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The



Leather Work Book.



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# The Leather Work Book :

CONTAINING

FULL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING AND ORNAMENTS  
ARTICLES SO AS TO SUCCESSFULLY IMITATE  
CARVED OAK ;  
SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THE USE OF AMATEURS.

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ILLUSTRATED.

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BY ROSA BAUGHAN.

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LONDON :

"THE BAZAAR" OFFICE, 32, WELLINGTON STREET,  
STRAND, W.C.

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# The Leather Work Book.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

LEATHER WORK, if well executed, imitates wood carving of all kinds, from the most delicate and elaborate, to the most grandiose, designs. It is a work at once easy, interesting, and (from the great variety of objects to which it can be applied), not at all monotonous. To those of artistic taste it offers a wide field for the exercise of their powers, for the leather work copied from the designs seen in real old carving is always most successful; there will be, in the course of this treatise, many such designs given. But it can be readily understood, how much more interesting the work becomes when the design carried out is the worker's own adaptation of some beautiful bit of old carving which may have especially taken his fancy, and the outlines of which he has himself sketched from the original. In a general way, anything that has been done in the way of carving in wood, or even in stone, may be imitated in the leather; but in the rare instances where it cannot, anyone, accustomed to the work, will soon see how to alter the design so as to suit the nature of the material.

Since leather work was first introduced there has been an attempt to supersede it by mouldings in gutta percha; but, although the extreme pliancy of gutta percha, when subjected to the power of heat, makes it an easy matter to make it take any form desired, it does not, to anyone familiar with wood carving, imitate it with the same success as the leather does. In the first place the smooth surface of the gutta percha has no resemblance, as that of the leather most certainly has, to the grain of oak; in the next the moulded edges present none of the crispness of carving; it is just the difference that there is between a common moulded glass sugar basin and one richly cut. Again, when the leather work was most the rage, another innovation crept in; some enterprising person started the sale of machine cut, ready made, and veined leaves and flowers, the latter with all the parts put together, shaped and hardened, ready to be



grouped on the frame or casket to be ornamented. We fancy the persons who distinguish themselves in this sort of leather work are of the same class of *faïnéants* (to call them by no harder name), as those who buy worked wreaths and groups of flowers, and after lazily doing a little of the "grounding" themselves, leaving even that to be finished by their maids, afterwards introduce the piece of work to admiring friends as their own. In these cases, however, as the result is probably better than what these make-believe people could achieve themselves, the deception is not, artistically, to be deplored. But, in the case of the ready-made leaves and flowers in leather work it is not so. Besides that the too great regularity of outline in these machine-cut leaves is objectionable, the fact that they must be grouped in the hard state—when they stand out stiffly from the surface, instead of clinging to it and appearing part of it, as they do when placed on in the malleable stage—entirely does away with the resemblance to carving. Again, these ready-made leaves and flowers are very expensive, and one of the great attractions in real honest leather work is the low price at which an object which is of value is successfully imitated. For example, the frame made from the design which accompanies the second chapter (Fig. 1) will, at the small cost of 5s. 6d., imitate a frame in old oak carving for which a couple of pounds or more would be given, according to the state of the market in Wardour-street.

Few and simple are the things required by the honest leather worker.

First, it is almost a necessity that there should be an *atelier* for the purpose (the smallest den of a room will do, provided that it has a grate that burns well), a little sanctum to which the tidier has not free access, for there are certain stages in this work in which to have things moved would be to irretrievably spoil the work. The leather at a certain stage is soft and pliant, and readily takes any form. Whilst it is in this plastic state it is moulded as a sculptor models his clay, according to his design, and it is then affixed to the surface of the object which it is to decorate. This being so, it will readily be understood how a clumsy touch from an unknowing hand may mar the whole design, and, as in a few hours afterwards, the leather becomes hard as the wood it is to imitate, the displaced leaf or flower presents a deformed appearance, when there is no alternative but to remove it—always a work of time after the hardening sets in, and go through all the process of sketching, cutting, softening, veining, and replacing that part of the design which has been thus injured. Besides the trouble of all this, such an accident retards the completion, for the painting of the frame cannot be commenced until the replaced leaves and flowers have hardened again, and this is a matter of ten or twelve hours. If a room cannot be entirely given up to the work, then a large table should, at least, be secured, which the "tidier" must be bound over to respect for at least twenty-four hours.

Given the little *atelier* or at least the table to himself, the worker will require a sharp pair of scissors, medium size, strong, but not heavy or unwieldy; a large bottle of liquid glue, or, better still, the old-fashioned glue-pot, which can be kept always simmering and ready for action, a light hammer, some small brads (little nails without heads) about half an inch

long, a gimlet, and last, but certainly not least, the leather will be required. This last is to be had at any good currier's; sheepskin is the leather to be asked for, and the most economical way of buying it is by weight, not by the skin. The liquid glue—like so many modern innovations—more elegant but not so efficient as the thing superseded—is apt to fail in fixing large heavy leaves, and, when it is used, it is often necessary to fall back upon the insertion of nails herē and there to make the work secure.

Some years ago sheepskin was only 10d. or 1s. a pound, but now it has risen to 2s. 4d. the pound. In choosing the leather be careful to avoid a skin the surface of which is blotched, or, again, one in which there is great inequality in the thickness between the part which was on the back and that which covered the flanks of the animal. Of course there will always be a little difference; but as in some skins the leather at the neck and flanks is so thin and discoloured as to be nearly useless, it is as well to call attention to this. For small designs it is best to buy several odd pieces, not a whole skin, and pay for them by the weight. This way leather more of one thickness is procured; but where flowers of a size larger than life, or panel work is going to be done, it will be desirable to choose a whole skin, and that the largest to be procured.

A manufacturer says that "merely 'sheepskin' is rather vague, as at the present time this kind of leather is dressed in many different ways. If English oak bark tanned bright basil, were asked for it would save the leatherseller much time in looking over the various sorts. With regard to the most economical way of purchasing, I believe that it will be found, if a fair man be dealt with, that whole skins, as well as pieces, are sold by weight. I know they are to retail men. As the writer says, care should be taken that the smooth side or grain of the skin (the side on which the wool grows) is perfect, as often in the preparation of this leather it is damaged in the process technically known as 'slicking.'"

Of course the whole skins can be bought by weight, as well as the pieces; this is in fact the means by which the leather seller fixes his price on the whole skin. The advantage of buying pieces by weight is that the purchaser can choose his own bits, and thus get the leather all serviceable, which is not the case with the whole skins.

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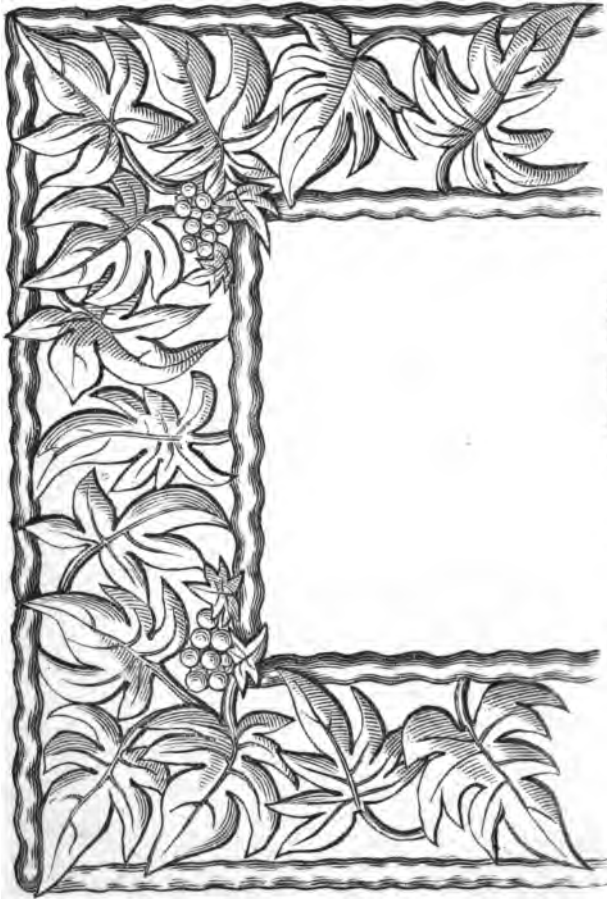
## CHAPTER II.

### PHOTOGRAPH FRAMES.

THE design (Fig. 1) we give here of wood-ivy leaves and berries, is both easy and effective, and is a good one for the 'prentice hand.

The frame had better be ordered of a carpenter, for, although hereafter it may be found easy to utilise any old shabby frames available, still, as deal is the softest wood, and therefore the easiest for the placing of the leather, it would be well that the first attempt should be made on a plain deal frame, made expressly for the design. It should be 14in. by 12in. outside measure; this will make it nearly, but not quite, square, which is the form usually seen in old oak frames, and it is well to imitate them in form as well as design. Oval frames are elegant, and they are often found in the antique and are very effective, but, as it is more difficult to group the flowers upon an oval form, it is perhaps better that the first attempt should be made in the shape of the small almost square frame, of which we have given the design. The width of the frame from the outside to the inner edge should be 2½in., and its thickness must not be less than ¾in.

The first thing to be done is to make the little border which is round the inner edge, as the same thing has to be placed round the outside edge on the thickness of the frame, which is to be about three-quarters of an inch. This border imitates what in wood carving is called "worm pattern," and, as it is the edge or bordering most constantly to be found in the antique patterns, we have given it here, although it is a little tedious to make. Rule a straight pencil line down the centre of the sheepskin, then another parallel to it about three-quarters of an inch apart, then with a pair of sharp scissors cut out the long narrow strip of leather between these lines, put small pencil dots an inch apart all along the outer edge of one side of the strip, as in A (Fig. 2), then place dots a little removed from the lower edge of the leather strip, each dot also an inch apart, but midway between the dots above B. Then draw a curved line from dot to dot as in C., afterwards a second line as in D., which will give the outline of the border in worm pattern; then cut along the lines E., and there will be a long strip of it ready, when properly softened, to lay on the outer edge of the frame. Although this worm pattern border is the most tedious part of the design, it will be as well to cut all that will be wanted at once,



**FIG. 1. WOOD IVY FRAME.**



before proceeding to the other and more interesting work. Enough will be required to go round the outside edge of the frame, that is on the thickness of it, and also (as seen in Fig. 1) for the outer and inner borders; the latter is a trifle narrower, but the method of cutting is entirely the same as for the other two slips.

Having prepared all the "worm pattern" border necessary for the design, lay aside the narrower sort (for it will not be wanted until the last thing), and plunge all the rest into a hand basin half full of hot water, not boiling, as that would crinkle up the surface of the leather, but not only lukewarm, as that will not soften the leather sufficiently; water in which the hand can only just be kept is about the temperature. Into this basin half full of hot water put three large tablespoonfuls of common salt, and stir it up, lay the strips of leather in so that they are thoroughly covered by the water, and leave them in soak eight or ten minutes, not more, or they will be spoiled. Then take them out, squeeze the moisture out of them with a soft cloth or towel, wipe them dry, put on plenty of glue (hot, strong, and liquid from the glue pot), and then begin the work upon the frame itself by laying on the worm pattern border to cover the thickness of the frame. The border will, probably, have to be joined in two places, as no sheepskin is large enough to cut a strip of 52in.; but these joins must not occur at the corners. To avoid this begin laying on the border midway in the frame at the top, carry it round the corners till it comes about midway at the bottom of the frame, then join it neatly in pattern (if carefully placed the two ends will lie as close together as two pieces of wood well spliced) and carry on the border till it meets the end at the top. Press the leather firmly against the wood of the frame with the cloth, taking care that if any of the glue exudes with the pressure on the surface of the leather, to wipe it off whilst it is wet. Put two small brads to secure the leather to the frame where it joins, and then proceed to wipe, glue, and place the border on the outer edge of the frame, taking care, of course, not to disturb the work already done. This border will have to be put on in four distinct pieces, joining neatly at each corner. It will be seen on looking at the design, that the tip of each leaf is to be so placed as to hide these corner joins. A small brad at the end of each strip where it joins will make all secure. This being done lay the frame down, for nothing more can be done with it till the border work is dry. The leaves, however, may now be cut. These must be about the size of the natural wood ivy. The centre leaf of the groups at the corners and top and bottom of the frame, should be the size of the largest wood ivy leaf to be found; the two on each side nearly as large. The common garden ivy will not do, as there is no grace in the form of its leaves. The best way to get good forms is to pick the natural leaves and trace round them on paper; then cut out the leaf from the sheet of paper, and trace it with pencil, *not ink*, on the leather. For the design of this little frame there will be required two variously shaped and sized leaves, and although it would perhaps save trouble to sketch round the real leaf on the leather, by the plan of taking it off on paper, there is made a whole set of wood ivy leaf patterns for any future occasion.

It is very interesting to form a collection of patterns, during summer, of all the different flowers with their buds and foliage likely to be wanted for future work. Thus, with the passion flower, which is one of the most effective in large designs, when the plant is in full leaf and bloom, the outline should be taken in good stiff paper (that will not crumple out of shape) of several of the foliage leaves of various sizes, of the star-shaped flower, its seed cup, and of that curious cross in the centre which comes out beautifully in leather work. All these patterns should be kept

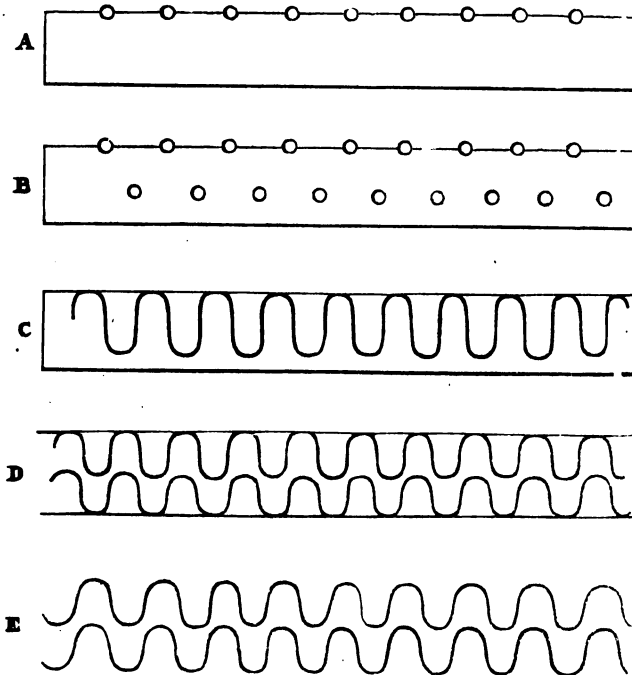


FIG. 2. WORM PATTERN DETAIL.

in envelopes and labelled. With a nice collection of this sort by him, season makes no difference to the worker. But to return to the work in hand.

Having cut all the leaves required, if the border be dry and hard, proceed to the more interesting work of softening and veining the leaves. Use the same quantities of water and salt, and take the same precautions as regards the temperature of the water; plunge in the leaves, let them remain the eight minutes, then take them out, a few at a time only, dry them and vein them. This is done with the point of the scissors, with

which the lines such as are in the natural leaf must be drawn; then, with the finger, pinch and twist the leaf into shape, cover the back well with glue, and lay it on according to the design. A rough sketch of the design should be made in pencil on the frame before placing flowers and foliage; for, in grouping, the exactitude necessary for centres and corners might get overlooked, and thus the whole thing be spoiled. Another point in which beginners are apt to fail, is the amount of relief to be observed in placing leaves and flowers. In this, as in the designs, it is best to imitate what is seen in real carving. Except in most elaborate work no



FIG. 3. LARGE WOOD IVY LEAF.

leaf or flower in wood carving is cut quite out in all parts, and as the back surface of the leather does not imitate the grain of the wood well, it is, perhaps, better to place the leaves in, if anything, less relief than is to be seen in the real carving, rather than more. Practice and study of cleverly carved work will soon enable the artist to place his groups so as to bear comparison with the real thing. In large designs, where massive and complicated flowers, such as roses and passion flowers are represented, the brads must be liberally used to make all things firm; but in this little frame, provided the glue be strong and not sparsely applied to the back of



the leaf, the brads need not be used except, as has been said, to the border.

Although it is much more interesting to take one's own patterns from the real leaf, in case the worker should not be able to get specimens of the wood ivy leaf, we give (Fig. 3) a leaf in an outline, which will do for all the large leaves in this frame, the slight variety of appearance being given by the moulding of them with the finger, to suit the space they are to fill. In this design, the extreme points of each leaf must be pressed firmly down on the frame, as also that part of the leaf near the stalk; whilst the stalks, on the contrary, should be raised up, so as to stand in perfect relief. In making the design, care has been taken that the termination of each stalk shall be hidden and secured by the point of a leaf, or by the inner worm pattern border. In Fig. 4 will be found the size and shape of the two little leaves at the corners.

Having placed all the leaves, according to the design, there now remain the berries. Some persons would make these of gutta percha, and when the frame is going to be partially gilded this can be done, for the different colour of the gutta percha would then be masked by the gilding, but though a little more troublesome, the process following is preferable. Get some common putty, make it into very small pellets, rather smaller than the natural ivy berry; then cut from the palm of an old kid glove (which must be white or light coloured) small round pieces; put in the little pellets of putty, and, with a needle and thread, whip round the

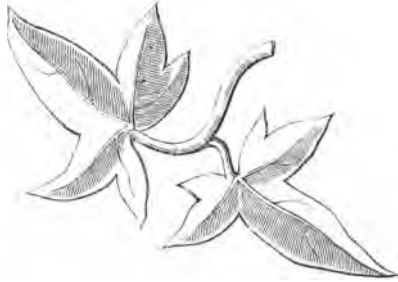


FIG. 4. SMALL WOOD IVY LEAVES.

edge of the little bit of kid and draw it up as if to cover a button; put one by itself, then stitch two to it, then one above, then three together so that it forms a pretty little group (like a miniature bunch of grapes); put plenty of glue amongst the berries, but not on the surface of them, as that will prevent the paint from resting properly on them; then place them in their places, and drive a small brad *between the berries*, but *through the kid* which unites them. Each bunch, to be secure, should have two brads in it. Having made and laid on all the berries (the kid which covers them will not, like the leather, require the salt water process), soften the narrow bit of border in the salt and hot water, dry it, glue it, and lay it on, joining it at the corners, and securing it, where joined, with brads, but be careful not to put the brads into the extreme corners, as by that the joints of the frame might be split; lastly, lay on the two small leaves, the points of one of which mask the joins of the border. Having done this, give a last and very searching look at the

frame, and if any leaf should have been misplaced from the hammering in of the brads, carefully replace it, and make it firm, either by more glue or by a little brad inserted in some part of the deep broad centre vein, and then lay the frame flat, for it must dry and harden before the paint can be laid on.

Do not be led, for the sake of effect, to set it up on end, for the leaves often fall out of place from their own weight; do not be induced to hold it up even for a second, but lay it down where it has no chance of being meddled with, and do nothing more to it for ten or twelve hours. If the paint be laid on before the leather is thoroughly hardened, it never does get thoroughly hardened. So again with the varnish; if the paint be not dry before the varnish is laid on, the varnish soaks into the paint, and the whole work is a muddle. In leather work, as in all art, we must "learn to labour and to wait."

In twenty-four hours the leather should have taken a dull, grey tint, more like stone than leather, and its surface throughout should be quite hard. Before, however, proceeding to lay on the paint, the artist should make quite sure, by gently touching the work all over, that each leaf and stalk is firmly in its place, and if any part should appear not firmly fixed, a small brad must be carefully inserted, to make all fast. When the leather has once hardened, glue alone is not sufficient to make it fast to the surface of the wood. The artist must choose the vein of the leaf as a nest for the brad. In the deep centre vein of a leaf a brad, driven well home, will lie without being in the least perceptible, when the paint and varnish are laid on.

It is best to get both paint and varnish at a good large oil shop; the smaller shops have their goods too long on hand, and they thus deteriorate. Ask for one pennyworth of brown umber for painting in distemper; this will last for several works of art. Do not be induced, by anything the shopman may say about what is used in the trade for painting oak wainscot, to accept anything but the brown umber. What the house painters use for oak wainscot is a much yellower powder, and would be likely to spoil the work, for if a wrong tint is once laid on, it is very difficult to retrieve the error without fretting the surface of the leather. The brown umber is a sort of coffee coloured powder, and, for a penny, there ought to be enough to fill a pint jar. It is better to keep the paint in this sort of thing than to leave it in the paper.

The varnish should be bought at the same shop; in this an investment of sixpence will be required, not more, for varnish wastes by keeping, and it is better to buy only what is required for the work in hand. Some persons only give two coats of varnish, but we advise three, as giving a more finished appearance to the work; should this advice be followed, the whole sixpennyworth will be used for this one frame. In buying the varnish do not be induced to buy varnish with what is called in the trade a little "oak colouring" in it; this colouring matter thickens the varnish, and takes from its brilliancy; besides, if the paint be properly laid on in there should be no need of "colouring" of any sort. The proper varnish is of a bright pale yellow, more the colour of salad oil than anything else, and it is of about the same consistency.

The varnish to be eschewed is of a deep brown colour, and as thick as treacle. Two paint brushes will be required. The size sold for 3d. will best suit for the painting and varnishing of the little frame in hand. One of these is for the laying on of the paint, the other for the varnishing; never use the paint brush for the varnish, or *vice versa*.

About two tablespoonfuls of the brown amber powder should be put into a half-pint of beer; it should not be porter, as that would make the paint too dark—ordinary household beer is the best thing. This mixture must be well stirred up, and the brush plunged in before the paint has time to settle to the bottom, and this stirring-up must be repeated each time more paint is taken on the brush for the paint settles to the bottom in a minute. The brush must now be passed all over the frame, letting the paint get well into every crevice, so that none of the white deal colour is left. Care, too, must be taken that the white kid which forms the berries is well covered with the paint, and to do this the brush must be put well down between the berries. Still, with all this, the paint must not be laid on too thickly, especially on the leather, as this would mask the grain of it, which must be preserved, as the effect very much depends upon it. Care must also be taken to paint well behind such parts of the leaves as are in relief from the frame, but no clots of paint must be left anywhere, as these, when dry, would crumble into the varnish, when it is being laid on, and interfere with its brightness. Having laid the paint all on according to directions, the worker will probably be miserably disappointed with the result, for the frame will look far less pretty than before these operations were begun, for it is only when the varnish comes to be laid on that the real effect of the paint is seen. An hour or so after the first coat of paint has been laid on (when it is nearly if not quite dry), the brush should be plunged into the paint and then passed in a long curved line, about an inch wide, over the frame in various places; while this paint is still wet, a graining comb must be drawn over the wet paint, imitating as well as possible the grain of oak. A little careful study of a piece of polished oak will enable the worker to do this better than any written instructions could do. A grainer's comb can be bought with the brushes at any large oil shop, but a small six-penny pocket comb will answer the same purpose. A piece of an old silk pocket handkerchief, deftly passed here and there over the dark wave of paint, is almost as effective as the comb to bring out the lights; we, ourselves, have always used both. This graining process being finished, the frame must again be left for eight or ten hours, as, if the varnish should be put on before the paint is quite dry, the whole thing will be spoilt. The varnishing process is simple enough; a little of the varnish must be poured from the bottle, into a saucer (not over much at a time, for the spirit evaporates so quickly when exposed to the air); then the varnish must be laid on in straight lines; care must be taken not to take too much on the brush at once, as the great point is to lay it on in thin coats, never leaving any drops hanging to the edges of the leaves and flowers. The brush should be well pushed into the interstices of the worm-pattern border, both on the inside and outside of the frame, and





FIG. 5. IMITATION ANT. QUE OAK FRAME.

over the back of the frame also; it is very little more trouble, and it makes the frame a more finished performance. This first coat of varnish will have put the worker quite in conceit again with his frame, but before it is exhibited, a second, and even a third coat of varnish should be put on when there will be a perfectly satisfactory result. One coat of varnish must not be put on until the other is dry, but, with the spirit varnish we recommend, there will be no need to wait more than a couple of hours between each coating.

A very pretty pendant to this frame may be made of holly leaves and berries, or of oak leaves and acorns. There is no need to give designs of these, as that for the ivy already given can be followed. The corner groups must be three leaves of the largest specimens to be procured; then there should be the leaf a size smaller, turned the contrary way, and the centre leaf the same size as the centre corner leaf. The holly berries should be formed exactly according to the directions given for the ivy berries, only holly berries are a size larger than ivy berries. For the oak leaves and acorn frames the same rules as regards the placing of the leaves hold good, but for the acorns, the real acorns are best, not over ripe, or they are apt to crack and break away, and yet they must not be gathered in a quite green state, or they will shrivel after the paint and varnish are laid on. Acorns that are just turning a pale brown, are in the stage most suited for the purpose. They must be cut lengthwise, in half, with a sharp penknife, then the kernel must be taken out, and the shell well filled with putty. In placing the acorns there should only be two where the berries are in bunches, as acorns grow in this way. It is best to choose the acorns with a little difference in size, and, in cutting them, let one be cut a trifle shallower than the other, so that it will be a trifle *less in relief* on the frame than the other. They will require a good deal of strong glue to fix them, as they will not bear the brads. These little frames may be made most elegant for either the drawing-room or boudoir, by calling in the gilder's aid, and by having the veins of the leaves and the berries (or acorns, as the case may be) gilded; but this, of course, increases the cost, and for dining-room picture frames, we prefer them ungilded; but this is purely a matter of taste.

We give a design for another small photograph frame, *carte de visite* size (Fig. 5). This photograph frame is copied from a bit of real antique carving, only, of course, very much reduced in size in order to adapt it to so small a frame. It is a specimen of leather work to be done in simple *bas relief*, and is, of course, much easier to work than things which imitate carvings more in relief. Should anyone not be artist enough to copy this little design in the ordinary way, it can be taken off on sketching paper, laying the sketching paper on the drawing and tracing over the lines which will appear through the paper, which is almost transparent. Then having got it off correctly, with a bit of "fusin" (a sort of charcoal pencil, to be had at any good stationer's) go over all the lines on the sketching paper, then lightly place the sketching paper face downwards, on to the piece of leather, press it a moment with the hand evenly all over the surface, remove it dexterously without letting it slip, which

would blur the lines, and the design will appear on the leather; but as the "fusin" is easily removed by a touch, it will be necessary to go over the lines with a sharp pointed pencil.

With a pair of scissors or a penknife (the latter in this design would be almost better) cut along the lines of the design, which will come out in the shape of a frame, as the leaves are all connected. It would be better to have the small deal frame on which the design is to be laid ready painted, but not varnished. The leather design, which should be cut from the thickest bit of leather to be had, should then be put to soak in the hot water and salt, then taken out, dried with a cloth, and veined, according to the lines in the design, well covered with strong glue at the back, and pressed firmly down on the little frame at all parts, taking care, of course, not to *lose* the lines, which should be very deeply scored, according to the design. The cross-way lines in the centre of the leaves, at each corner, and at the top and bottom of the frame, must be deeply scored to give effect.

As regards border, a small worm pattern inside (laid on before the rest of the design) might give richness, but it is not necessary. In the outside border it would interfere with the design, and would be better omitted. The frame must not be at all larger than the design, as the leaves should come to the very edge, so as to mask the wood. When dry, paint and varnish according to previous directions, and an exceedingly pretty little frame will be the result.



## CHAPTER III.

### JEWEL CASKET.

WE here give the design for a little jewel casket. The proportions for which this design is intended are 14in. by 7in. and about 8in. in height; but if it were found desirable, in order to utilise any small box it would not be absolutely necessary to preserve these proportions to the letter. For instance, a squarer box would take this design, by widening the panel on which the group is placed. The effect might be less rich, perhaps, but a little more space between the extreme points of the flowers and leaves and the edge of the panel would not be in the least objectionable. We have seen very graceful and quaint-looking little caskets, in which the leather work was grouped on old cigar boxes. There are, however, two objections to the utilization of these little boxes; in the first place the wood of which they are made is a little too thin to give the effect of an antique carved casket, which is generally rather massive; and in the second, the wood of which they are made is so different in grain to the leather, which, as we have before said, imitates oak well, that no amount of paint would quite disguise the fact that the ornamentation was laid on, not carved from, the surface; both these objections, however, can be done away with by preparing the box by laying on panels of leather (the exact size of the box) on the sides, ends and lid. This leather should be taken from the thickest part of the skin, and cut with extreme exactitude to the size of the part to be covered; the corners must not in the least overlap, as this would destroy the sharp outline of the edges, neither must it be the fraction of an inch away from the edges, as then the bordering would not lie flat.

With all these precautions properly carried out, the old cigar boxes may be transformed into very pretty presents. Of course the leather so laid on must be subjected to the hot salt water process, plenty of good strong glue applied to the back, and a small brad put in here and there at the corners; the very smallest brads obtainable must be used for this purpose, as the wood of cigar boxes is very thin, and the points of the brads coming through to the inside would be very unsightly.

The first thing to be done is to prepare the border; this should be made of long strips of leather about  $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide, cut with extreme exactitude, and



to achieve this the lines should be measured and ruled in pencil, and cut with a sharp penknife, not scissors, as the very sharpest outline is required; having cut sufficient for the ends, front, back, and lid, the narrow strip of leather which appears to twine around it must be cut; this for a border of  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide, should be cut  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide; plunge both strips into the hot salt and water, take both out and dry them, then cut the narrower strip into little lengths of lin.; all these little lengths must be exactly alike, and if the worker's eye will not serve him to place them in a sloping equi-distant line, he would do well, before the hot water process, to mark with small pencil dots on the broad piece of leather the points at which the narrow slip should reach. Glue must, of course, be put at the back of the narrow slips; but, besides this, it is well with a needle and a little cotton to stitch them at the edges, just once through, to prevent their slipping before they dry, for if the spaces between what represents the ribbon are not equal, all the grace of this border is lost; when well executed there is nothing prettier.



FIG. 6. JEWEL CASKET.

It may, perhaps, be as well to mention here, that in this design, and indeed in all those where the form of the object ornamented precludes the work being laid flat to dry, "leather-work needles" come in useful. Persons who lay on their leather work dry and hard, on the system to which we objected in our first chapter, are more dependent on these little fixers than those who work on the plan we recommend, for, as will be readily understood, the crisp hard leather is much more difficult to make adhere. These "leather-work needles" are like ordinary needles, only rather of a strong kind, and they are without eyes; they used to be had at a stall in the Soho Bazaar, where were also sold the stamped leaves and ready made flowers, the use of which we have already anathematised. The stamped leaves and ready-made flowers sometimes come in useful for outline patterns, when the artist is working on flowers which cannot be produced at the moment, but as a general rule, it is not only more interesting, but much better as regards the natural appearance and grace of a group that the outlines should have been copied from the real flower. To return, however, to the needles; they are, we think, to

be had at the fancy shops, and their use is to hold fast, until the leather and glue are dry and firm, those parts of the work which are likely to drop from their places. Thus, in this design, a needle stuck in at each point, where the ribbon meets the edge of the broad piece of border, would be the best way of making sure that the border should keep its proportions; the needles must be slightly pressed until it is felt, by the resistance, that the point has gone a little way into the firm surface of the wood. The needles had better not be stuck in until the last thing, as they would very much interfere with the worker's comfort in laying on the panels and the design.

Having made the border and placed it, the next thing is to cut the panels on which the design is to be laid. These should be about half an inch from the border, and must be cut from the best parts of the

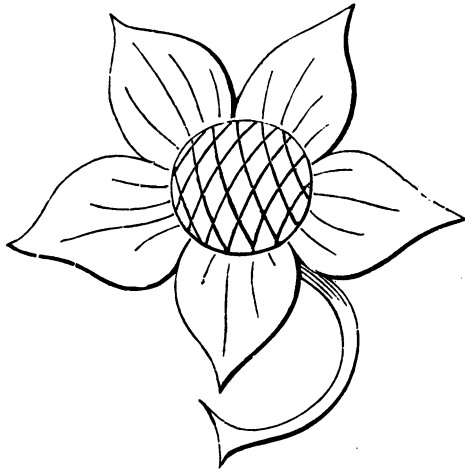


FIG. 7. FLOWER FOR CASKET.

leather, with a penknife, so as to get the edges sharp. These panels, after being soaked, and the moisture pressed out, must be placed, with plenty of glue, on the sides of the casket, a small brad being inserted at each corner, to make all fast. Then begin the design on the lid. Fig. 7 is the outline in working size, of the largest flower; the smaller ones must be cut from it, two sizes smaller; the round in the centre is formed on a wooden button mould. Two sizes of mould will be required for this design. The moulds have a small round hole in the centre, into which a little nail must be passed; then a circular bit of leather, rather larger in circumference than the mould, must be put over the mould, and, with a needle and thread, the leather (having been previously soaked in the hot salt water) must be whipped round and drawn together in the manner in which a button is covered; then the flower softened by the hot salt water

and veined to pattern, must be placed, with a liberal allowance of gins at the back, on the centre of the lid, the leaves pinched by the finger, must be fixed naturally on the surface, then the button mould, with its nail and the covering of leather hammered down on the centre, and while the leather is still soft, the diagonal lines drawn with the point of the scissors or a stiletto in the centre. The bud is made by leather cut in the same shape as the flower, but much smaller; with a needle and thread the points of the five leaves are tacked together, but before this is done, a long strip of leather, with a little knot in the centre (to form the bulbous shape of the bud), is passed through a hole in the middle of the star, and this forms the stalk, which must be carefully tucked under one of the leaves of the centre flower from which it starts. The second division in the bud is made by the needle and thread in this manner: wind the thread several times tightly round the leaves, just above the covered knot, which is at the end of the narrow bit of leather which forms the stalk; a star the same pattern as the flower, but three times smaller, forms the base of the bud; of course all this is steeped in the hot salt and water before being placed. It is, perhaps, better to state here once for all that nothing in the shape of leather is put on any object in leather work without having been previously subject to the hot salt water process. Fig. 8 is the largest leaf working size veined; the other leaves must be cut to this pattern, only smaller where the design requires it. The little tendril should be cut,



FIG. 8. LEAF FOR CASNET.

following the pattern of the design, the end of it tapered off where it meets the border, and the border end carefully tucked under the base of the leaf, from which it starts. No brads will be required for the securing of this design, except for the corners of the panels and the borders. Each flower will be secured by the small nail inserted in the centre of the button mould before it is covered by the leather. For the designs on the front of the casket and on the two ends, the same directions must be followed as for the lid, and for the slight difference in the placing, the design must be consulted.

The button moulds chosen must be of three different sizes, as there are, in this design, three different sized star-shaped flowers; and in choosing

the moulds it will be as well to take, as a guide for size, the working size pattern, which we have given, of the largest flower, and also the two other patterns, working size, which the artist will have made for himself from our design, for the two smaller flowers. It seems almost needless to say that the moulds must not be quite the size of the centre of the flower as drawn, as the thickness of the leather with which they will be covered will very materially increase their circumference; this must, therefore be taken into account in making the choice of the moulds for all three sizes. Those moulds which have holes ready drilled through the centre are preferable, as driving the nail through the hard surface of the wood where there is no hole is apt to split the mould, and this puts the centre of the flower out of shape. Nails, not brads, must be used for this, as the head of the nail is an additional security; we use brads for attaching the leaves in preference to nails, because they are less evident, but in all cases where the process is masked, nails are, of course, better than brads. The nails chosen for this design must be small, and very flat headed; tin tacks would not be long enough, after going through the mould and the leather panel, to bite deeply enough into the surface of the wood, and thus would add but little to the security of the flower; but there is a small slender flat-headed black nail, about three-quarters of an inch long, and this is the nail of which, in conjunction with brads, the leather worker should always keep a good supply.

The tendril, which occurs here and there in this design, must be sketched in pencil on a thick part of the leather, cut out and laid on in its place, with plenty of glue, so as to avoid the necessity of a brad, which would be too apparent in so delicate a part of the work. The broad end of the tendril, as well as the stalks of the leaves and buds, must be well and neatly tucked under the wider stem on which the flowers tie, and from which both leaves and tendrils ought to appear to spring. The outer covering of the bud should have a hole in the centre, through which the stalk of the bud passes. The knot in the strip of leather which forms this stalk (which answers the double purpose of forming the bulb of the bud and of preventing the stalk from slipping through), should be tightly tied so as to form a firm round substance, and the starlike leaves of the flower of the bud (which must be cut one size smaller than the star of the smallest flower in the group), must be well pinched up with the finger after they come out of the hot salt water, and then stitched together at their five points to give the apex form to the bud. If the stitches are put in with care the paint and varnish will entirely mask them.

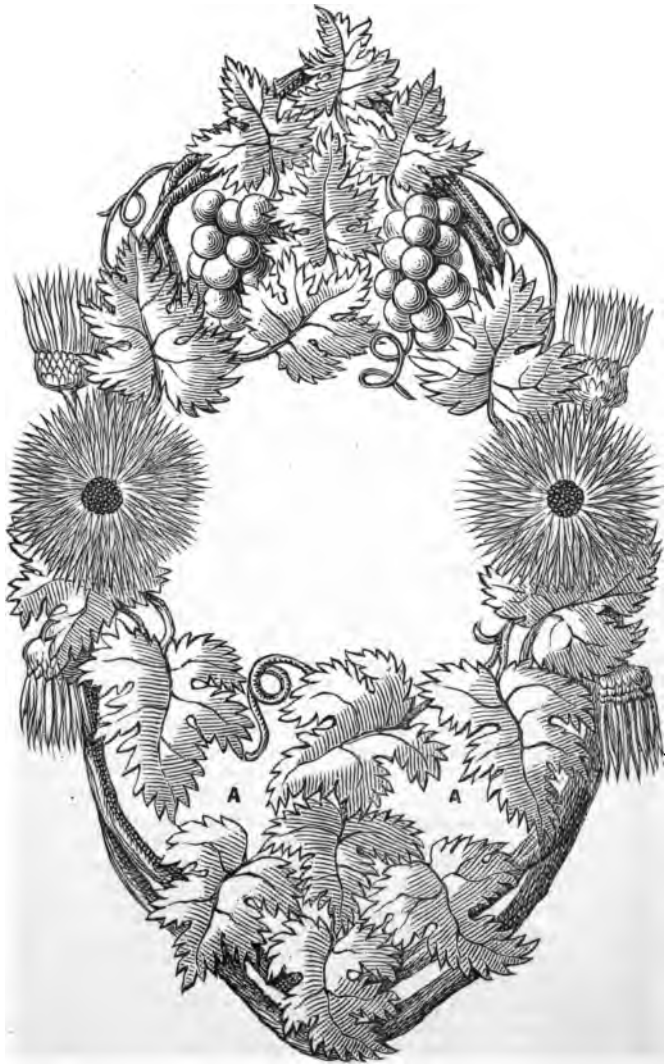
Follow the directions for painting and varnishing in Chapter II. If the worker should prefer to imitate light oak it can easily be done, but in that case, as with cigar boxes, the whole surface of the casket must be first covered with the leather; for as, in the imitation of light oak, the paint is not used, the deal surface of the wood would be too great a contrast. To imitate light oak much greater care is needed, for as nothing but the varnish is put on, any glue left sticking to the edges of the leaves would be instantly noticed. All the stalks and ends, too, must be more carefully placed, but when this is done the work in light oak is very elegant and effective.

As regards the interior of the casket, it may be either carefully painted and varnished, according to instructions, or it may be lined with velvet, which gives it a great elegance. If light oak is to be imitated, the casket must be lined, as the deal varnished would not give the appearance of the light oak; if the dark oak should be elected, then the inside may be painted, grained, and varnished with very good effect. Small mediæval brass locks and ornamental hinges give a very antique appearance to these little coffer. Hart's, in Wych-street, Strand, is the best place for all mediæval patterned brasses.

If this little casket were done a few sizes larger than we have suggested (and the pattern would do quite well for this, it would only require a wider space being left between the border and the panel), then corner brasses, terminating in a sort of spearhead ornament running along the border, would have a very antique effect. In all these matters this design leaves room for individual fancy. A double panel would have a very good effect, that is, the second panel placed upon the first, about an inch of space being left from the border to the first panel, and then again another inch between the edge of the larger panel and the second one on which the design would be placed, according to pattern. This would have a very handsome and massive effect, but, of course, for a casket the size we first proposed, the double panel would not do, as it would leave no room for the design, without reducing it too much. A coffer 4in. larger every way than that we have suggested would only require the border the same size, as the double panel would be sufficient to cover the extra space which the larger sized casket would give for ornamentation.







**FIG. 9. GIRANDOLE.**

## CHAPTER IV.

### GIRANDOLE AND BRACKETS.

THE design opposite (Fig. 9) is intended for the frame of a small sized girandole for either a drawing room or dining room. It is, perhaps, more suited to the latter, as fruit is introduced, but the outline being light and delicate it would, if partially gilded, look very well in a drawing room. By "partially gilded" we mean that the veins of the leaves, the two bunches of grapes at the top, and the stalks and tendrils throughout, should be gilded. Should this idea be adopted, the candelabra (for which spaces have been left in the base of the design, A A) must be of ormolu; if the frame is simply painted dark oak, then the candelabra must be of brass and of as mediæval a pattern as possible.

The outline of the frame on which the leather is laid is rarely visible in this design, which gives it a very pretty appearance. This is done by laying on the leaves and flowers, so that they overlap a little, but it must only be by a *very little*, about the eighth of an inch, no more, or the effect, when the frame is seen from the side, would not be good. The frame on which this design is placed should be of a long oval, tapering almost to a point at the top and bottom, and it should be narrower at the sides than at the apex and base; its thickness through should be quite an inch, so as to give the effect of carving, for in real carving, an elaborate bit of work, such as this represents, would never be cut from a shallow bit of wood. The sized girandole for which this design is intended should be 28in., outside measure, from the point of the topmost leaf to that forming the lowest point in the base, and 15in., outside measure, across. It may be objected that the space left for the plate glass is small in proportion to the thickness of the frame, but this gives it a more antique appearance, and in girandoles the plate glass is only required to reflect the light of the candles in the sconces, and the sized glass given is quite large enough for this. Should a larger girandole be prepared, it would be easy to add another chrysanthemum leaf and bud before placing the vine leaves and stalks of the base. The leaves, fruit, and flowers are intended to be life-size. We do not think it needful to give a pattern of the vine leaf working size, as a real vine leaf may be procured in any season; the leaves of the greenhouse vine are more elegant in form than those of the



out-door vine. Care must be taken, of course, to choose a leaf of a good form, and, although all the leaves in the pattern are about the same size, it gives greater grace to the design when the pattern leaf is drawn from two different leaves, so as to give a little diversity to the outlines.

Before beginning upon the part of the work visible in the design, the artist must not omit to mask the inch of deal which the thickness of the plane would present when seen from the side, with a nice piece of border pattern. In this case, worm pattern border would be better than that more elaborate one given for the casket. All that is here wanted is to mask the deal, and the worm pattern would do that as effectually as any other, and is far the simplest and easiest border pattern we can offer. Having cut this, it must be soaked in the hot water, dried and laid on with plenty of glue, and well pressed down on the wood work of the frame. All frame borders should start from the top of the frame, as the join is thus less observable, and brads must be inserted at the top, sides, and base, to make all fast. This done, put the frame, laying it flat, in a safe place, and proceed to prepare the other parts whilst the border dries and hardens. It will be best to begin with the vine leaves. Count the number required, and trace the quantity wanted, from the two pattern leaves, on leather. The worker must not forget in so complicated a work as this, to follow our advice of tracing in pencil a rough sketch of the design on the deal frame, so that in the interest of placing the proportions may not be lost. Having cut, soaked, and veined the vine leaves, they might with advantage, if the border pattern were firm, be placed, leaving the proper spaces for the grapes, flowers, buds, and tendrils.

The grapes are formed in the same way as the ivy berries already described, that is, with putty, covered by bits of old kid gloves; but only the palms of the gloves can be used, as the seams of other parts would be objectionable. The putty must then be moulded into graceful oblong shape, a piece of kid put round it, and, with a needle and thread, the kid must be fastened at the top; grape after grape must be moulded and made in this fashion, and tied together, the smaller ones being first formed and the bunch worked upwards to the larger ones at the top. For very large designs, where the grapes are almost larger than life size, the thinnest sheepskin leather must be used, and in this case the leather must be subjected to the salt water process, but with the thin white kid leather it is not necessary. Having formed the two bunches, they may be placed in the spaces left for them among the leaves. Plenty of glue will be necessary, and a great many brads driven in well between the grapes, which will, of course, be all firmly fastened together with the needle and thread; the round of kid into which the putty is moulded should be cut somewhat larger than the size of the grape, then, when the cotton is twined round, the kid remaining above the grape forms a sort of little stalk, and the grapes are attached by these as in a natural bunch of the fruit.

Having made and securely placed both bunches of grapes, the two tendrils beside them claim attention; for these some soft malleable wire will be required, and long strips of leather after being soaked in the hot salt water must, with a needle and thread, be stitched on to the

wire; then the wire must be given the little circular twist seen in the out, and the ends inserted in holes made by a gimlet in the deal frame, pulled through to the back, and pinched and flattened down to make it secure. The holes for the insertion of the stalks must be made in the proper places for them when the rough sketch is made of the whole design on the deal frame, as boring the holes after the leaves are fixed would be apt to disturb them. These stalks may be raised about  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. from the frame in the top part, which will have a very pretty effect. We frequently see stalks quite carved out from the frame in elaborate bits of old carving, and in this case the wire being passed through the frame at both ends, gives a pretty and light effect, and is quite secure. The more massive stalks in the base must lie close on the wood, about the fraction of an inch over the outside edge of the deal frame beneath. Of course the side where the leather is joined by the stitches must be kept next the frame, and plenty of glue must be put on it. If it starts from its place, a brad may be inserted where it crosses; but, if cleverly placed, this ought not to be needed.

For the chrysanthemum flower it will be needful to cut an exact circle of leather about the size of the circumference of the natural flower in full bloom; a very small hole must be made in the centre of this circle of leather, then a line must be cut top and bottom, close to, but not running into, the hole; then again crossways, lines must be cut from the middle of each side of the circle straight towards the hole in the centre, then lines between each of these, and so on until there appear a series of lines, all radiating towards, but not touching, the centre hole. This will give a quantity of little tongues of leather, which represent the long petals of the flower, and which must then be, each of them, pointed off. Five of these star-like forms must be cut for each flower; thus, for this design, no less than ten will be required, and they should all be prepared before any are set on. Having cut the ten, plunge them all into the salt water, dry them, and pass the point of the scissors or the stiletto point up each long tongue-like petal, making a sort of long vein; then glue the back of one and lay it in its place on the frame; glue the back of another, and place it on the first one, and so on until all five are placed. Then get one of the slender flat-headed nails, mentioned in Chapter III., and, covering the head of it with a bit of soaked leather or white kid, in the same manner in which the grapes were covered, stitching it with needle and thread, nail it firmly through the centre of all five circles; move the leaves to fall a little carelessly, and the chrysanthemum is complete. The leaves can be easily obtained for tracing the pattern leaf of the foliage which surrounds the flower. The buds are formed by a single circle cut on the same plan as the flower, only the cuts must not run quite so close to the centre, and the circle must be about two sizes smaller. A long narrow strip of leather must be cut with a knot at the end, and stitched on to the wire as before described for the tendrils. This must be passed through the hole in the centre of the circle, leaving the knot inside, which forms the bulb of the bud. The needle and thread again here come into requisition, as the greater part of the pointed ends

of the circle must be stitched together—a few here and there being left to fall back as if the bud were opening. Then the needle must be slipped down a little way, and the cotton bound tightly round and round to form the bud, the needle passed backwards and forwards through and through to make all fast, and then the cotton broken off. It seems almost needless to say that in forming the bud the outer side, *i. e.* the smooth side, of the star must be outside, and that with the layers of circles for the flowers, the rough side of the leather must be placed next the frame in the first circle, the rough side next the leather in the next one, and so on. Care must be also taken in ruffling the leaves of the flower, after it is placed, to give it the natural look, that the smooth side of the leather is always presented, as the under side does not take the varnish. A little star-like circle, very small, with a hole in its centre, must then be passed upwards on the strip of leather which represents the stalk, and, being softened with the hot water and covered with glue, it can easily be pinched into shape and made to adhere to the bud. All the buds are formed in this manner. The stalks and tendrils in the base might be made with a double twisted wire inside them to make them thicker, and both ends of these must be passed through holes to the back of the frame, so as to make them quite secure.

This girandole would be very effectively treated as imitating light oak, and would then, without the gilding, be suitable for a drawing room; but it must be remembered, that where it is intended to represent light oak, great care must be taken not to splash the glue about on the leaves and flowers, as everything of this sort is evident on the leather when there is no mask of paint to cover defects. In imitating the light oak it is, perhaps, desirable to have a little colouring matter in the varnish; say one-third of the dark varnish to two-thirds of the light. Designs like this, where the framework beneath is well covered with the ornamentation, are those which are best adapted for the imitation of the light oak. If, however, the frame is to be done in the light oak the "leather work needles" must be used so as to avoid using many brads in the fixing, for even in the veins of the leaves, where there is no covering of paint, the brads are apt to show. We always found that the leather work needles were handier to use with small heads (made of a little bit of sealing wax) affixed to them. This not being able to use the brads freely is another difficulty in working in the light oak. We ourselves prefer the effect of the dark oak, but where a dining room is all furnished in light oak it would be desirable to have the girandole *en suite*.

As regards brackets *en suite* with the girandole it will, perhaps, be sufficient to say that the base of the girandole will form the design, placing bunches of grapes (hanging downwards, of course) in the two spaces left for the candelabra in the design for the girandole, and surmounting these, in the part next the slab of the bracket, with a chrysanthemum, its leaves and buds. The edge of the bracket must be ornamented with a worm pattern border to correspond with that round the thickness of the frame of the girandole. Any carpenter will make the sort of foundation bracket in plain deal for about 1s. 6d. or 2s. For this

design the slab of the bracket should be about 9in. wide in the part next the wall, and it should be cut in a semi-circular shape, advancing in the centre to about the distance of 6in. from the wall, which will leave a slab just the right size for a single vase or statuette. The support of the bracket (on which all the ornamentation will be grouped) should be made sloped from about 2in. from the wall at the base of the bracket, to within 1in. of the slab at the top of the support; this should bring the chrysanthemum, its buds and foliage close up to the edge of the slab in front. The sides of the bracket should be simply masked by a piece of worm pattern border all round the edges, and a panel of leather, cut to the rather triangular shape of the space left to be covered, must be placed within half an inch of the worm pattern border. Both brackets must, of course, be made the same size and the same design, and they should both be painted at the same time, and in exactly the same tint as the girandole. Should the girandole be partly gilded, the brackets must have the same treatment.



## CHAPTER V.



### SIDEBOARD.

THE design given is intended for a small sideboard about 5ft. wide. The foundation in plain white deal could be had made to order at Oetzmann's, in the Hampstead-road, London. We cannot tell the exact price which would be asked, as it would depend a little on the finish required, and the massiveness of the wood in the plinth and panels. In this the purchaser would be guided in giving his order by the amount he wished to expend on his sideboard; we would only observe that the more massive the foundation, the more will the work resemble the bit of rich old oak carving it is intended to imitate.

In working out this design begin at the group of grapes and vine leaves at the top. For the grapes and vine leaves we have already given full instructions; the stalks, too, and tendrils are to be formed with the leather sewn on wire, as explained for the girandole design. Of the four long irregularly shaped leaves which are mixed with the grapes and vine leaves, we do not think it necessary to give the working-size pattern, as it can be easily sketched from the design in proportionate size with the vine leaves; they should be quite 2in. long to be life size; they are supposed to be the foliage of the melon-like fruit at the base of the frame.

The pears, apples, and melons are formed in the following manner:—A lump of putty, the size of the fruit required to be moulded, must be covered with a piece of the leather, which must have been previously soaked in the hot salt and water, squeezed well dry, and, whilst still in the malleable state, stitched on over the putty. The fruit must then be pinched into shape, and the stalk, made of wire covered with leather, run straight through it, entering at the part where a fruit is joined to its stalk, and coming out at the place which represents the top of the fruit, where there is the small husk or eye. This husk must be formed by a small bit of leather, cut in a star-shape, but quite small; this must have a small hole in its centre, and be passed up on the stalk, pushed tight up to the fruit, and nipped with the fingers into the little crumpled shape the husk assumes; then the stalk, at both ends, must be passed through a hole made in the frame and hammered flat at the back to secure it. Of course, the stalk at the husk end must be passed in close to the fruit, and the husk

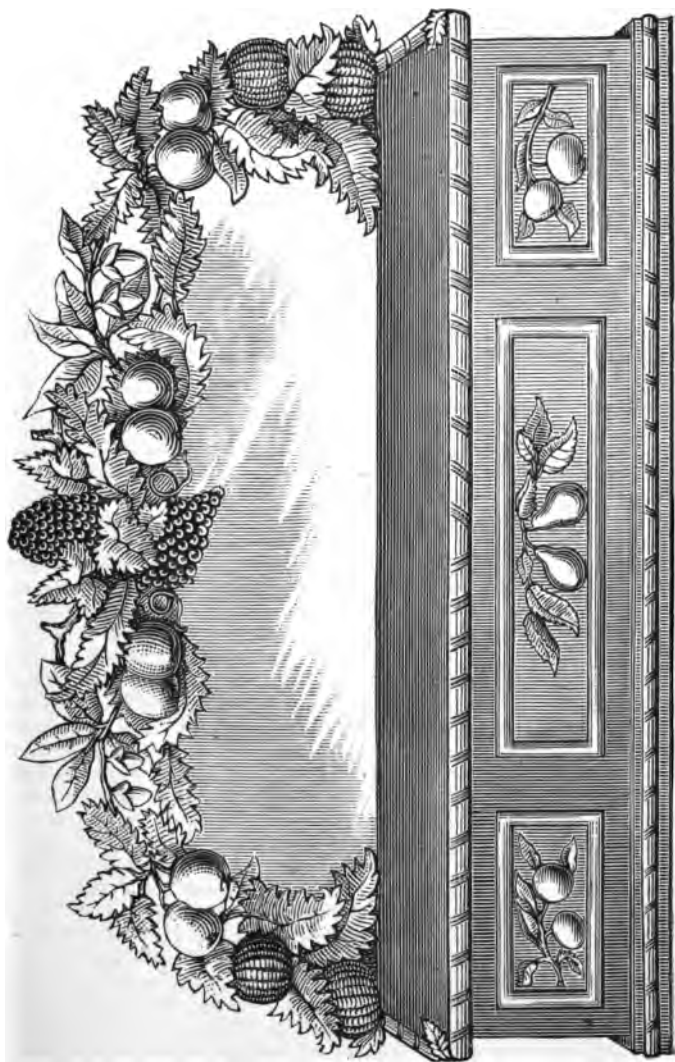


Fig. 10. SIDEBOARD, WITH FRUIT DECORATIONS.



pinched up to hide that the stalk is inserted in the hole. At the other end the stalk may be raised from the frame and not passed into the hole close to the fruit, but at  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. or  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. distance from it, as seen in the design. The stalks that are thicker are made so by having a thicker wire inside them. It would be well, for this design, to be provided with wire of three different sizes; as for the stalks of the filberts, and of the leaves a very fine wire is required, whilst for the stem of the vine some more than double the thickness will be required. In placing the fruit it is well to flatten the side next the wood, so that the fruit only lies on in three-quarter relief. As a rule nothing in leather work should be laid on in entire relief, as it does not look so like the real carving. After the fruit has been all fixed, and before the putty and leather harden, it would be well to draw, with the point of the scissors or stiletto, the lines round the stalk of the fruit and round the husk, and to draw the deep longitudinal lines on the melon-like fruit.

In ordering the frame of the sideboard at the upholsterer's, it would be well to ask the workman to let the frame in the centre rise a little, so that the grapes, which form the apex, can be securely fixed. The line of the frame, too, should take a downward curve of about an inch in the immediate centre, for the other bunch of grapes to be properly secured. The melon leaves, which lie along the edge, may a little overlap the line of the frame (as is shown by the design), but it will be seen that both the stalks and ends of the leaves lie on the frame. The frame must also widen at the base on each side, for the large leaves of the melon foliage to be properly secured. It would be well, in ordering the sideboard, to take the design, as an intelligent person would then easily understand the proportions of the curves the frame ought to take.

The border pattern round the slab of the sideboard is worked like the border pattern of the casket (see Chapter III.) only it must be cut a size larger; the corner leaf, is a leaf of the melon foliage, a size smaller. Of course, in placing the leaves, fruit, &c., in this design, it is understood that glue and brads must be very freely used. No nails are required to the fruit, as the wire passed through to the back makes that very secure; but the glue must be very liberally supplied to the flat surface of the fruit which lies on the frame. It seems needless to add that the part where the leather is seamed must be that chosen to lie on the frame. The same with the stalks; the side where it is sewn must be turned towards the frame.

The filberts are made on the same principle as the fruit. A piece of putty the size of the nut of the filbert must be covered with softened leather, and tied up at the top; then pinched, so as to present the angular edge seen in the oval of a filbert. The husk, or outer covering of the filbert is made of an oval-shaped piece of leather, with a hole in the centre through which the stalk of the filbert must be passed, and then the longer part of the oval being turned to the two sides, it must, with the finger and thumb, be pinched into shape. Sometimes, where filberts are represented in larger quantities, it forms a pretty variety to make some of them half closed; this is done by cutting the oval of the husk a little



larger, and, with a needle and thread, stitching it together at the joint over the nut. If preferred, this might even in this design be done, and thus give more variety to the outlines. After stitching the husk together at the tip, it must be opened a little at the sides, so as to partially show the nut inside. It is not necessary to use white kid leather for the grapes if the thinnest part of the basil tanned leather is chosen. For the nut of the filbert, too, it is not necessary to use the kid, the thinnest sort of leather will do.

The front of the sideboard is easy work. Three panels must be cut of leather, soaked, well glued, and laid on according to the design. Great care, moreover, must be taken that they are laid on with exactitude, and to insure this, it would be well to measure and mark the place. Having placed these three panels the other three, about an inch and a half smaller, should be placed upon them, and then the fruit must be placed in each panel. In this design, as there are no cupboard doors, there will probably be an open back, by going round to which the worker will be able to secure the wire ends of the stalks which fasten in the fruit. In the panels, even more than in the frame part, it will be necessary to fasten all securely, as there is so much more chance of friction in this lower part than in the frame. With this view we had thought to give only foliage as the panel ornamentation, but the effect of the fruit is so much better that we have been tempted to give it. As a general rule it is better to choose designs for panel work for large pieces of furniture which are in bas-relief only, as this, lying flat on the surface of the wood, on which it is placed, cannot be disturbed from its place by any amount of friction. In this design, however, as the frame is in such florid relief, panels which were not ornamented with work equally raised, would have looked poor and out of character with the frame above them.

The plinth is ornamented with border pattern the same size as that previously mentioned. The ends of the sideboard must have the border pattern continued at the top and on the plinth, and the double panels must be ornamented as shown in the two side panels.

It will be remarked that in this design leaves frequently overlap one another; this, though wonderfully effective, renders the work more intricate, but with care it is not difficult to achieve. The only thing to be remembered is to place the leaf, which is represented as beneath, first, and to secure it well to the frame before the overlying leaf is placed. As a rule, in designing, we generally arrange that in overlying foliage the leaves should be in strong contrast, so as to make the design more clear. Here it will be noticed that the indented leaf always overlaps one of an even edge—this avoids all confusion of lines. In all the most beautiful old carvings this sort of thing is to be observed. However rich and varied the ornamentation the design is still clearly discerned. This is why the passion flower and rose are so beautiful in combination. The foliage of the passion flower is very indented, that of the rose in graceful curved lines. Even the forms of the flowers themselves are in strong contrast. All these things should be observed in designing, and even in choosing from among the designs of others, the worker can never over-estimate the importance of strong contrasts.





FIG. 11. LONG PANEL OF JARDINIERE.

## CHAPTER VI.

### JARDINIÈRE.

IN the working out of the design (Fig. 11) which is intended for a jardinière, there will be little or no difficulties to encounter; the border pattern may be found a little tedious, but we chose it advisedly as being in such strong contrast with the ornamentation of the panels; however, if preferred, there would be no reason whatever against the substitution of the pattern given for the bordering of the casket presented in Chapter III., only as the jardinière is about three times the size of the casket, the border must be in proportion.

The whole of this design is intended for a jardinière about 18in. long by 9in. wide, and it should be quite 8in. high to take the design, life size, without crowding. Of course, should there happen to be an old window box which it was thought well to utilise, by a little coaxing of the pattern the same design would probably do; only as out door window boxes are not generally made quite as high in proportion to the length and depth for which this design is intended, it would, in such a case, be necessary to cut the border pattern smaller, and in placing the leaves, to allow them to spread a little more towards the sides. The habit of working in leather soon enables a person of artistic taste to adapt any design to his purpose. In the explanations we must, however, for clearness, suppose the proportions of the jardinière to be those we have suggested.

The first step to be taken is, as usual, the preparation of the border. For those who are not skilful enough with their pencil to draw circles with precision, as the greatest exactitude is necessary for the effect of this border, we should advise their getting their rings as follows:—After choosing the best and thickest part of the leather, they must draw a series of circles with pencil, not ink, round a penny piece, which will be about the size the outside circle of the ring should be; then, on each of these circles they must place a sixpenny piece, exactly in the centre; then, holding it steady with one finger so that it does not shift its position in the least, they must draw a circle round that too. They will then have a ring the exact size for the border. From this one ring they can easily take off the outlines of all the others. They had better mark the pattern ring, and keep marking all the rest from that one, for if, without thinking of it

they were to keep tracing the outline of each ring from the one just finished they would find that, after cutting a dozen or so the size had got to be perceptibly larger. This is easily understood, but, as it might not occur to the worker, we think it best to mention it. A small trefoil in the centre of the circle gives both grace and richness to this pattern. In giving the design of the border as small as we are obliged to do in order to get in the whole group, within the prescribed limits, we found it impossible to sketch in the trefoil with sufficient clearness to give the effect, and we have therefore made the circles into ovals, but we also give a working size pattern of circle and trefoil complete (Fig. 12), and if the artist has the patience to work out his border with this enrichment of it, the effect will amply repay him for the extra time devoted to it. In placing the trefoil in its place, the stalk must always be placed in the base of each circle. Although this border is purely architectural it is often seen in old carvings, sometimes alternated with a small St. Andrew's cross, the pattern of which could be easily got from the trefoil we have given by drawing a fourth leaf in the place of the stalk, and it should be veined in the same manner, only a small circle should be drawn on it to mark the centre, and in placing it, instead of its being upright, like the trefoil, it forms a pretty change if placed in the contrary fashion with the leaves spreading out sideways. In this, however, individual taste may have its way, but as regards the trefoil, it must be placed, as we have said, stalk downwards, throughout the pattern. The border pattern must also be laid on the thickness of the wood round the top, as the line of plain deal, however well painted and varnished, would mar the whole effect of the rich ornamentation beneath it.

If the wood of which the jardinière is made should happen not to be as thick as the width of a penny piece, so as to take the border, then the whole of the border must be cut narrower, which is easily done by taking two coins of the same relative proportions, but of smaller dimensions than those suggested (say a halfpenny and fourpenny piece), for it is essential that the border which marks the thickness of the wood should be the same size as that in the other parts of the design. Having cut a sufficient supply of rings and trefoils for the four sides, of the front, back, and ends of the jardinière, the next thing is to subject them all to the hot salt water process; they must be then taken out and dried, and with the point of the stiletto the worker must draw a little dotted line on each ring, which gives richness to the circle, and vein the little trefoil according to the lines seen on the working size pattern. This border pattern will not require brads, for, as each piece is laid on separately, if well glued and firmly pressed down to the wood, it will all lie as firmly as if carved from the surface. The little fixing needles, however, may, with advantage, be used to prevent the rings from dropping out of place while the glue is still wet. These needles are, as we have before



FIG. 12. DETAIL OF BORDER.

aid, very useful in all these cases of work which cannot be laid flat to dry.

Having placed all the border, we should advise the work to be left for the day; at any rate, all placing of the leaf and flower ornamentation must be deferred until the border pattern is dry and firm enough for the fixing needles to be removed. This group represents a foreign creeper with its flower and bud, and, although it would be very effective in alto with raised stalks and buds, we think that for a jardinière, which is subject (from its position in a room) to so much friction, it will be better to treat the design in bas relief. We give the leaf working size (Fig. 13); the

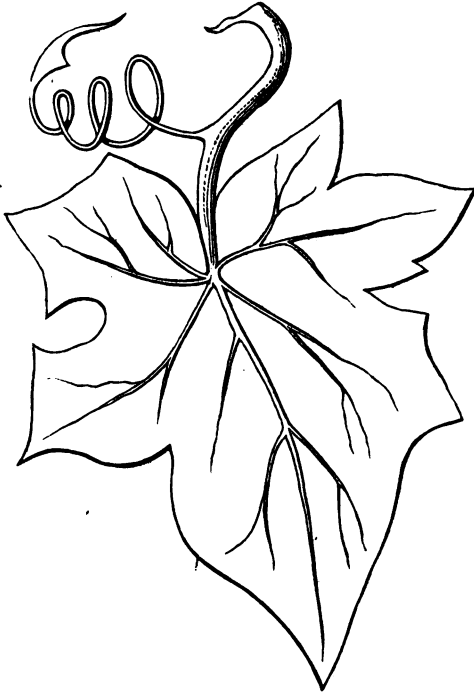


FIG. 13. DETAIL OF LEAF.

little pendants projecting from the flower are cut out separately, and should start from a small oblong shaped piece of leather, exactly the outline of the flower itself, only three sizes smaller. This should be placed first, then the flower upon it, when the oblong piece of leather raises the flower a little, and gives a pretty effect. In placing the flower, a great

deal of glue must be used, and the flower must be well pressed down at the edges, which must everywhere touch the wood; thus the centre will be more raised than the sides, which is what is required to give the bulb-like form of the flower. The lines on the flower must be deeply marked with the stiletto, and if in the placing they have been partially obliterated, the stiletto must be brought to bear upon it again, as it is essential for the effect of this berry-like flower that the long lines, like those on a melon, should be clearly defined on the leather. In places where the leaves overlap, the under leaf must lie quite flat on the surface. In all cases here these little pendants must be well glued down to the surface of the wood. The sheath to the flower is made in a fourpointed form, and passed up the stalk to the flower. For this pattern all the leaves must be cut with stalks. A fine bit of wire must be run in half way up the leaf, in the deep vein of the centre leaf, or, if possible, between the back and the surface; with thick leather this is easily done, and for this design, as it is to be so much in bas-relief only, the thicker the leather the better, as it gives greater richness to the pattern. The fine wire run up the leaf must be inclosed in the leather of the stalk by the leather being stitched over it, the stitches of course being all on the side which will lie next the wood. All the points of the leaves must touch the surface of the wood, and where the stalks of each leaf joins the large stalk of the creeper a small hole must be made with the gimlet, into which the end of the wired leaf-stalk must be well pushed with the point of the scissors; then some glue must be put upon it, and the big stalk placed over it and pressed down firmly upon it. Of course brads do no harm if they can be inserted without being evident; but in light designs, like this, it is difficult to do so. In the veining of leaves it must always be remembered, that after all the lines seen in the pattern leaf are deeply scored, it is necessary to take up the leaf and pinch all along the lines of the deep centre and cross-way veins; this must be done from the back of the leaf, then, from the front, the edges must be nipped here and there, so as to give a natural appearance.

As the two narrow panels at the ends would not take the same design as that given for the front and back, we add a little group (Fig. 14), the proper size for the end panels. It represents the same creeper with its buds and flower, and to the working out of it of course all the foregoing remarks will apply.

In sketching all leaves before cutting them out, it is well to remember that the stalks may always be traced, starting from the middle, but curling round close to the edges of the leaf; when out the stalks drop down length ways; but it will be easily understood that by tracing them in this way instead of lengthways down into the leather, a great economy of the leather is effected.

The painting and varnishing of this jardinière must be done according to the directions given in the second chapter, but light oak would not be well for an article of this kind, as the bright colours of natural flowers, and their fresh, many tinted foliage, are seen to best advantage in contrast with dark oak. It will, of course, be necessary to have the jardinière lined with zinc, as, without this, the moisture of the mould in which the

flowers are placed would soon ooze through to the surface and rot the leather. It is a better plan to sink the flowers in their earthen pots (with saucers under them to catch the moisture when they are watered) and to fill up with moss, than to put earth in. In the first place it is thus easy to replace a fading flower with a fresh one, and in the second the leather work runs no risk of being injured by the damp, which, after a time, eats through the zinc, and affects both the wood and the leather.

We have seen very pretty flower pots for large plants made in leather work, with an old (small sized of course) beer barrel. Beer barrels are generally made of wood which is very hard and difficult to work in; but, a four-and-a-half-gallon size makes as pretty an ornamental drawing room flower-pot as the most fastidious fancy could desire. About 2in. from one



FIG. 14. END PANEL OF JARDINIÈRE.

end must be cut off, and then the iron hoop must be pushed lower down so as to secure the wood. Both the iron hoops (top and bottom) must be masked with a broad ribbon of leather, cut rather wider than the hoop, so that quite a quarter of an inch of the leather on each side of it can be secured on the wood of the barrel, for the glue will not bind the leather securely on iron. This must be done top and bottom to hide the iron hoops, then a pretty border pattern, narrower than the leather ribbon in both cases, must be laid on, and a rich group of ivy leaves and berries, or (when the design has been given) of roses and passion flowers, must be placed all round the barrel about midway between the two border patterns, rather nearer to the top border would be most elegant; some antique brass hoop.



handles from Hart's, in Wych-street, should be screwed on each side of the barrel on the top border, remembering, however, that the screws must be placed where the leather pattern border lies on the wood, and castors should be fixed inside the lowest rim at the bottom, so as to enable the pot to be moved easily, which from its weight would not be the case without this precaution. Three small brass castors, placed at equal distances, would be sufficient, and, as the ends of barrels are always an inch away from the outside rim, these castors would be quite hidden from view. The whole should then be painted and varnished according to directions, and there would then be as pretty and effective a pot for a camellia or oleander plant as could be desired by any one.







**FIG. 15. OVAL PICTURE FRAMES.**

## CHAPTER VII.

### — — — — — OVAL PICTURE FRAME.

MUCH as we admire leather work, we do not think it adapted for the framing of water colour pictures, as the deep dark tones of the oak setting would be in too violent contrast, and would have the effect of fading the tints of the picture. Even for oils we prefer a narrow beading of gilding between the frame and the picture. In the design we give (Fig. 15) if the small inner border were gilded, the effect of both picture and frame would be improved by it.

The cut (Fig. 15) which accompanies this chapter gives a design for an oval picture frame, 30in. by 20in. (outside measure), for the deal frame which must be quite 4in. wide, and fully lin. thick. It is always a senseless economy in any case to use thin wood, for the work never has the same resemblance to real carving, and, in this particular instance it would quite mar the effect, as so elaborate a bit of work would never have been carved from a thin bit of wood.

The fillet or ribbon which appears to bind the wreath of flowers, is very commonly seen in old carving, and has the merit of being at once effective and easy of execution. The first step, however, in the workmanship of this frame, is to lay the border pattern round the edge; it is true, as the flowers in most parts overlies the frame, it seems almost needless labour to cover the thickness, but it is not a very troublesome business; and as it gives the work, when seen sideways, a richer appearance, we think it would be a foolish economy of time to omit this usual proceeding. The directions given for the border pattern of the casket will serve for the outside border, but for that around the inner edge of the oval another mode of working will be required. The frame must be laid on the leather, and weights put on it to keep it immovable; then, with a pencil, the exact line of the inside of the oval must be traced. The frame may then be removed, and an oval following the line of that already traced at about the distance of three-quarters of an inch must be drawn, care being taken that the two lines are exactly equi-distant throughout. The worker will thus have traced out a small oval three-quarters of an inch wide on the leather; this he must cut out, soak in the hot salt water, dry, and place with plenty of glue, and a brad or two at the top, base, and sides on the frame. For the narrow

crossway bits, which are meant to represent a cord twisted round, he can follow the directions given in Chapter III. It seems almost unnecessary to suggest, that the bits of leather which represent the twist of cord should be placed over the brads, which would thus be hidden.

In this design it is more than ever necessary that the grouping should be sketched in pencil on the frame before beginning to place anything. The fillet should be the first point attacked, as, this once properly placed, there will be less risk of mistakes in grouping the various flowers and foliage. The ribbon must be cut 3in. wide and from the best part of the leather; each piece must be long enough to allow of its being doubled in an inch at the end next the inner border, and of its being wrapped round quite an inch on the back of the frame. It must be remembered that the ribbon cannot be placed until the border pattern is quite dry, and so firm that there is no risk of disturbing any of its parts. This being the case, and the ribbon being in the softened state which the hot salt water process produces, the little zig-zag line must be drawn on the edges, then glue must be liberally supplied to the back of the leather and the fillet placed; the end next the inner border must be first fixed with three brads to each end, placed on the part which turns under; to effect which the piece of leather must be thrown back into the inside oval, then it must be turned and carried with the proper slope over the edge to the back of the frame and there made fast with nails; this will make it all perfectly secure. A few creases must be made in the leather according to the lines seen in the cut, to give the effect of the folds the ribbon would take in being wound around the wreath.

The rose with its buds and foliage should be the first group placed. The rose itself should be made thus; the worker must trace on his leather five circular figures from the outline given as the working size pattern of the rose (Fig. 16). Each of these should have a small hole in the centre, and when softened and dried, the stalk (which should have a little wider bit at the top), should be passed through this hole, in the centres of these five circular forms, care being taken that the rounded parts of the leaves are placed over the deeply indented parts of the circle immediately beneath it. The three first circles must lie flat to the surface, the other two must be turned upwards, and a stitch or two given here and there to keep the leaves together. The two circles which represent the inner part of the rose, and which are not fully opened, must have the best surface of the leather turned in the contrary way to which most of the leaves are placed, so that the rough surface of the wrong side of the leather is in the inner part of the rose. Of course where the rose represented is intended for a fully opened rose (showing the seeds at the heart of the flower), then the leather of all the circles must be placed with the best surface the same way as all foliage is placed at all times. Having passed the stalk through all the circles, it must be pulled through the holes (previously made with the gimlet for them) to the back of the frame, the wire bent and hammered down, and a little glue put on to make it fast. Then the foliage should be placed; the spray under the rose and rising a little above it on the opposite side to the buds, should all be cut in one piece. It should be traced

first from some natural spray of six leaves, in pencil, on the leather, and then cut out; the centre stalk wide enough to admit of its being stitched over the wire, the wide stalks of the leaves need not be wired, but the wire of the stalk should run up the back, or at least half way up, the back of the leaf which forms the apex of the spray. The rosebuds are formed of a figure of the same outline as that given for the rose itself, only cut three sizes smaller. A wired stalk, with a knot at the end to form the bulb of the bud, must be passed through the hole in the centre of the circular form, and, with a needle and thread, the bulb of the bud must be

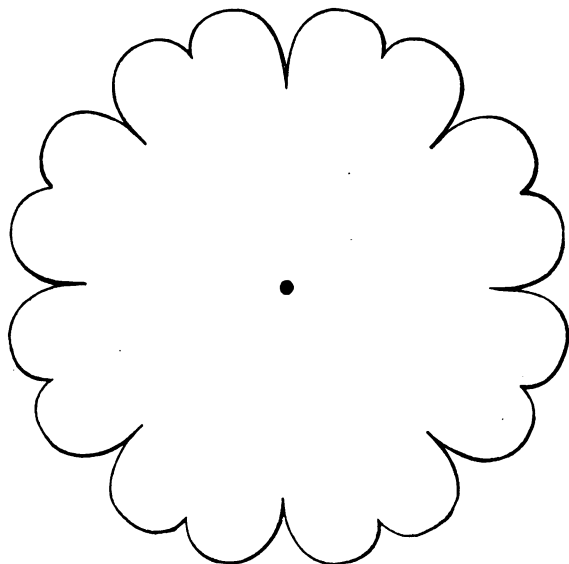


FIG. 16. DETAIL OF ROSE.

made by winding the thread tightly round about a quarter of an inch above where the stalk comes out, then the leaves which inclose the bud must be cut. The worker can easily make a pattern from any rosebud for himself; this must be cut all in one with a hole through the centre to pass it up the stalk, when its points must be stitched together, a little glue put on, and the apex pinched into shape with the fingers; both buds should be secured to the frame, first by having the raised stalk to which they are attached passed through a hole and secured at the back, and also by a brad being driven through the stalk where it is covered by the leaves of the overlying foliage.

The little four-leaved flowers are formed like the star-shaped flower in the casket, with the button mould centre covered by leather, and secured

as explained in Chapter III. ; but, as the flower is only the size of a primrose, very small button moulds must be procured ; the long narrow leaf can be easily cut in proportion to the flower ; it should have one very deep centre vein, and the side veins but lightly marked.

The corresponding group is one of the climbing convolvulus. To form these, a circle rather larger than the round of a natural convolvulus must be cut ; then, when softened, it must be pinched into little ridges along the lines seen in the design, and the stalk, which must, of course, be wired, should be cut into five minute spikes, which should be allowed to stand up in the centre of the flower when the stalk has been passed through the hole. The flower must then be formed into shape by winding up the cotton round the base of it, which will thus be formed into the point which is seen at the stem of a convolvulus ; then the three flowers must be placed according to the design, and in the same manner as the flowers of the other groups, by drawing the wired stalks through holes to the back. The leaves of the convolvulus are very lovely in shape, and must be cut according to those in the design, only the proper size to correspond with the natural flower.

The group on the other side—the star-shaped lily plant—will be rather more difficult, but its effect will fully repay the trouble spent on it. The outline of the flower must first be traced in pencil on the leather, from the working size pattern we have given (Fig. 17), and it must then be cut out in one star shaped piece, with a small hole in the exact centre. The seven curious seeds should then be cut from a piece of leather about 1in. deep and 2in. wide ; this should leave a space of about  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. between each stalk ; the little seed in the centre, which should be trefoil-shaped, must be cut first in the line, and then the six others, with, as we have said, the distance of about a quarter of an inch between each ; form them in rolling them round the wired stalk, by beginning with the trefoil end and winding the others around it, and thus the trefoil shaped seed will be, as in the pattern flower, the centre seed. The trefoil must not be cut with quite so long a stalk as the others. When they are all round the wired stalk it must be passed through the hole and with a needle and thread the whole must be stitched into shape by winding the cotton round and round in something the same fashion as described for the forming of the convolvulus, only the cotton must not be wound quite so tightly, as the lily is a flatter shaped flower than the bell like convolvulus. Care must be taken to arrange the seeds afterwards so that the best side of the leather should lie uppermost ; a little graceful inexactitude in the fall of the seeds has a good effect ; we mean that each little seed need not be exactly in the centre of the leaf to which it would appear to belong. The long lily foliage should be placed first, and the flower placed on it, on the same principle as all the other flowers already described. The small bud which hangs close to the frame should be formed of three pointed leaves only, not the double circle of leaves, and when the wired stalk with its little knot to form the bulb is passed through it, the bud must be tightly sewn up at the ends, as it represents a bud scarcely formed. A little star-shaped bit of leather must be passed up the stalk to form the green leaf, or calyx, which

encloses the bud ; this must be pinched into shape and well glued to sit close to the bud, then the stalk must be pulled through its hole and secured.

In the group opposite all the same remarks apply, only the two underleaves of the heartsease are cut together, and the two larger heart-shaped upper leaves also together. They are all then placed round a wired stalk, and the cotton wound well round them, and a few stitches put in to make them fast. The bud is formed of three leaves stitched together

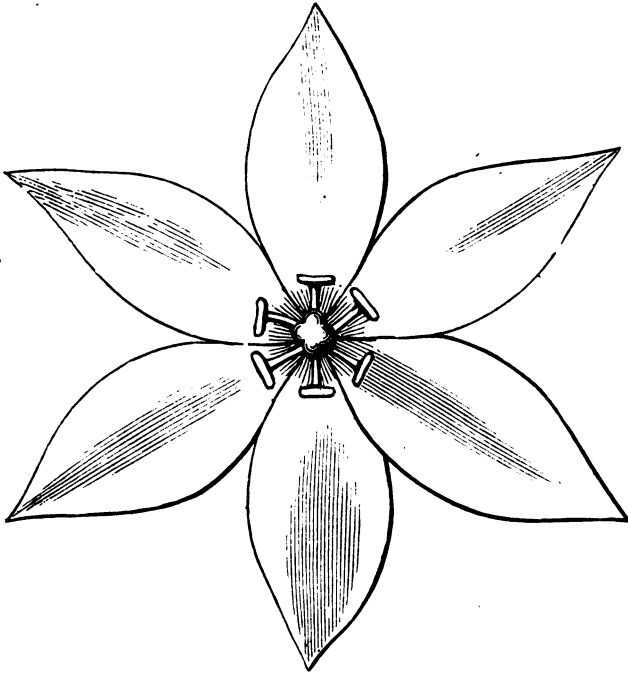


FIG. 17. DETAIL OF LILY.

just like the lily bud, only not quite so long in proportion ; it must have its wired stalk and its tiny sheath at the top of the stalk in the same fashion.

The group at the base represents merely the lily half opened, and a larger bud than that which hangs by the fully opened flower. For the half open lily, the six leaves are required, cut the same size as the lily, but one or two of the leaves must be stitched together at the tip, the others should be slightly bent back, as if bursting open. There is no need, of course, to put the seeds inside, as the heart of the flower is not disclosed. The bud



by the side will also require six leaves, only cut a size smaller. The foliage leaves are the same as those round the open flower.

A very pretty pendant to this frame might be made by placing groups of fruits instead of the flowers. The worker could, we think, design it for himself by taking the groups of fruit on the sideboard we gave in Chapter V. The grapes and vine leaves at the apex (life size, of course); then on each side the filberts and foliage; beneath, in the spaces occupied by the lily and heartseases, on one side the pears and foliage, on the other the apples. The melon, with its irregular indented leaves, would form a beautiful base. We should ourselves prefer this as a pendant to the flower wreath frame, to a repetition of the same pattern. Either design would make a very graceful and effective girandole.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### COVER FOR BOOK OR BLOTTER.

As the last chapter dealt with a design for very elaborate work entirely in alto-relief, we have, by way of contrast, chosen for the subject of the present one a design in perfect bas-relief, and of an entirely mediæval character. It is intended for the ornamentation of either a blotting book for a library or even drawing room table, or for the cover of a book the subject of which makes it desirable to give it an antique appearance. It is peculiarly adapted to the former purpose on account of its capability of being rendered in such entire bas-relief, which is, of course, a necessity in such a matter. Designs for the covers for books may be more raised; but, as we have more than once observed, as a matter of fitness, we think that all objects which are likely to have to undergo much manipulation should be ornamented in bas-relief rather than in raised work, which, though perhaps prettier, is more likely to suffer from being much handled, whilst leather work in bas-relief, or the contrary, will bear the same amount of knocking about that an article in carved wood will do; indeed, far more than those pretty carved ornaments in dark wood with which our bazaars and fancy shops have been inundated for the last three or four years. The designs of these latter are very often remarkably graceful, and we recommend them to our readers' attention on this account, as the leather worker would be quite able to carry out in his material any pattern of scroll, leaf, or flower which these little works of art present, only, instead of being in open work his rendering of the pattern would appear in bas-relief on the deal wood foundation. The fretwork designs we do not recommend; we think them (those at least which have come under our notice) meagre in the extreme, having none of the grace and flow of carved work, which can be so successfully imitated in the leather.

We will now proceed to describe the rendering of the little work in hand. In the first place, get two pieces of real oak as the foundation. For so small an object the difference of price would not be very great, and as the pattern does not quite cover the foundation, the real oak will have a much better effect; besides, deal is far more apt to warp when subjected to the heat of being on a table near a fire, or even constantly under a lamp. The pieces of oak procured should be about  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick and about 12in. by

9in. in size. If a perfectly square blotter should be desired, this design would suit it equally well; but we think the slightly elongated shape more elegant. The perfect square, however, might perhaps have a more mediæval effect; in this the worker can consult his own taste, the proportions make no difference in the description of the working out of the design.

After procuring the pieces of oak, the first thing is to cut a long strip of leather about  $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide, which, after being softened in the hot salt water,

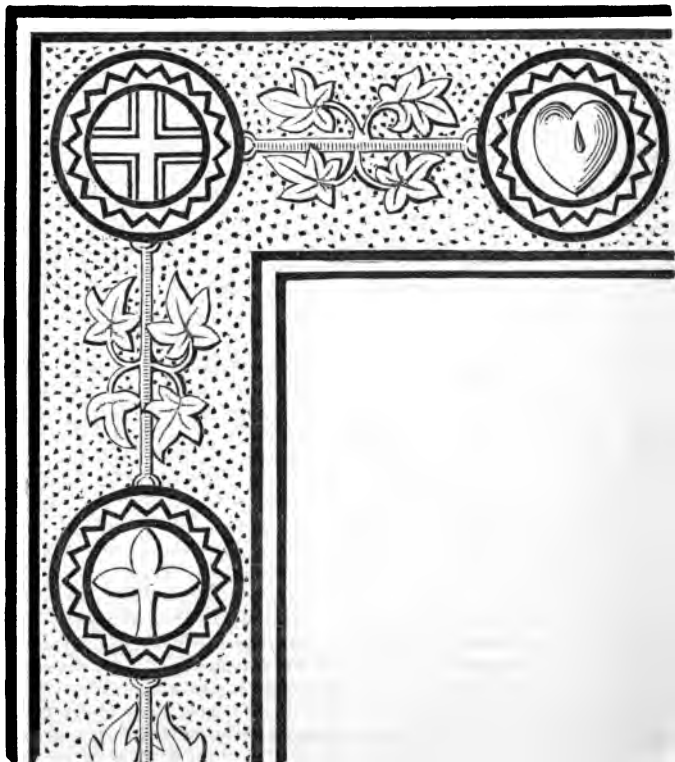


FIG. 18. BORDER FOR BLOTTER.

must be dotted over at intervals, like the ground work in the design (Fig. 18); then two even lines must be deeply scored on each side of the strip of leather, about  $\frac{1}{4}$ in. apart; as these should be very even, it would be better to rule them on the leather with a pencil before soaking the leather. When these preparations have been made, this slip of leather which is to

join the back of the book must be firmly glued on the two pieces of oak, lying on the wood quite lin. on each side; this will leave the extra  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. for the thickness of the book when the blotting paper leaves are put in; then a piece of strong ribbon of a pretty colour (we think that deep ecclesiastical red would suit best) must be glued on about four inches each way from the top down towards the centre of the back of the blotter. Of course, the upper part of the ribbon is left loose for the leaves of the blotting paper to be passed through. Another piece of leather, about the same size as that which forms the back, must then be cut and prepared like



FIG. 19. CENTRE ORNAMENT FOR BLOTTER.

that before described, and this must be passed under the ribbon and firmly glued down an inch on each side; this will hide the rough surface of the under side of the leather forming the back, and will cover the ends of the ribbon where glued down, and make a nice firm back to the blotter.

When this is all dry and firm, the next step should be the border (Fig. 18). First, the plain bit of leather on which the circles and foliage are placed. This must not be cut in strips, but in a very exact line, the size and shape of the blotter, and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. wide. It must be taken from the best part of the

leather, so that it shall have no flaw or wrinkle on its surface; it must then be plunged in the hot salt water, dried, and the straight lines drawn on it and dotted over with the stiletto as described for the back. It must be glued and placed with great exactitude on the blotter, round the edge; where the outer line of the border meets that of the piece of leather forming the back, another slip of leather, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. wide, must be laid over the join, or a very narrow strip of worm pattern would have a very pretty effect. This little bit of masking must not be laid with its edges equi-distant from the join, as that would interfere with the pattern of the border, but it must be placed more on the slip of leather which forms the back of the blotter, and with its extreme edge only overlapping the foundation of the border pattern. We would suggest that the border ornamentation should be cut quite three sizes larger than the design. If, however, any of our readers should not be artistic enough to enlarge the pattern, the whole design in the size given repeated inside as a double border would have a very good effect. The group of leaves should be cut all from one piece, and where the leaves appear to overlap the stalk, the effect must be given with the stiletto, which will mark the line of the leaf on the wet leather. The small enlargement of the stalk where it joins the circles must be cut about double the length it appears, so that it will be well under the circles. The circles must be made as we described in the directions for working out the border pattern of the jardinière (Chapter VI.), only the most effective size for this would be those cut from a five shilling piece, with a half-crown as the inner circle, of course the group of leaves must be drawn in proportion. The centre ornaments of the circles, namely the cross, heart, and trefoil must be alternated, and the position of the trefoil must be varied according to whether the circle it ornaments is in a horizontal or perpendicular line, its stalk being always placed in the base of the circle it ornaments.

The centre ornament (Fig. 19) is complex and will require much patience, but as it is working size the different parts of it can be taken off on sketching paper, and the lines upon it pricked out on the leather, or transferred to it in the manner we directed in Chapter II. That part of the border of the medallion which is dotted over must be first cut (all in one piece with the five leaves attached), and it must be quite the size of the outer edge of the ribbon, which should be placed upon it, and thus be more raised. The best plan for the preparing of this would be to trace the extreme outline of this ornament, not cutting away the centre, which is really part of the same piece of leather, although as the outside parts are dotted and the inner circle not, the effect is given of the one part being the frame, the other the ground, on which the knight's figure is placed. Having soaked and placed this groundwork and pressed it well, and quite flat down in the exact centre of the blotter, the worker must proceed to place the outside ribbon, which must be cut in five separate pieces; then the second ribbon must be cut, and this all in one piece. The next thing is the knight himself. We would caution the worker against endeavouring to take away that slightly wooden look in the outlines of the horse, as this is so very mediæval in character. Both knight and horse are cut in one

piece, and the lines of the leg, armour, and shield, as well as those of the features of the face, and the muscles and trappings of the horse, should be drawn on the moist soft leather with a very fine pointed stiletto, then the knight and horse must be well covered at the back with glue and firmly pressed down on the leather centre; the worker must, after placing his knight, go carefully over any of the lines which may have been effaced by the pressure of the hand in fixing the figure; the spear at the lower end must be cut long enough to be well covered by the innermost bit of the border; this last bit (we mean the inner border) must also be cut all in one piece, only slightly open (as seen in the design) at one side of the top. Last of all, the three bits of fluted ornament must be cut, soaked, glued, and placed, and the little dots made on the leather, as seen in the design, and then the work must be put by till it is dry enough to make the other side of the blotter.

The same border should be used, and, if liked, the same medallion, could be repeated. We think, however, that the effect would be better, and the work less tedious, if, instead of the knight and horse, some antique letters cut in leather were placed as a centre. A group of three letters is always most graceful. A E I is a pretty design, but it might be preferred to place the initials of the person for whom the blotter was designed. Then if these happened to be but two in number they must be cut as to size according to the space in the medallion. There are so many lovely designs for old English letters in the illuminations now so much in vogue, that we think it hardly necessary to give any here. A monogram would, if gracefully designed, be perhaps more effective than the three separate letters, as it would make a more decided centre to the medallion.

When all the ornamentation is placed on both sides the blotter must be painted and varnished according to instructions. We would, however, remark, that as real oak is here the foundation of the blotter, paint must be laid on very thin, so as to keep the grain of the wood visible. For the same reason this bit of work might be treated as light oak, and be merely varnished and not painted at all; but in this case the dark varnish with the colouring matter must be used, instead of the clear pale yellow varnish we recommend for the works in dark oak.



## CHAPTER IX.

### FISH BOWL STAND.

IN the present chapter we give instructions for producing one of the prettiest and, at the same time, one of the most useful articles to which, as an ornamentation, leather work can be adapted. The cut (Fig. 20) gives a design, made by ourselves, for the stand of a globe for goldfish, or for the base of one of the goblet shaped aquariums. We, however, think the old fashioned glass bowl in every way preferable to the unsightly aquariums of the present day, which seem to us to sin against the rules of beauty and grace both in form and colour. Still, if our readers happen to possess one of the Brobdingnagian ale glasses to which the name of "goblet aquarium" has been given, its ugliness might be considerably diminished by its being set in a pretty base of leather work.

The best place to get the wooden bowl on which to place the design would be at one of the large basket shops where sieves and such things are to be bought. We bought ours at a large shop of this kind in Wigmore-street, Oxford-street, and the price we paid for it was 2s. 9d. It is about 12in. across, and 7in. in height. There is a sort of wooden bowl which is much cheaper from being thinner and altogether of a much more common make, but we do not recommend our readers to allow themselves this economy; these cheap thin bowls are often irregular in form, and from their very thinness are apt to warp; they might not, moreover, bear the nails, which are apt to split bad wood. The class of wooden bowl we mean has a rim at the top quite a quarter of an inch wide.

The first thing to be done on getting the bowl home is to have a false bottom of deal placed in it so high as to allow the widest part of the circumference of the globe to be quite an inch above the topmost edge of the leather work base. The false bottom being fixed, the next thing to be done is to cut or scrape the inside in order that it may be narrow enough for the inner and outer side border to meet, so that the narrow cross-way strips should each be in one piece for both outside and inside border pattern. This has a very pretty effect, the plain strips of leather first laid on should be about an inch wide, rather less than more, or there will not be surface enough left to place the pattern, which is of roses, anemones, and

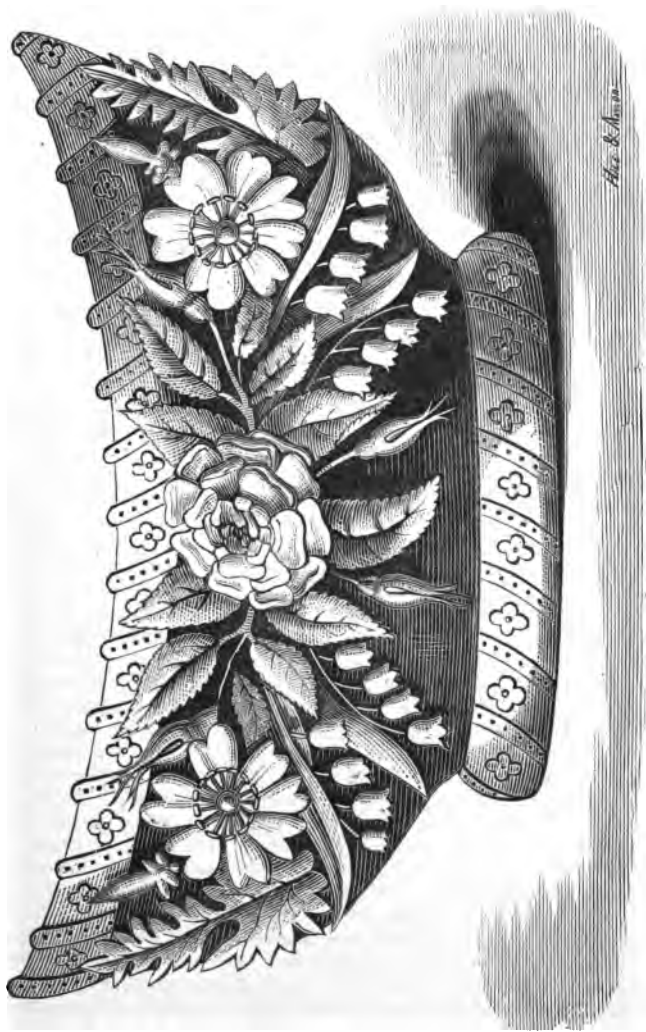


FIG. 20. FISH BOWL STAND.





lilies of the valley, all life size. Brads will be necessary, as well as plenty of glue, to fix these two leather bands both in the inner and outside edge of the bowl; then cut the narrow slips about the eighth of an inch wide, and each of them about two inches long. It would be as well to sketch in with pencil on the bands of leather the lines these slips are to take, as any irregularity would considerably mar the effect of the border, the rectangular exactitude of which forms a good contrast with the richness and flow of the grouping of the flowers beneath. The small four leaved ornament between the bands is cut in one, and the small circle in its centre is made with the point of the stiletto, after the leather has been duly softened; of course, the bands of leather in the slips must not be laid on until after they have been submitted to the hot salt water process. The four leaved ornament must not be nailed on, as any brad or nail would be too evident, but the glue must be very liberally supplied to the back of each, and they must be firmly pressed down with the finger when placed, and the little fixing needles used to keep them from dropping out of place must not be removed until they are quite dry and firm; the same remarks, of course, apply to the inside border. After having placed the border both at the top, inside, and base of the bowl, it will be as well to suspend all operations until it is quite dry and firm, when the fixing needles may be all removed, and the nailing and hammering necessary for placing the flowers may be done without danger of shaking the more delicate parts of the borders out of place. Again, we would remind the worker that it is necessary to trace the design in the foundation to prevent misplacing the various parts.

The first thing to be done should be to trace out in pencil on the leather the groups of leaves for the rose. These groups of five leaves, each (with a long bit of stalk on which the bud is to be placed) must be cut in one piece; there will be six such groups required, as the rose, with its leaves, buds, and foliage is supposed to be repeated immediately after the long anemone leaf on each side of the bowl, and again in the centre of the group on the corresponding side. Having cut these six groups and the five circles (four times repeated for each rose required), it will be well to soak and rinse them all. We explained how roses and their buds were made in Chapter VII. We would only add that the bit of stalk at the end of each group of leaves must be cut long enough to admit of a knot being made in it at the end after all the parts of the bud have been passed on to it. It will not be advisable to wire either leaves or stalks in this pattern, for as it is not desirable that the work should be in excessive alto relief, the leaves and stalks should lie rather flat on the surface. The leaves of the rose with its bud (which must be secured by a nail to make it fast) must be first placed, then the first circle of the rose over the stalks, the best side of the leather uppermost of course; then the second and third, the leaves ruffled up a little here and there to give a graceful and natural effect; the fourth and fifth circles of the rose must be placed with the best side of the leather turned the reverse way, as they will be tacked together with a needle and thread, the rough side of the leather inside; but before doing this, when all five circles are placed, a flat

headed short nail must be driven through the centre of all five, then with a needle and thread the edges of the leaves of both of the two last circles must be caught together, so as to join the centre and still half closed leaves of the rose. The one large pendent rose leaf under the rose, drooping towards the base of the bowl, must be cut separately, as also the two buds each side; the one bud is advisedly made to droop a little lower than the other, as this slight irregularity gives naturalness, and, consequently, grace to the design.

As regards the lilies of the valley, we do not think it necessary to give the leaf working size, as the worker can so easily cut one for himself. The spray of lilies must be worked out in the following manner: the main stalk must be cut with smaller stalks, from which each bell will hang, cut along one side; these smaller stalks must be cut long enough to admit of a small knot being tied at the end, around which the little bell will be stitched; the main stalk must be stitched together so that all the smaller stalks come from underneath it, then the bells must be cut in leather according to Fig. 21. After soaking them in the hot salt water, they must be stitched up the back, and the top gathered up round the little stalk pendent from the main stalk, the knot at the end of the stalk will form a foundation; when all the bells are made and fastened on to the main stalk, it must be placed in the drooping position it occupies, care being taken that the side where the bells are stitched is that which lies next the wood

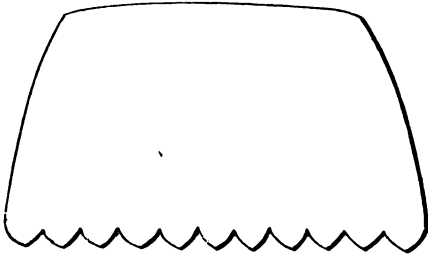


FIG. 21. DETAIL OF LILY OF THE VALLEY.

of the bowl. If possible to insert a little brad inside each bell without it being seen, it would be well to do so. The pinched-in shape of each little bell before the extreme edge is easily rendered by stitching in a little deeper just at that part. The pattern given is for the smallest bell at the extreme end of the stalk; the others must be graduated in size, from the same pattern, to give the proper effect.

There now only remain the anemones. This is a flower which is very effective in leather work, both on account of the star shaped flower, and also its deeply indented foliage. We give the working size pattern of the outside leaves (Fig. 22); and a working size pattern of the seeds in the centre (Fig. 23). The spot in the centre of Fig. 22 indicates where the nail for fixing the flower must pass. When the former is soaked and marked according to pattern, a flat shaped nail, having the head covered with a piece of softened leather put on it as a button, must be driven home through both the seed circle and the outside leaves; this will make it fast in the centre, to the bowl; but, of course, there must be glue placed on the back of all the leaves. The bud is formed of a circle of

the same form as the flower, only much smaller, stitched together at the top, and pinched with the finger and thumb into the pointed shape which

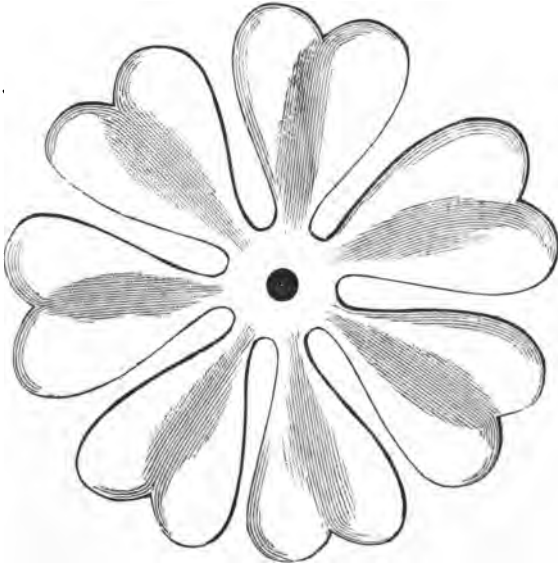


FIG. 22. DETAIL OF ANEMONE.

appears in the design. The long deeply indented leaf, double the length of an ordinary rose leaf, should have been cut, soaked, veined, and placed together with the bud, before the flower is placed.

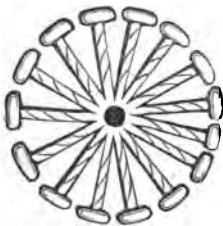


FIG. 23. DETAIL OF ANEMONE SEED.

About a couple of days after all this has been done, paint both inside and out, and give no less than three coats of good light varnish. If fruit as a design is preferred to flowers, the wreath given in the design for a sideboard would be very effective, and the same border pattern as here given would do. The grapes with foliage would take the place of the rose, the filberts and leaves of the lilies, and the pears and foliage of the anemones. Then the whole would have to be repeated, as the melon shaped fruit would be too large for so small an object as the bowl. As a drawing-room ornament we should ourselves decide for the design given, which we know to be effective.



## CHAPTER X.

### CABINET DRESSING TABLE.

THE subject of this chapter is an antique and rather florid design for a cabinet dressing table with toilette glass attached (Fig. 24); and, although the working out of it will be found somewhat troublesome, the effect will amply repay the time spent upon it.

The cabinet must be made expressly for the work in plain unvarnished deal, and should be of the following proportions: 2ft. 6in. wide, 2ft. 6in. high, and 2ft. deep, from the base of the glass to the border in front. The glass should be an oval, of 2ft. by 1ft. 3in., outside measurement. A larger glass and table might be worked in this style, but then it would be necessary to increase the pattern by repeating the leaves and flowers in each group, care being taken to place the added flower so that the pendant falls in a different direction to that of the flower immediately below it; but, unless there should be some necessity for such alteration, it is always better to work out a pattern on an object of the exact proportions for which the subject was intended.

This design represents the acanthus flower and leaf. It is sometimes called by architects the passion flower, and, in the design from which we have adapted the subject (which was an antique carving on a cathedral stall), the sacred heart certainly formed the base of the group, but as the foliage is purely that of the acanthus (so well known to all artists in carved work), and, as the natural passion flower is of quite a different structure, we think it more correct to describe this grouping as one of the acanthus flower and leaf.

It will be necessary to get rather thick leather for this work, as the leaves are large and should look massive. We give the leaf (Fig. 25) working size, and, after having cut as many as the design requires from the best part of the leather (so as to ensure having the thickest part of it for the purpose), they must be carefully set aside for future use; not subjected to the hot water process as yet, for it is always better to get on with all the border and panel work first.

The ornamentation on the small part of the oval frame visible has already been described. We have chosen it for this work, because it is so particularly effective on all oval forms, and because its regularity and delicacy



FIG. 24. CABINET DRESSING TABLE.



are in such strong contrast to the boldness and flow of the large acanthus flower and foliage. Having laid on all the small border of the oval, it will be necessary to place the panel in the front compartment of the cabinet before working at that part of the border, and in affixing that which surrounds the compartment in which the drawers are placed, great care must be taken to lay the first strip of leather (on which the narrower strips lie) quite in a correct line; it must not in the least overlap the opening for the drawers, or the friction caused by opening them would soon fret it.

The second and larger border, which is an arabesque, also copied from an antique, is very effective. We give a section of its working size (Fig. 26). This must be transferred to the leather in the manner we described with the bit of "fusin," or with white French chalk, and traced with a pencil directly afterwards, as both the "fusin" and the French chalk rub off at the slightest touch. There is, however, another and, perhaps, a surer way of getting this border accurate, which is first to trace off the bit we have given on thick paper against a window; then cut it out, draw two parallel lines on the leather, the width of the pattern apart, and laying the cut out border between them, trace round the edges of it, and it will then be transferred to the leather. On moving the cut out pattern farther on, the worker must be careful to let the design join accurately. When sufficient has been cut of this arabesque border for all the parts it has to ornament, it must be subjected to the hot salt water process, but only for a very short time; then, after being dried, the little dots must be made on the surface with the point of the stiletto, and, the back being well covered with glue, it must be carefully laid on and well pressed down to the wood on all parts. If this is done there will be no need for brads which, in so delicate a piece of work, would be disfiguring.

When these minor ornamentations are all quite dry and hard, the more interesting work of placing the flower and leaves may be carried out. We have given the flower working size (Fig. 27), but not in detail; it may therefore be as well to explain that it should be cut in two parts, that is, the four upper leaves in one, the lower one apart. The long pendant is formed in the following manner: two narrow strips of leather should be cut, having the trefoil-like formation at the end of each; these must then be neatly sewn together so that they form one trefoil-shaped termination; this must be wound on to the end of the wire, which will form the pendant, and bound round and round with cotton, being stitched firmly with a needle in its place, then the strip of leather which covers the pendant must be cut and sewn on the wire to the length of a couple of inches; a little circular piece of leather, with a hole in the centre, must be passed up the stalk to the trefoil, and pinched into the cup-like form of the part which surrounds the trefoil. The needle and thread must then be brought again into requisition to secure it, and glue must be liberally supplied to make all fast. Of course all these parts must have been previously subjected to the hot salt water process, and the lines on the stalk of the pendant must be drawn on it with the stiletto; the four large leaves of the flower must then be placed around the pendant (at the distance seen in the pattern), and secured with the needle and thread;



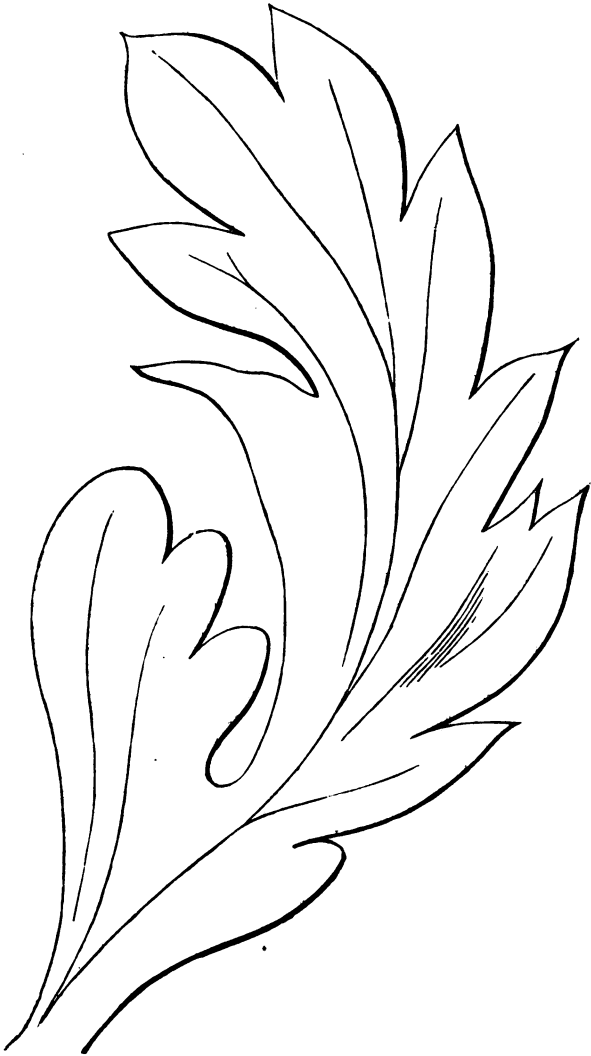


FIG. 25. ACANTHUS LEAF (Working Size).

and lastly, the large leaf must be placed and stitched into its place. By large leaf we mean the leaf which shows the whole of its surface.



FIG. 26. ARABESQUE BORDER.

Before placing the flower on the frame the foliage should all have been laid on in its place. No wiring will be required to any of these leaves

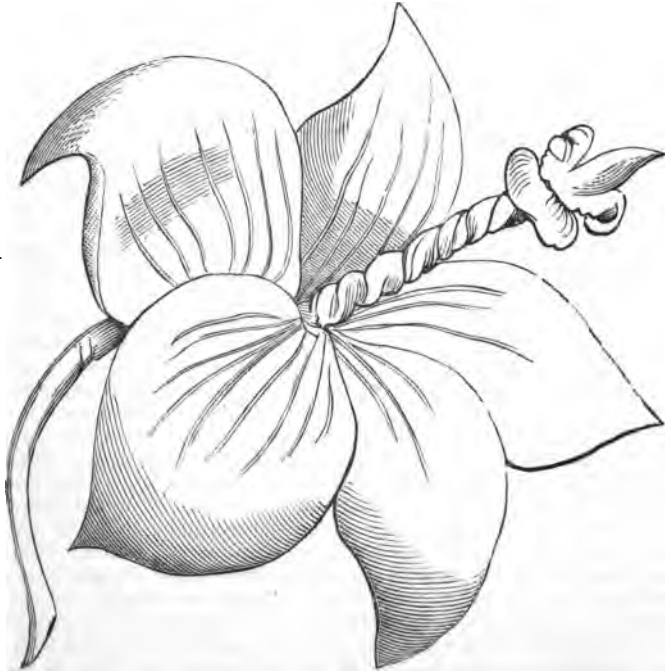


FIG. 27. ACANTHUS FLOWER (Working Size).

as there are no stalks visible; the foliage must be placed with care and taste, so as not to be too flat to the surface, and yet not so much in alto

as the flower itself. The hole through which the wired stalk of the flower is to pass to the back of the frame (where it must be secured by being pressed down with a hammer or pincers) must be made large enough to admit of some part of the point of the flower to be pushed in. We mean that part round the stalk where the cotton was wound round to secure the five leaves. By putting a small section of this into the hole, the flower is not only rendered more secure, but it gives to it a stiffer position, more like that which the same flower in carved wood assumes. Without this precaution the weight of so large leaved a flower with its heavy pendant, would cause the flower to drop forward from the frame, as bell-like flowers do on their stems, and this is not at all the effect we wish to produce with the ananthis flower. After the flower is firmly placed, and well secured behind with glue, and by the hammer, the pendant must be gently bent in a graceful curve according to the design; the trefoil tip should touch some part of the frame or foliage, but the stalk part should appear in entire relief. This is often seen in florid designs of old wood carving, and has a very beautiful effect. The trefoil pendant on the flower, which forms the apex of the frame, should just touch the leaf on which it droops, the flower on the base should have a small brad cleverly inserted between the leaves of the trefoil and the little cup which surrounds it, to make it quite fast to the ornamentation on which it lies, for that is the part of the dressing table likely to be rubbed by servants in dusting, and special care should therefore be taken that all should be firmly placed.

The bud by the side of the flower at the apex of the frame is formed of the same shaped leaves as the flower, only out some three sizes smaller; this bud is represented as partially bursting, and this is done by leaving one of the leaves unattached by the needle to the others, and pinching it together with the finger and thumb at the very tip.

The handles on the drawers, in the side compartments, should be of antique pattern, and in brass. We mentioned in a former chapter, Hart's, in Wyeh-street, as a good place to get these medieval brasses, and it certainly is an excellent place for those to whom expense is of no immediate consequence; but where this is the case, we strongly recommend a less ambitious establishment. Messrs. Brand and Co., of 187, Tottenham-court-road, London, have a great choice there of all patterns of antique brass handles at marvellously cheap prices. We saw there a set of loop brass handles, with the brass key holes attached, which struck us as very unique, at the low price of 7d. each—less, we believe, if bought by the dozen. The brass work clamps for antique chests are also to be had at Brand's at a very reasonable price. It seems almost superfluous to add that the brass work must not be put on until after the work has been painted and varnished, for if the brass gets smeared with the varnish it is almost impossible afterwards to remove the stain. In painting the dressing table, we strongly advise that a coating of paint and varnish be given to the *insides* of the drawers; the process is troublesome and lengthy, but the finish it gives to the work is quite worth the extra labour.

Should it be desired to have a whole *suite* of bedroom furniture in this style, the same design could be worked out on the panels of a wardrobe,

on an antique ottoman chest, and on the front and sides of a dressing table. For the chairs of the set it would be desirable to have a group of the leaves only on the back of each, and this group must be very carefully laid on in rather less relief than the foliage where it is mixed with the flowers. We do not recommend the small delicate border to be used for any object which is subject to so much handling as chairs; but the arabesque bordering, if well pressed down, and with plenty of strong glue applied, would be as secure as the same pattern carved on the chair would be. A small chimney glass of the same design and even size, as that given for the dressing table would have a very quaint and antique effect.



## CHAPTER XII.

### HALL BRACKET.

As, although we have frequently suggested that certain designs were suitable for brackets, we have never yet given any special instructions as to this useful branch of leather work, we have thought it well to devote one chapter to this subject.

The plate which is given (Fig. 28) represents a design in ferns and water lilies, life size, for a large hall bracket. The deal bracket, on which the leather work is to be placed (and which any carpenter would make for about 4s.), should be 16in. wide, 9in. deep (that is from the top border to the wall), and the façade on which the group, as represented, is to be placed, should be quite 14in. from the top border to the lowest enrichment at the base. The wood of the façade must be sloped inwards from the top edge to the base, which will be 6in. long and 5in. deep, *i.e.*, from back to front. The two sides will then be of a somewhat triangular form, which can be covered by a simple panel of leather following the line of the side of the bracket, only within 2in. of the edge each way; and a line of the border pattern, which must be doubled at the base to correspond with that which is in the front of the bracket, must be placed all round the edges. The sides might be further enriched by a small spray of fern being laid on the panel in a graceful position, the stalks downwards of course. We have not thought it needful to give a sketch of the design for the side of the bracket, as the instructions for working it are so easily given in words. We have said this design is for a hall bracket, but, of course, should a bracket of such large dimensions be required for any special purpose for a drawing room, the design would be very well suited, and if the bracket were ebonised and partially gilded, it would form a very handsome object in a drawing room.

In these days, when furniture in black and gold is so much the rage, it is as well to know that leather work may imitate the richest carving in ebony with the same success as that in old oak, only that in this case it would be necessary in all large objects, to combine a little gilding, the black in large masses has too funereal an effect—a small book cover, card case, or even blotting book, might be effective ungilded, but anything in the way of frames, brackets, or large pieces of furniture, must have the gilding to relieve the dead black surface. The process of ebonising the

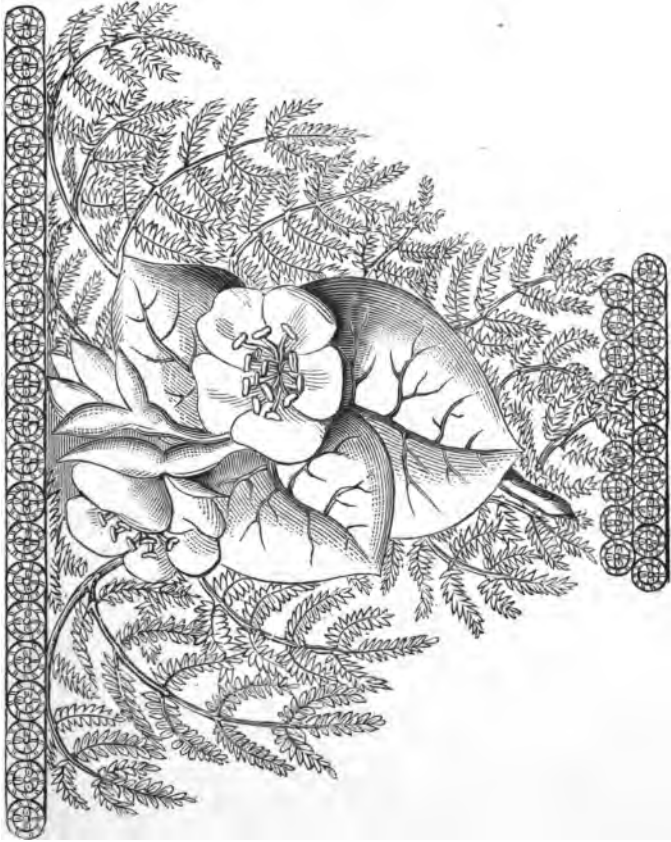


FIG. 28. HALL BRACKET.



leather work is simple enough. Instead of getting the distemper paint, the artist must ask for a bottle of black stain to imitate ebony, this must be laid on the whole surface very smoothly, and no part must be allowed to be darker than the other; no graining will be afterwards necessary, as ebony presents none. When properly dry the black stain must be sized to prevent it from running into the varnish when the latter is laid on. The size can also be procured at the oilman's at 1d. per lb., where the ebony stain is bought. About half a pint of water should be put to 1lb. of size, the whole set in a basin and put to dissolve gradually in a cool oven; when it is all liquefied it must be laid on very smoothly, and very thin, with a clean brush, and when this sizing is, in its turn, quite dry, the work must have three coats of the pale yellow varnish. As ebony has a smoother surface than oak, still more care will be necessary in varnishing leather work which is to represent carved ebony, and each coat of varnish must be perfectly dry before its successor is laid on. The parts that are to be gilded must not receive any of the ebonizing colouring, as the gilding would not take over it. In choosing a design where gilding is to be added, it is always well to make a selection of one where the gilding will



FIG. 29. DETAIL OF BORDER.

be properly distributed. The rule for partial gilding which it is best to follow is to gild the veins and stalks of the leaves, the petals, and seeds of flowers, and the centres of enrichments in the way of borders. Some people gild all border work, but we think this has a heavy and patchy appearance when seen from a distance. In this design, for example, the stalks of the fern, the veins of the lily leaves, and the seeds in both flowers, should be gilded. As regards the border, we should gild the little narrow cross way lines round the circle, and the extreme centre of the trefoil. If the rest of the gilded furniture in the room happened to be of florid design, we should have the whole of the trefoil gilt; but, of course, this would come much more expensive.

We will now proceed to explain the working out of the design. The first thing to be done is to cut and place the panels on the top and sides. That on the top must be cut the exact size of the top of the bracket, the edge of it will afterwards be masked by the bordering. After soaking these in the hot salt water and squeezing them well dry, they must be placed with plenty of glue, and well pressed down to the surface, so as to lie perfectly flat. The two panels on the sides must be cut, as we have said, 2in. smaller than the bracket, but, in form, they must exactly follow the line of the bracket. Having placed these, the border should next claim attention. This is cut in a series of separate circles. We have given one of these circles, working size (Fig. 29), with its trefoil centre. The circles are best got by tracing round a florin piece for the outside circle and by placing a shilling on it for the inner circle. The cross way bits are not laid on separately, they are merely drawn on the



leather when it is soft from the hot salt water process, and the parts between are dotted over with the point of the stiletto, to give the effect of the spaces between the narrow lines being a separate piece of leather. If the work should be ebonised and gilded it will not be necessary to make the dots between; in fact it would be unadvisable to do so, as that sort of thing is not seen in ebony carving, besides the gilding of the crossing lines will give the desired effect, which is that of its being a ribbon twisted around the circle.

For the fern, choose from among some bits of common broken two fronds of about the size desirable for the design. These must be laid on the leather, and the outline traced with a pencil; it can then be cut out in a whole piece. The stalk of the second frond is not seen, but it should lie underneath in much the same position as that which is seen immediately beneath the lotus leaf. The fact that the leaves of the fern would overlap, will give richness.

The double border at the base should, of course, be placed before the ferns are laid on, and the last spray which falls down in the centre over the ornamentation, should be coaxed into a graceful curve, and secured in the centre fern here and there by a brad, or the weight of it might cause it to drop away. The same thing must be done with the two sprays which droop over the border at the sides. It would also be well here and there, among the drooping sprays, to insert a brad, so as to make the work quite secure. For this work (which represents a very massive bit of carving), it is best to get a rather thick piece of leather and one of the smoothest surface possible in basil tan.

The last thing to be placed is the lotus, with its bud and foliage. The flower should be cut from a real large sized water lily. It would take up too much space to give the working size here, but the readiest plan would be where a real lily is not to be procured, to buy at a florist's an artificial one, and cut the leaves from that. The flower is cut, in common with all the cup and star-like flowers in leather work, all in one piece; only, to give the effect of the thickness of the lotus, the flower must be made of double leather; that is, an exact counterpart of the form of the lily must be cut, and the two must be neatly and firmly sewn together at the edges. This had better be done after the leather has been soaked in the hot salt water, as the labour of stitching through the hard leather would be great. A great quantity of glue must be placed between the two flowers at the back of the leather, and they must be firmly pressed together; then the seeds of the flower must be thus made: three rings must be cut in leather after the pattern which we have given (Fig. 30), but they must be of three different sizes. The one given represents the largest required. When soaked the lines upon the little hammer-like seeds, and on the stalks, must be drawn with the stiletto, then the foliage of the flower should be placed.

The three leaves are all of different sizes, and must be drawn from the real leaves, then soaked and veined. The large leaf at the base might, with effect, be of double leather, but it is not so necessary as for the flowers (where the leaves turn up and would show the wrong side of the leather if

not double); but the two smaller leaves should be of single leather only. When placed according to the design, then lay on the centre fully-opened flower, bend its leaves back at the edges here and there on the leaves of the foliage, but twist the top leaf a little forward, so as to retain a little of the cup-like form the lotus has before being fully opened. Then place the first and largest seed circle, then the second turned so that the little seeds fall in the gaps between those of the circle beneath; lastly, place the third circle with the same precaution as regards placing the circle for of the seeds to fall between those of the second circle; then cover the head one of the long flat-headed nails we have before recommended for the work, with a piece of leather sewn round its head as a button is covered, and drive it well home in the centre of these circles through the middle of the flower into the wood of the bracket to make all fast; then twist the seeds into a little graceful irregularity, and the centre flower is finished.

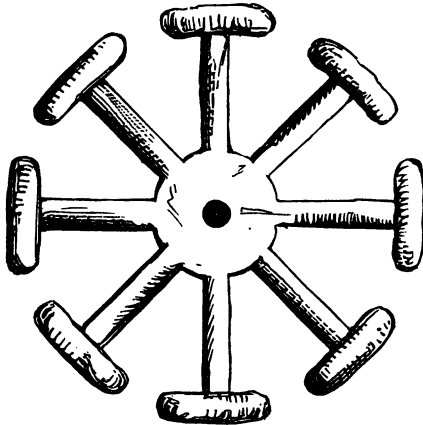


FIG. 30. DETAIL OF LOTUS SEEDS.

The stalk on which the bud and half opened lily are placed must be made on very thick wire. The bud must be cut exactly like the flower, only three sizes smaller, and a bit of stalk passed through its centre. Then the sheath or calyx of the bud must be passed up and stitched in the manner we have often described, with the cotton wound tightly round beneath, to form the bulb of the bud. The half opened flower, which must also be of double leather, is formed in much the same way; the three seed circles must be just passed on to the wired stalk, which must have a knot at the top to prevent their falling off; then the cup-like form of the flower must be passed up, and finally the sheath of the flower. The whole must then be secured as described for the bud by the needle and thread, and the end of the stalk of both bud and flower must be pushed into a hole in the wood, made previously for them beneath the leaf of the fully blown flower; they must then be liberally supplied with

glue in all directions. The centre of the leaves lying on the fern should touch the centre stalk of the fern, and a few brads should be inserted in the cup of the flower, in parts where they would not be seen. In the heart of the bud too a brad should be inserted, to prevent its dropping out of place from its own weight. All three leaves would be the better for being secured at their stalks, and under the leaves of the flowers, by a few brads judiciously placed. The points of the foliage leaves should not turn up at all, but, on the contrary, the leaves should be rather raised in the centre, and the edges curved under.

This is not a troublesome or difficult design to work out, although it will will be found to be very effective, whether treated as carved oak for a hall, or as ebonized and gilded for a drawing room bracket.





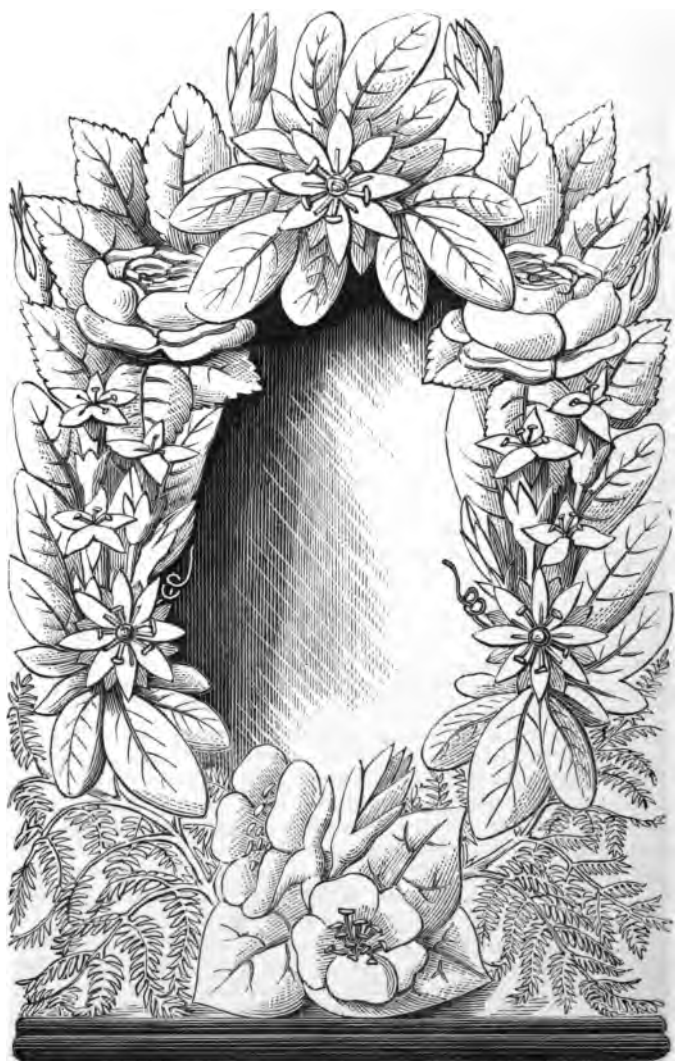


FIG. 31. PIER GLASS.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PIER GLASS.

THE design which accompanies this chapter gives a florid pattern for an antique chimney glass, which would have a very good effect if worked out as a carved ebony frame, and partially gilded as we explained in our last chapter. We have introduced the ferns and water lilies as the base of the frame, thinking that persons who had worked out the bracket in ebony and gilding, for a drawing room, might, very possibly, like to do the chimney glass to match. This design would look equally well in dark oak, but if for a drawing room, it would even then be better partially gilded, as it is so massive; besides, the passion flower, which occurs oftener than any other flower in this group, is very much improved by being in some parts gilded.

The frame is intended for an oval, 5ft. by 3ft. 9in., outside measure, but when we say an oval it must be understood that the oval must widen and flatten at the base, so that the ferns may be firmly placed. The foliage at all parts overlaps the edge of the frame, but as it should not do so by more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  in., the foundation should take somewhat the form which the frame presents, and should have a straight line at the base, terminating in a plinth of 2in., which plinth, to have a good effect, should be wholly gilded. The framework should be quite 3in. wide at the top and sides, and should be at the least 2in. thick; not only to bear the weight of the plate glass, but to give the effect of solidity which so massive a piece of carving would present if worked out in real oak or ebony. Should it be wished to utilise an old chimney-glass frame of the square shape, the design might still, to a certain extent, be carried out upon it; only it would, in such a case, be necessary, after laying on the roses, to place a group of other flowers such as campanulas, as the bell-like shaped flowers are always best placed at the sides of a frame; but a group of anemones, with foliage and buds, and a few sprays of lilies of the valley with their long leaves, would soon bring the design to the corner, where the campanulas might be placed; after the passion flowers, the roses might be repeated, if the sides of the glass required it, and then the anemones might be repeated and worked round to the fern and water lilies for the base. Should the foundation have to be ordered of a carpenter, we should advise the proportions we have

given, as being more antique. The first thing to be done is to mask the thickness of the frame with a piece of worm pattern border, cut large, that is, the whole width of the thickness of the wood. This must be soaked in the hot salt water, dried, and laid on with plenty of glue, and brads, at intervals where the strips of leather join; for, of course, in so large a frame it would be impossible to cut the whole of the outside border in one length.

We have given the foliage of the passion flower working size (Fig. 32), and the blossoms can be readily made from the design and the printed directions. It will be necessary to trace and cut out six leaves from the pattern given, and three a size larger. These three larger leaves are for the leaf at the apex of the frame, and for the two highest leaves at the side of the frame. Before, however, placing anything, it will be well with pencil to sketch out the whole group on the wood of the frame, so as to get everything evenly placed, and to bore with the gimlet the holes through which the wires of the stalks of the flowers are to be passed.

Having done this, and cut the foliage of the passion flower, it will be well to attack the flower itself, which is a rather complicated affair. A star of eight leaves, about the size of the circumference of the largest cabbage rose, should be cut, then another exactly like it; these must be soaked and veined, not, however, as foliage leaves are veined; one line must be drawn up the centre of each leaf, that is all. When this is done, set them aside and cut the centre. We do not mean the cross-like form, which is so apparent in the flower, but the circular piece next the leaves. This must be made thus:—Cut a circle the size of a half-crown piece, place a dot in the centre of it, cut cross-way lines down to the dot, but not across it; then cut lines between these, from the outer edge to within a little of the dot in the centre, and again, between each of these, till there appears a circle of narrow strips of leather; then point each of these little strips into a mitre shape at the end, soak the form thus produced, and dry it, and lay it aside, for no part of the flower can be placed until the cross-like centre is formed. Cut this the size of the circle just described, with the five little branches terminating in the hammer-shaped seeds seen in the design; after having soaked it in the hot water, take one of the long flat-headed nails we have previously recommended and place the inner circle of the part just described upon the head of the nail, then with a needle and strong thread make it firm to the nail. This is done by whipping round the centre, and covering the head of the nail (as one should cover a button with cloth) with the leather. Wind the cotton several times round it, and the centre will then form a small knob, from which the five little branches, with their hammer-like terminations, must stand stiffly out; as the leather hardens they may easily be made to do this. Some persons wire them underneath, but we do not think this necessary.

Now, having cut, veined, and placed the foliage of the group at the apex, the flower may be laid on thus: The first star must be placed (as seen in the design) in the very centre of the frame, the points of the leaves should touch the foliage, after which the second star must be laid on, care being taken to place it so that the leaves fall evenly *between* the leaves of the star beneath; then place the small circle of strips upon this and over

it, in the very centre where the dot was made, drive the nail through the heart of the flower into the wooden foundation beneath. The nail must not, however, be driven quite home to the leather, as this cross-like centre of the passion flower is always a little raised; the nail must, therefore,



FIG. 32.

be left a trifle less than a  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. above the flower. Glue must be freely put on all parts, and the nail may have a little hot glue put on it before driving it into the frame. With the passion flower and with roses no hole for wire will be needed, as nails driven through the heart of each flower,



well into the wooden foundation, is a more successful way of securing them to the surface. The two buds of the passion flower should have been placed with the foliage and before the flower. For these cut a single star-like circle, about three sizes smaller, pass a wired stalk through a hole in the centre, pinch up the leaves, tack them here and there with the needle, leaving a few of the points to escape as if bursting open, pass upon the stalk the sheath of small leaves in which the bud is enclosed, stitch it on, wind the cotton round and round below it to form the bulb; then pass the wired stalk with plenty of glue into its hole through to the back of the foundation, where it must be hammered down to make it firm. Then drive a nail among the leaves of the bud higher up than the bulb to keep all firm. This rule of making and fixing should serve for all flower buds; the slight differences of form being of course observed in the cutting of them from the leather and in moulding them into shape.

For the formation of the rose we refer to former chapters in which this has been fully described. We would only observe that in this design both roses and foliage must be cut as large as the very largest sized rose, as the design is intended to cover so large an object as a chimney glass.

So with the campanulas; the group is intended for one of the giant campanulas, almost the size of the roses. These flowers should be formed on the same principle as the lilies of the valley described in Chapter IX. A long piece, about lin. deep and 1½ in. wide, must be cut, with five points along the edge, and a facsimile of this must be cut in a bit of glove leather, for, unless very thin basil tan can be procured, the double leather will be too thick for a campanula, although it does very well for such flowers as the water lily. The campanula must be made of double leather, as the five points which turn down would present a rough surface if the double leather were not used. The piece of basil tan leather and the glove leather must be neatly sewn together along the edges, then the bell must be joined up the back; the tightened form of the bell, just beneath where the five points fall over, can be easily obtained by taking the stitches of the seam a little inwards at that part. Of course, all this work with the needle and thread should be done after the leather has been soaked in the hot salt water, as in its natural state it would be too hard to stitch through with the delicate needle which is required to prevent the stitches from showing. In cutting the leather for the stalk, the top part of it must be divided into three small strips of lin. long, with a little bud at the top (as seen in the design); then, when the ball of the flower is passed on to the stalk, these little strips should be left rather higher than the flower, and allowed to fall naturally forward downwards upon the cup of the flower. A little putty put into the lower part of the bell of the flower, and rammed tightly down with the finger, will cause it to preserve its rounded shape, and will harden with the leather and give the whole solidity. The sheath is cut in the shape of a small circle, with alternate long and short points, and must be passed up the stalk, well secured with the needle and thread, and a great deal of glue, pinched here and there into natural forms, and then the flower must be placed by passing the wired stalk through its hole and securing it at the back of the frame by hammering it down; then a braid should be

driven through the inside of the cup, on the side which lies on the frame, so as to secure the flower; and the stalk may be a little raised, standing out from the leaves beneath. This is often seen in old carving, and has a very pretty effect. As the campanula flowers all lie on the foliage, it will be well to cut the long leaves, soak, vein, and place them before laying on the flowers.

We think it a good plan in working out these florid and complicated designs, where leaves overlies one another, to lay on all the foliage of the whole design before placing the flowers. For the ferns and water lilies at the base ample instructions were given in our last chapter. We need not, therefore, go again into that. We will merely now recapitulate the order in which we think the various groups of this design had better be worked out. First the border pattern, then the passion-flower foliage and buds, the rose leaves and buds, the long campanula leaves with the passion-flower foliage and small bud and tendril at the side. This tendril should be formed by covering a piece of narrow wire with leather, soaked, and then stitched on, and by twisting it into the shape seen; both ends of the wire must then be carried through the wood of the frame, one end beneath where the bud is placed, the other lower down when the flower will cover it. Having done this on both sides of the frame, it will be well to place the sprays of fern. These must be cut from a natural fern, and may be as large or as small as the frame may require. The different sprays must all be well secured, not with glue only, but with plenty of brads driven into the centre stalks at every point where it seems necessary. The three large lotus leaves and the bud must then be placed, and, finally, the flowers, beginning with the passion flower in the centre, and then working downwards to the water lilies at the base.

When our readers have once worked out a design of this elaborate nature, they will require no further instructions in this interesting art. We would only, as a last remark, caution the enthusiastic leather worker not to fall into the error of too great realism in his designs. The plastic nature of the leather, which, when soaked, is so obedient in the hands of the artist, is apt to betray the worker into a too great elaboration, with a view to natural effect; but this is, in our eyes, a mistake. In decorative art, such as carving and moulding, strongly pronounced realism is in bad taste, and makes the absence of the natural colour of the object represented too apparent. Instead of reproducing a group of natural flowers as he sees them, the leather worker's aim should be to imitate a wood carver's rendering of such a group. Above all things he must guard against working too much in "alto relief," for although we do see occasionally in old carvings a bit of very elaborate work, where the foliage seems to be carved almost out of the substance of the wood in every part, that sort of work is rare, and the leather worker would do better to imitate more ordinary work, which would less challenge comparison.

As a rule, each leaf should have about a third of its surface flat, as if on the frame; leaves may be made to overlap each other, and (when the designer is careful that this is done in such a way as not to interfere with the outline) this has a very rich and graceful effect. In a general way, the

leaves which overlie one another should be of different foliage which afford strong contrasts. If the leaves are of the same foliage, care must be taken that they overlie in such a manner that the eye can carry on the idea of the form of the leaf beneath, as in this design, where the point of one leaf of the passion flower lies over the side of the other.

All these things, however, are best learned by a careful and, we may say, reverential, study of the old masters in the graceful and interesting art of wood carving. This, and the habit of endeavouring to reproduce these *chef d'œuvres* in the more plastic material we have been discussing in these pages, will soon enable anyone to design for himself.

In leather work, as in all other art, "practice makes perfect."

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