WILLIAM EDMUND WALL

PRACTICAL GRAINING, WITH DESCRIPTION OF COLORS EMPLOYED AND TOOLS USED

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Содержание

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MAPLE OR SATIN WOOD. LIGHT ASH.
LIGHT OAK. HUNGARIAN ASH.

CHAPTER I.
GROUND-WORKS FOR GRAINING

THE following remarks, while not claiming to be anything new or startling, will perhaps be of interest to those who seek to improve themselves in the modern style of imitating the grain of wood. The ideas set forth in these pages are founded on the observation and every-day experience of a grainer to the trade who does not claim to be the best in the world, but who offers his suggestions for the good of the craft.

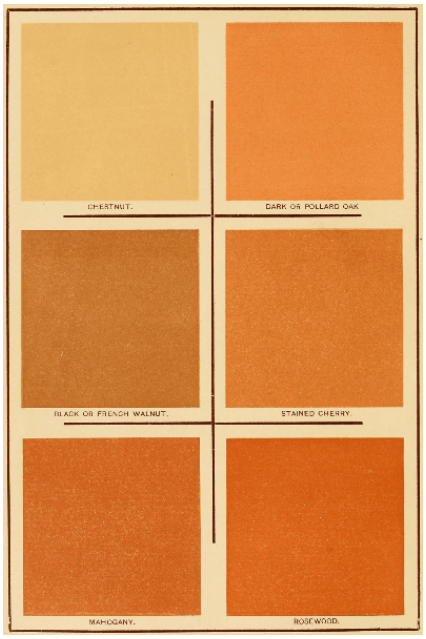
Graining is often overlooked in the rage for stained white wood or olive greens in interior work, but it will always find favor with those who have experienced its wearing qualities as compared with plain painted work; for should the varnish be of good quality and not crack, the work, if properly done, will stand for years and will not fade in the manner that paint does, and where the work is properly done on new wood it cannot be chipped off unless the wood is taken off with it. It can be scoured off, but will not come off otherwise. Where graining is done over old paint or over work that has been previously grained the case is different, as, if knocked or bruised, it will chip off to the coat beneath, and where the work has formerly been white the effect is very bad and is hard to remedy; but if care is taken when grounding the work, it may to a great extent be prevented.

In preparing old work for graining one of the first things requisite is to have the surface made as smooth as possible; this may be done with sand-paper or—what is better—lump pumice stone.

In case the graining is done over old paint that has cracked the best thing to do is to remove the old varnish or paint by the application of a strong solution of washing soda or a weak solution of potash. Some painters use spirits of ammonia or burn off with a burning-lamp. After thoroughly softening or removing the old paint or varnish with either soda or potash, the work should be washed off with a weak solution of vinegar (about a pint of vinegar to a pailful of water), in order to remove all traces of the alkali and prevent its future action on the paint. Some painters think that this is too much trouble and assert that they cannot get paid for doing work in this way, but in the end it will prove to be the best way, as it will greatly add to the appearance and durability of any job so to prepare it. In any case the work should be thoroughly sand-papered and made as smooth as possible before receiving the first coat; this, of course, is for old work. The ground-color should be thinned with about half spirits of turpentine and half oil, with the addition of sufficient drier for old work, and oil, with an extra quantity of drier, for first coat on new work, using some spirits for the second and third coats.

The writer has found by experience that on the cheapest jobs (of two-coat work) where the wood is sappy and the work has been rendered rough by the painter using a large quantity of drier in his priming coat, a much better surface is made to grain over by this method. It will not spot or look cloudy when rubbed in to grain, as two-coat work often does on new wood.

A little "elbow-grease" and sand-paper between coats make a vast difference in the looks of a job when finished, and the ground-work should always be lightly sand-papered before it is rubbed in by the grainer.



CHESTNUT. DARK OR POLLARD OAK.
BLACK OR FRENCH WALNUT. STAINED CHERRY.
MAHOGANY. ROSEWOOD.

GROUNDS FOR GRAINING.—IN ILLUSTRATION OF ARTICLE BY WM. E. WALL

In mixing the ground-color for graining never use dry colors where it can be avoided, as the work will be more or less gritty, and there is really no saving in their use. A pound of color ground in oil will go much further than one of dry color, is more easily applied and is much better to grain over. Of course much depends on the purity of the colors employed, and the painter will find that the best colors are none too good for his use, as they go further and work better than do the cheaper grades. It is a good plan always to strain the color before thinning, whether the colors used be dry or ground.

The foregoing may seem superfluous to the good workman, as he himself has probably found out more than this; but it may put some beginner on the right track, and none of us are expert enough to miss learning a point if we can.

MIXING OF THE GROUND COLORS

The ground-work for oak is made by adding yellow ochre to lead till the color is deep enough. In matching the real wood a *little* raw umber will help to bring it to the desired color, but is better without the umber for light work.

In matching very light oak chrome yellow may be substituted for ochre. For dark oak use the same colors as for light and add Venetian red and burnt umber; the same color will do for pollard oak. For green oak (*á la furniture*) do the same as for ordinary work, and when grained shade it over with a thin wash of chrome green or add a little black to the ground color. For ash use the same color as for light oak, but do not get it quite so yellow; a little raw umber will counteract this. A little chrome yellow may be added for Hungarian ash. For chestnut use a similar color to that for ash, but deeper and with a little red. For maple the ground-work should be very light. To an ordinary pot two-thirds full of lead well broken up add about a teaspoonful of chrome yellow and about half that amount of

burnt sienna; some grainers prefer a *very little* Venetian red instead of the burnt sienna. In matching the wood get the ground-work as near the lightest color on the wood as possible, and you cannot go astray. For satin-wood the ground-work is similar to maple, but deeper in color. For burl ash use the same color as for ash, or slightly deeper.

The ground-work for cherry is probably mixed differently by every painter—at least, that is my experience—and it is hard work to make any workman believe that his is not the right way. In different parts of the country the popular idea of what "cherry color" is, varies greatly. In the majority of cases what has been called "the color of the fruit" is wanted, so we must make the ground-work to suit the demand. Cherry in its natural color is but little darker than ash, and the ground-work may be made in the same way or by adding raw sienna to the lead instead of yellow ochre and umber. The cherry that grainers have to match is often finished by furniture-makers, and is as dark as mahogany; in such cases the ground-work must be made with yellow ochre for the basis of the color and darkened by Venetian red. It will want little if any lead for the darker kinds of stained cherry, but will stand some for the lighter shades. In priming new work add considerable lead for first coat, as it gives more body. Three thin coats are none too many for new work, and they should be applied without leaving brush-marks. There is nothing more aggravating to the grainer than to find that a job is full of streaks of thick paint, as it is almost impossible to do a good job on such a ground-work.

The foregoing remarks apply to priming coats on new wood for graining any kind of wood.

The ground-work for walnut is made by taking yellow ochre for the base of the color and adding a small quantity of Venetian red and a little burnt umber; for very light work a little lead may be added. The same ground will do for French walnut. For mahogany the ground-work is made of yellow ochre, Venetian red and red lead. For rosewood chrome yellow, red lead and a small quantity of Venetian red. The foregoing are about all the woods that a grainer in New England is called upon to imitate; and if I mistake not, it is so elsewhere. Of course all painters or grainers may not agree with me in using the colors named for preparing the ground-work, but good work can be done on such grounds. One thing I wish to say is, Never use Indian red in a ground-color, as it is not transparent and makes the work look muddy. In grounding work for cherry or walnut, where the old paint is not removed, it is well to add some red lead to the color, which should be frequently stirred, or the red lead will deposit on the bottom of the pot.

CHAPTER II.
THE GRAINING COLOR

In mixing the graining-color for any wood just as much difference of opinion exists among grainers as to the proper way of mixing the color as there is among painters as to the proper way of mixing the ground-color, and although different grainers have their own method of preparing and mixing their graining-color, and often use different materials and colors, still, good workmen will often obtain the same effects, but by a different process. Such being the case, it is impossible to lay down any cast-iron rule for the materials to be used in the representation of any wood or for the *proper* way to imitate any wood.

In imitating the color of certain woods the colors used are quite simple, while for other woods considerable pains must be taken and a number of colors used if the color of the wood is to be matched. I think the most common fault of graining is that the color is made darker than it should be; still, the grainer is not always to blame for this, as such a fault cannot be laid to his charge if the painters insist on keeping the ground-color itself as dark as or darker than the work should be when grained. Many a time in the experience of grainers is this the case, and I have on more than one occasion mixed a proper ground-color to match wood after being called upon by some alleged painter (who thought the ground-color he had put on was correct) to grain the job, but in most cases it is said, "Do the best you can with it and let it go, as the folks want to move in," or, "I want to get my money," etc., and so grainers do the job if the color is not too far off from what it should be.

Let us suppose that we are going to grain a job of light oak in oil. First lightly sand-paper the ground-work with a piece of fine or an old piece of sand-paper, and dust off. The ground-color should be quite hard, and not tacky, before the graining-color is applied, and two or three days is none too long a time to stand before being grained. Where a good job is to be done and finished at one impression, as we might call it, the manner of working can be reversed—that is, the work can be shaded or over-grained, as it were, on the ground-color in distemper before being rubbed in oil. The check roller can be used to good advantage, and the panels and stiles of doors streaked or mottled. The distemper color must not be diluted with much water, or it will rub off when the oil-color is being applied over it. This way of working is an advantage in matching stained oak, as all that remains to be done after it is grained is to stain it to the desired depth or color. On ordinary work this shading is done on the graining-color when dry.

The colors necessary for graining oak will be raw sienna and burnt umber, with a *very little* black to be added in case it is needed. It is impossible to specify the exact amount of each color to be used, and the judgment of the workman must be exercised in all cases. The ordinary way is to mix about two-thirds raw sienna and one-third burnt umber, adding the black if necessity should require to match wood. Do not get the color too yellow, but rather on the gray shade, as that is most frequently the color of the wood.

The color should be thoroughly mixed in a clean pot, and, if in oil, thinned with the following mixture, or sufficient of it to bring the color to the desired shade: Half a gallon of spirits of turpentine; two and a half pints of linseed oil (boiled is to be preferred); half a pint japan drier. It is better not to use too much drier, and, as the drying qualities of each maker's japans, etc., vary greatly, the workman's judgment must guide him as to the exact amount to be used. It is a matter of doubt as to what is the best article with which to thicken the color without altering the shade; a little bolted whiting is very good. Some grainers prefer melted beeswax or soap dissolved in hot water and added to the color while hot, or even cold water stirred into the color. As a rule, the less of these added to the color, the better.

After thinning to the desired consistency, a good brush is the next requisite for applying the color. Do not use stubby brushes, as in so doing you lose more time than you gain by making them last longer. By general consent the flat brush has superseded the round brush in the eastern states of America for grainers' use, as it requires no binding and is a much better blender, when used as such, than any round brush, and it is more quickly broken in for use. It is better to use a medium size rather than one too large; one about three and a half inches across the butt will be found the most serviceable. An oval or a flat sash tool and a No. 2 flat fresco bristle liner, to be used as a fitch tool in putting in hearts, etc., will be all the brushes required. A set of steel combs, or even two, a coarse and a fine steel comb and one or two of good rubber, are all the tools that are required. The rubber combs should be coarse and fine—that is, the spaces between the teeth of the fine rubber comb should measure from one-sixteenth to one-eighth of an inch and the coarse one from one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch. Sometimes a rubber comb with the teeth cut graduated looks well introduced among the other work. Where the work is to be shaded or over-grained it is better to cover the teeth of the rubber combs with a thin cotton rag before using, taking a clean place on the rag for every time the comb is used, but on cheap work this may be omitted.

When a piece of work is rubbed in, if it is desired to represent "champs," or "lights of oak"—better known as quartered oak—the rubber combs are first used and carefully drawn through the color—not necessarily in a straight line—and the coarse or finer, or both the steel combs, are drawn lightly over the track of the rubber comb; the work is then blended lengthwise with the flat brush, which has previously been rubbed out clean, and the champs or veins are put in across the grains previously made by the rubber and steel combs. The other implements necessary are a piece of soft rag and the thumb-nail. Many substitutes have been invented for the thumb-nail, but it is as yet unsurpassed for this particular purpose, as it is more sensitive than are the bone or horn substitutes sometimes used.

Plate 3.
PLAIN OR WAINSCOT OAK, LIGHT.

Plate 4.
FLAKED OAK, LIGHT.

CHAPTER III.
QUARTERED OAK

In imitating quartered oak, or any other wood, it should always be borne in mind that it is the *wood* that we wish to imitate, and not somebody's idea of what it should be—for if we copy others, we become, as Byron says, "degenerate copyists of copies"—and the best thing that any beginner can do is to procure pieces of the real wood, study the various changes of grain and get the general character of the grains of each wood impressed upon his mind, then endeavor to reproduce them in his work; for the work will be judged by its general appearance, and not by the looks of any particular piece of work. After the champs or veins are wiped out with the rag, the spaces of combed work between the champs must be softened by a piece of rag folded three or four times and drawn over the combed spaces and toward the edges of the work previously wiped out with the rag. The edges of the champs may first be sharpened up by drawing the second joint of the forefinger against them. A fine comb is then waved over the spaces of open work and the whole panel blended lightly crosswise with the flat brush. Quartered oak can be imitated by combing the same as has been described, and letting the work dry before taking out the champs. When the work is dry, mix a weak solution of washing soda, and add a little dry umber to show where you touch the work, put on the champs with a fitch tool, let it stand a few minutes to soften the color, and then rub off with a soft rag, and it will be found that the graining-color is taken off to the ground-work, giving the same effect as if wiped out while the color was wet, only that the work looks cleaner. Work done in this way should be over-grained. The champs may also be put in in dark color over the dry combed work, and left so, as some veins of oak appear dark in certain lights. These dark veins may be imitated by combing the work the same as if going to use the rag to wipe out. Do not blend, but put in the veins with a small fitch tool or fresco liner dipped in some color from the bottom of your pot—not too dark—and immediately blend one way, lifting the edge of the color; after practice it will be found that a very good imitation of dark champs or veins is the result. Heart-work may be done in the same manner, but the combing should be done with a steel comb, the color for putting in the grains being but little darker than that with which the work is rubbed in. It is sometimes necessary to go over the whole with a fine steel comb. An occasional dark piece introduced among wiped work tends to relieve the sameness and looks more like the hardwoods; it also gives a better opportunity (where a job is not to be overgrained) to make distinct mitres and joints. This is very important and should never be forgotten. Be sure and have all joints cleanly cut, as nothing so much offends the eye as wavy or crooked joints. It is always better to make a distinction between the long stiles of a door and the adjoining cross rails. A common fault of the amateur grainer is his inability to make clean-cut divisions.

Plate 5.
FLAKED OAK, LIGHT.

Plate 6.
HEART GROWTH OAK, LIGHT.

The heart of oak—or, as it is sometimes called, "slash oak"—is usually done in the wet color, and is not combed previous to being wiped out with a rag. The outline of the work is first wiped out and the inner edges are softened with the rag. The edges of the work toward the side of the panel should be filled out either by hand or with a small rubber or leather comb covered with a thin piece of rag, being careful to follow close to the last line done by hand. This is an operation which if not carefully done will spoil the appearance of any job. When the panel or piece of work is grained, a coarse steel comb may judiciously be used, drawing it lightly over the heart-work and softening the whole lengthwise with the dry brush and toward all knotty places or turns in the wood. In case the work is to be overgrained, care must be taken not to soften the edges too much, as it will present too sunken an appearance. The plain grains are made with the comb; and if this part of the work is properly done, the effect is better than if it were full of strong grains.

When the work is to be overgrained (and good work cannot be done without), it may be overgrained when dry, in either oil or water color. If in oil (as we finish most outside doors, etc., in this vicinity instead of varnishing them), the same color may be used as for graining, or with the addition of a little more oil and drier, and darkened with umber if necessary. The check roller may first be used in water color, the work having previously been dampened, and, when the checks are dry, the whole gone over in oil. Or the checks may be put in in oil color after first overgraining

in water color; this will necessitate oiling or varnishing when dry. The check roller is used to good advantage on hearts of oak, and the work should then be lightly blended lengthwise. In shading the champs the brush may be drawn through the shading-color, leaving the work streaked; then wipe off where the color covers the champs too deep. A similar effect is obtained by using a medium fine comb covered with a rag, the color being taken off in this way; this is for oil color. The blender drawn through water color, or a common oak overgrainer, gives the same effect for water color. It is better to go all over the work with a thin coat of color, as it looks raw without, and shading it in this way gives the depth that is otherwise unobtainable. Shadows are put in around knarly places, and touches added where needed, and the job is finished.

CHAPTER IV.
GRAINING OAK

Oak may be overgrained by using a very thin coating of asphaltum for the shading color; thin with oil and spirits.

Oak may be grained in distemper—that is, using beer or alcohol for a vehicle with the color, instead of oil. Good work can be done in this way, but not so quickly as in oil. A little sugar added to the beer makes it dry slower and work better than without it. If a tablespoonful of alcohol be added to a pint of beer, the work can be combed while wet almost as well as if in oil. First dampen the ground with a sponge wrung out in clean water, and then rub on the color the same as in oil; comb while wet (or use an overgrainer when dry) and blend lightly with a badger blender; then wipe out the veins or champs with a wet rag before the color dries, or afterward, as desired. A similar effect for light veins is obtained by using the fitch tool to put on the veins or champs and lifting off the color with the blender, thus leaving the champs light. For dark veins the work is put on with a fitch and left as put on. The heart-work may be done in the same manner, both for light and for dark pieces, but it cannot be done so successfully as if done in oil.

Of all the woods we have to imitate, I think oak is the most difficult, hence I have tried to explain the different ways in ordinary use of imitating it; and in closing I would say, Do not overdo your work. Most grainers put in more work—that is, showy grains—than would appear in the natural wood unless it were all selected. And remember that a nice piece of combed work is just as good a representation of oak as the majority of the heart-work often seen.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.