

then sewn in and the boot is finished by a coquille (No 229) around the top and on the front of crochet, worked as follows :

Make a long chain, work 7 treble in one stitch, miss 2, 7 treble in next, the 7th drawn back to the 1st with one single, miss 2 and repeat. On the other side of the chain work the same, but the 1st 7 treble must be in the stitch in which the 2nd 7 treble is worked. On the edge of each row work 1 single, 3 chain, miss one all along. The boot is then finished with bows of ribbon. This little boot may also be worked as a shoe by omitting the 12 rows of double crochet.



SEASONABLE DECORATION.

AT this time of the year our thoughts naturally turn to those seasonable decorations which each winter become more artistic and consequently more successful.

The means and modes of adornment come more liberally to hand, and those who remember how crude were the church decorations in rural districts some twenty years ago cannot fail to recognize the value of the movement in favor of the culture of the beautiful, which the lamented Prince Consort initiated in 1851. It has borne rich fruits in our homes, in all the surroundings of our religious and our social life, and has greatly extended the sphere of usefulness of the educated classes.

The church decorations—except as regards the abundant use of natural blooms, which in loveliness cannot be surpassed—are far more permanent in their character than they used to be, and are far better carried out. For the young girls, into whose hands they mostly fall, bring to bear not only a cultivated taste and understanding, but their nimble fingers are well directed by artistic knowledge. Most of the texts are hand-painted, on the best materials that can be had; and the churches themselves, being in better condition, for most of them having gone through throes of restoration, it but rarely occurs that there are long areas of white walls to be covered as of yore, when quality was only too apt to yield to quantity.

Frosting is, perhaps, the most salient feature in both house and church decorations for the moment, when the ground glass powder or diamond dust are used. Much good work is also done with the new gold metal powder dust, which is very coarse grained, and intended to look rough, and to catch the light. It is applied with size, and the rougher the foundation the better, hence flock paper is preferable to wood, or to any kind of prepared cloth. It combines with diamond frosting, with most excellent effect. For example, the initial letter of a text would be in the gold powder, the rest in the crystal, or a gilt bordering to each of the crystal letters is good. The result is very different from the old flat gold.

We do not now confine the Christmas decoration of our houses to holly and mistletoe, but mistletoe plays a most considerable part still. The fashion is to make it up into balls like the floral balls, which has been introduced so successfully for weddings, and sometimes they have an outer fringe of berries in the centre, like the belt round the planet Saturn. These mistletoe balls are hung by either silver cord or ribbon, or bright red cord or ribbon, not only in the hall, but deftly poised in corners or over mantlepieces. For the old story repeats itself from century to century, and yet is ever fresh and young.

Scarlet berries still peep in among our decorations between the prickly points of the holly leaves, which are sprinkled with the white crystal powder, and intermixed as much as possible with the variegated and white holly. Any white everlasting leaves—rushes, reeds, thistles, and grass from the hedgerows—are set against a background of gilt or silvered wood, or by the sides of mirrors; only they must be artistically poised, and not used with a niggard hand. With these the holly blends, and hovering over them are tiny robins, or any English birds at hand, with an artificial nest, may be at the foot. Skeleton leaves are frequently used, and bunches of dried stick partially frosted over. With all these silver bells are blended, which clink joyously with every vibration of ribbon. Sometimes these are attached to silver cord and hung across mirrors, or between doors, so that "there is music wherever we go." We are not all attempting to set aside in these modern days any of the ancient notions as regards Christmas, but with the old we are grafting on some pleasant additional elements of beauty.

On dinner tables and in corners of rooms huge high-handled baskets are introduced, covered with plush and filled with flowers. Frosted rustic woodwork of all kinds, formed into flower receptacles of every conceivable shape, are to be scattered about our rooms and tables at Christmas; and holly, I can assure you, looks particularly fascinating covered with frosting powders, and springing from a well-shaped rustic tripod. An Irish potato pot, with mistletoe made in Barbotine and entwined round it, is a Christmas novelty which has much to commend it.

The rustic china centres, with men and maidens leaning over gates, and birds billing and cooing in the hollow of an old tree, can be set off to a greater advantage with any available greenery and flowers. The new white shells, with the curled leaf-like edges, are adapted to the low style of decoration, that is now the fashion. There never was a greater choice of beautiful forms in which to set lovely flowers. The cut glass in ormolu stands, the ladders with pendant baskets, the easels on which glass flower bells rest, and from which any trailing plants is indeed a delight to the eye, have rarely been equalled. Many new kinds of Venetian glass and Venetian shapes have recently been brought out. One excellent centrepiece is a large bulbous base of pure white glass, the tube-like mouth in the centre surrounded below with some six others. It is somewhat difficult to dress, but well done; it shows a few flowers and falling leaves to perfection.

Sprays of cactus, tulips, and other flowers in pure glass and in china, colored like the natural bloom, are most useful.

Happy are the people who can introduce among any of these decorations the electric light. It can be arranged in houses where it is not a part of the domestic economy, the storage being beneath the table. Gas is not admitted in rooms where artistic dinner tables, or the real comfort of the guests are studied. An over-hanging lamp aided by candles is the prettiest mode of lighting next to the electric light, and old silver candlesticks and pure white china are used in preference to any others. Happily we have banished uniformity from our dinner tables, with the old stiff meaningless fashions of years ago, and in its place we have adopted one decided scheme of color, which is a pleasure to the eye. The hostess has now every aid ready at hand in the way of well-shaped and finely-colored floral receptacles. Many decorators forego them all and set their flowers in a centre bank of moss. Any blooms, whether in or out of season, are to be procured for a consideration if home gardens and glass houses do not produce them. Yellow has been the favorite tone of the year, which has delighted the eye in those new crescent-shaped stands whence feathery blooms descend in a rain of flowers, and of late a deep, rich, old-fashioned pink has become to the fore, for the Cupid arches, Incroyable wreaths, victor crowns, and all the many arrows, garlands and other devices it has been the fashion to lay on the table-cloth.