

Japanese Wood-Carving

dominate the works of this group. The strength of the "Glasgow School" is by no means represented only by the artists to whose work attention has here been drawn, but these pictures are among the most remarkable exhibited. D. M.

It will be interesting to some of our readers to learn that the picture by Sir F. Leighton, Bart., P.R.A., recently unveiled at the Royal Exchange, was painted on a strong flax canvas, prepared with a medium invented by T. Gambier Parry, Esq., and called by him "Spirit Fresco Medium." This medium, supplied by Messrs. Roberson & Co., was somewhat modified by them under the advice of Professor Church. The picture by R. W. Macbeth, A.R.A., also at the Royal Exchange, was painted with a similar preparation, known as "Parris's Medium." Both pictures have been attached to the wall by the process termed "Marouflâgé."

A JAPANESE COURSE OF INSTRUCTION IN WOOD-CARVING. BY THE EDITOR. SECOND ARTICLE.

IN the Sets 3 and 4 now illustrated, the early stages of instruction, commenced with Sets 1 and 2, are steadily carried forwards. Each lesson will be found to tax the skill of the hand in some new direction. In the lessons of Set 1, the student was given the necessary exercises to enable him to master straight lines, angles and intersections. In Set 2, he was shown some varieties of triangular incisions, and required to practise the simplest form of surface modelling. In Set 3, the first lessons in curved forms are here set forth. Their true value can only be fully appreciated by those who carefully study them. Not a single lesson is given without a distinct purpose. The details of each pattern and almost every line have their separate value as exercises. Thus, in the first two lessons, the curves are so arranged as to give the maximum amount of instruction in the simplest manner. It is intended that the hand, in following them, should be trained to make curves in all directions with equal facility. A thorough mastering of these early lessons will be found by the student to be of immense value to him when he commences to essay advanced work. In the later lessons of this Set, the first exercises for surface modelling on curved forms are given. Some new difficulties are presented to the student in every lesson; and they are so arranged that

each one follows in proper course upon the preceding one.

With Set 4 a notable stage of instruction is reached. Hitherto the lines and curves have been confined to those of mathematical rigidity. No latitude has been given to the play of the hand. The necessity for the student to cultivate freehand is nowhere found to be more important than in wood-carving. There is a particular charm about the perfect handling of the chisel which can scarcely be overrated. Freedom of movement, together with power of expression, are of the highest importance. Nothing more denotes the master of the craft than the manner in which every cut is made by him. Weakness, hesitancy, want of complete sympathy between head and hand, soon make themselves felt upon the work produced. The Japanese are singularly happy in the perfect control they seem to have upon the chisel; and there can be little doubt but that this is in a large measure due to the great importance they attach to freehand work in all its phases.

Examine most carefully the progress of the freehand lessons in this Set 4. Lesson 1 begins with deep triangular incisions, which are carved forwards in a graceful curve until they terminate in fine hair-like lines. Any hesitation or "niggling" on the part of the carver would be fatal to the proper production of such lines, and, indeed, close attention and considerable practice will be found necessary before they can be satisfactorily executed. Lesson 2 is a further example of freehand work in which the experience gained in Lesson 1 will be found to be most useful. Lesson 3 is scarcely more than a variety of the preceding ones, but is remarkable in that it first introduces the learner to the study of plant form. Lesson 4 is a delightful free-hand study. The easy sweeps of the tool and the delicacy and force of the incisions are admirably rendered. Lesson 5 teaches a still bolder form of cutting combined with a greater degree of surface modelling, and is a useful introduction to the final lesson, No. 6, of this Set. The *Tomoye* upon which the last lesson is based is a species of badge of circular form usually containing a combination of two or three patterns of comma-like shape, and is often to be met with in Japanese ornamentation. In this instance we have the crest of a wave rendered conventionally after the fashion of the badge. Its chief interest to the carver lies in the fine sweeping lines of the pattern and the careful work required in the surface modelling.

In our next article we shall treat of Sets 5 and 6, completing the first year of instruction.