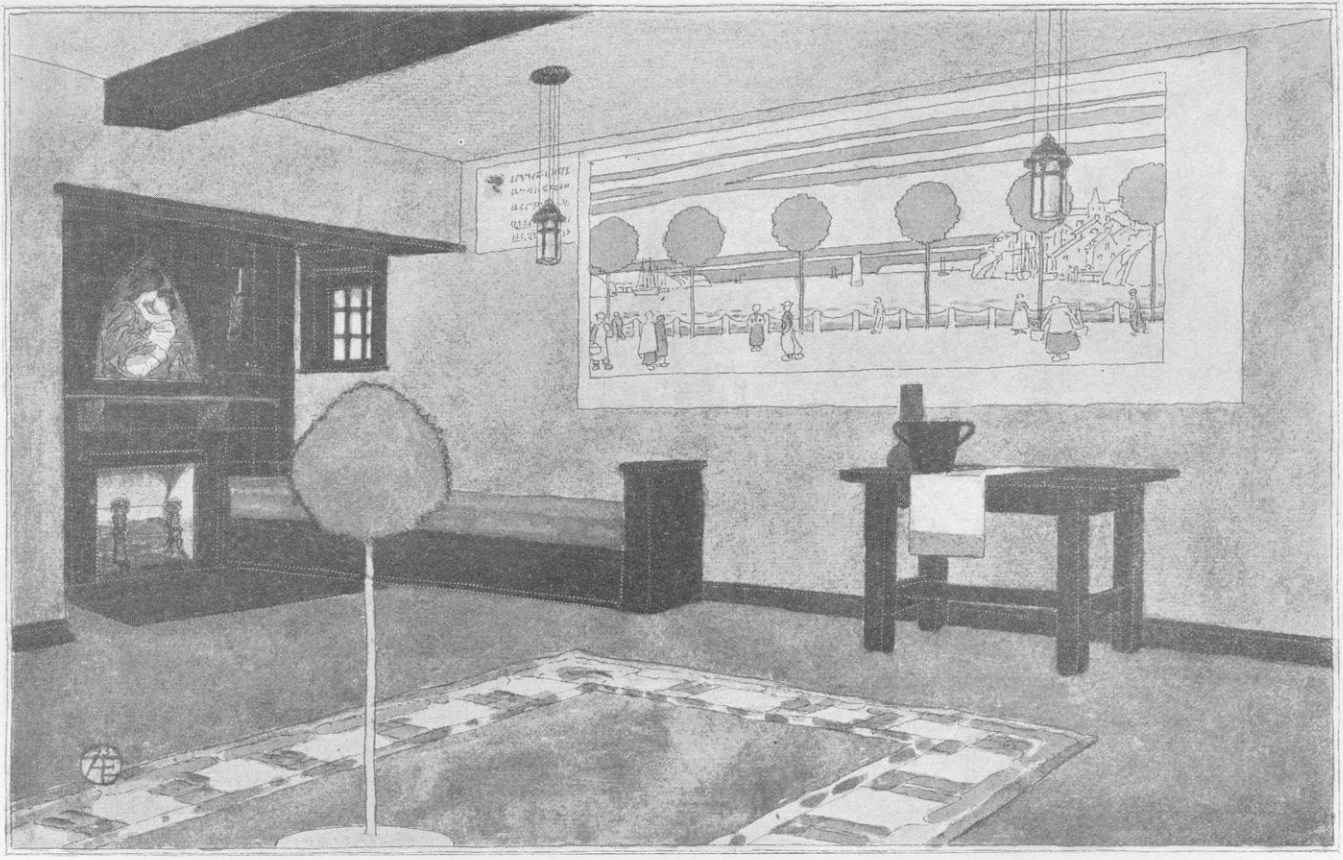
for the feet, and absolutely noiseless beneath the step; three conditions particularly appropriate for a room of this kind. This tile, it is suggested, should be farther carried up the side walls, so as to form a wainscoting of reasonable height all around the room, and increased at the sink, range and kitchen table, to a height of about five feet, except where interrupted by windows. Above this, a French glazed paper is recommended which may be readily cleaned with a damp sponge, and which can now be obtained in patterns most agreeable and attractive.

The kitchen under ordinary circumstances, being one of the warmest rooms in the house, it would seem appropriate that the color scheme of the room be something suggestive of coolness. For this reason let the rubber tiles be of blues and greens, and the paper, above the wainscoting, of a greenish gray, with pale lemon yellow ceiling, which will satisfy the eye, and remove from the kitchen its usual ugly and neglected appearance.

The treatment of the hall on the first floor may with advantage be continued up the staircase and in the second story. The bedrooms varying, as they are exposed to the various points of the compass, should be treated with schemes of warm or cool colors. The northwest room of the house, for instance, being from its location the coldest room on this floor, would seem to demand a coloration of yellows and orange, or reds and orange, and those on the southwest equally schemes of greens and blues, with the understanding that in any of the rooms, whatever the prevailing tone of the room may be, it is dead and uninteresting without some small object which presents, by way of foil, its own complementary color.

In this design it is especially desired that the frigid white and blue decorations of the ordinary bathroom be avoided. If there is any one place in the house that should look, as well as be comfortable, it is the bathroom, and it is for this reason that a warm scheme of yellow or red is recommended for this room.

The résumé of the color and decorative suggestions for these various rooms shows that no item of expense has been added to the cost of the house merely for the sake of decoration, but that infinite care has been exercised in the judicious and proper selection of the colors to be employed and in the combination of the material nec-



Fireplace in Living Room

Dining Room, showing Sideboard

essary for the living and constructive purposes. Therefore, if no error be made in the selections, the result should be: a house that is a home; that is comfortable, economical, good to look at, good to be in; a house that is hospitable and homely.

IF DISCERNMENT WERE OURS TO TRACE THROUGH THE MAZE OF FASHION AND EXPERIMENTAL ORIGINALITY, THE LIVING PRINCIPLE OF TRUE ART, THE CAPRICE OF TASTE WOULD HAVE LITTLE TO DO WITH THE COMFORT OF OUR CONVICTIONS OR THE WORTH OF OUR INVESTMENTS.

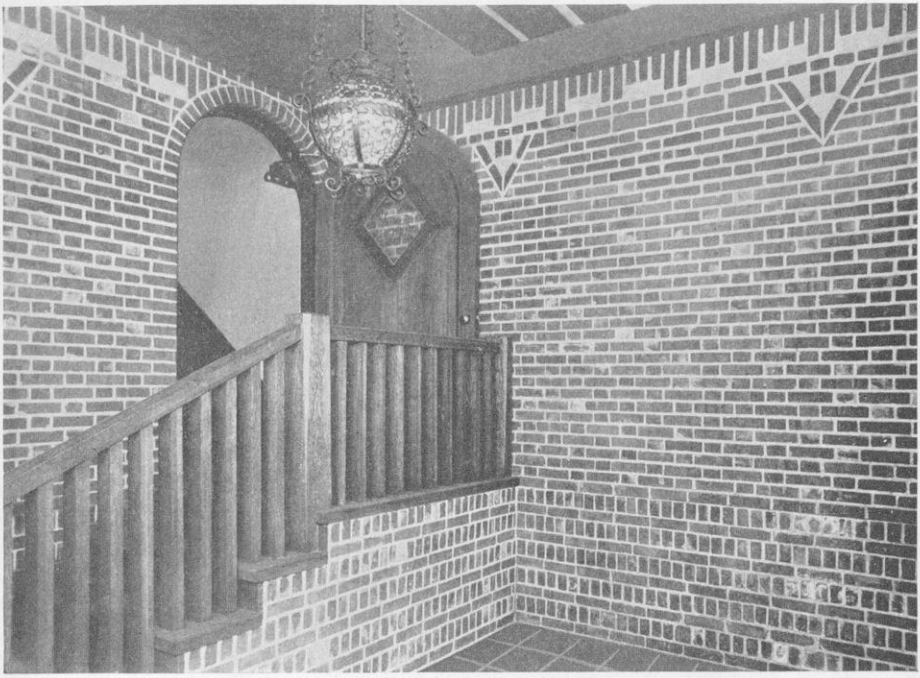
FALLACY HAS ITS SHORT TRIUMPHS AND THE PERSUASIVE CRITIC, OR THE CREATOR OF ART VALUES MAY EFFECT REAL VALUE BUT FOR A DAY. THE LIMIT OF THE CREDULITY OF THE PUBLIC, WHICH LINCOLN HAS IMMORTALIZED, IS THE BASIS OF HOPE.

HENRY R. POORE IN "PICTORIAL COMPOSITION"

# The American Style

UNTIL within a comparatively few years the Europeans have said with a sense of superiority: "America has no architecture.' But they are coming—and that not slowly to modify their statements. They recognize an element of merit in certain of our most recently erected public buildings as, for example, the Boston Library. Farther than that, they acknowledge that we are developing "the American style," which they so long believed to be an impossibility.

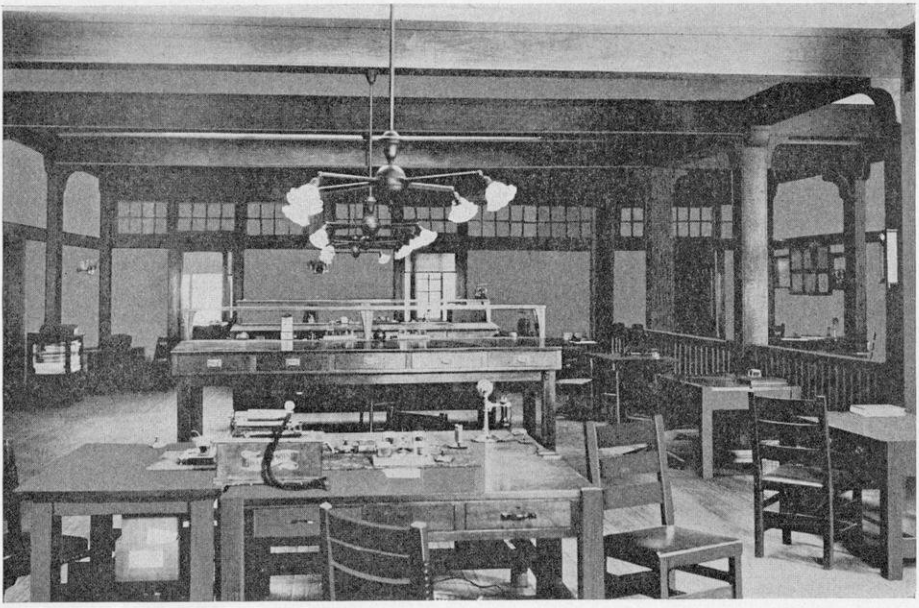
They are largely correct in their judgments and statements, since a style is always created unconsciously and has its existence in the needs of the people. And, as with us, the rapid increase of financial importance has caused the demand for the ware house, the complete office, and the corporation building; so American architects have quickly risen to meet this heavy and complex demand. The ingenuity, adaptability and practical qualities of our builders can not fail to impress the visitor to the business districts of New York, Boston, Chicago, and other of our commercial or industrial centers, when he compares them with the corresponding quarter of London, the financial capital of the world. In the latter city, the smoke and the tortuous lines of streets, centuries upon centuries old, are hostile elements not to be overcome, scarcely even to be mitigated. Beside, in many cases, the buildings themselves are of too great age to bear strict comparison with their similars in America. Whence it happens that in this one instance our youth as a people, our freedom from precedent and convention have advanced us in an important branch of the greatest and most useful of the arts, beyond the point occupied in that same branch by the English or by any continental nation. Enterprise, courage and wealth speak from the great assemblages of iron, brick and stone which dominate our American streets as eloquently as the older architectural piles of Europe tell their story of religion, popular rights, or seigneurial power. Henceforward, the erection of the building devoted to business uses is the prerogative of the American architect, who is even now passing into the history of the fine arts, in which he will be studied in the number of those who have really created: who have adapted a pre-existing principle to a new and serviceable use,

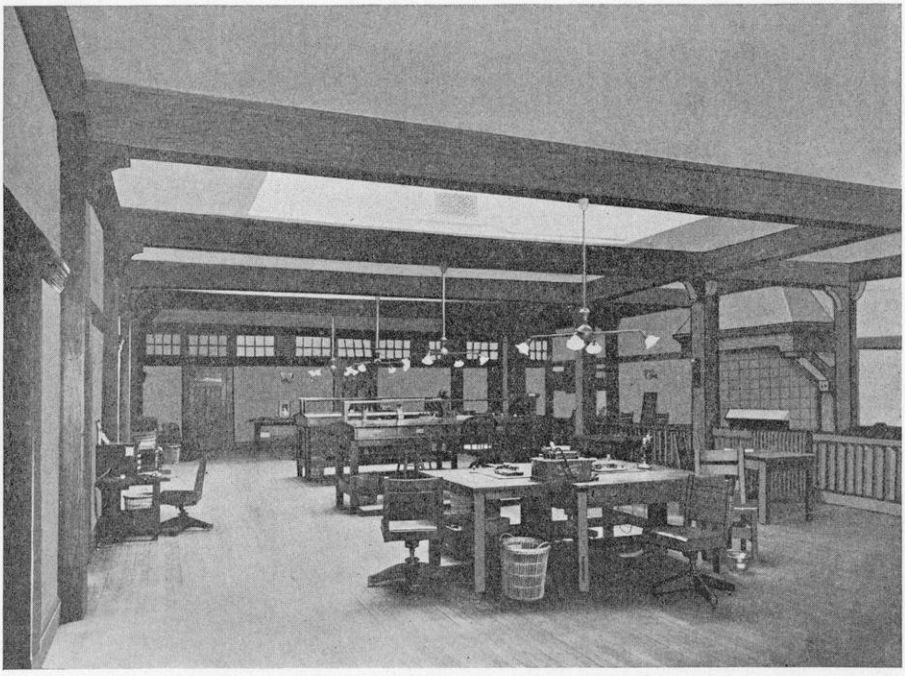


Entrance and Stairway


Offices of William E. Uptegrove & Brother
Foot of East Tenth Street, New York

Wilkinson & Magonigle
Architects





Interior Views of the Uptegrove Offices

or who have introduced a new element with that effect which promises permanence.

This special creation of the American architect is not only bold and solid in construction, convenient beyond anything that has been devised in the Old World to be put to similar uses, and calculated to assure rapid transaction of business. It is also most imposing in exterior effect: a quality which is partially due to the fact that in America our customs preclude the interior court, which in Europe receives the greatest care and attention from the builder; the street front being subordinated and sacrificed, and, in many cases, forming but a mere screen before it.

An example of exterior effect produced in our national style, resides in the very important office building recently erected at the foot of East Tenth Street, New York, by the architects, Wilkinson and Magonigle, for William E. Uptegrove and Brother, who are dealers in mahogany and other fine woods.

This structure is two stories in height, and is built of Harvard brick with wide "raked-out" joints in black mortar. The façade with its row of Roman arches, into which are fitted wide recessed windows, gives in its first story, a certain Old World effect, clear enough to be suggestive, but not so definite as to reveal its prototype. Above, a row of large windows cut into small panes, lead the thought away from the suggestions of the first story, and, at the same time, bring their very distinctive note into harmony with the general scheme. Still higher, another bold feature claims attention. This latter may be defined as a hood, supported on finely decorative iron brackets, projecting a strong shadow, and giving accent to what otherwise would be a too smooth and ineffective façade.

The end arch at the right affords access to the stairway, which leads from a tiled floor through the brick masonry, by broad steps to the second floor.

The staircase ends at the rear of a room destined for the manager and gives upon a corridor running the length of the building. This corridor leads to a reception room, which, in turn, is followed by the private offices of the two members of the firm: these three divisions occupying the width of the building at the rear. The

floor area then remaining, still a rectangle, is occupied by the general office. This room, large in reality, is given the effect of still greater spaciousness by the excellent provisions made for its lighting and furnishing. To the first of these ends, the rear wall is made like a screen; the portion included between the top of the door-frames and the ceiling being continuous mullioned windows, through which light is transmitted from the outer windows in the offices beyond. A large chimney-piece with a picturesque hood and faced with Grueby tiles, lends an air of hospitality to the room; while the open rafters add still farther to the mediaeval effect. The floors are of oak, the ceilings are in plaster, left in sand-finish, and the furniture is all in the simple structural style advocated by The Craftsman.

The entire space of the ground floor is devoted to warehouse purposes and there are stored the valuable woods composing the stock of one of the largest commercial houses of its kind in the world: mahogany, satin-wood and fine veneers being the products most largely represented.

On completing the survey of this structure so distinguished in its exterior, so refined in all its fittings and furnishings, one can but applaud the spirit of its owners who have successfully expressed the strength and importance of their business enterprise in the building which is its visible representative.

# An Adirondack Camp

*HARVEY ELLI*

IT is given to build a retreat in the Adirondacks: something that shall give a decorous shelter, that shall have the privacy and the many domestic comforts which our civilization has changed from luxuries to necessities; all these must be had, and more. It must have the openness and freedom of a tent; it must be a camp; one must live practically out of doors, and yet have immunity from flies, mosquitoes and kindred pests, as well as the privilege of withdrawing absolutely from the outer world. This is surely a difficult sounding problem, and yet it is very like the bark of a dog. First of all, it should not be an expensive thing, this lodge or camp, but, like its surroundings, it should be honest and sincere, frankly direct in its purpose and methods. Utility, the desire for harmony, common sense itself, demand that whenever it is compatible, the material about the site should be used. It seems almost an absurdity to dwell on this point, but the fact that a noted architect has recently built a house of stone in the clay-bearing state of Virginia, and another of brick in the granite-ribbed state of Maine, makes the reason for this emphasis more evident.

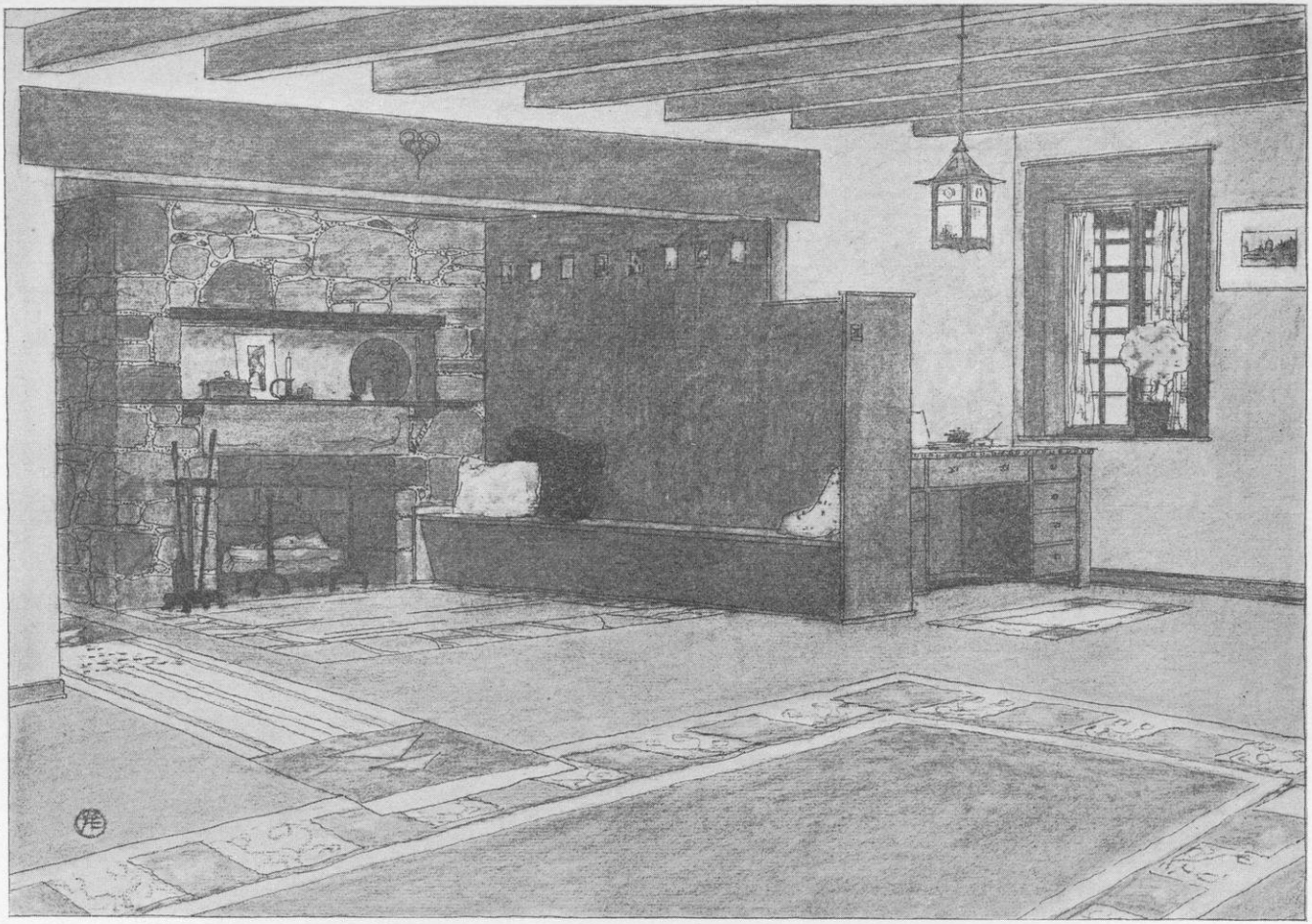
Let, then, the abounding spruce be used for the framing, mill slabs for siding, hemlock for sheathing, pine for the floors, and the local stone for the chimneys, fireplace, hearths, etc. Let it be remembered that mortar is not easily made where it is purposed to build. Mortar boards, which can be nailed to the studding by the carpenter, will answer every practical and æsthetic purpose.

It is also to be remembered that breakage of glass in this wilderness is a serious matter. Let the panes be small and easily replaced from a reserve supply, which should be kept on hand. The materials being gathered, let the heads be drawn together for the arrangement of the camp. The word camp is suggestive, and the mind instantly reverts to a large parade ground, with the orderly arrangement of kitchens in the rear, the radial axis, and a sense of order and openness. Why not, then, borrow from the men of war? Have a parade ground and place of general gathering; a place where, when the duties or the pleasures of the day are over, all may meet on common ground! This, with the kitchen and eating room in the rear, should make for convenience, largeness, and economy of space. This is all plausible, if the arrangement upstairs make no

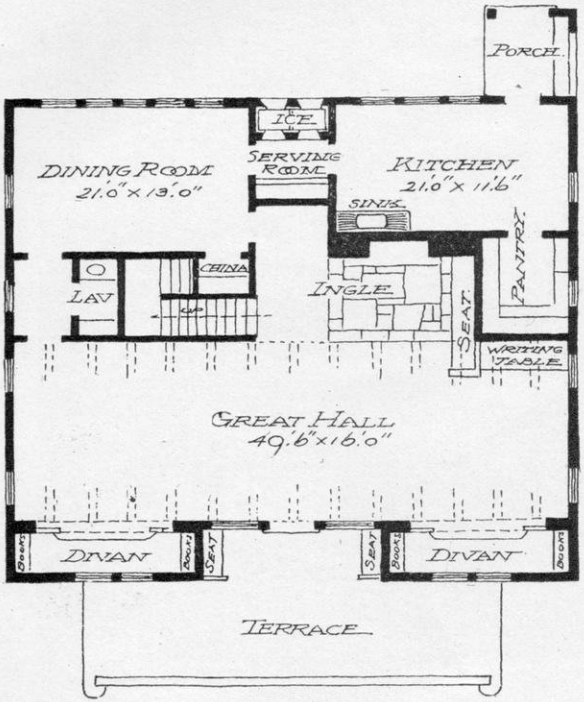
contrary demand feasible. There must be an upstairs; as sleeping rooms would interfere and be interfered with most seriously, if in direct connection with the rooms and arrangements already resolved upon. Economy, as well, has its part, for the same roof which covers one story will cover two equally well. In laying out the floors below, no account has been taken of privacy for the immediate family; in other words, no headquarters. It seems, then, that there must be a large room provided for, and so that air and cross ventilation may be had, its location should be central rather than otherwise; while the sleeping rooms, or tents, should be grouped about it. Means of communication between the two stories naturally comes between the gathering place of one story and its equivalent of the second story. This gives a stairway in the center, then, like the broad way from the parade ground to the Colonel's headquarters.

This tentative arrangement, put together with due regard to structural and domestic requirements, gives us nearly the accompanying floor plan. It will be seen that the bedrooms will still have space in plenty, if the outside walls be dropped back to form second story balconies, or rather loggias, which, were it not for the flying insects of the night, would give a secluded and delightful retreat for the evening, if one desired to get away from the throng of the great room. To afford immunity from these prowlers, let screens be inserted between the posts that carry the roof. If it be desired, as it probably will be, insert the screens so as to divide the loggias into smaller ones. These screens should be removable at will and stored during the winter months. The comfort arising from this contrivance may be imagined, for it not only provides a practical out-door sitting-room, but in stress of temperature and by means of a hammock, it gives an unequaled sleeping place. The camp is laid out! The major portion of the structural material having been obtained from its own environment, now let all be put together with fitness and due respect for the proprieties.

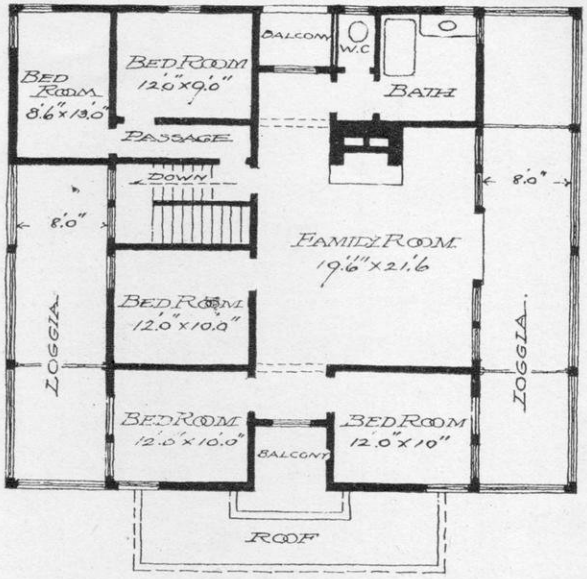
Again, the camp should look as much as possible as if it were a part of the site: as much a part and parcel of its surroundings as the trees and rocks which were its sources. For this reason, paint should be avoided wherever possible, and time be given an oppor-



Great Hall, Adirondack Camp




GROUND FLOOR PLAN




SECOND FLOOR PLAN

An Adirondack Camp

tunity to spread that veil which makes for harmony. That portion of the exterior woodwork which is formed by tools might very well be stained a dull orange tone; this with dull red on the shingled roof, together with the purplish browns and grays of the slabs, would give almost the coloration of a faded autumn leaf. So the building would, without discord, take its place in its environment. The outside being left as nearly as possible in the way in which nature provided, the inside of the camp calls for thought and attention that shall make it habitable and attractive.

In the big room we have already in place the floors of pine, the walls of mortar board, the visible construction of the ceiling with the mortar board between the beams, and a fireplace of stone, with its hearth of the same and the windows with small panes. These may not be altered, but only carefully enhanced, by refinements that shall really refine, and when any doubt exists as to the propriety of any scheme for beauty, let it be sacrificed; for nothing is safer than the old rule of decoration, formulated by Owen Jones: "When in doubt as to any detail of decoration, leave it out!" No matter what is done, it must be borne in mind that simplicity is the key note of the entire room, and that anything savoring of the "artistic" shall be vigorously thrust aside. If this be conscientiously kept in mind, the transition from the primitive surroundings of the exterior to the civilization of the fireside, will be easy and natural.

The fireplace, as will be seen by the drawings, is constructed of the local stone, boulders preferred; these are split and laid with the flat side out, with big, generous mortar joints, without the slightest attempt at concealing any of the construction. Over the fireplace there is provided a recess sufficient for the reception of the few household gods, which the mistress may feel unable to leave behind in the city. The whole fireplace, while extremely primitive, is eminently practical and good to be and live with. This fireplace leaves space for a seat that will accommodate eight or ten people, and the seat is supplemented in its rear and next to the window by a writing desk. The walls, which are a dull, cold gray, would, without doubt, be improved by a wash of dull, yellow ochre, which would give a tone not far from the old-fashioned "butcher's paper;" restful, and keeping its place as a background

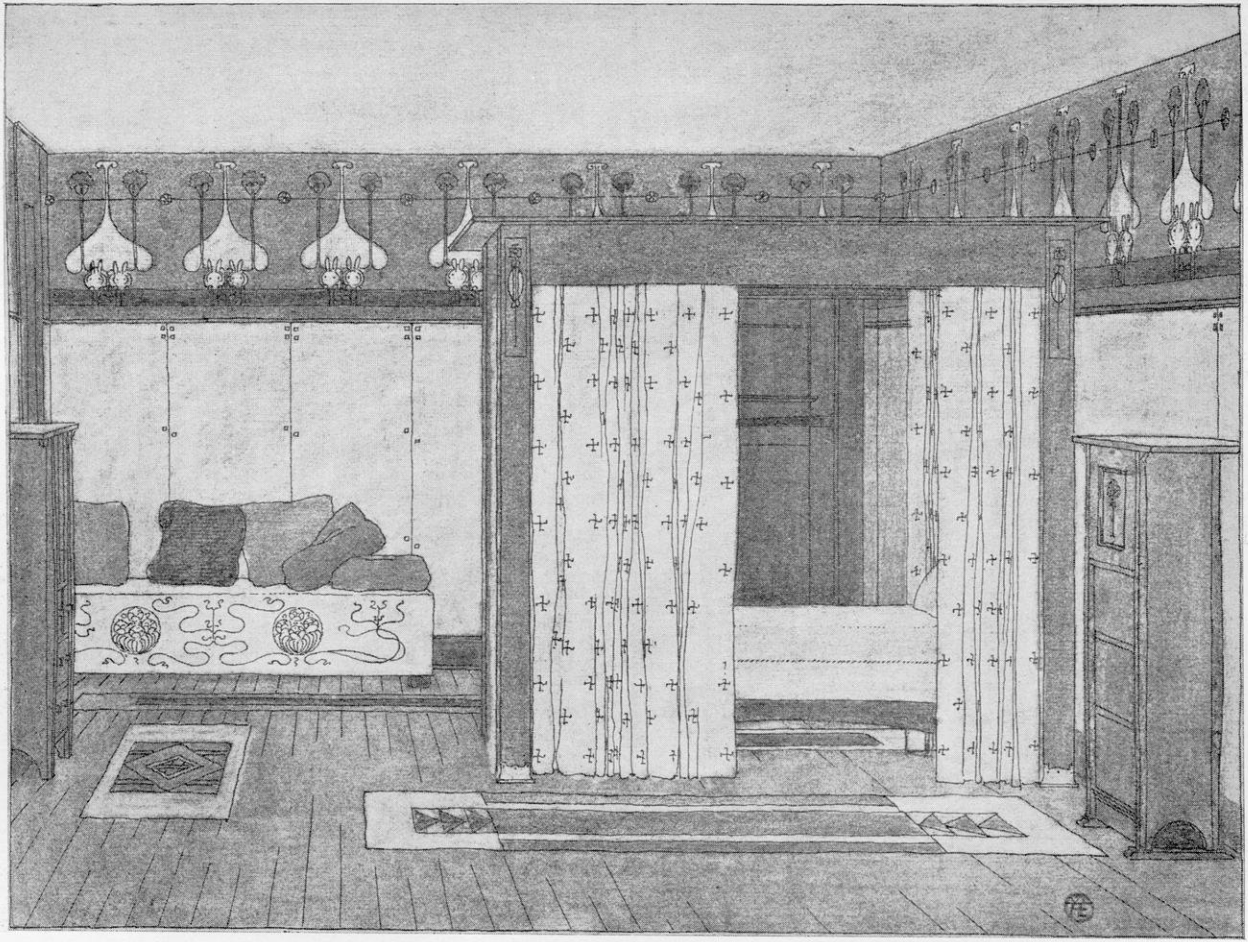
most admirably. It will be noticed that floor arrangement allows for two alcoves on either side of the entrance. As there is no place provided for books, let each end of either alcove be fitted with book shelves, and these alcoves, which, during the day, serve as lounging places, may, by night, if occasion demand, be screened off from the main room by curtains, hanging from concealed poles in the casings; thus the alcoves will be made into small sleeping compartments or berths, and thereby add materially to the accommodations of the camp.

Let the woodwork remain as it comes from the hands of the workmen, without paint, with simply a dark olive brown stain on the beams, casings and doors; then, with the addition of a few simple, quiet rag rugs for the floor, we have an apartment that is of much propriety, and to which one can come back with ever-increasing satisfaction.

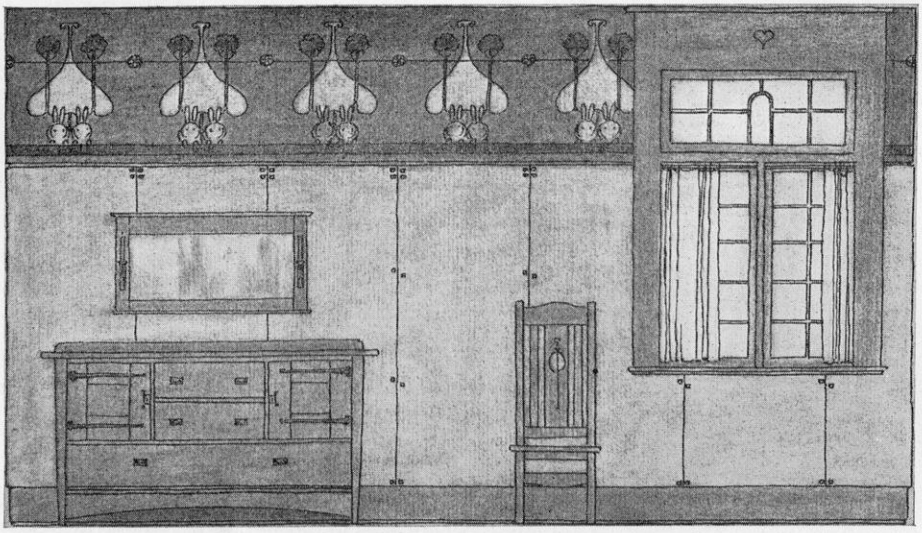
The dining room, with a change of old rose on the walls, instead of the tawny yellows, calls for no variations from the general treatment of the house. The bedrooms should have an air of coolness, suggested by a dull grayish blue, and, throughout the camp, the color of the woodwork, save the floors and that of the kitchen and pantries, should be of the brown before mentioned.

The kitchen and its offices, such as serving rooms, pantries, etc., should be ceiled up with spruce boards, stained a strong grass-green. All the sanitary fittings must be of the best and plainest obtainable and so arranged as to be put together without expert advice or high priced labor. It is hardly necessary to say that the furniture should be of the simplest, that each piece should have a function, and that all abominations made to look at should be barred out absolutely; for this is no museum, but a camp in which to live.

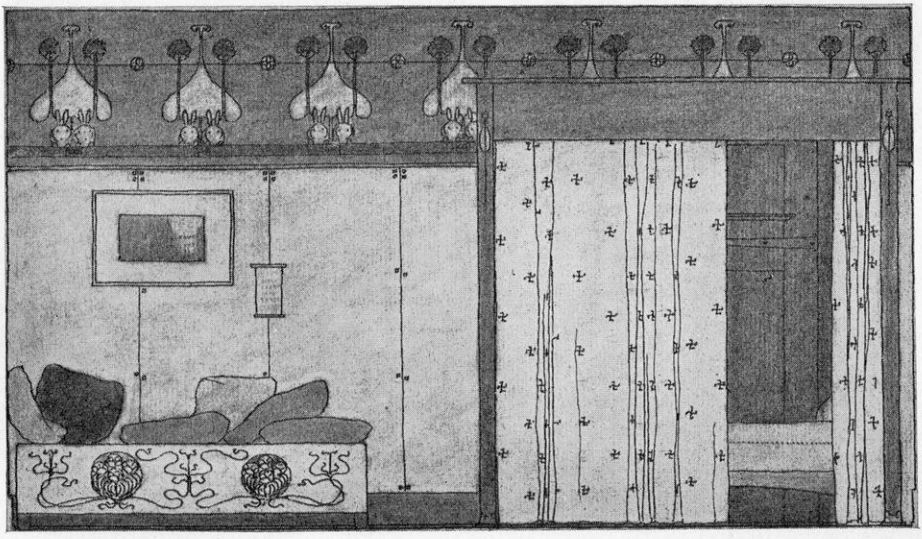
Sufficient has been said to indicate the general lines upon which to work in the building of this camp, and if they are honestly followed with the conviction that simplicity and fitness are the two touchstones of beauty, the problem of the return to Nature, will be reasonably solved.



A Child's Bedroom



West Wall



East Wall of Child's Bedroom

# A Child's Bedroom

TO create the beautiful from materials lying near at hand, and of small intrinsic value, is a task bringing abundant reward and sometimes not difficult to accomplish. This is especially true of effects in household decoration, which result from knowledge, skill and taste, rather than from lavish expenditure. Good form and good color are the only requisites to the production of a successful interior. If these be secured, no one whose opinion is worthy of attention will question the means by which they are attained, provided that the structural and decorative materials employed, stand to one another in proper relations of cost; provided that one element does not strike a note of luxury discordant with a neighboring element of extreme simplicity.

To create beauty from simple elements in the surroundings of children is a duty which the elder owe to the younger. This for several reasons: the cultivation of taste is almost synonymous with the cultivation of morals. Once the aesthetic idea takes possession of the young and developing mind, lower pleasures and thoughts are forgotten, and the desire to seek, to possess and, in many cases, to produce the beautiful, becomes a powerful and permanent impulse. In learning to appreciate beauty, the child acquires a taste which will strengthen with time: which will add to the pleasure of his youth, provide a means of adorning his prosperity or of consoling his adversity, and, at all times, place him above material things. Beauty of surroundings, moreover, teaches the child respect for order. It inspires him with the wish to preserve and cherish the objects which he habitually touches and uses. It eliminates in him the tendency to mar and to destroy, which in the adult leads to carelessness, waste, and impoverishment.

It is imperative that this beauty should proceed from simplicity. Luxurious surroundings are harmful. They suggest and induce idleness. Complex forms and costly materials have an influence upon life which tells a sad story in history. On the other hand, chasteness and restraint in form, simple, but artistic materials are equally expressive of the character of the people who use them, and equally formative in their influence upon the young. The art of Savonarola's cell, and of the Puritan keeping-room or kitchen, is higher and finer than that of the Petit Trianon. The aesthetic faculty of the child should be fed and not surfeited.

# A Child's Bedroom

In order practically to work out a problem of beauty as a resultant of simplicity, let us choose the most ordinary elements with which to furnish and to decorate a child's bedroom. First, the room given is commonplace, and therefore demands that the walls and furniture lend it character and attractiveness; that form, color and design endear it to its imaginative young occupant .

As regards form, color and design, three essentials must be respected. First, all shapes to be used must be structural, clear-cut and frankly expressive of their purpose. Second, the color-scheme must not be aggressive. It must soothe rather than challenge the eye of the child. It must, in some sense, be representative of Nature: that is, to the extent of using the same colors to the same purposes that they serve in the outdoor world. Third, all design allowed in the rugs, hangings, friezes and cushions must be rational and restrained, since familiarity with distortion is certain to produce evil effects upon the taste, as well as upon the manual skill of the child.

The basis of the color-scheme requires no search. Green literally suggests itself, since it is the background of Nature. The shade of green demands attention. It must be light, tender, warm: a combination of qualities found in the pale blush of the ripening harvest apple. This shade will then appear upon the side walls, up to a certain height, in a plain linen fabric. Above it, in order to relieve the otherwise too unified surface, there will be a frieze, also of linen and of generous width. The frieze must form with the walls and ceiling a complex harmony, and from its middle position, like a rich musical chord of modulation, it must introduce a single discordant note of color. Its background is a dull gray-blue, upon which appears the design seen in the illustrations: the inverted heart-shaped spaces being in clear, cold green; the tree-tops in lemon yellow; the crouching rabbits in cream color; the bodies of the trees and markings, as well as the heavy band near the bottom, in dull plum color

This use of color in the frieze demands for the ceiling a pale whitish yellow, which completes a sequence so agreeable that the eye returns again and again to follow it either upward or downward, always with the same satisfaction. It must be added that

the frieze is a piece of needlework combining embroidery with stenciled appliqué, and although very important as a decorative feature, it is inexpensive as to material: its cost being largely resident in the time and skill which are necessary to its production.

To complete the background for the movable objects which the room contains, the floor is stained (if new), or painted a dark moss green, upon which hooked rugs make spots of agreeable color, such as those with which the impressionist blots his canvas; the colors here being blue and olive green, fused into harmony by masses of white, and by scattered bits of brick-red approaching a purplish shade.

The background being thus arranged, the movable objects must be fitted to their places, with the utmost care as to line and color. The furniture is of quartered oak, of a soft gray green, and has a smooth, dull finish, very agreeable to both eye and touch. Such finish is given also to all the woodwork of the room: door, casings, and windows.

The chief of the few pieces of furniture is the miniature "four-poster," which valuable as a decorative feature, is also most comfortable as a bed. It will further endear itself to the child, because he has seen its original in pictures, and because it is a small copy, suited to his own needs, of something used by older people. The draperies of the bed, window and lounge are of a linen fabric, very artistic in texture, and of that self-color which is known in France as *beige,* and approaches the shade of a light *suède* glove. All these draperies, as shown by the illustrations, bear the same design. They are embroidered in pale blues and greens, which are pleasing against the *beige* background, and also as being repetitions of certain color-notes of the frieze.

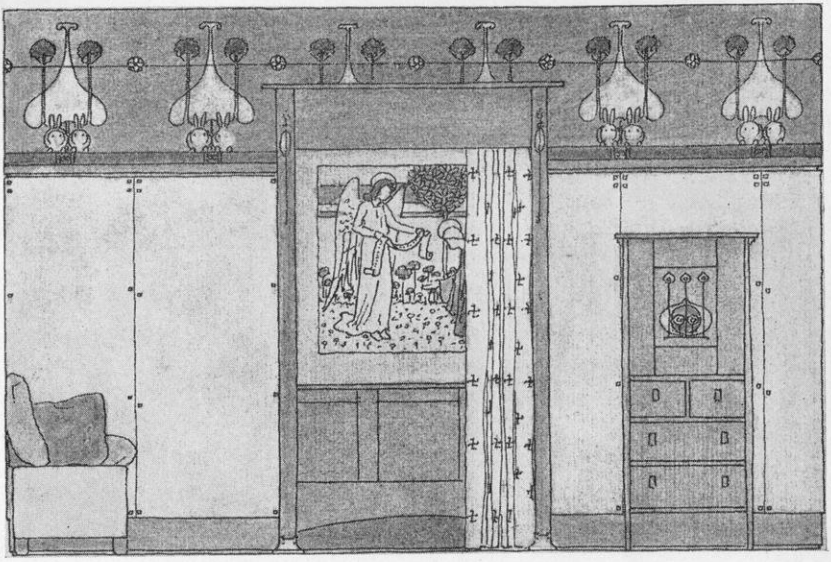
The room is now complete: a complex harmony of color has been established, so modulated that neither adult nor child will easily weary of it. The expense incurred has been comparatively slight. The effect attained is a sufficient reward for the thought and work devoted to the plan. The child chosen to enjoy the result will draw from it a lesson of order and refinement that must tell upon his future life.

# Curtains and Coverlet

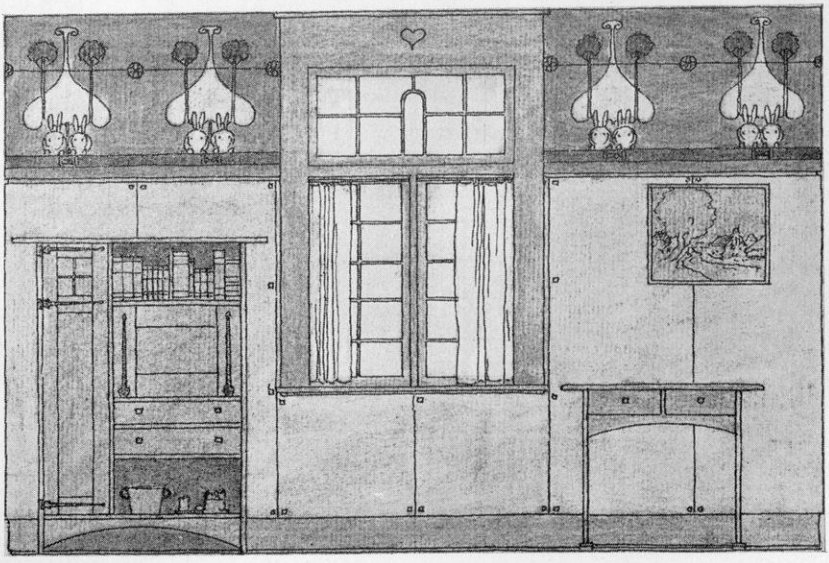
THE CRAFTSMAN for June illustrated the treatment of a casement window which has been the subject of numerous letters of approval addressed to the publishers. In response, therefore, to this mark of appreciation, a detailed description of the draperies of the window is here subjoined, together with that of a bed-coverlet to accompany them.

The fabric is linen, of peculiar weave and of that natural color known in France as *beige*. Hemstitching an inch in width, done in Delft blue embroidery silk, outlines the side and foot, making a hem of two and one-quarter inches at the side, and of two and three-quarters inches at the foot. The hem is made in the ordinary canvas stitch, by taking diagonally upon the needle four threads of the fabric. The threads thus loosened are tied midway by the silk, in groups of fours; thus producing the usual hour-glass effect. The corners are marked by the wheel or flower familiar in hemstitch needlework.

The coverlet is designed to fit a wooden bedstead six feet, two inches long by four feet, eight inches wide. One breadth of the fabric, thirty-one inches in width, is taken for the center, and to this piece half-widths are added, one on either side; thus completing the top part of the coverlet. Thence, a valance twenty inches wide, with a hem of three and one-half inches, falls to meet the floor line. The hemstitching of the valance is, like that of the draperies, one inch in width, but five instead of four threads are taken as the unit of the stitch. All the seams of the coverlet are outlined with needlework in canvas stitch: six threads being taken on the needle, and the stitch made twelve threads high; while further emphasis is given to the seams by the tree ornaments shown in the design, embroidered one inch in height, and eight inches apart, alternating on the two sides of the canvas stitch. It may be added that the coverlet, when finished, should be eight feet in length, and the top part fifty-six inches in width; also that the pillows, according to the English custom, should be concealed beneath it. Pleasing variations of this design are now under consideration in the needle-work department of The Craftsman, one of which, in the French style of bed-drapery, will be illustrated in the August issue of the Magazine.

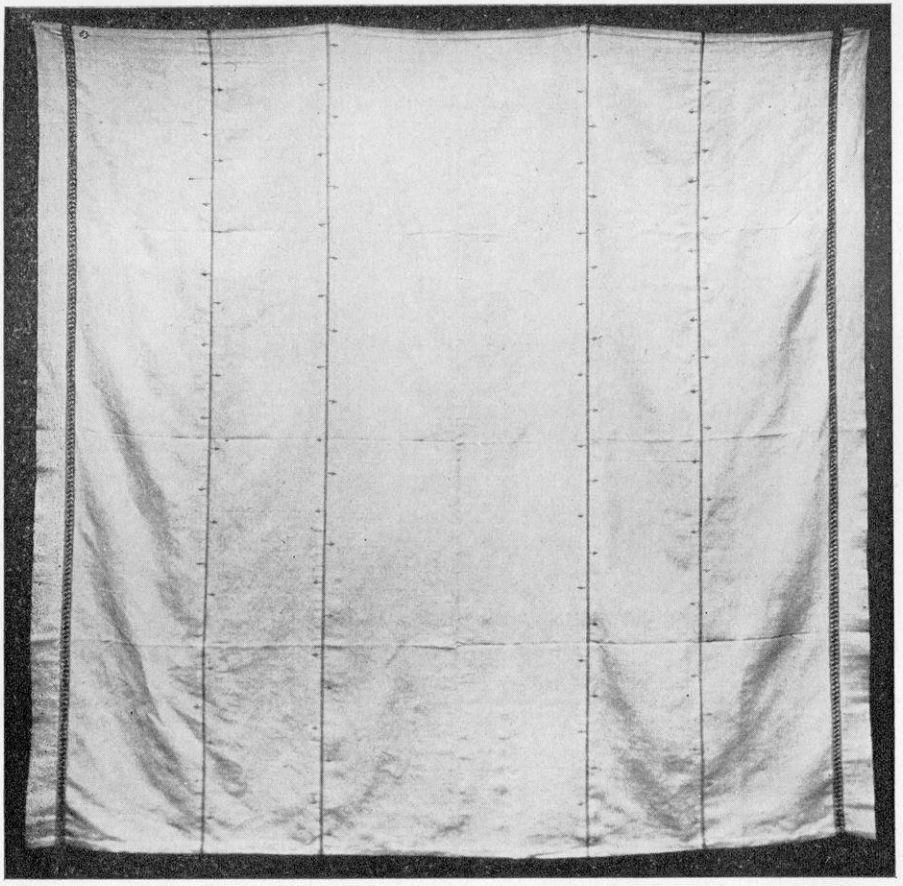


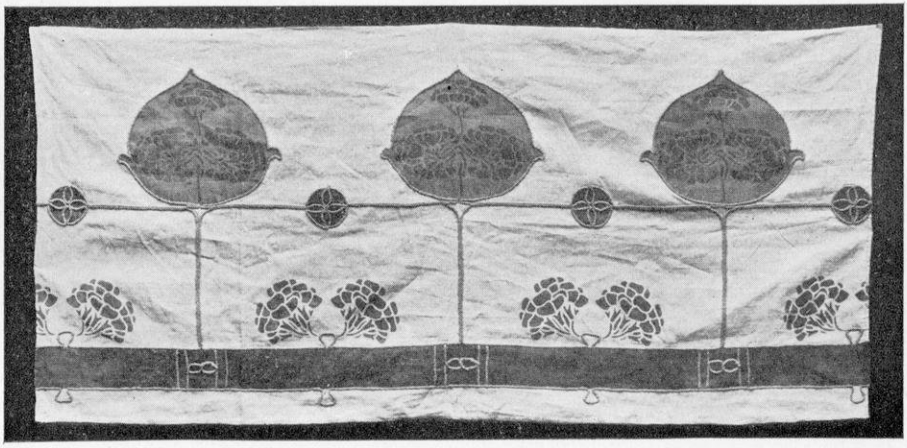
South Wall

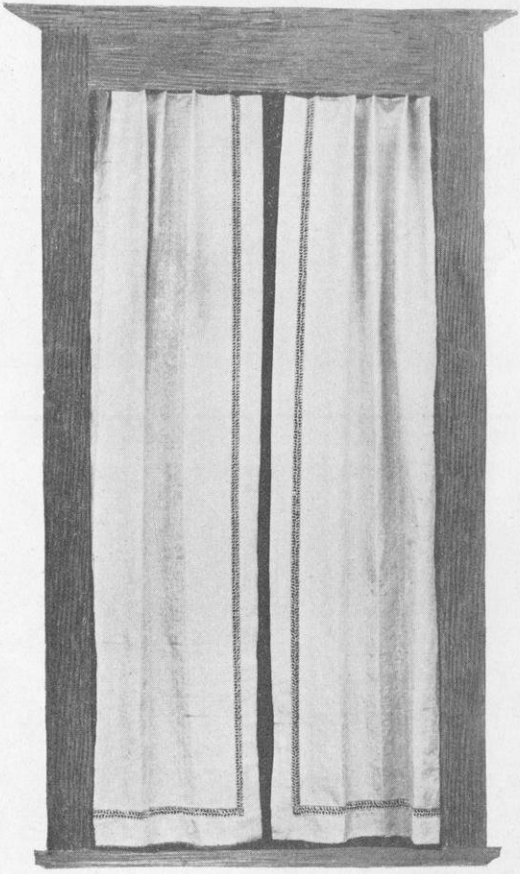


North Wall

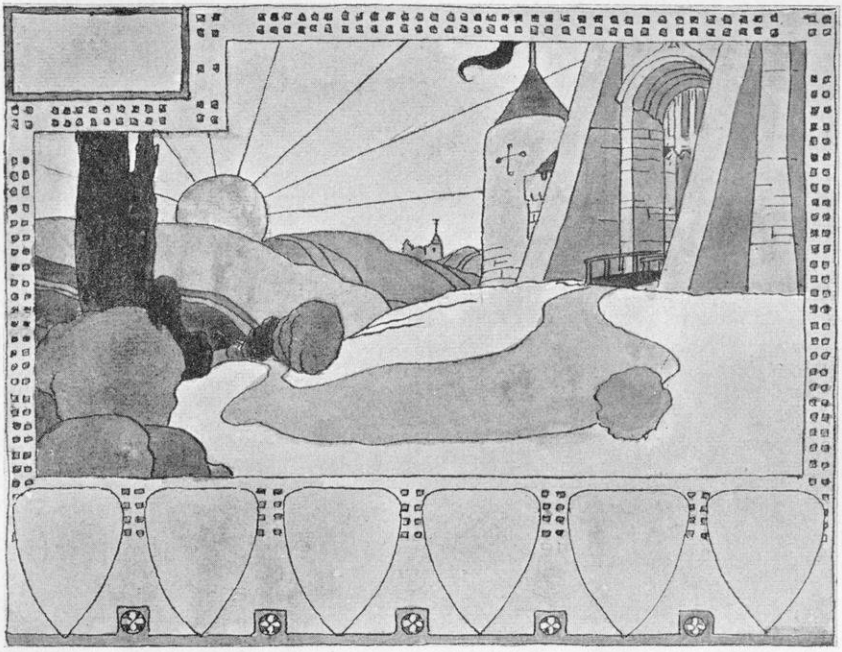
See page 285







Coverlet, Frieze, and Curtains embroidered in The Craftsman workshops



Craftsman Tapestry

## Description of the Frieze Accompanying the Curtains and Coverlet

THIS piece of embroidery is worked upon a bluish gray linen, with the design outlined in a pale, cold tone of plum color. The broad band at the bottom, the whorls, and the large circular spaces are done in *appliqué:* the two former with a dull red linen fabric, the latter with a sage green material of the same texture. Upon the *appliqué,* as also upon the blue-grey background, the floral forms are stenciled in tawny yellow ochre; the whole composing a quiet, refined chord of color, and affording a decoration easily executed, and so inexpensive as to materials, that it may be produced at little more than the cost of a frieze in paper-hangings of the highest grade.

## Examples of The Craftsman Wall Hangings

A NUMBER of successful experiments have recently been been made in the embroidery department of the rapidly multiplying Craftsman workshops: so successful, indeed, that they are here illustrated and described in detail, with the intention of aiding those who may desire to procure designs uniting the mediaeval quality with the modern gamut of color.

The fabric serving as a basis for the embroidery is a tan-colored linen, woven in coarse mesh, and suggesting the Bayeux tapestries, that great historical document of the period of the Conquest. Upon this interesting fabric the patterns are stenciled, the masses of solid color are applied, and the whole is outlined with heavy dark embroidery.

The color scheme of the hanging illustrating militant Christianity, has its dominant note in the cloak of the knight, which is a strong golden yellow. The angel is clothed in white, and holds a floating scroll done in a faded bluish green, often found in old French tapestries of the best period. The hair of the two figures is worked in blue-black, which provides an admirable contrast for the halos encircling the heads with a band of pale, metallic yellow. The knight sits a blackish-brown horse, caparisoned in the style of

the Middle Ages, and with the harness showing a pattern worked in the blue of the angel's scroll. A tree completes the composition and at the same time adds a last modulation to the color-harmony: a soft yellowish green familiar, like the blue-green above noted, from its frequent occurrence in historic pieces of tapestry.

The second design is also a mediaeval one, since, according to existing sentiment, no other classes of subjects are suited to the kind of embroidery under consideration. In this piece, the color-scheme is more varied: introducing lighter and gayer hues, which are permissible in the secular, landscape subject, as contrasted with the religious figure-piece. Altogether, the picture is agreeable and cheerful, and, in some inexplicable way, suggestive of Chaucer.

Here, the color of the ground is a pale tawny yellow, upon which are applied dull olives and blue greens for the trees, gray-violet for the tower walls, and old rose for the road leading from the castle. The distant hills are done in two shades of blue: one inclining to green, the other to violet; while the sun shows a pale lemon yellow. As in the first hanging, the outline is embroidered in a brown approaching black.

It is to be noted that, in the description of these color-schemes, the terms yellow, blue, green, violet, and the rest, are used relatively: each tint or shade of any given color being modified, softened, faded, like its correspondent in the tapestries which have been affected by those great allies of art: time and dust. It may be added that the desirable color-quality is the yellow of stains in wood, the blue of much washed and faded jeans, the red of an old wrap which has been exposed to much stress of weather: all the colors to be grayed, broken, and combined with great subtlety. But indications such as these would seem to be quite unnecessary, since museums are now nearly as numerous as libraries; thus affording those who are interested in embroideries opportunities for acquaintance with fine originals.

In the wish to further the art culture which is so well begun by public institutions, The Craftsman presents the tapestries just described; suggesting their appropriateness in a modest home, to which they will add an accent of individuality not to be gained by any other equal expenditure of money and time.

# A Russian Peasant Industry

*"Nothing that is human is foreign to us."*

LIKE the literature, the music, and the plastic arts of the Russians, the peasant industries of the same wonderful, primitive people are now intensely attractive to the races of older civilization. Those so attracted vary, of course, in class and in character. There are the ethnologists who, by measurements of skulls and facial angles, seek the differences between Caucasian and Turanian, and calculate minutely the results of the mixture of blood upon the things of the intellect. There are the devotees of political science, who weigh the effects of Czar and of Nihilism upon the masses occupying so large a portion of the earth's area. There are those who, surfeited with the life and literature of capital cities, and longing for new mental excitement, find a fresh, elemental quality in everything that is Russian, and seek to revive themselves therefrom. Lowest in the scale are the self-styled connoisseurs haunting the Parisian quays and the East Side of New York for objects of art and handicraft made by the people who throw so much of themselves, their passion and despair into every stroke of the hammer or of the needle which their hands direct.

Regarding the action of the last-named class—the connoisseurs and collectors—a writer in "Handicraft" for June has thus forcefully, truthfully expressed himself:

"What possible use have we for most of the 'things' with which our homes are filled, and from which it is inconceivable that we should ever derive the slightest satisfaction, except in that perfectly vulgar form which accompanies the mere sense of possession? And could anything be more pitiable, as a confession of industrial sin, than the way in which we ransack every corner of the world to collect as curiosities the adjuncts of healthier and simpler lives than our own?

"Why can we not learn the perfectly easy lesson that the homely, charming objects produced by peoples who live closer to Nature than we do are more interesting than ours, simply because the life to which they correspond and whose needs they reflect, is simpler, and the relation between the needs and their satisfaction more direct?"

# A Russian Peasant Industry

A sound thought is expressed in these words; one that should take root in our American life and bear fruit in our environment. This thought the most artistic peoples have reflected, or still reflect in their manners and customs. The Greeks were superior to "things;" satisfying their perfect aesthetic sense by the union of the useful with the beautiful in their objects of daily use. They eliminated all superfluous articles from their dwellings. They literally took up their beds and walked from a closet on the north side of the inner court of their houses to another closet on the south side, whenever the winds from the mountains and the sea warned them of the approach of winter. We may imagine them as admitting to their bed chambers a press for plaiting their gowns and mantles, and a few vases which served them for bureaux, chests of drawers and boxes. Simple is also the life of the Japanese: a few embroideries, screens and vases of porcelain or enamel—all objects of daily service—meeting their wants, material and immaterial.

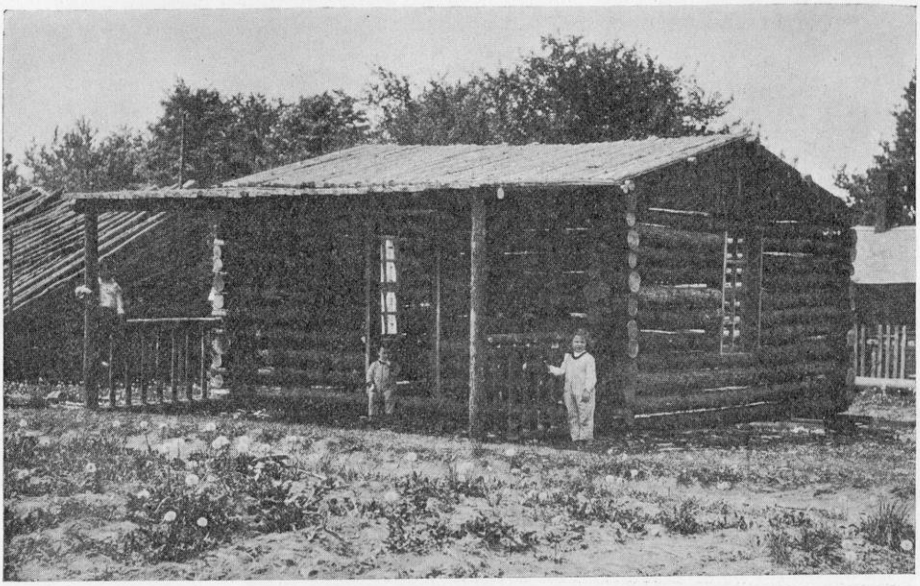
Among peoples of simple life less celebrated for their artistic qualities, beauty in homely belongings is sometimes so strong that, as has been well said by the writer just quoted, the sophisticated of the world feverishly seek to gain them for their own without understanding the secret of their value, and having gained them, destroy that value by placing them in incongruous surroundings.

But, also, as is suggested by the same writer, there is a way to learn from "the homely, charming objects produced by peoples who live closer to Nature than we ourselves do." And this way is all other than to barter with Tyrolese peasants for their marriage chests and their clocks, or with the Russian exiles for their copper samovars and their embroideries.

Thus it is as examples of simplicity as a means of art-production, as pieces of work technically good, and as an historical study presented in symbols that the Russian needlework here illustrated is given a place in our pages.

The figure-piece is a scarf, or *tisch-lauf:* the fabric being homespun linen, the raw material of which we can imagine as cultivated by *moujiks* whose portraits animate the pages of Russian and French novelists: sons of the soil who between two long days of labor, light a candle to Saint Nicholas and pray that they may


Russian Peasant Embroideries



A Cedar Cabin

FOR the child the house of his parents does not mean all that the home represents for the adult. He wishes a place that shall be his very own, in which he may express himself, without restraint, in work, exercise and play. And so wishing, he makes a just demand upon his elders. He has rights to space, freedom and the pursuit of happiness which must be respected. When possible, he should own a cabin, and this should be his castle in all that regards control and mastership.

Opposition to such a possession of the child often comes from the parent, who does not wish his grounds encumbered by an unsightly structure, however small, and who objects to the confusion and the débris caused by the building process, however short it may be.

Both these objections, which are valid to a degree, may be obviated by a building such as is shown in the accompanying cut. This is an attractive and picturesque little structure, telling a story of primitive, or frontier life, which can not fail to be appreciated by the boy, in whom imagination is always and necessarily one of the strongest qualities, as it is also the first faculty to be developed in the child.

By a system sometimes employed in important architecture, the cabin is built of numbered timbers. It is purchased in the logs and may be set up and dismantled at will. The building material is cedar and the dimensions twenty-two by fourteen feet, with a porch seven feet in width. The cost of the material ready to be mounted is one hundred fifty dollars, to which are added the expenses of transportation. The cabin has already proven useful to parents and delightful to children, since it unites in itself the requisites of a summer nursery for babies, a spacious doll-house for little girls, and a gymnasium and workshop for boys. It is an essential of youthful happiness, wherever space and surroundings permit it to be erected.

die in piece on their stoves. The fabric itself is eloquent of hard, patient toil,—this time the toil of the woman—presumably the wife, mother, or grandmother. And thus the textile—substance and treatment—symbolizes the primitive society, the time when "Adam delved and Eve span," when there was neither nobleman nor serf, but simply "the lords of their own hands."

The embroidery, with its brightness and its stitches requiring keen eyesight and sureness of hand, suggests the work of women younger than those who may have spun the fabric. The colors, deep red and dark blue, heightened with yellow and black, stand out from the background like enamels or mosaic: thus showing the traditions of Byzantine art, the mother of the Russian. The letters too of the very decorative inscription tell a strange story of the mingling of races, of wars and invasions; since these characters are members of an alphabet based upon the Greek and into which certain barbaric elements have forced themselves. But the meaning of the inscription is the most important of all the symbols wrought into this humble, beautiful piece of handicraft. It condenses into a few words the picture of the actual social and political situation of Russia. It is an apology for Nihilism. It is the epitome of a novel of Tolstoi and the justification of his creed. It reads:

LET US DANCE AND SING AND FORGET FOR A TIME HOW BITTERLY WE LIVE.

This sentence, saddening to whoever understands it, becomes doubly significant to one who will pause to consider all that it implies: how it appears to have been traced by the hand of the worker at the imperative command of an overflowing heart. It may be compared to the writing on the wall of a political prisoner's cell, or yet again to a canvas of Verestchagin depicting persecution, supreme physical suffering, or martyrdom.

Regarding the purely technical part of the work much may be said in praise, although it might be dismissed with a glance by the careless, since it is done in the most familiar, the simplest and the earliest of the *canvas* stitches: that is, cross-stitch. The artistic qualities of this form have been discussed by Mr. Lewis F. Day, the English authority, whose words give new importance to a use of the needle which any careful child can be taught to make. His

criticism contains too much of value to be left unquoted. He writes:

"A stitch bears always, or should bear, some relation to the material on which it is worked; but canvas or very coarse linen almost compels a stitch based upon the cross lines of its woof and indeed suggests designs of equally rigid construction. That is so in embroidery no matter where. In ancient Byzantine or Coptic work, in modern Cretan work, and in peasant embroidery all the world over, pattern work on coarse linen has run persistently into angular lines—in which, because of that very angularity, the plain outcome of a way of working, we find artistic character.

"Work of this kind is not too lightly to be dismissed. There is art in the rendering of form by means of angular outlines. It is not uncharitable to surmise that one reason why such work is not popular with needlewomen may be, the demand it makes upon the designer's draughtsmanship: it is much easier, for example, to draw a stag than to render the creature satisfactorily within jagged lines determined by a linen mesh.

"The piquancy about natural or other forms thus reduced to angularity was the unavoidable outcome of the work. There is a pronounced and early limit to art of this rather ingenuous kind, but that there is art in some of the very simplest and most modest peasant work built up on those lines no artist will deny. The art in it is usually in proportion to its modesty."

The use of the stitch so described by Mr. Day, is, in the *tischlauf,* or scarf illustrated, a quite ambitious, although successful effort. "The jagged lines" define the little figures agreeably and even render the effect of motion in the dance. In the aprons, familiar to all who remember the Katusha of Tolstoi's "Resurrection," as she was costumed in last season's stage productions, the same stitch is used effectively in much conventionalized floral designs.

Altogether the pieces, judged by the standard of their class of work, are worthy of attention as spontaneous, primitive, humble works of art. Besides, they express the personality of those who wrought them so simply and strongly that they compel attention and command sympathy.

# George H. Jones as a Craftsman

THE frequenters of foreign bric-a-brac shops—more especially of those of the Low Countries and Italy, always examine with pleasure the rare chests, chairs, and other pieces of cabinet-making decorated in *marqueterie,* or as the Italians name it, *intarsiatura.* They quickly learn to distinguish between the two varieties; since the Dutch consists largely of floral designs in which the tulip-motif is predominant, while the Italian patterns are more delicately traced, and although generally based upon the acanthus, are so conventionalized as almost to conceal the plant-form. In both instances the materials used in the inlay are practically the same; being Oriental woods and gems, obtained through the commerce which the maritime cities of Italy, Holland, and what is now Belgium maintained with the Asiatic countries.

The art itself, it is said, came from the same source, or rather it was the heritage of the Orient from the Egyptians who first practiced it. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it flourished throughout Europe, and fine examples were imported from England into the American colonies. In the first half of the nineteenth century it was successfully practised in several cities of the United States, but, in common with all other industrial arts, it degenerated, in the period following the Civil War. It was commercialized, and produced mechanically in great quantity and at rapid rate. In this debased form it is composed of scroll-sawed veneers hastily assembled into designs and sometimes colored with a brush. But although so dishonestly, so inartistically composed, it has obtained and still commands an extensive market. The real art is also a true veneer: the design being completed independently of the object which it is destined to adorn, and then applied to the construction. Into these designs enter the most varied woods and valuable, almost precious materials: the former including pear, apple, plum and satin woods, amaranth, figured maple, woods stained carmine-red, olive, and other greens, saffron, blue, and violet, the very rare thinya, amboyna, and even woods which have no trade names, but which, discovered by missionaries and explorers, and prized for their beautiful colors and grains, are sent to the centers of industry. The mineral and animal substances employed

are also of varied nature; prominent among them being numerous metals, semi-precious stones, coral, mother-o'-pearl, bone and tortoise shell.

The artistic work, as distinguished from the commercial product, is now executed in at least one studio in the United States. But the workmen who are there engaged are not native Americans, since the traditions of the craft are preserved only in France and in Holland, and are not to be acquired save by thorough apprenticeship.

The American studio, to which reference has already been made is under the charge of Mr. George H. Jones, a young craftsman who has worked in *marqueterie* for ten years, during which he has obtained most unexpected and beautiful results, and has gained an entrance for his productions into the most artistic interiors of the country.

A visit to his studio is time most profitably spent, since it acquaints one interested in the present revival of the handicrafts with the skilful and thoroughly honest methods of a workman who gives his energies and labors to the creation of beautiful things, rather than to the accumulation of wealth at the expense of art and truth. As a single example of his care and fidelity may be cited the device used by him in opposition to the less expensive and more mechanical methods of some of his rivals. This is the production of shadows by his scrupulous selection of woods, which he matches together in a delicate gradation of shades, or, more artistically still, by varying the direction of the fibres of his veneers. The processes rejected by him are the browning and shading of the wood by the use of hot sand, and the abuse of dyes and acids, with which to produce striking color-effects.

The finest pieces resulting from the slow, laborious methods just noted, are *tours de force,* but among the things wrought by Mr. Jones there are equally honest, although much less subtile efforts. Such, for instance, are friezes and borders in *marqueterie* which are now frequently used to emphasize the constructive lines of interior architecture and furniture, and which this craftsman fits to a desired color-scheme by means of durable stains which he himself prepares and uses.

## George H. Jones as a Craftsman

Altogether this master mosaicist in woods is a high type of the modern art worker: he uses mechanical process and scientific knowledge with discretion; he unites in himself the designer and the maker; he pursues his art with devotion, while he does not neglect the practical side of his calling, and is rewarded by ample patronage.

As a designer, he is capable and original, in the best sense a follower of *l'art nouveau;* adopting the wavy line and the plant-form with excellent decorative results.

For the workman, as well as the amateur, it would be interesting to trace by illustration the development of the art of *marqueterie or intarsiatura;* Italian and Dutch designs appearing as the first links in the evolutionary chain, and recent examples from the New York studio as the last. And as such a series is requested by a number of the patrons of The Craftsman, it will, if obtainable, be presented in an early number of the magazine.

ONE MAY DO WHATE'ER ONE LIKES
IN ART: THE ONLY THING IS TO MAKE SURE
THAT ONE DOES LIKE IT—WHICH TAKES PAINS TO KNOW

ROBERT BROWNING
"PIPPA PASSES"

# The Art of Tooling Leather *KATHERINE GIRLING*

THE worshipful Companie of Leatherers must have prayed often the prayer of the Psalmist, "The work of our hands, establish Thou it," for their handiwork, left to the mercy of Time the effacer, has fared marvellously well.

This broad belt and money pouch, wrought with the owner's heraldic device, a rampant demi-griffin, holding in his claws a fleur-de-lis, was carried by father and son on two crusades. It went through the English civil wars. In six hundred years it has not faded, but has, in fact, grown richer in tone. It did not crumble, nor chip, nor break, but hardened like bone. It could not be melted, as metals were, at the King's need. It was humble, and provoked not the wrath of the Reformer. The griffin still frowns a challenge to any one who would molest the treasure he guards, and the claws which offer the fleur-de-lis, a hostage to Setebos, are still sharp. This is the art which we modern folk forgot! In the eighteenth century, leather tooling and embossing became a lost art. Leather is easily burnt and stamped and pressed over molds. Ease and cheapness conquered beauty and individuality.

Since the days of the Romans, Western Europe had known and valued tooled leather. In the Dark Ages, craftsmen in Spain, France, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands worked at the art. The Renascence saw its glory. Each country developed its particular style. Spanish work is splendid with elaborate "all-over" designs, heightened by color and gold leaf. The Germans favored embossing, for the incised outline is definite and strong.

The Italian and Celtic work is tooled. Flowing, graceful lines sink softly into the background. These workers felt that ridges, though effective, are limiting; that the most artistic work is done when the artist is left free.

Germany has known the revival of the art for fifteen years. The English have practiced it, especially in connection with bookbinding, since 1896. The art could not have been difficult to rediscover if one knows how pliable wet leather is. Without that secret of the craft, the results are marvels past finding out.

The art is so new, as yet, in America that tools must be im-

ported or made to order. All one really needs is a single punch made from a piece of No. 5 stub steel, filed flat on one side, and beveled on the other. The end is rounded and beveled. About half an inch from the end it begins to curve, till the point is bent at an angle of twenty-five degrees from the bar. It is set so that an inch and a half of steel projects, from a small cylindrical handle, three-fourths of an inch in diameter and four or five inches in length.

Leather must not be scratched. No sharp edges or points must be left on the tool.

Art dealers in England provide also a pointed tool to use in transferring the design to the leather, but any point, sharp enough to impress the leather without scratching, will answer. Rounded flattened handles of bone, or celluloid, or ivory, (one finds one on a paper-knife occasionally) are useful in working the background smooth and flat. The backgrounds may be stamped with dies cut into set patterns. This destroys the surface of the leather, catches dust, and is, like most cheap processes, uninteresting. The designs, especially for a beginner, should be simple and broad. Avoid curves which cross each other and very fine, long lines. Divide a piece of paper into diamond checks. Put in the center of one check a fleur-de-lis. Alternate a nail head or a crown with this. Transfer the figures, but not the diamonds, on to the leather. H. Jacobsen is possibly the best known craftsman, and Mrs. Alma-Tadema the best designer. They choose heraldic devices, as a rule.

In this country, suggestive work has been done by copying our native wild flowers.

Indian and negro heads would be capital, if they had not already been done to the death by the pyrography people.

I am sure that there is a future for leather workers who study Japanese designs. The simplicity; the possibility of identifying a natural object in the design; the action, the motion, given to beast, bird and fish; these are most desirable qualities for tooling. A Japanese dragon would be quite as effective in leather as in metal.

The tooling of leather for backs of books should not be attempted without consultation with the bookbinder.

Having chosen a design, transfer it to the leather. Leave a

margin of leather around the edge of your piece. Pin with thumb tacks the leather on to a board, slipping bits of cardboard between pin and leather. Sponge the leather. Blot it dry. Pat it. Do not rub it, as you value its surface. Place the design on the leather and go over the outline of the design with a pointed instrument. Do not tear the paper, or scratch the leather with the point. Remove the paper and strengthen the outline if it needs it. Take the leather off the board and soak it for three minutes in cold water. Experience may teach you to vary the time. The leather should be wet enough to tool, but not spongy. When little drops of water follow the tool, the leather is too wet. Let it dry.

In soaking, the leather should be entirely immersed, and when taken out, blotted dry with clean blotting paper. It water marks rather easily. Place the leather on a hard stone, slate, metal, or wooden surface. They are named in the order of their desirability. Hold the punch firmly as if it were a pencil with which you meant to write. Place its beveled side on the leather at right angles with the surface and close on to the line of the design. Punch down with a firm, definite stroke. Repeat these little footprints till the outline is marked in relief, but work them into the background as you proceed. Do not drag the tool. Each stroke must be distinct, yet the tool should play in all directions, so that one impression obliterates another, till the whole background is even and smooth. Except when working about the outline, lower the tool so that it forms an angle of forty-five degrees. Take it farther up on the handle, and use it as you would a brush, stroke softly for a finish. If the leather dries, repeat the soaking process for a minute. Keep the leather clean. Your little finger resting on the leather should be protected from the leather by paper. Finger nails make fatal prints.

The next process is to punch up the design. This is done from the back. The leather is so held with both hands that the tool, grasped by the fingers of the right hand, may play about underneath the design. This process resembles rubbing more than punching. Firm yet soft strokes are best. Faulty lines may be rubbed out from the back when the leather is wet, but definite upward punches cannot be beaten down. Do not let the tool run over

the edge of the design. Perspective is possible if you punch into prominence the near parts of the design, and leave retreating surfaces more flat. Bevel the edges a bit when you have flattened the leather out on the board again. Go over the outline and the background patiently once more. Model the design as though it were wet clay. With the point of the tool touch in fine lines like leaf veins. Sharpen edges or repress them at your will. Learn to know when the work is done and stop resolutely. Your tendency will be to refine strength into weakness. Your work will lose expression. When it is dry, stain it with brown ink, or with leather stains, or the color may be deepened by sponging it with caustic soda. The object of staining and polishing is to prevent finger marks from showing.

Staining is learned by experiment. Brown ink may be rubbed over lightly and then rubbed in briskly with a fresh cloth which also polishes. The ink may be brushed on and shaded. Or, after the ink has been left on the leather for five or ten minutes, it may be washed off again, restoring almost the original light leather color. Respect the right of leather to be brown. Only an autumn oak leaf can assume such rich brown tones.

Painted and gilded leather looks like *papier mache* or carved wood painted. It no longer is the genuine material with a beauty of its own, which the craftsman may enhance, but must not disguise. After staining the leather, go over the modeled parts again, if they need pointing. But after polishing do not disturb the surface.

Embossing resembles tooling except that the outline is incised with a sharp blade, after the design has been transferred on to the leather, while the leather is dry. Hold the knife upright in the right hand, guide the blade with the forefinger of the left hand, and cut the leather exactly half through.

Sponge the leather. Open the incision by dragging the punch sidewise, through it, toward you. Tool down the background and that side of the incision. Dampen the back of the leather and press the design up, as in tooling. If you work the design up boldly, fill the holes you leave with glue and sawdust, or with modeling wax worked in when hands and leather are perfectly dry. Cover the surface with tissue paper, so that it will not adhere to the table

when you lay it down. Go over the background and the design again. Point up the edges. Embossing should be crisp. Stain and polish.

The leather to use is calfskin. It should be a firm, stout piece. Its thickness depends upon how deeply you wish to work it.

If you do not know whether a piece will take the tooling, wet a sample, thrust your finger into it and note the ease with which you can pull it flat again.

Small articles: purses, bags, cases for cards, bills, or cigars, belts, or key tags, are advisable bits to begin with. Panels, screens, chair covers and even piano covers may be done. Of course the stiff leather will not drape. Purses and cases should be made up by a pocketbook maker. Send him your pieces with their margins yet uncut. His sharp knife and firm hand give precision. The edges of cases may be finished with grooved lines ruled on by the aid of a metal ruler.

Cases are lined with skiver, or satin, and may be stitched up by any leather worker who possesses a sewing machine. Do not bend the ends of cases over until you have stained the piece.

The art of tooling leather ought to commend itself to amateurs.. It is not expensive. It demands a firm touch, but not great strength. It is not a noisy craft, like that of working in metal work. It is not trivial. It is a noble old art. A beginner may feel his way along with surprising satisfaction, yet in it, an artist may find scope for his highest powers.

# Building in Clay

*CHARLES F. BINNS*

THE above title has reference, not to brick and terra-cotta, but to the recently revived art of vase building which has been fortunate enough to attract notice both favorable and adverse.

The formation of clay vessels by means of the unaided hand is almost as old as the human race. Artificial supports were used at first, such as baskets and woven twigs, but the essence of building is the absence of the wheel as an aid to the development of form. While the majority of primitive peoples abandoned this method as soon as they became acquainted with the mysteries of the wheel, there remained some tribes and even nations to whom this knowledge never came. The greater speed of wheel work pushed aside the primitive method of building and, hence, where the wheel became known, the earlier work was never studied or improved upon. But in those cases in which the aggression of the wheel was not felt, attention was exclusively confined to building, with the natural result that great skill was acquired by the workers.

Prominent among the exponents of clay-building were certain of the Indian tribes of North America. They were untaught, and simply followed the bent of their inclination; but the result has been the opening to the modern world of a new avenue of expressive handicraft.

The Indian women were experts in basket weaving, and their method of construction,—sewing together an endless coil of twisted cord,—may have suggested the coils of clay with which their vases were built. The main difference lies in the adhesion. Basket coils must be sewn together. Clay coils adhere, when moist, until the fire gives them a permanent bond.

Early pottery was, without exception, formed to meet a need. No thought of ornament was present, and such beauty as the work possessed was in the fitness and utility which constituted the main, or indeed the only, claim to existence.

Thus, the examples which remain, while varying greatly in form, are of few types. The early British made the funeral urn, the food vessel, and the drinking cup. The Indian wares are mainly of the same class and comprise water-bottles, storage jars, and open vessels for grain or meal. The forms thus evolved are simple

and strong in outline, well adapted to their purpose, and such as could be fashioned with the least possible labor. The claims of clay are strong and must be heeded. The successful rearing of a plastic wall, of whatever shape, eight or ten inches in height and less than a quarter of an inch in thickness is not to be regarded as a matter of course, and many failures taught that the forms attempted must be those for which the clay was suited. It is not by accident that one type of work is produced in wood, another in iron, another in marble, and another in clay. One recognizes almost by intuition the appropriate outline. In the days when nations and even tribes were isolated, each had to depend upon its own creative and productive skill: hence it is that ancient handicraft is so suggestive and inspirational.

For the craftsman nothing is more important than a careful study of early work. This will not lead to copying, but will supply a motive power which cannot be secured in any other way.

A suggestion may be received here from the habit of the Japanese artist. He spends hours among the birds and flowers, but draws not a line. In the quiet of his home he notes his impressions. The memory of what he has seen is imprinted upon his brain, and, like the latent photographic image, is developed by his facile pencil. He is never accused of copying nature. He does not copy, nor need the student of ancient works of art be subject to the cheap accusation of copying, because he has drawn an inspiration from some better man. Of course, there is such a thing as open and shameless copying,—forging were the better term,—where an inferior producer shelters himself beneath the reputation of some master mind and puts forth worthless imitations. But an action like this is recognized everywhere as reprehensible, and the danger is that the legitimate craftsman who draws an inspiration and makes it his own, giving to the work his individuality and skill, shall be likewise condemned. The fear of this has driven many to feed upon their own thoughts, striving to produce work which shall be original in name, but which lacks character, beauty and truth.

In clay building there are certain type forms which are the natural outcome of the material. It would be absurd to contend that the Indian women had copied the ancient British, and yet

many pieces are very similar, though produced thousands of miles apart. In like manner, many a piece has been made, in a modern studio, which closely resembles the work of the past, but without the maker ever having seen that which he is accused of copying. It is not to be expected that anyone, before sitting down to shape his clay, shall institute a search in every available quarter, in order that he may not trespass upon any pre-existing form. No such thought was present to hamper and cripple the enterprise of long ago. The Egyptian, the Greek, the Chinaman, and the Indian, each expressed himself in his material, and it is unfair to deny a similar privilege to the workers of to-day.

The modern manufacturer is persecuted by the cry for novelty. The senseless demand for new things, new shapes, new colors, new designs, has resulted, on the one hand, in an indiscriminate use of old shapes with some slight change to justify a different name, and, on the other, in the production of certain outrageous objects which may, fortunately, claim to be new. Such things are always new, for they never live long enough to grow old; whereas, the precious productions of ancient time live among men as literature lives. They cannot die, for the world cannot do without them.

AN ART CAN ONLY BE LEARNED IN THE WORKSHOPS
OF THOSE WHO ARE WINNING THEIR BREAD BY IT

SAMUEL BUTLER

# Book Reviews

THE CITIZEN IN HIS RELATION TO THE INDUSTRIAL SITUATION, by Henry Codman Potter, D. D., LL. D. Somewhat more than two years ago, Mr. William E. Dodge gave to Yale University a fund whose objects are conveyed in the following clauses:

"I desire to make a gift to the University for the purpose of promoting among its students and graduates, and among the educated men of the United States, an understanding of the duties of Christian citizenship, and a sense of personal responsibility for the performance of those duties.

"For the furtherance of the purpose in view, it is my desire that the income of the fund thus given should be paid each year to a lecturer of distinguished attainments and high conception of civic responsibilities, who shall deliver a course of lectures on a topic whose understanding will contribute to the formation of an intelligent public sentiment, of high standards of the duty of a Christian citizen, and of habits of action to give effect to these sentiments and these standards. The lectures thus provided are to be known as the Yale Lectures on the Responsibilities of Citizenship."

In accordance with the terms of the above request, the bishop of New York delivered in 1902 the series of discourses upon "The Citizen in his Relation to the Industrial Situation," which have now been incorporated into a volume.

Throughout these discourses the churchman with ringing voice sets forth the duties of the man toward his fellow beings. He gives utterance to no platitudes concerning the oppressed workingman or the misjudged capitalist. He discusses impartially the rights of each and the wrongs of each, as well as the relations of each to the consumer, the citizen, and the State. He analyzes and clearly explains the industrial situation: especially the present dependent position of the machine operator, as compared with that of the old handicraftsman. In this connection he says that men have become "mechanicalized; that the machine sets the pace and compels its operator to be operated in accordance with its movements."

In the lecture upon the citizen and the workingman, the author gives the impression that he is the advocate of capital against labor. He appears to be extreme in his convictions and uses his facts with telling power.

In the following lecture, however, he dissects the capitalist without reserve or pity. He declares in homely terms that society has the right to ask the rich man not only "Where did you get it?" but also, "What are you going to do with it?" He denounces in bitter terms the manipulation of the stock-market, the juggling of corporation accounts, and the employment of obscure systems of book-keeping: all of which are employed to deceive those entitled to know the truth. He denounces the user of such methods as a common thief, in words to make every financier pause in his course to examine his conscience.

Under the head of "The Citizen and

the Consumer," the Bishop discusses the abuses of the factory, omitting no horrible detail of what he names "white slavery": the truck-system, the sweat-shop, and the other familiar manifestations of those great corporations which have recently claimed to be powerful by "divine right." The majority of these abuses Bishop Potter attributes to the fault of the employer. But, just and clear-sighted as he is, he recognizes also the part played therein by the selfishness of the consumer, as notably in the passive encouragement by the public of sweat-shop methods.

In the final division of his subject: "The Citizen and the State," the lecturer discusses means for the solution of the present industrial problem. His conclusion seems to be that a limited and reasonable degree of State control would be advantageous to the well-being and permanence of society; but that the complete socialization of all industry would be as disastrous as a policy of absolute *"Laissez-faire";* that solution and salvation lie in the cultivation and advance of the spirit of brotherhood, since that spirit implies equal justice for all.

During the course of this simple, yet learned and powerful treatment of a subject of great moment, each factor of the social order: capitalist, laborer, consumer, receives a proper degree of attention: none being unduly magnified or diminished to the profit of argument or oratory. Just and fair to each offender, the reverend "father in God" neither spares nor spurns. He sets forth with dignity and force the conditions of a problem which must be solved by society. [Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902, New York. 248 pages, full cloth. uncut edges. Size: 5x7¾ inches. Price, $1.00 net.

PICTORIAL COMPOSITION AND THE CRITICAL JUDGMENT OF PICTURES, by Henry R. Poore, A. N. A. This is a valuable book of art criticism: valuable because, like the work in the same field accomplished by Mr. John Van Dyke, it will aid in changing the point of view from which the public regard pictures. Until recently, the French led the world as critics of both art and literature, simply because they brought to their tasks sense and science; recognizing that the works of the imagination, whether expressed in form- color- or word-symbols, proceed from principles as fixed as those which govern the production of the most material and commonplace creations necessary to our daily life: the chair, the table, or the pudding.

A few more teachers like Messrs. Van Dyke and Poore, a few more books like those to which these writers set their hands, would go far toward ending the useless study—if study it may be called —made by women's clubs of their most cherished fetich, art. Within many such organizations a bit of biography plus a bit of ecstacy,—both copied indiscriminately from sources but yesterday unknown to the compiler,—constitute "a paper." The papers composed after an unvarying formula,—it were better to say "recipe,"—extend through session and season, touching all epochs and

countries, calling up in the mind of the listener none save cloudy, confused thoughts, which soon vanish, like "an insubstantial pageant, leaving not one wrack behind."

It is indeed time that the superstitious reverence, surrounding the old masters, should be replaced by a useful understanding of what those artists really were, as space decorators, experimentalists in line, color, and pictorial composition. The understanding thus gained will be a significant addition to a fund of general knowledge, and will be of practical benefit in the arrangement of household belongings and in the judgment of many minor questions of daily occurrence into which art considerations enter.

The acquirement of the real elements of criticism will put an end to the rhapsodic discussion of the Madonna's expression; of Saint Joseph's gestures; of the attitudes of saints and martyrs. Art criticism, it is well to acknowledge once for all with Morelli and his school, is a question of measurements, of optical effects and of color-treatment.

But it is not to be inferred that Mr. Poore's book is a primer intended for the use of the beginner. It is a work to be consulted by the advanced student. It is, as is stated by the author in his introduction, "addressed to three types of art workers: the student of painting, the amateur photographer, and the professional artist." "To the art-lover," Mr. Poore suggestively adds, "this book may be found of interest as containing the *reasons* in picture composition, and through them an aid to critical judgment. We adapt our education from quaint and curious sources. It is the apt correlation of the arts which accounts for the acknowledgment by an English story writer that she drew her style from Ruskin's "Principles of Drawing," and of a landscape painter that to sculpture he owed his discernment of the forest secrets, by daily observing the long lines of statues in the corridor of the Royal Academy; or by the composer of pictures to the composer of music; or by the preacher that suggestions to discourse had come to him through the pictorial processes of the painter."

The scope of Mr. Poore's work may be appreciated by a glance through his table of contents giving the heads of chapters in which things heretofore to many honest souls intangible and imponderable are reached and accurately weighed. Under the head of pictorial composition, he gives explanations of balance by opposition of line, by spots, by gradation, by principality or isolation, and by curvature: illustrating each of these sub-heads by some well known canvas which he analyzes so clearly that the least experienced person may come to understand its genesis, and grow capable of answering with authority the flippant questions of those who have not yet learned that the function of art is to represent, not to *imitate;* who criticise necessary conventions and principles on the ground that they are not "natural."

In later chapters Mr. Poore treats the circular observation of the picture; an-

gular composition; equivalents; light and shade, with the effects obtained by emphasis, sacrifice and contrast; the place of photography in the fine arts; the aesthetics of composition and the critical judgment of pictures, the last two subjects being discussed in many subdivisions.

The chapter on circular composition notes a delicate distinction between the old and the new methods, which is most interesting as a point of criticism. In his argument, Mr. Poore uses two familiar pictures: Tintoretto's "Marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne," and "Endymion," by George F. Watts. In the former painting, Ariadne, seated against a rock, extends her hand to clasp that of Bacchus, who stands on a much lower plane, and beneath a floating figure acting the part of the priestess of love. This floating figure, according to Mr. Poore, "offers a shock to our scientific sense, which is not quite relieved even when we recall the epoch of its production or concede the customary license to mythology. At a period in art when angels were employed through a composition as a stage manager would scatter supernumeraries—to fill gaps or create masses—in any posture which the conditions of the picture demanded, it is not strange that the artist conceived this figure suspended from above in an arc of a circle, if in these lines it served its purpose. In this shape it completes a circuit in the figures, fills the space which would otherwise open a wide escape for the vision, and by the union of the three heads, joins the figures in the center of the canvas, completing with the legs of Ariadne, five radial lines from this focus.

"To the mind of a sixteenth century artist, these reasons were more convincing than the objection to painting a hundred and forty pounds of recumbent flesh and blood, with the support unseen. To the modern artist such a conception would be well-nigh impossible, though Mr. Watts gives us much the same action. Here, however, the movement of the draperies supplies motion by the figure of Selene, and, as a momentary action, we know it to be possible. Were the interpretation of motion by hair and drapery impossible, and the impression, as in the Tintoretto, that of the suspended nude model, it would be safe to say that no modern painter would have employed such a figure. This touch of realism, even among the transcendental painters, denotes the clean-cut separations between the modern and the mediaeval art-sense."

In the chapter on "The Picture Sense," Mr. Poore expresses a good thought in happy terms when he asks "the many sharers in the passing picture pleasures of a great city to make themselves intelligent in some other and more practical way than by *contact,* gleaning only through a life-time what should have been theirs without delay *as a foundation;* and to exchange for the vague impression of pleasure, defended in the simple comfort of knowing *what one likes,* the enjoyment of sure authority and a reason for it."

The book of Mr. Poore, to judge by

its merits, should pass through many editions. But one stricture may be made against it as it now stands. It is studded with errors occurring in the spelling and accentuation of foreign words: the errors not even remaining faithful to themselves, but assuming different forms at different points of the essays. [The Baker & Taylor Company, New York. 256 pages, full cloth, uncut edges. Size 6¼x9½. Price $1.50 net.

How to Make Money, edited by Katherine N. Birdsall. "Of making many books there is no end." The articles contained in this volume first appeared serially in *Everybody's Magazine*. They treat in detail eighty practical methods by which an untrained woman can earn living wages, or add materially to a small income. The means to these desirable ends are plainly set forth, but they are such as would *suggest themselves* to those in necessity. "The will makes the way." [Doubleday, Page & Company, New York. 249 pages. Full cloth. 5x7½ inches. Price $1.00 net.

Home Building and Furnishing, by William L. Price and William Martin Johnson. A series of designs and articles prepared for *The Ladies' Home Journal* has been made into a book, under the title appearing above. In their magazine form the articles found abundant acceptance, as testified by the fact that over five hundred houses were built in one year from the plans given. Both the text and the drawings are principally the work of two architects, William L. Price, and William Martin Johnson; the former dealing with houses of moderate or small cost, village churches, tents and cabins; the latter treating interiors; beside, there are two papers entitled, "Remodeling the Front Door," and "What a Window will do for a Home," by Frank S. Guild.

The book is well written and well arranged, while a number of the drawings for doors and windows are pleasing and elegant. But as a whole the designs show over-elaboration; this fault being most apparent in the interiors, which are encumbered with furnishings and ornament, and therefore confusing in effect. [Doubleday, Page & Company, New York. Illustrated. 139 pages. Full cloth. 5x7⅛ inches. Price $1.00 net.

Literary Landmarks of Oxford, by Lawrence Hutton. This is a charming little book, which, according to the statement of its author, was written by a certain underpaid, and not overworked, middle-aged, American writer, a lover of British Letters and the Makers of British Letters, as a result of a six weeks' vacation, all spent in Oxford.

It is a flowing narrative, such as an excellent conversationalist might give of the town, the colleges, and the famous sons of the colleges. It has the stamp and ring of truth and accuracy. But it escapes pedantry and it reads itself. Its arrangement is a natural one: the history of each college, from All Souls to Worcester, forming a chapter by itself.

The delicate humor with which readers are wont to associate the name of

Mr. Hutton, is not here wanting. As an example of this quality so refreshing in a narrative dealing with many facts, one may cite certain comments upon the famous young Jewel of Corpus Christi: a boy who began to study at four a. m., who went to bed at ten p. m., who took no recreation but walking, and even then, if he did not meditate, or instruct the two boys who were his companions, "argued in Aristotelian fashion:" habits which soon caused his collapse both physical and mental, "overshadowed as he was," says Mr. Hutton, "with the weight of the honey of information he had sipped not only from the Tree of Knowledge and from the Flower of Learning, but from Greek Roots." The commentator adds in his own inimitable way that there is a medium to draw, in college life, between the unusual Jewel Boy and the Boy of the Diamond; between too much argument in Aristotelian fashion, and too hard tackling in the football way.

The parallels between the English and the American university which appear on nearly every page, keep the interest of the reader unflagging to the end; Princeton, the alma mater of the author receiving, as is right, a large share of attention. As an example of such parallels may be mentioned the story of John Connington of University College, who repeated a thousand lines of Virgil to his father before he was twelve; and who, when he was thirteen, devoted one pound, thirteen shillings, out of his own pocket-money, to the purchase of a copy of Homer. "This was a number of years," writes the narrator, "before John Fiske, a boy of about the same age, made by his disagreeable drudgery, money enough to buy a copy of Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon, in Middletown, Connecticut."

Mr. Hutton's book must be praised for its scholarly, well-arranged indices, by means of which the reader instantly finds his desired reference. Another attraction lies in the illustrations which show picturesque bits of the architecture and the scenery of the "gray old town." The illustrations appear on smooth paper; they have great delicacy of outline, are unmistakably the work of an architect, and depend for their accent upon masses of foliage rendered in thick, black masses. Each one of them is a study of Gothic, the majority, of course, being of the Perpendicular period. The book cover, too, deserves a word of praise. It is absolutely plain, in dark green cloth, with the title printed in gold, in plain Roman capitals, and an ornament below, also in gold, and consisting of a knocker: the plate representing a face with a heavy ring attached; the whole forming an interesting and artistic grotesque, although not a reproduction of the famous brass which hangs in the College Hall of Brazenose. [Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1903. 264 pages. Full cloth, uncut edges, gilt top. 5x7½ inches. Price $1.00 net.

SILVERWORK AND JEWELRY, by H. Wilson, with Diagrams by the Author and other Illustrations. This book is a

member of the artistic crafts series of technical handbooks, edited by W. R. Lethaby, one or more of which have been previously noticed in The Craftsman. These volumes are issued in the wish to provide trustworthy text-books of workshop practice from the point of view of experts, and to set up a standard of quality in the crafts which are more especially associated with design. To this end tools, processes, and details of work are carefully discussed and minutely illustrated. The pictures are line-cuts, and the text is good English. The present volume, although primarily addressed to the workman, contains many passages scattered through the technical treatment, which are very interesting to the general reader.

Such, for example, is the footnote which advances an unorthodox opinion regarding Benvenuto Cellini; denouncing the man as a blackguard—a judgment in which many are liable to concur—and condemning most of his work as meretricious—a censure likely to arouse opposition.

The body of the book contains a criticism worthy to be quoted. It treats of the use of precious stones and reads thus: "Stones and jewels to the early artist were means of adding emphasis to his work, or were used as the germ of a design; by the modern they are used as substitutes for design. To the former the jewel was an added beauty to the setting; to the latter the jewel is a means of hiding the setting and the workmanship. The old workman took the rough crystal of sapphire, or ruby or emerald, and polished it, keeping the stone as large as possible, displaying to the utmost its native beauty. The modern workman splits and cuts his gems into regular, many faceted, geometrical forms of infinite ingenuity and intolerable hideousness.

"The modern method of cutting equalizes the color and intensifies the glitter of the gem, but the glitter takes away the mysterious magical quality, that inner luster of liquid light, which for the artist is its chiefest beauty, and replaces that beauty by a mechanical sheen offensive to every cultivated eye. Moreover, the machine-made perfection of the cut stone has, as it were, reacted on the mounting, and is, perhaps, one cause of the mechanical hardness and lack of artistry so visible in modern work."

If this criticism could influence the lapidary and the jeweler, as well as the woman who wears ornaments, we might hope for beauty there where we have now but ostentatious display of wealth and the open confession of vulgarity. [D. Appleton & Company, New York. 346 pages. Millboard, uncut edges. 4⅝x7¼ inches. Price $1.40.

The standard of quality of the pages in this magazine are silent but convincing testimony of the work done by the Mergenthaler Linotype machine.