

THE OREGON SCOUT.

VOL. III.

UNION, OREGON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 1886.

NO. 7.

THE OREGON SCOUT.

An independent weekly journal, issued every Saturday by

JONES & CHANCEY,
Publishers and Proprietors.

A. K. JONES, Editor. J. B. CHANCEY, Foreman.

RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION:
One copy, one year, \$1.00
Six months, .60
Three months, .35

Advertisements in advance.
If by any chance subscriptions are not paid full end of year, two dollars will be charged.

Correspondence from all parts of the country solicited.
Address all communications to A. K. Jones, Editor Oregon Scout, Union, Or.

Lodge Directory.
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TRUQUAGE.

The Art of Making New Things Look Old—Furniture That Has to Date from the Sixteenth Century.

Truquage, although a term probably unfamiliar to many of our readers, nevertheless deserves to rank among the finer arts of modern civilization, such is the industry and skill and ingenuity with which it is carried out.

Burns' collar mother was chiefly admirable for the skill with which she "gar'd and things as well as new," but the truquage devotes himself, on the contrary, to the art of making new things look quite as good as old.

The connoisseur of furniture of the present day is well aware that, for certain important qualities of soundness, good workmanship, and good taste, that the "old is better," with valid reason also for his opinion. But the crowd, who have neither his leisure, his knowledge, nor his experience, naturally fall into the hands of the scientific experts of truquage an easy prey to the spoiler.

The stock in trade of the French truquage and his English congener—quite as expert as he—need not be large. Walnut juice—which gives an agreeable mellowness of tone—and nitric acid are neither of them expensive. The latter imitates pretty closely the ravages of ants, and holes bored with a fine auger easily give the wormeaten appearance which appeals to the lover of the antique in carved furniture.

The writer was informed by a workman's wife that her husband was one of those solely employed in the boring or auger business; but in Paris live worms are kept to do the work, and do it even better, and to order, which is more surprising. New oak can be stained by a solution of old iron in hot vinegar, which darkens it to a deeper tone; it is then carefully oiled and polished. The price demanded, however, is such that "bargains" can be boasted of by the inexperienced, while really fine work always commands its value in the open market.

The unhappy pieces of furniture which have to date from the sixteenth century are severely beaten with heavy bludgeons, which serves to give them the worn appearance necessary to three centuries of existence. A common device is to paint the panels of cupboards, roughly carved on the premises, with white paint. They are then dried in the sun, and, after keeping some months, are washed in potash, which removes the paint in patches, and the exquisite finish of the carving beneath is apt to be taken for granted by the buyer, who is aware that in the last century much good panelling was thus painted, and preserved to our generation in consequence in all its pristine freshness in cutting and outline. Buhl of a very ordinary description is ornamented by French dealers with brass scroll work, after the designs of Gillot, who succeeded Buhl. Those who can be taken in by these mechanical reproductions must be left to their fate. In porcelain and faience one can only say *caveat emptor*, so clever are the tricks by which even the learned are deceived. At Cagé's manufactory at Versailles the *fauces de Nevers* is reproduced to perfection; but here all is fair and open dealing. If the buyer prefers his purchase "antique," M. Cagé will bake it for him until the glaze crackles. It is further mellowed in a manure heap, and a slight extra charge is imposed. The special marks of favorite potters are easily imitated, and as such pains is taken with the spurious wares, with intent to deceive, as would suffice to give value to real specimens. The character of the early decorations is carefully preserved—the even white of the Moustiers ware; the dead dull white of the Marseillaise, and the careful finish of the old Delft potters.

At Venice the reproduction of the old palatial furniture is a thriving industry, and the same at Florence, but it possesses little or no artistic value. The ebony is black stained wood; the *stipi* are bone and not ivory; the shapes and patterns are, however, carefully copied, and the prices are not excessive, and good patterns are a distinctive gain in furniture; but the modern production will not have the lasting qualities of the old. Ivory triptychs are manufactured at Versailles. The golden tint is gained by boiling in oil, then plunging into boiling water, and drying before a hot fire, which cracks the ivory to perfection. These require a very skillful eye to detect, as the carving is often meritorious. Even works of the highest art do not escape the truquage. Clodion, the late eminent French sculptor, discovered that a group bearing his signature had been sold for 4,500 francs. Legal proceedings were instituted, and it was brought to light that the work in question was due to one Lebroc, who had made it his study to imitate Clodion. Nevertheless, three eminent judges—

Millet, Chapu, and Guillaume,—after careful examination and in spite of the signature, decided that in their opinion it was not the handiwork of Clodion. So the sales were annulled and damages were not allowed by the courts. Clodion's real name was Michel, and some of his earliest and finest works are thus signed. The arts of truquage extend themselves even to literature. As long ago as the seventeenth century we find the printers of Lyons and Rome simulating *princeps* editions of Racine and Moliere. The type, the paper, the colophons, all being reproduced with unscrupulous accuracy, and then palmed off as genuine upon the unwary purchaser. The manufacture still prospers, added with the photography processes and the art of the facsimile. So also are old letters and autographs successfully floated, signed by Cardinal de Retz, or Colbert, or whom you please, fetching a good price and almost challenging scrutiny. The history of the Shapira forgeries of the Pentateuch are fresh in the recollection of our readers. They were offered at the modest price of one million sterling. So also the famous *venis Martin* can still be bought at Paris, very like, but still not genuine; and clever painters, whose work is as good as Lancret's, can be found to figure as Watteaus with no mean success. But at present the secret of the real *Martin* remains as impenetrable as it is exquisite.

In buying old oak furniture the buyer should notice the presence or absence of the "ties" or cross-bars near the floor, which are invariably in the construction of the seventeenth century joiners. The forger is apt to forget this, and thus himself brand the work as spurious. Decoration was formerly the proper art of a guild of Florentine artists in the fourteenth century. Painters, jewelers, engravers, and metal workers lived in a happy state of co-operative harmony, so that a coffer or casket might bear the successive impress of many clever hands; as the enamel, the setting, the lock, the jewel work, would each be executed by an artist-craftsman, skilled at Dello, or Cellini, or Ghiberti. It will scarcely do to contrast the revived mode of painting on furniture, as we behold it in the shops, with this delicate and masterly work. Yet many of our young painters might be worse employed than in spending real thought and putting real good work on articles of daily use, which we have to regard, unhappily, as necessarily ugly because utilitarian.—*London Queen.*

The Confederate Preacher.

It is remembered that in 1862 a country preacher somewhere in central Missouri was notified by the militia that he must cease his treasonable utterances in the pulpit or be arrested. The preacher demanded a bill of particulars. He was told in an abrupt way that he must pray for the president, and to the astonishment of the militia, he promptly declared his willingness to comply with the order. On the following Sunday morning his church was crowded with militia men and confederate sympathizers, each filled with half-conscious anxiety for the day's results. It was a hot day in June. Outside the church the horses neighed and whinnied. Over the square, wooden pulpit, the hot breezes toyed with the leaves of a hymn book which had been opened at the ancient tune of "Mear." In the amen corner sat the officers of the "militia." In the opposite corner were the deacons of the congregation. The white-haired preacher was hidden from view behind the pulpit longer than usual that morning, but at last the services began and a breathless hush fell upon the assemblage as it solemnly knelt for the prayer on which the fate of the congregation was hanging.

"O Lord," said the preacher, breaking the painful silence which had followed his introductory of thanks. "Bless Thy waiting congregation. Bless Thy servant who shall address them this day and may his words be fruitful to Thy kingdom. O Lord, in a special manner we pray Thy richest blessings upon the president!"

"Amen!" said the kneeling militia officers, nudging each other violently, while great drops of perspiration stood upon the foreheads of the deacons. There was a brief and awful pause.

"Lord," shouted the preacher familiarly with sudden animation. "Thou knowest whom I mean. I mean Jefferson Davis!"—*St. Louis Republican.*

A blind man was sitting in company with some visitors when one of the company left the room. "What white teeth that lady has!" said the blind man. "Why," said a friend, in great surprise, "how can you tell?" "Because," answered the blind man, "for the last hour she has done nothing but laugh."

Young Men in Society.

As a general thing young ladies are much more self-possessed when they first go into society than young gentlemen, and while the girl of sixteen is helped out by the kindness of other women and the attention men always pay to the rosebuds, if they are pretty or pleasing, the boy of eighteen or nineteen is left to do the best he can for himself, and if he is modest, well bred and not conceited, he often retires from society after a few brief plunges into it. Yet, after all, hollow as society is, in many professions it is necessary for a young man to hold his own and appear well on social occasions.

It is also a relief to any one whose feelings are strong and who is apt to grow melancholy in solitude to have "somewhere to go." I presume many originally able men who have become oddities, and grown careless in their habits and offensive in their manners, might have been comfortable and well liked if they had taken a little pains to know a few people, and to be sought at least in some small circles of society.

Long ago Lord Chesterfield said to his son: "Your figure is like other people's; I hope you will take care to dress so, too. Why then should you be ashamed? Why not go into mixed company as freely as into your own room?" And he adds:

"I remember that when, with all the awkwardness of college about me, I was introduced into good company, I was frightened out of my wits. If I saw people whisper I was sure it was about me, and thought myself the object of the censure or ridicule of the whole company, who, heaven knows, did not trouble themselves about me. In this way I suffered martyrdom, and should certainly have renounced polite society forever if I had not been absolutely convinced of the necessity of forming my manners. I remember at last gaining intrepidity enough to go up to a fine woman and tell her that I thought it was a warm day. She answered me very civilly and said she thought so, too; upon which the conversation on my part ceased, until she remarked, good naturedly resuming it: 'I see your embarrassment, and I am sure the few words you said to me cost you a good deal; but do not be discouraged. All you want is manner, and you do not want that as much as you think you do.'"

Lord Chesterfield was supposed to be one of the most elegant men of his day; and the bashful boy who made an effort to say, "It is a warm day, madam," became ambassador to the Hague, viceroy to Ireland, secretary of state, and member of the cabinet. He had all the elements of social success within him, and yet, no doubt, he might have gone to the wall but for that determination to form his manners in good society. And what was said so many years ago to a bashful English youth a bashful boy of any nation may read with benefit: "Do not be discouraged. All you want is manner, and you do not want that as much as you think you do."—*Harriet Trowbridge, in Good Housekeeping.*

A Blazing Monarch.

Coal is no longer king in Pittsburgh. Natural gas has dethroned him: Old King Cole was a swarthy old soul, And a costly old soul was he, His sets were spread O'er the broad earth's bed, He drew tribute from sea to sea! Gladly his slaves a torch will wave Not lit by the fires of treason, But fired by spells from magic wells, To burn in the light of reason! —*Philadelphia News.*

Why They Had to Kill Another Chinaman.

One of the best known mining engineers in the United States, in fact the man who built many big mines and tunnels on the Pacific coast, and whom we will call Smith for the sake of the story, told the Casual Observer the other day that while superintending the construction of a mine at Virginia City, on which mostly Chinese labor was employed, the foreman of one of the tunnels came to him one morning and said: "Mr. Smith, a Chinaman was killed this morning by a fall of rock in the tunnel. We'll have to kill another before night." "Why so?" was the inquiry in reply. "Well," said the foreman, "as he took a fresh chew of tobacco, 'it's easier to carry two dead Chinamen out of camp than one.' The engineer got mad at this and prohibited any reckless exposure of life. But sure enough before the night fell another Chinaman had been gathered to his fathers. The manner of carrying the dead Chinaman out of camp was to hang one body on each side of a mule. If there was only one dead Chinaman it took two men to carry him off, one at his head and another at his heels."—*New York Graphic.*

It is seventeen years since the first railroad across the continent was completed.