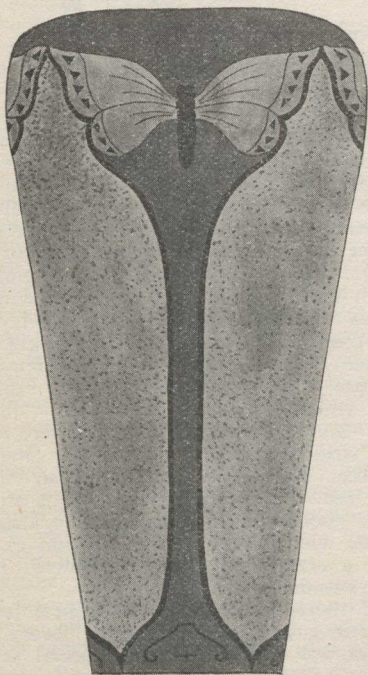


nishings we may follow the round of the season always with something new yet equally harmonious—gay crocuses, yellow daffodils, the many-tinted nasturtiums, orange lilies, roses, yellow and red, gladioli, marigolds, goldenglow, sunflowers—until winter comes, and we coax the daffodils to bloom indoors, to replace them later with pretty red geraniums or some of the many varieties of ferns. And so, if we are fortunate enough to possess a garden, we find something for each of our rooms what-



DESIGN FOR JARDINIERE

ever its color scheme may be that looks as though it might have grown just to be placed there. Among the costly bric-a-brac that is offered in the shops few things will give greater pleasure than an old ugly gray stone mustard jar filled with graceful branches of purple lilac. To be sure they are not so lasting as a piece of pottery or brass (perhaps that is part of their charm), but when they are gone the irises will be here, and then the white roses and the August lilies, each one seeming with its first coming more beautiful than the last.

When all has been said on the subject of ornament we come back to the old familiar rule—each piece must be more beautiful than the space it occupies, or there is no excuse for its presence. Furnishings that are a necessity we can only make as beautiful as we may, but ornament that fails to meet the test has no reason for existence at all.

### Concerning Pyrography

OF the various arts that are used in the decoration of a home pyrography is perhaps the oldest. Some of the earliest attempts at expression in the form of a picture or design were

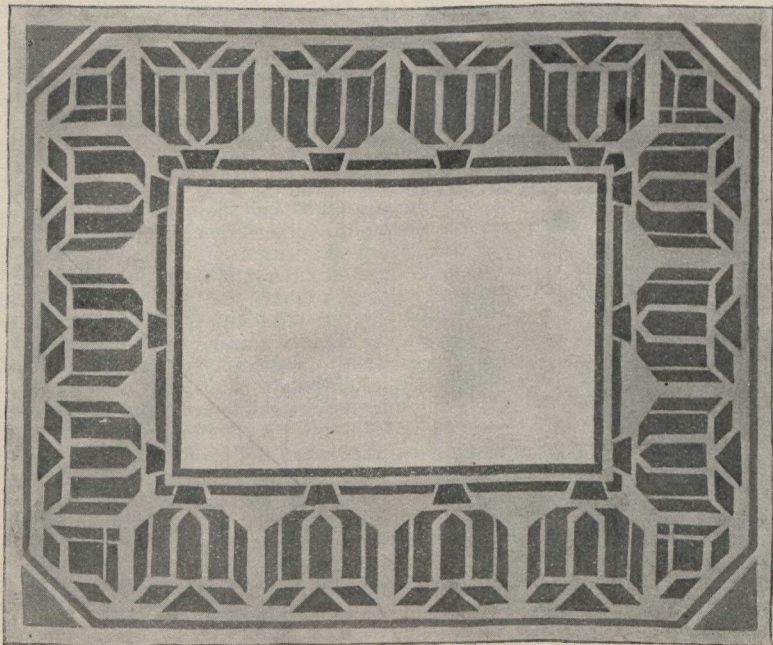
made with some sort of red-hot tool upon wood. Nations that had made but little progress in civilization produced wooden articles decorated with quaint arrangements of lines and dots burnt upon the surface, while familiar objects are outlined in the same way, sometimes traced so delicately that some very fine

tool must have been used. Some of these old specimens of burnt work may be seen in the museums and are exceedingly interesting, the very simplicity of the design frequently giving a most pleasing effect. It is said that the first outline drawing was made when a man, charmed by the shadow of the woman that he loved as it fell upon the wall, caught up a charred coal from among the embers and traced its outline. It is probable that burnt work may have had some similar origin; some idler dreaming by his camp fire attempted perhaps to trace his thought on a nearby piece of wood with the hot end of his poker, or perhaps only to trace the strange pattern made by the shadow of the dancing flames.

This first tool would do its work but awkwardly, and yet the result might have more artistic value than much of the pyrography that is done to-day with our greatly improved point and facilities for heating it. Skill in the handling of a point is so easily acquired that a knowledge of the technical part of the work is often considered sufficient, and poor, and inefficient work is the result. It is to this that the varying popularity of pyrography is due, and after a surfeit of department store designs applied without artistic feeling or consideration of appropriateness we are inclined to turn in dislike from it all. Yet it has all the possibilities of any work in black and white, and the warm rich brown of the burnt wood gives a most attractive color. But the work must be done with the same careful study of effects, of light and shadow of the varying tones of color, of harmony of lines and appropriateness of design that would be given to work with the brush or crayon. The fact that the article to be decorated is usually of wood or of leather and seems to demand a choice of subject more bold and decided than we might use in decorating china or designing some exquisite bit of embroidery, should not prove hampering, but rather lend individuality to the work.

Basswood is most commonly used for this work, and most of the pieces that are shown in the shops for burning are made from it, though some which are imported from Germany are holly, which on account of the shortness of its grain is better for burning. If one is near a reliable cabinet-maker, however, it is better to have the pieces that one desires made up by him. The workmanship will be better than in the ready-mades, and one may exercise their individual taste in the choice of shape and wood. Basswood, butternut and pine are soft woods, and burn most easily, but where a design is to be finely executed and not too deeply burned such hardwoods as oak, maple and elm may be used. Of the three mentioned, elm will give the blackest line under the pencil. There is no wood that will give more beautiful results than teak, though it is, of course, expensive.

The illustrations offer some suggestions in design for the amateur burnt wood worker. It is wiser to attempt only the smaller pieces, unless one has perfect confidence in their own good



DESIGN FOR TRAY IN BURNT WOOD

taste and skill. A piece of furniture such as a chair or table, may not be lightly discarded when we become tired of it, and this we will be sure to do unless the design is extremely simple, conforming to the lines of the furniture itself, and having sufficient decorative value to give it added interest and beauty.

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