

# HOME DECORATION

By JESSIE E. RORKE

IN home decoration more than in any other art or craft mere thoughtless imitation is to be avoided. There is a quality of life and force in all original work that escapes an imitation, strive as we may; but in decorative art we not only contend with this lack of "verve" in our direct imitation of our friends' successes, but we may also fall into serious blunders in their application. Differences of color, of lighting, of size, of form in room or furniture, must decide the adaptability of the decoration which we admire, and what seems beautiful in another's surroundings we may find quite unfitted for our own.

To recognize the beautiful, to be instantly aware of incongruities, to be able in thought to picture clearly an effect as yet unseen, is the gift of an artist—it may also be the gift of the observant. All beauty of nature, or of art, consists of three things—beauty of outline, beauty of color, beauty of light and shadow; and to the thoughtful observer these are apparent at every glance. I do not mean by this that everything which is beautiful must possess these three: one, even two of them, may be absent—witness the beauty of geometric design or of flat color—but there must be no offence in any of these. For instance, the pencilled outline may be beautiful while it lacks color or shadow; it cannot be so if light and shade be portrayed incorrectly or if the color be unsuitable.

To watch for these three manifestations of beauty, to carefully analyse all that seems pleasing, to test the value of all decoration according to these truths, is to grow gradually to an involuntary recognition of them, to possess a subconsciousness of the beautiful, a perfection of taste which bars out what is unfit, regardless of example or fashion.

THE use of conventional design in china decorating makes efficient and pleasing results quite possible to the amateur if she is willing to work with patient care and precision. The three designs shown on this page are suitable for the odd plates for which we find so many uses, and are not too difficult to be attempted by the home worker. Before beginning have everything at hand that you will need to use, and the brushes and receptacles for oil and turpentine perfectly clean. The room should be as free from dust as possible, and if the dress you are wearing is not of cotton, linen, or silk material, it is well to cover it with a large apron to prevent the tiny bits of fuzz that continually come from woollen goods from settling on your work.

Clean the china with clear water but no soap and wipe with a cloth that is free from lint. Then brush with turpentine and allow it to dry. If you can trust yourself to draw with perfect accuracy you will have more pleasure in your work if the design is put on free hand, but if not it is wise to use the tracing paper. If this has been done, clean the china wherever it is soiled by the paper, and re-touch the lines with the pencil where they are indistinct.

Grind the colors carefully on the ground glass when rubbing with the tinting oil so that the mixture is perfectly smooth. If it seems at all gritty add a couple of drops of Dresden thick oil and grind again. Have your pad of silk and absorbent cotton made, the cotton for wiping the brush at hand, and brushes, palette, oil and turpentine placed conveniently so that no time may be lost when you begin to apply the color.

If the design selected is the first shown on this page it may be effectively treated with green-gold and yellow-gold. Color the blossoms and stems with yellow-gold, and the spaces between and the outer and inner bands with green-gold.

Use black in the broken band between the flower stems. As there is no outline it is necessary to keep the bands very smooth and even. If the plate must be sent out for firing, dry in the stove oven and allow it to become quite cool before wrapping in soft paper or cotton wadding.

To prepare for the second firing tint the plate a delicate green, using one part of brown-green to one part of Albert yellow. Pad with a quick regular touch till the color is perfectly smooth and even. Wipe the design free from any of the color that may have been carried into it by the pad, with a brush that has been dipped into turpentine and partially dried. Apply both green and yellow gold again, also the black if it is not even in color, and fire. This firing should complete the plate. Burnish the gold and rub the tint with very fine sandpaper.

Ivory, blue and gold will make an attractive color scheme for the second plate. Tint the whole plate with ivory and fire before drawing the design. An ordinary drawing pencil may be used after the tinting has been put on and is much less awkward than the Ceramic pencil. Use unfluxed gold for the curving lines, the broken band, and to outline the wide band in the centre. It is well to use a No. 2 liner as a wide line is desirable. Paint the inner band and the space between the design and the edge of the plate with turquoise blue. After the firing try with the burnishing brush and apply the gold again if necessary.

The curving lines of the trumpet flower bring to our minds at once the orange-red of its blossoms and deep vivid green of the leaves against the setting of dull red bricks. These colors are entirely pleasing as we find them and might be used in a naturalistic design where the colors could be softened and blended into one another without any striking contrast. In a conventional design less contrasting colors would be more suitable, several tones of brown working in very prettily. Tint the plate with hair brown, laying on thinly and padding until most of the color has been removed and an even delicate pinkish brown is obtained. After firing draw in the design and paint the band with hair brown of a darker shade than the tinting. Use one part of blood red to ten of hair brown for the flowers and make them a medium tone between the band and the tinting. Use hair brown for the bands and stems, making them quite dark and shading the short calyx from this into the coloring of the flower. Fire a second time and outline the whole design with unfluxed gold. The firing which follows should complete the plate.

Never be satisfied with less than your best work. If after the tinting has dried it becomes spotted in any way do not attempt to patch it. It will only end in disappointment, and though it may seem trying to clear off all that has been done and begin again, it will be most satisfactory.

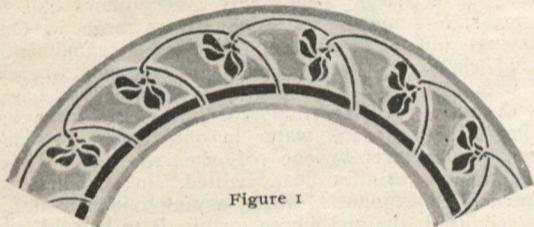


Figure 1

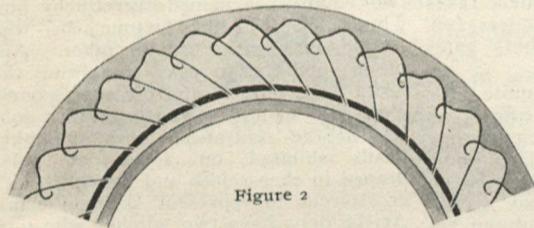


Figure 2

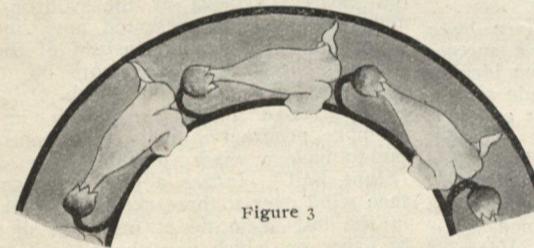


Figure 3



## Carving Sets

An almost everyday necessity in the household is a Carving Set. The illustration shows a set that is remarkable for its beauty, finish and wearing qualities. It is the "Avon" pattern in the famous

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