

Literature.

"The world of books is still the world I write."—MRS. BROWNING.

Written for the LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

A New Book.

"My Lady's Dressing-Room, published by Cassell & Co., New York; Williamson, Toronto."

Here is one of the prettiest little books in the world. There is no excuse for any maid or matron being anything but dainty, sweet, graceful, loveable—if not actually pretty if she has this volume in her dressing-room. Here are valuable and tried recipes for every thing which mars the fair skin in any way. Here is wholesome advice as to the care of this body, the best preservation not only of health and strength, but of beauty and symmetry. The chapters on the face, the hair, the head, the foot are particularly useful and carefully prepared. The book is adapted from the French of Baronne Staffe by Harriet Ayer Hubbard, whose charming portrait adorns the front page. No woman can afford to be without this excellent work, nor will anyone who has it in her possession willingly let it out of her hands for even a short time. It should be handy continually for reference.

A WRITER SAYS:—"As one always has preconceived ideas of an author whose work has impressed him, I must confess to something of a shock when I opened the February number of *The Writer* and found myself confronted with a portrait of Miss Mary E. Hawker ('Lanoe Falconer'), the author of that short but powerful novelette 'Mlle. Ixe.' I had pictured to myself a middle-aged solid-looking woman-of-the-world—a sort of Mlle. Ixe herself; instead of which I saw a most fragile-looking young person with a quantity of crimped hair and eye-glasses. The crimps and the eye-glasses were all right; but the fragility of the young woman, together with a certain tremulousness about her autograph signature indicated that her strength lay in her mind rather than her body. A biographical sketch furnished by T. G. L. Hawker speaks of the 'constant ill-health' of Miss Hawker, in spite of which she has devoted her life to writing and study. Until the publication of 'Mlle. Ixe,' she was almost unknown. Up to that time, with the exception of an occasional magazine article, she could get none of her manuscripts accepted. Her last story, 'Cecilia de Noel,' is much more the sort of thing one would expect from the fragile creature with whom her biographer and photographer have made us acquainted."

Handiwork.

"The lily may grow, but man must fret and toil and spin."—DRUMMOND.

Any question of general interest regarding home decoration will be answered in this column. Any suggestions, contributions or letters from those interested in this department will be welcomed.—Ed.

Photograph Frame.

Fan-shaped stand, ornamented with plain plush and broche silk panels, crossed with rays of gold galon, in which to slip the photographs. Mixed cordeliere round the border, forming a knot of small loops at the peak, and a long one at the top to suspend it to the wall.

Occasional Table.

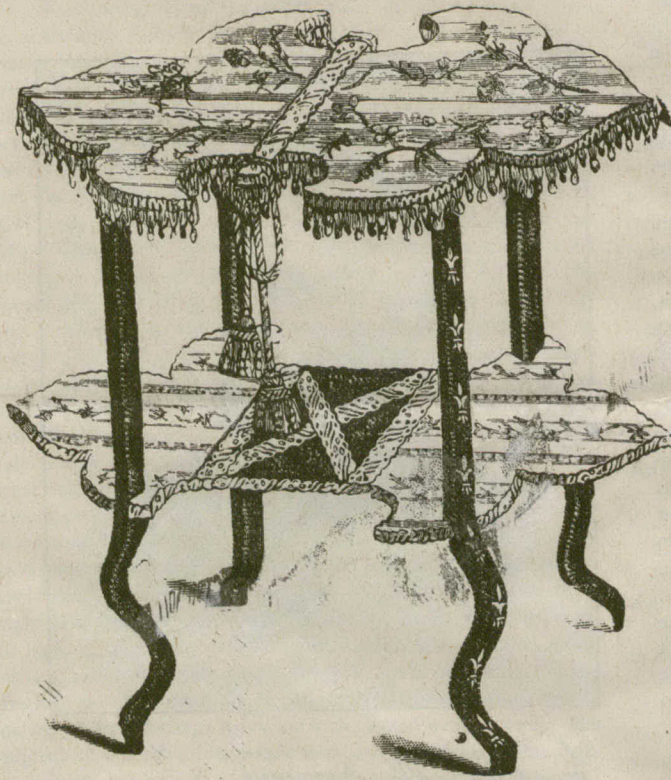
This pretty fleur-de-lys shape is to be obtained from Ville-en-Bois, 5 Rue de Rome, Paris. The two fleur-de-lys shelves are covered in antique brocade, with a cream-colored ground, striped in pale green, and powdered with trails of flowers. Multicolour fringe encircles the top, with cordeliere and tassels drooping at the sides. Legs and square in ruby plush, enhanced with gold galon.

AS MANY persons are in the habit of taking bonbons to the theatre or opera, and as it is a "fad" just now to carry them in the quaintest little bags and boxes, which, unless of gold or silver, are usually made at home, we will give a few descriptions of the newest shapes in which this fancy evinces itself. One of the oddest

is a jockey cap, which is easily made by cutting out four sections of silk and plush. Let two be bright red and two be pale blue. You may use satin for these last, if you prefer it to silk, or you may make all four from remnants of brocade silk. Line with thin silk, after shaping the cap in cardboard, and covering it with the above materials. Make your visor of kid, and sew it to the front edge. You then form a bag-shape of thin silk, and sew it to the edge on the inside. To this you make a hem, and run in a silk cord. This bag holds the bonbons, and can be suspended from the wrist or finger. Another odd shape is that of a drum, and for this you require an external decoration of gold cord, after making the round shape in the same way as that of the jockey cap. Your bag is in the upper part, and on the outside two little drumsticks of gold wire add to the quaintness of this novel affair.

FOR the "twin" wall-pockets, as these are called when there are two of them made use of for the purpose of suspending them, to receive newspapers, or to be used as pocket-emptiers, you tie the edges together with ribbons, or attach them still more closely, first removing the decoration of the edge from such as are already trimmed, and sewing them together. Contrasting colors look well used in this way. A novel style shows a tragic mask on the outside of one, and a Greek temple on the other, both decorations being sewed on, the first being a painted silk mask, of small size, and the other a fine chromo.

FOR a double tray of plush and gold lace to hold bracelets and rings, and which constitutes a handsome ornament for the toilet table, you require a double triangular shape in cardboard, which



OCCASIONAL TABLE.

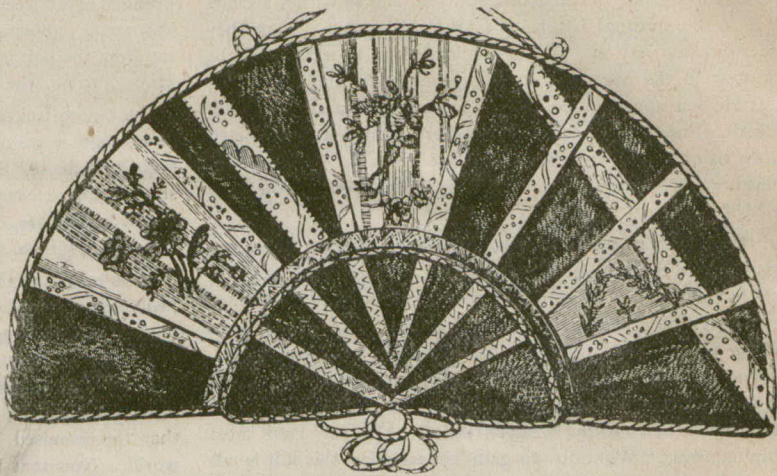
you cover with the plush, and border with the lace, setting it upright, so as to form a stiff edge, which will prevent the jewels placed within from slipping out. Although so simple, this little tray is a very satisfactory article to make, and in a double heart-shape is singularly pretty.

FOR a table basket, such as is now used to contain letters or photographs, you require several rows of plaited straw in the greens and reds seen in the Swiss handkerchiefs now imported. Then, in addition, you must have some wide ribbon of similar tints. This you run in between the rows of straw, after setting them securely in the perforated cardboard forming the base of the little basket. You need not line it, but you must decorate it with a few bows and drooping loops of the ribbon. If skillful at shaping, you can make your basket into a very good boat-shape by cutting the cardboard into that form, and drawing the ribbon closely at the two ends, leaving the middle open. You cut your straw into the right shape so that you have secured their lower part in the perforations, and either attached them with gum or sewed them fast.

A PRETTY table-screen is made by shaping the back and front so that the top forms an oval, and decorating them with hand-work in a Roman design, or with the Egyptian figures which are seen on frescos, and which can be procured at any print shop. You must outline the edges with gold cord, and place rosettes of ribbon on the corners, and where the screen folds.

MANY of the new work-baskets show the oddest shapes imaginable, as, for example, a

washtub, a milk-pail, and a chicken-coop. The washtub shape is cut out in cardboard and covered with plush and bound with metal cord. The milk-pail is prettiest when covered with brocade silk

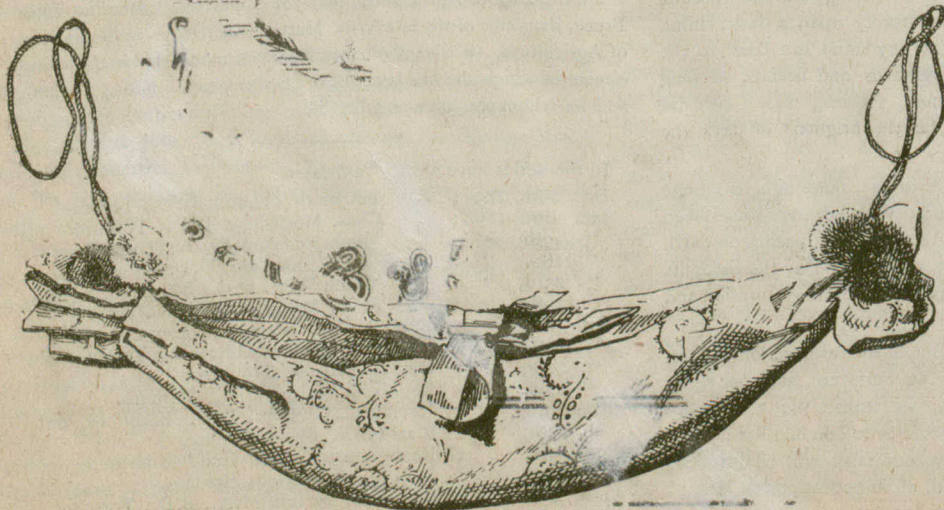


PHOTOGRAPH FRAME.

with a flower pattern, and bordered with white cotton lace. A bunch of artificial clover is tied to the highest part of the top, and suggests the favorite food of that indispensable domestic animal for whom the pail is so often in requisition. The chicken-coop basket is more complicated, and requires slender bits of split bamboo. These are arranged so that the lid of the basket is similar to the top of the coop. On the outside you place a chromo representing a hen and her chickens; and this you may lay on the lid, or on the front of the basket, pasting it down. A very novel basket of this kind had a large toy hen, with natural feathers attached to the composition in which the fowl was shaped, and this was placed on the lid, making a pretty basket, although the idea of a hen being large enough to cover the entire top of her coop is scarcely consistent.

THE darning bag of a family is one of the domestic institutions, and the style so popular for some years. Church sales is not the most desirable, with its patchwork and single receptacle for all yarns. The skilful mender, however, she must have a variety of well-sorted yarns, which is practicable if all can be kept in one compartment. A more convenient bag is made with a circular bottom, pasted on to a tin can of six inches in diameter, with a bag gathered around it within which are several partings for different grades of yarn. This bag is best made of gingham, one and three quarters breadths in width and about two feet deep, eight inches of which is turned up inside to form the bags, six or more in number. The two circles for the bottom are covered with the gingham, as for a flat pincushion, and the gathered edge of the bag is sewed to them. It is more convenient if drawn up with two strings. A needle book made of the same cloth, with flannel leaves for the darning needles, is a useful addition. With such a bag well supplied with needles and yarns, and by practising the above directions, the weekly mending may not be an arduous task.

PEN, INK AND PAPER.—I spent a month with Elmira last summer. Elmira is an excellent housekeeper; her bread is perfect, her linen is as white as snow, and she has a place for everything and everything in its place, except pen and ink. A trifling exception, you may think, in an otherwise perfect *menage*, but it did not seem trifling to John one hot, sticky July day. John is Elmira's husband, and one of the most patient of men; but let the most patient man in existence leave his haying and come to the house with a neighbor to sign a paper, if pen and ink are missing the chances are that something will be said that would not look well in print. John came in with a neighbor who was to sign a receipt. He went to the sitting-room closet, where writing materials are found when an occasional letter is written (their's is not a literary household); he found a bottle of ink, mostly dried away, and a penholder containing a pen. Elmira's hands were in the bread, but she ran in answer to John's call. After some searching in a jar of lamp-lighters a pen was found and fitted in a holder. The ink was improved by the addition of a few drops of water, and as no other paper was at hand a leaf was cut from one of the children's copybooks. John wrote the receipt, stopping once to remove a hair from his pen, and as he had no blotter he passed the damp paper to his neighbor, who wrote his name and blotted it with his square thumb, and then wiped the thumb on his hair. After John had made the remarks alluded to and vowed that if he lived through haying he'd have a place under lock and key where he could find writing materials without scouring the neighborhood for them, Elmira went on with her bread. John returned to his hayfield, and I, who had always lived with writing materials at my elbow, made a mental memorandum of the incident for future use. Elmira's is not the only household where it is a work of time to "drum up" the necessary things to do a bit of writing, and oftentimes when these are found a table must be cleared to write on. If such a store of conveniences was at hand how many things that are neglected would be done at once. The acknowledgment for the little gift would not be delayed till you are almost ashamed to send it; the paper you marked to send to a friend would go at once if you could lay your hand on a stamped and glued wrapper; it would not be such a task to mail that photograph, or the little package, if that ever-handy desk stood in the room. Of course it will cost something to get a desk and stock it, but many of the things will last a long time, and it will pay in the saving of time and temper.



HAMMOCK NIGHTDRESS BAG.