

SETTING THE MAD TO CURE THE MAD.—At an asylum in Vienna (says the *Union Médicale* quoting from the *Danube*) a novel method of treatment has been adopted. The director has established a lithographed journal for circulation in the asylum, and he induces the patients to contribute to it. Especially he encourages them to refute the manias of their comrades. The man who believes his nose to be made of sugar candy and liable to dissolve, he says, can argue with excellent logic against the folly of his friend's theory that his beard is a tender plant and needs frequent watering. As a rule, they are able to discuss with good sense all subjects except those which concern their peculiar delusion.

STAINS FOR LEATHER.—The following processes are recommended by M. Reimann. For a blue color: Dissolve 10 grammes of aniline blue and five grammes of size or glue in 1,000 grammes of water. Brush the leather over well three times with this solution, allowing it to dry thoroughly between each operation. Finally polish with yoke of egg. For a lilac color: Dissolve 10 grammes of tannin in a litre of water, and brush the liquid well into the leather. Then, immediately afterwards, brush it over three times with a solution of 5, 10, or 20 grammes (according to the depth of color required) of violet methyl in a litre of water, wash over with pure water, and finally polish by rubbing vigorously with a preparation of 10 grammes of isinglass, and the same quantity of pure glycerine in 100 grammes of water.

PRESERVING THE EYE.—Surgery can justly boast of a new conquest. When an eye is severely wounded the healthy one is in danger of being impaired by "sympathy." To preserve the good eye, it was hitherto the practice to remove the injured one. Dr. Boucheron has discovered that by cutting the ciliary nerves the "sympathy" is stopped, and this dispenses with the necessity of removing the injured organ. Forty surgeons have thus operated successfully.

POLISHING HORN.—The surface must first be prepared by scraping with a steel scraper; the polish can then be effected by means of a buff wheel, in the lathe, dressed with powdered brick dust; to produce a fine gloss use another buff with dry whiting. Or the surface can be made smooth by scraping with a piece of glass, and then rubbing with sand paper, finally polishing with rotten stone on a piece of old cloth.

POLISH FOR WALNUT WOOD.—Mix with two parts of good alcoholic shellac varnish, one part of boiled linseed oil, shake well, and apply with a pad formed of woolen cloth. Rub the furniture briskly with a little of the mixture until the polish appears.

CARVING FRET WORK.

BY THOMAS STOPHER.

Fret work, however simple, is capable, with proper treatment and proper tools, of receiving much improvement. The most elaborate and well attached patterns are susceptible of receiving some of the most beautiful and life-like touches of the carver's art, especially in the case of bas-reliefs in hard wood. A few remarks from my own experience, and from the love of wood carving I have always had, may throw a little more light and information upon the art. Many persons have not the slightest knowledge of how the work is performed, believing, as I have often been told, that it is all done with some kind of knives. They call fret work carving; in fact, almost any kind of scroll work, curved mouldings, moulded panel work, composition castings, *papier maché*, etc., passes with most people for carving. Some years ago a Burnt Wood Carving Company set up and succeeded in a method of using iron moulds, heated sufficiently to burn away the wood to certain shapes, by this means reproducing a great variety of good examples of wood carving. The work required a little cleaning up, and great quantities were floated off in cabinets, mantel-pieces, etc., as genuine carving. The deception soon became exposed, and I believe the company burnt their fingers and collapsed.

A gentleman lecturing a short time ago upon Art Furniture, observed that "the country was literally flooded with tons of rubbish, a libel upon the very name of carved furniture. Perhaps allowance ought to be made for a lack of knowledge in this respect. We have just passed a period of very excellently constructed furniture. We cannot blame the manufacturer or the purchaser so very much, for the very reason of its cheapness. To see rooms grandly furnished at half the cost of good work, and yet have all the appearance of genuine, is a tempting and powerful inducement to purchase, but there is very little doubt the time will come when this false economy will betray its own worthlessness." Imitation of old work, especially carving, has

been and is carried on to almost a faultless pitch, and as an extensive desire exists to possess real old work a few practical rules will assist to guide the purchaser. If the hand is carefully passed over old work no unpleasant or sharp edges can be felt, but if the work is imitation, staining must be resorted to to match the color, the edges, with their recent sharp cut of the tool, can be easily detected, for all the most careful sand-papery cannot entirely remove them. Burnt wood carving and composition have no edges at all, and there is a most entire absence of undercutting. There is no reason why old material should not be judiciously made up, guarding against blending together the extremes of different styles of framing, moulding and ornament. The success of the undertaking depends entirely upon the knowledge possessed by the manufacturer of different styles. The purchaser ought also to make this latter a question of study. We are sometimes at fault with regard to the age of buildings, furniture, etc., owing to tastes for styles of work receding, just as we now occasionally see highly ornamented buildings designed and carved out by architects in fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century work. Fashion has played a considerable part in the development of a love for wood carving, and scarcely any house of well-to-do persons would be considered furnished without its little bits of Swiss or German carving, and very often these are quite the lions of the drawing-room, and visitors are most profoundly informed they were purchased by their informant himself on a Continental tour, with the additional stereotyped information, as I have often heard, that all this kind of work is performed by shepherds and boys and girls, during the long winter evenings, with pocket knives. I should like to see some of their charming little chamois executed by this means.

Carvers are divided into various classes in the trade, and are recognized as ship carvers, chair carvers, cabinet carvers, architectural carvers, carvers and gilders, and stone carvers. Carvers and gilders may be said to be almost a misnomer, as most of the gilders of the present time know little or nothing of carving, nor is it necessary for them, as nearly the whole branch of their ornamental art consists of prepared composition; by this means the costly and elaborately carved picture-frames of half a century ago are superseded. I am afraid this once busy and beautiful branch of the carver's trade can never return; the present excellent designs and construction carry with them the great Herculean lever of this age—cheapness. An impression exists in the eastern counties that most of our old wood carvings in our churches, old timbered houses, furniture, etc., was imported from Belgium. It is probable the carvers themselves migrated here from that country and practised the art, and no doubt a good staff of native carvers soon began to ply the calling, and local influences to have their effect upon the nature of their productions. The introduction of specimens of foliage peculiar to the neighborhood is a well-known fact, and sea weed and common forms in carvings in our churches along the coast are especially to be noticed, whilst inland the foliage of forest trees was introduced. Carvers, as a rule, stick to the effect of training. I think I may assume the rule has always held good, and that we very early possessed a great deal of carved ornament purely English, and executed by English carvers. The repetition of certain kinds of ornament all over the kingdom leads me to imagine carvers traveled from place to place to execute the work required to be done, as they do now, and after the manner of masons, who have been distinctly traced from building to building by their trade marks. We find all our tools of the present time exactly fitting the old ornaments of bygone times.

I will now endeavor to give some account of the difficulties the accomplished wood carver has to surmount. Like all other artistic pursuits the art must be practised with method. The experience that has been brought to bear upon it to bring it to its present state of perfection has been handed down from time immemorial. It takes a carver's lifetime to become acquainted with all the trickery adopted by the trade, and to attain a knowledge of all the various styles of ornament is simply impossible during the life time of a carver. Men become acquainted with a certain style, become attached to it; the result is comparative perfection, probably, in that style, with a very limited or imperfect knowledge of any other, and so the carver ends his days. Grecian, Composite, Italian, Renaissance, French, Jacobean, Rococo, Gothic, Elizabethan, Queen Anne, and Victorian, comprehend no small field of study. Some men delight in the slow tedious execution of miniature works; others in the bolder flights of sculptured figures—historical, scriptural, poetical, or otherwise; others in the graceful flow of foliage, animals, birds, etc., combining probably portions of the whole range of the wood carver's art. A comparison between this, the highest walk of the artist wood carver, and the lowly efforts of the amateur fret work