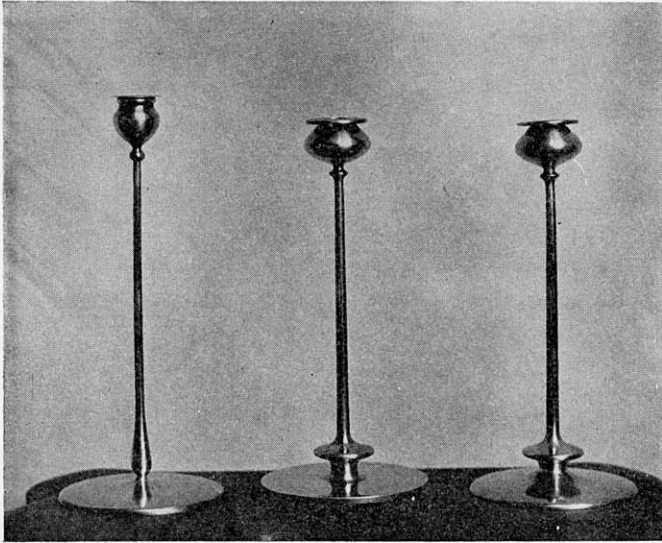


THE CRAFTSMAN

utility and simple beauty rather than a striving for striking effects. He believes that a candlestick is not the place for the display of the human form, and that sea

a medium of exchange between the producer and the consumer.”*

The movement started among a few people who realized the possibilities of industrial development in the old town. Hingham was one of the earliest settled points on the Massachusetts coast, and is rich in historical associations. The early inhabitants were industrious, intelligent, and well-to-do. They brought with them from the mother country not only a knowledge of farming, but also a fair proficiency in the mechanical arts. As time went on, special lines of industry came into prominence, and Hingham manufactures were widely known and widely used. The Hingham bucket was especially famous and found its



Candlesticks: brush finished brass

shells and mushrooms should be viewed in their native element rather than as shades for lamps.

HINGHAM ARTS AND CRAFTS. THEIR AIMS AND OBJECTS. BY C. CHESTER LANE.

THE Hingham Society of Arts and Crafts was organized two years ago. Its object is “to promote artistic work in all branches of handicraft. It hopes to bring designers and workmen into mutually helpful relations, and to encourage workmen to execute designs of their own. It endeavors to stimulate an appreciation of the dignity and value of good design, and to establish

way into almost every household in New England.

Other manufactures were more or less successful, but the perfecting of machinery in the latter part of the nineteenth century threw much of the costlier handmade product out of the market. America has had her Dark Ages of workmanship and design, when houses were filled with ugly, ill-made furniture and crude decorations. The ginger jars and drain pipes covered with gaudy pictures and varnished with a heavy glaze, the *macramé* lambrequins which hid the beautiful lines of colonial mantelpieces, the sideboards and rocking-chairs with no semblance of beauty or usefulness: these,

*From the circular issued by the Society of Arts and Crafts, Hingham, Mass.

HINGHAM ARTS AND CRAFTS

happily, are things of the past. And with the higher ideals, came a revival of interest in domestic handicraft. Bits of old needlework and embroidery were brought down from dusty attics for admiration and imitation. Chairs and tables, of exquisite design and honest purpose, took the place of flimsy and over-decorated furniture. Handmade articles began to have a new value and significance in the face of so much that was cheap and worthless. At the opening of the twentieth century, public interest was thoroughly aroused in more than one locality, by what had been accomplished among a few earnest workers. The little town of Deerfield, in the western part of Massachusetts, offered for exhibition exquisite baskets, attractive rugs, and beautiful embroidery, in proof that a revival of these once famous industries was practicable, and there were those who were convinced that in Hingham lay similar possibilities.

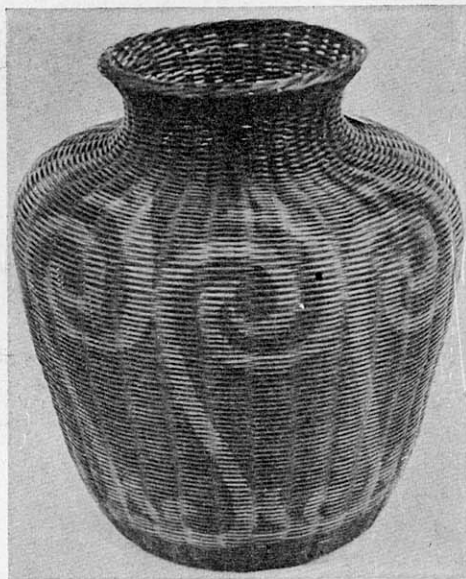
The feeling gradually gained ground, until in November, 1901, it took shape in the formation of the Hingham Society of Arts and Crafts. The management of the new society was placed in the hands of a council of fifteen persons, whose decisions relate to membership, general aims, and all financial questions. This council includes the president, secretary, and treasurer, which officers the council elects annually.

Each handicraft is under the charge of a special committee, and each committee is represented in the council by at least one member, usually by the chairman. In this way, the council exercises such an oversight of the sub-committees as to insure the smooth and harmonious advancement of the different branches of the work.

The Deerfield Society organized after the

various industries were well started. The Hingham Society began with its organization, and felt its way gradually along the different avenues of work which were open to it. The members owned frankly that it was an experiment, but two years of growing usefulness have justified their faith.

It was determined that a high standard of excellence should be set up, and only those products are offered for sale which receive the approbation of the committee.



Burned-reed basket

The aim of the Society has not been merely to establish a market for salable goods. Many articles would find a ready sale which are not within the scope of such an association. Nor is it a philanthropic institution, and while it endeavors to help craftsmen to find a market for their goods, it does not hesitate to reject inferior or inartistic productions.

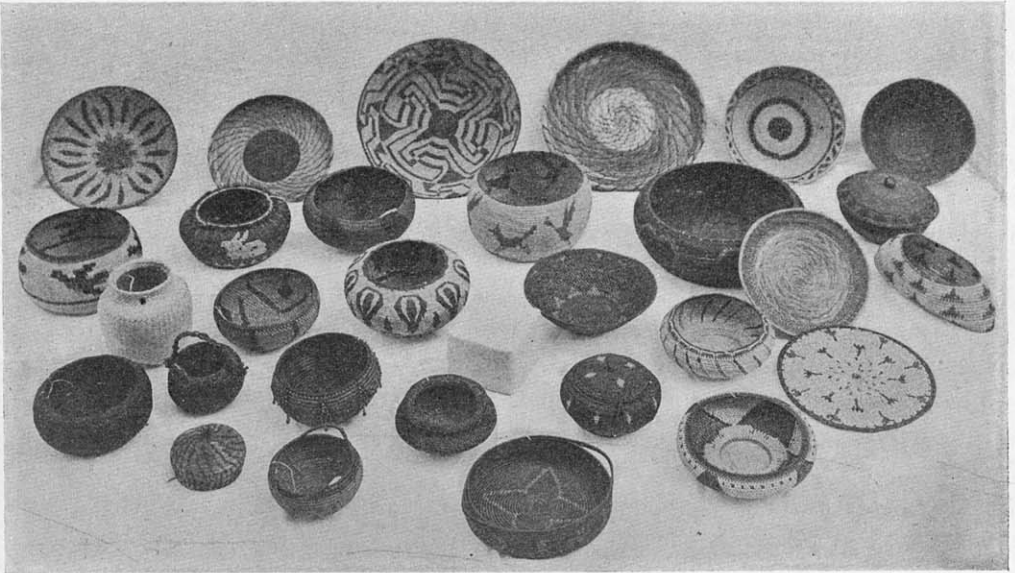
This was a point which at first there was some difficulty in making plain. If a

THE CRAFTSMAN

worker made a rug or a basket which she was confident would sell, she could not understand why the committee should reject it. On the other hand, if a needy and deserving person offered inferior or unsuitable work, it was not always easy to make the decisions seem just and equitable. These problems, however, are working out their own solutions, and the judgments of the committees are regarded with greater con-

Virginia, by invitation of that institution, and there gave a course of lectures and demonstrations on the art of vegetable dyeing. It was only after much experimenting and painstaking effort that a process was discovered by which these desirable shades are produced, and the achievement deserves full recognition.

The making of baskets was one of the first of the various activities in which the



Raffia baskets, mat, and palm-leaf basket

fidence and respect as time proves their value.

The association in Hingham is still too young to have developed very many successful branches of industry, but it feels just pride in what it has accomplished. One of the most important of its branches has been the making of vegetable dyes. Raffia in soft, durable colors is offered in a dozen accepted shades, and fabrics for rugs or embroideries are dyed to order. The official dyer went last autumn to Hampton,

society is now engaged. For this purpose reed, burned-reed, palm leaf, and raffia are used. Of these baskets, those made from burned-reed are by far the most artistic, being unique and singularly rich in coloring and design. The raffia baskets are colored with the vegetable dyes and give very pleasing effects. This industry offers great scope for individual and original work, as has been amply shown at the exhibitions held each August by the Society. Much attention has been given to form, as

HINGHAM ARTS AND CRAFTS

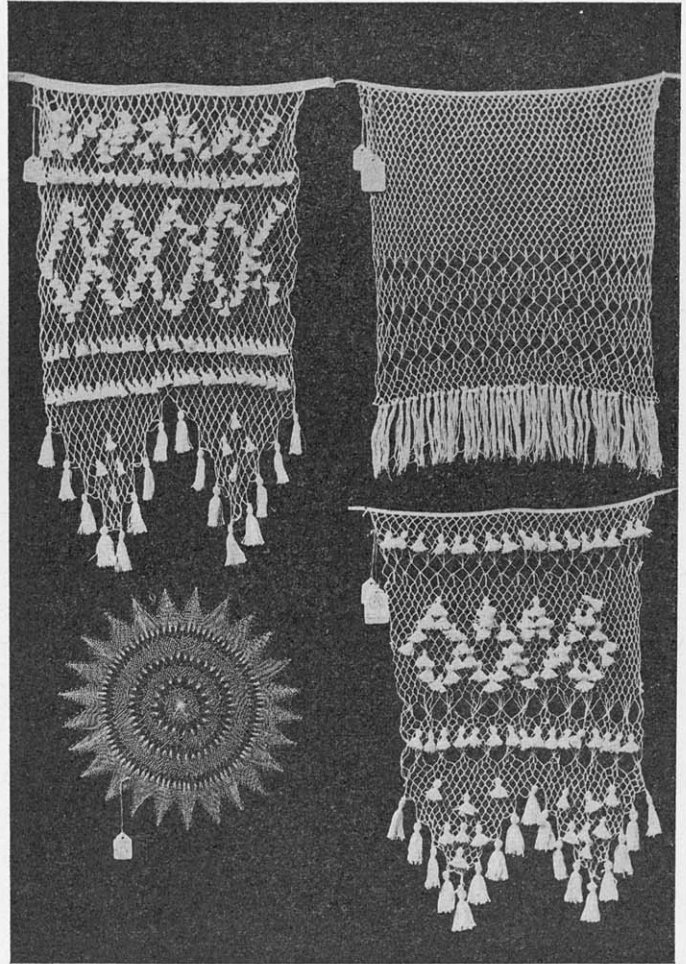
well as to coloring and design, and the results are highly creditable.

The manufacture of rag rugs has presented more than the usual number of difficulties. The unattractiveness of the work and the limitations imposed by the material have been great obstacles to the artistic results desired by the Society. By proper effort, however, it is possible to make rugs which are light, durable, cleanly, and of attractive coloring. Here again the vegetable dyes come into play, and the rugs may be made in any color scheme desired.

The workers in embroidery have tried to revive the old needlework of colonial days, adapting the designs to modern uses and convenience. Original designs of great beauty are also furnished, and deserve much praise. Bedspreads, table covers, bags, and center pieces have gone far to establish the deftness and industry of our modern needlewomen. The old-time netting and fringes, made by several members of the Society, prove as popular now as in the days of our grandmothers, who also appreciated daintiness and durability. The accompanying illustrations show the quality of the work done.

Spinning and weaving have only lately been undertaken, but fabrics of great prominence are produced for embroidery and

clothing. Bead work,—in woven chains, bags, necklaces, card cases, belts, fobs, etc.,—presents great variety of coloring and design. Candles, made of bayberry wax, are in demand, and for these large orders



Netted fringes and mat

have been filled. These "bayberry dips" are a delicate green in color, and give out a faint, pleasing fragrance.

Cabinet work represents one of the most interesting phases of the Society's activity. In this department, beside artistic furni-



EMBROIDERY AND NETTED FRINGES

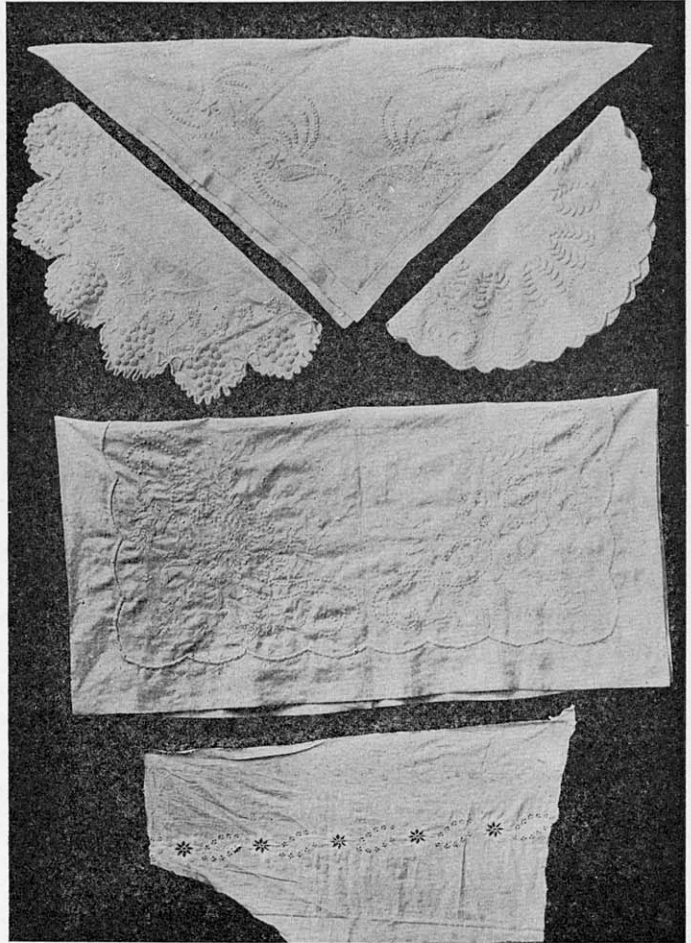
HINGHAM ARTS AND CRAFTS

ture, old-fashioned buckets, tubs, churns, and piggins are made. Great ingenuity has been shown in the manufacture of toys, and tiny buckets and nests of boxes, such as delighted the hearts of children half a century ago, have been successfully reproduced.

One of the members of the Society has done excellent work in iron; and another has produced beautiful effects in copper and silver. Doubtless, as time goes on, new lines of activity will develop, and other talents will prove to be latent in the Society.

It is frequently asked: What is the financial basis of the Society, and what is done with its profits? The whole arrangement is a very simple one. Whether or not it proves to be permanent, depends upon various circumstances, but, at present, this is the plan upon which the Society conducts its business. Every article, before it can be marked with the Society's stamp,—a Hingham bucket,—must be brought before a committee qualified to judge of its artistic excellence and its satisfactory workmanship. The price is then fixed, and, in most cases, the article is put on sale at the annual exhibition. The money paid for it goes to the worker; the Society, at present, asking no commission. The running expenses are met by the admission fees to the exhibition, as well as by those to the Society itself. The latter are not annual dues, and as by this

time, a great number of the capable townsfolk are already enrolled as members, it is possible that a commission may eventually be charged to defray the many small expenses. Even the most skeptical, however, are by this time convinced of the unselfish quality of the Society's interest in the movement. It



Embroidery

is always the work, and not the organization, that is looked upon as most important. This feeling has made it possible for the Society to attain signal successes, and will pave the way to still more worthy achievements.