

Useful Receipts.

IMITATION CARVED IVORY.—A correspondent in the *English Mechanic* says—"Ornaments for the parlour," &c., may possibly find interesting and profitable amusement in the construction of articles in imitation carved ivory. I will endeavour to explain the *modus operandi*. In the first place we must have something to ornament—a work box, card case, a tea-caddy, or what-not. If the article is of mahogany, rosewood, or walnut, polished, we can only lay our "carvings" on it without disturbing the polish; but if common wood, or without polish, it must be coloured white, or ebonized. If, for instance, then, our work box is not made of white wood, we must take $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of isinglass, and boil it gently in half-pint of water till dissolved; then strain and add flake-white, finely powdered, till it is as thick as cream. Give the box three or four coats of this solution, letting each dry before the other is laid on; then smooth it with a bit of damp rag. When the composition is dry, we can put on imitation ivory figures, which are to be made as follows:—Boil $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of best rice in one quart of water, till the grains are soft enough to bruise into a paste; when cold mix it with starch powder till it becomes as stiff as dough; roll it out about as thick as a shilling. Cut it into pieces about two inches square, and let it dry before a moderate fire. When required for use, get a coarse cloth, make it thoroughly wet, then squeeze out the water, and put on a large dish four times double; place the rice cakes in rows between this cloth, and when sufficiently soft to knead into the consistence of new bread, make it into a small lump; if too wet, mix with it more starch-powder, but it must be sufficiently kneaded to lose all appearance of this powder before you take the cast. The moulds are gutta-percha, about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick; cut it into pieces of 2 in. square, and soften it in hot water; then obtain, if possible, some specimen of real carved ivory or other suitable work, cameo-heads, &c., and take off the impression on pieces of gutta-percha, by pressing it carefully upon the carving till a deep impression is taken. When the moulds are quite dry and hard, and paste in a proper state, with a small camel-hair brush touch lightly with oil the inside of the moulds, and then press the rice paste into them. If the impression is quite correct on removing it, take a thin, sharp, small knife, and cut the paste smoothly, just so as to leave all the impression perfect; then, with a sharp-pointed pen-knife, turn all the rough edges, and with a solution of isinglass and acetic acid, or liquid glue, place the figures on the box in large or small pieces, just as your own taste directs. The figures adhere better if put on before they are quite dry. Sometimes, from frequent kneading, the paste gets discoloured; these pieces should be set aside and used separately, as they can be painted in water-colours to imitate tortoise-shell or carved oak; this should be done after being stuck to the box. Having completed the work, finish by varnishing it very carefully with ivory varnish, which should be almost colourless; paper varnish or the best "white hard" will answer very well. This design so nearly resembles carved ivory, that it has been mistaken for it when nicely done; and it is very strong if carefully cemented, and looks well for boxes, card-cases, &c., either as ivory or tortoise-shell. Instead of oiling the mould a pleasing effect can be produced by using powdered French chalk (steatite) or black-lead, as the lubricating medium between the paste and the gutta-percha. The objects when cast may be readily dyed with liquid colours, such as the aniline dyes. The "carvings" must be thoroughly dried before the varnish is laid on, so the work must be put away in some place free from dust, till it can be completed.—*Quinton*.

TO FIX DRAWINGS.—The first methods for fixing works of art executed in chalks, charcoal, and other substances in danger of destruction from the slightest touch, date from very far back, and in some cases are perfectly successful. Sometimes the drawing is rapidly dipped into a bath of some glutinous liquid, and sometimes the liquid itself is applied with a brush. This, however, cannot be done with chalk or charcoal drawings. A very thin and transparent sheet of bibulous paper is laid on the drawing, and the brush is then passed over the protecting sheet; the glutinous liquid penetrates to the drawing, and the wished-for effect is produced. In the case of chalk drawings (pastels), however, this process has the inconvenience that certain tints, on being wetted, change their tone, and do not return to their former state on drying. This circumstance led to some experiments with a view to find a better fixing fluid, and after many trials it was found that the silicates of potash and soda answered very

well, but with the drawback that during the application the colours were likely to be disturbed so as to give the appearance of being "smudged." At length, however, this was obviated by a very simple plan, merely executing the pastel upon a thick but unsized paper, such as is used in copper-plate printing, and afterwards applying the fixing liquid to the back; it is thus quickly absorbed, without causing any disturbance of colours on the other side. To this must be added that none but mineral colours should be used, these being the only ones that can combine with the silicates, which have no action on vegetable colours. These rules being observed, the picture will not only resist damp, but will even resist washing with water. Acid vapours have no effect upon it, and it will become almost incombustible. For pencil drawings a thin solution of isinglass answers the purpose. It should be allowed to run over the drawing, or be very carefully applied with a soft camel's hair pencil. For chalk drawings make a thin solution of size, put it into a flat dish, pass the drawing from one side to the other under the liquid, taking care that the liquid comes in contact with every part of it. The friction of camel's hair pencil would injure the drawing. When it is completely wetted, fasten it to the edge of the table or to a string, by means of two or three pins, until dry. Crayon or charcoal drawings should be spoiled by this process, and for fixing them the paper should be washed over with a solution of size in the first instance. When quite dry the surface is in a good state for making the drawing, after which it should be inverted and held horizontally over steam. The steam melts size, which absorbs the charcoal or crayon, and when it has again become dry the drawing is fixed. This process may be repeated several times during the progress of a drawing, the effect being increased each time.

IMITATION IVORY CARVINGS.—"*Quinton*," whose account of this process we have already quoted, further says:—"The quantity of starch powder varies with the quality of the rice paste, but certainly half a pound ought to be sufficient for half a pound of rice. Boil the latter thoroughly, by which time the quart of water will be considerably reduced, but if the paste is too thin it will be a guide to boil longer till the water is still further reduced. A little boiled sago may be added when the paste is found to be too thin. Like everything else, the art requires practice before you become proficient in it. Isinglass size may also be used, and many other things which I did not think it necessary to mention in these columns. As to ebonizing wood the receipt has been given before; but here is a method that I use with success. Take a pint of water that has been boiled; put in a handful of logwood chips, and simmer till you have a strong decoction—about a quarter of a pint. Apply this liquor hot to the wood to be stained, about two or three times according to the nature of the wood, letting each coat dry thoroughly. Add about half a pint of boiled water to the remainder of the solution, and place in it some rusty nails or some sulphate of iron, and a couple of bruised nut-galls; boil, and apply two or three coats hot. This solution should be black, so the right quantities are easily ascertained. The stains should be prepared in a glazed pipkin, and be applied with a sponge or clean brush; but each coat of both liquids must be thoroughly dry before putting on another, going over the work also with a very fine glass-paper. When the stain has become dry, get some French polish and add sufficient thumb-blue (any oilshop) to slightly colour the polish; apply in the usual manner, doing the work in a dry and warm room. This method produces an appearance equal to that of ebony. Beware of grease."

IMITATING ROSEWOOD.—1. A transparent liquid rosepink, used in imitating rosewood, consists in mixing $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. potash in 1 gallon hot water, and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. red sanders wood is added thereto; when the colour of the wood is extracted, $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. gum shellac are added and dissolved over a quick fire. The mixture is then ready to be used on a groundwork made with logwood stain.—2. Boil $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. logwood in 3 pints water till it is of a very dark red, and add $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. salts of tartar. While boiling hot, stain the wood with two or three coats, taking care that it is nearly dry between each; then with a stiff flat brush, such as is used by painters for graining, form streaks with black stain. This imitation will very nearly equal the appearance of dark rosewood.—3. Stain with black stain, and when dry, with a brush as above dipped in the brightening liquid, form red veins in imitation of the grain of rosewood. A handy brush for the purpose may be made out of a flat brush, such as is used for varnishing; cut the sharp points off, and make the edges irregular by cutting out a few hairs here and there, and you will have a tool which will actually imitate the grain.