

shocking example of crewel-work, where ears of wheat, corncockles, and some nameless pink flowers all grew out of a woody stalk, on which was perched an impossible bird.

Flowers copied exactly from nature demand to be represented only in natural positions, and this usually being out of the question, the sense of probability is only restored by adapting them to their conventional situation.

A whole plant can be used thus, either by giving a suggestion of the trunk and root, or by making it rise out of a vase, flatly treated, with hardly any shading, and such devices are peculiarly suited to friezes and panels.

Birds and animals, natural or mythical, frequently occur in ornament, generally in connection with foliage; but are less satisfactory than flowers, as lacking some of that repose which our instincts seek in decoration as opposed to pictures. They require conventionalising more sternly and using more sparingly; wherefore the purely mythical, such as dragons, are the easiest to deal with, and can, with a little imagination, be developed from the lines of scrolls, as in classic and renaissance sculpture.

The ordinary amateur will do well to leave the human figure entirely out of her compositions, for although its presentment forms the highest expression of Art, a considerable knowledge of anatomy is necessary for its simplest treatment successfully, and for similar reasons, real animals are more difficult to manage than those whose proportions may be safely left to the imagination of their artistic creator.

Landscape also is seldom satisfactory in amateur hands, and although within late years a fashion has arisen of decorating doors and panels in this manner, the painting often ends in being too pictorial for a decorative design and too conventional for a picture. Still birds, trees and flowers can sometimes be combined in a strictly conventional landscape with good results, as in Japanese and Chinese work. The Art of these two nations is too full of emblematical meanings to be easily imitated, but a study of their designs will teach the truthful rendering of all objects by the fewest possible lines, almost without any aid from perspective or shading.

Heraldry is so rich in suggestion, that it is rather strange how seldom its resources are drawn upon. Repeats of a coat of arms, shield or crest, brought together by a background of surrounding lines, will make an extremely pretty "all over" pattern. Mottoes should not be frequently repeated, or they become wearisome, especially on an object in constant use.

Heraldic drawing and colouring must be very carefully copied, for as all these details are essentially symbolical, the slightest inaccuracy may change their significance. Should the proper tints appear too garish for the decorative scheme, it would be best carried out in monochrome.

The historic style to which such details seem most suitable is that pseudo-classic known as the "Adam."

For the plan of a square table-mat in blue on white linen I once took that of an "Adam" ceiling, which consisted chiefly of an octagon centre, and, close against the border on each side, two semi-elliptical panels, and founded their decoration on the crest of

the house—a lion holding an olive branch. The whole crest was placed in the centre, two lions faced each other in each corner, and between them grew a conventionalised olive-tree whose symmetrical curves filled the space between the centre and the panels, and from which was suspended midway between corner and centre a shield bearing the family initial. The panels were subdivided and decorated with small olive sprays; while their borders and those of the octagon and the whole mat were variously derived from the leaves and berries.

In simpler patterns small shields and panels, bearing initials or monograms, can be gracefully connected by what is known as the "strap-work" of Elizabethan carving. Or we may make our work symbolical by the use of primitive shapes which are traditionally regarded as emblems; a heart signifying love; a horseshoe, good-luck, for instance; while some initials and Christian names can be typified on small shields in a punning fashion; such as a bumble-bee standing for B, or the name Beatrice, of which Bee is an abbreviation; a daisy for Margaret, a crescent for C. or for Diana for examples.

The innumerable Christian emblems should be only introduced into Gothic or Byzantine ornament; and are anomalous in any work inspired by the pagan feeling of the Renaissance.

Even if possible within the limits of this paper it would not be particularly useful to attempt an analysis of historical style.

A fairly creative mind will soon form its own style, or will select that with which it is most in sympathy.

But it is important that the style chosen shall suit the decorated object, and can be fully rendered by the materials at command; and the designer should have a clear idea whether flat or raised ornament is best fitted for her purpose. To the former grace of line, harmony of colour, and contrast of pattern with background are essential; but for the latter the value of shadows and gradations of tone are of first importance, lines giving way to masses, and colour to light and shade. One obvious rule in this connection is, that no object whose use demands flatness should appear to be ornamented in relief.

Because our knowledge of ancient art is chiefly derived from architectural masterpieces, it does not therefore follow that we can legitimately transfer an acanthus scroll from a Greek temple to a modern mat, and translate the shadows of the original carving by heavy masses of dark colour; for the inequalities of surface adding beauty to a stone frieze would be absolutely dangerous on a floor, if real, and suggest discomfort if only an inartistic sham.

Most of girls' artistic crafts demand flat designs, as for example, embroidery, lace, painting, stencilling, pyrography and some leather work; while others, such as modelling in clay or metals, and wood-carving, are necessarily in relief.

But even in these materials the relief is often better kept quite low, and thus the impartial critic sometimes bestows warmer admiration on so-called chip-carving, than the more elaborate wood-carving in high relief.

In some embroidery raised details are

allowable, but it should here be born in mind that the slight relief will supply its own shading, therefore the colours used need no gradation of tone.

A closely-decorated background will frequently supply contrast without destroying flatness, or may pleasantly bring together a thin straggling pattern. It should generally be in lower or more neutral tints than the pattern, and its details less conspicuous. For instance a bright-coloured flowing design of peonies, on an old-gold ground had the latter covered with a network of light-brown. But the busy background is too often overdone, and the decorative value of plain surfaces underrated.

The great natural gift of an eye for colour can be little assisted by written rules; still, as the fewer the tints the easier is it to get a good effect, first essays should be made only in two shades; a dark with a light, or a bright with a neutral. Afterwards three can be tried, a light, a dark, and a neutral; and when more are used they should generally include a shade each of red, yellow and blue, although one may be little more than a suggestion. On a white background, the imposed colours should be fairly rich, or if a very light tint be included, it should be cut off from the ground by a darker outline. On black the contrary applies, but in a many-coloured design, the ground is best of a neutral shade, lighter than the darkest, and darker than the lightest tones in the pattern.

The method of putting the design on to the actual material to be decorated, differs with every kind of work, and must form part of the technical instruction.

For flat surfaces the drawing should be traced on transparent paper as before described, this pinned on to the material, between the two being laid a sheet of carbonised cloth with the carbon side downwards, and every line carefully gone over with the pointer. For some work the marks thus made on the material may be sufficiently permanent, but for embroidery I prefer fixing them in water colour with a brush known as a Rimmer. A mahl-stick should be used during the transference, as if the hand rest on the tracing the carbon is apt to come off in spots where not wanted. For the same reason the drawing pins should not go through the cloth, as its shifting is of no consequence if the tracing and the material be firmly held on to the board.

Instead of the white cloth for dark materials a pouncing wheel is sometimes used as follows: all the lines are perforated by it before the tracing is pinned over the stuff, then the powdered chalk is rubbed through all the holes with a roll of flannel like a miniature bolster, the size of one's thumb. When the tracing is unpinned the pattern will appear on the material in a series of fine dots, which must be transformed into fixed lines by white paint.

With either method on a rough material, such as serge, the lines will show more clearly if the stuff be first smoothed over with an iron, which is not hot enough to change the colour, as heat will sometimes do.

When this stage has been reached, the success of the work depends no longer on the designer's but the worker's skill.

