

## IMITATION OF MARQUETRY.

The beauty of furniture decorated with that expensive inlay, technically known as marquetry, is acknowledged throughout the world. These surface-inlays of the shell of the marine tortoise, or hawk's bill turtle, with various metals, ivory, and wood stained and shaded by heat, sometimes with pigments, have, since their earliest production, placed a princely value upon them, and given marquetry a position high up in the scale of originality and wealth of design in furniture. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced some fine specimens, noted alike for their originality and beauty.

The imitation of marquetry is no new thing; and the imitations have by no means been of an inferior character. Long ago it was accomplished in the form of painting by hand. The attendant expense in its production, being as much or more than that of the genuine, and in some points superior in workmanship, made the attempt limited to the effort comparatively abortive. This imitation was finer, often times being much superior to the real marquetry, for the trained brush of the artist could make a much truer line than could be cut by the skilled workman for the gems, even than those who had worked so long for the perfection of the true piece. It also possessed another superiority over the genuine marquetry which greatly enhanced its value; notwithstanding the delicacy and care that is exercised in the placing of the precious bits that form the inlay, they will "pull up" or become started if used very much.

In this process of painting the imitation wood, they are obliged to lay their veneers in their actual positions, sand-papering and scraping them down after they are laid. Each separate article has to be begun anew and the whole process gone through with as on the previous piece, sketching, coloring and finishing each different piece of furniture throughout, making a reproduction of labor, and necessarily swelling the expense to a large figure. It was as far from the means of those who desired it as the genuine marquetry.

We have now a process, the one of Spurr & Prang, that is comparatively simple in itself, with results equal to those which it imitates, produced at a small expense. The real is oftentimes inferior to it in appearance. A representative of THE AMERICAN CABINET MAKER recently called upon Mr. Charles W. Spurr, who very kindly furnished him with the particulars of the process, which are as follows:

Let us begin at the very foundation of the process; the wood upon which this ornamentation is made is white holly, which is cut into thin veneers, 125 to the inch, which while yet in a green state and wet, are united at the "extreme of swell," with paper; a pure flour paste being used. This paste stands all extremes of temperature; heat does not affect it nor cold destroy it. In this state the wood is taken to be finished; being subjected to a solution of tartaric or oxalic acid for the purpose of removing any discolorations and cleaning the wood, taking from it all foreign substances, &c. Then a solution of glycerine (one part in four of water) is applied; this renders the veneer pliable and soft, a requisite of great importance, as the wood must be in a very receptive state that the impression which is afterwards given may be clearly executed and sharply defined. After a process of slow desiccation, sand-paper is applied and the surface of the wood made thoroughly smooth, as there is no similar process employed after the work is finished, all the smoothing that the holly veneer gets being given it now.

The wood in this state, the first stages of the production being completed, is sent to be lithographed upon. On it then is printed the ground-work and the fine lines of the design in black, brown, or whatever may be the chosen shade. The work is then given to artists, who with pure water colors fill in the blank space (that which in printing the ground-work was not touched) with whatever tints and shadings are required, following a copy previously painted. This is done in a short time, and then the veneer is varnished, as all this class of work is, with French polish in ordinary furniture varnish, by doing which the colors are prevented from rubbing off a glassy surface is given. The work of painting now being finished, (the veneer having been pasted to the paper backing as already described), it is laid with a thin glue size, one-third the consistency of that used in laying ordinary veneer. The surface on which the veneer is laid, and also the caul must be perfectly smooth and true, from the fact that the surface of the marquetry cannot be disturbed.

What makes this process a possibility and brings it to such a state of perfection is the fact that the paper backing which is put on protects the veneer, preventing any glue whatsoever from penetrating through the pores of the wood, which is the result

on veneers of porous woods put on the ordinary process. It is easy to see from this that the entire success and perfection of the work depends upon this accurate and careful preparation of the veneer. It is not too much to say that the whole feat hinges on this—all the other processes being subordinate to it.

This new work is being used to decorate an upright piano for Hallet & Davis to be exhibited at the Centennial; also on an organ entered by Geo. Woods, and the exhibit of the Home Sewing Machine Company.

That such an invention should be the outgrowth of American ingenuity we are glad; and that such an ornament, surpassing in richness the marquetry that is offered buyers by dealers at so large a price, can be made with which to decorate and beautify our furniture and elaborate the luxuries of our homes, is a gratification which all lovers of refinement and elegance truly enjoy.

For the information of amateurs, white holly of any thickness can be obtained from any veneer merchant in Boston or New York.—*Scientific American.*

## THE MONUMENT OF ENGLEBERT III.

BREDA CATHEDRAL, HOLLAND.

(See page 260.)

The family monument of Englebert III, and John of Nassau, of which we give an illustration, is without doubt the most remarkable of all the sepulchral remains in Holland, and has few rivals in Europe. This noble monument is placed in the north aisle of the choir of the former cathedral in Breda, with its back against the solid screen-wall, dividing the choir from its aisles. It is adorned with a great deal of sculpture of very remarkable excellence. The larger figures are rather above life-size, and are most masterly works, both for expression, "pose," and delicate finish. They represent John of Nassau and his wife, and Englebert III. and his wife, Count and Countess of Breda, together with their patron Saints, St. John the Baptist, St. Englebertus, St. Jerome, and St. George. In the centre is a statue of the Madonna,—this is modern, as the ancient one had been destroyed in the seventeenth century.

It is not possible to give the exact date of this monument. It might have been erected during the lives of Englebert III. or John of Nassau, or any time after their deaths. It is, however, undoubtedly a work of the very end of the fifteenth century. Unlike the other tombs in this church, it has escaped mutilation in a very wonderful way: it was probably respected because William of Orange was descended from the Nassau family, and what little restoration was required, which consisted chiefly in replacing the statue of the Madonna, has been admirably carried out under the direction of Mr. Cuypers, at the expense of the present royal family of Holland. There are many other interesting monuments in this church, and it contains two of the finest Flemish brasses in existence, but everything is in the most terrible state of filth, ruin, and neglect; in fact, the condition of the church is a national disgrace. The nave alone is used by the colonists, to whom it belongs, and the only use made of the noble choir and transepts, as far as we could discover, was to air the linen of the pastor and his family, as a very extensive line of very clean linen was suspended from one end to the other of the transepts. There was a very suspicious look to the choir, strongly suggesting the idea that the "wash" had absolutely taken place in this part of the sacred edifice!

We have described the noble tower of this church, and also the remarkable choir-stalls, in a former number. The new Roman Catholic cathedral at Breda,—the only other religious edifice of any importance in Breda,—has also been illustrated in this journal.

In our illustration the iron grille which protects the lower portion of the tomb is omitted, for the purpose of showing the original arrangement of that portion of the monument.—*Builder.*

**THE TURKISH NAVY.**—Turkey has now a flotilla of 11 gun-boats on the Danube, seven being ironclads. The imperial despatch boat *Rethymo*, after having been refitted in the Admiralty docks, has returned to her station at the Dardanelles.

The authorities of Reggio-Calabria offer a prize of £2,000 for the best machinery for the extraction of the essence of bergamot. The apparatus must be cheap, and produce the greatest possible quantity of essence in the shortest space of time, and that without impairing the purity, colour, and odour of the product.