GARDEN AND PORCH DECORATIONS OF CEMENT WITH MOSAIC EMBELLISHMENT: BY HOWARD F. STRATTON

ONE objection which has been made to work in concrete (cement) is that it lacks color. In some carefully designed forms, however, the contour, or the relief of the ornament gives such a variety of effect in light and shade that the surface is made interesting enough without actual color; but in the simpler shapes, the gray tones have sometimes palled upon the garden lover, who is apt as well to be a lover of color. In damp places where the growth of moss covers the material with a mantle of green velvet, this objection does not obtain; and in those regions where brown and orange-colored lichens spread their feathery covering there is enough variety.

In certain old gardens of Italy, cooled and saturated by fountains, this naturalistic addition of moss or lichen is exquisitely fitting and harmonious. In dry locations many forms of concrete construction have, however, frequently lacked the touch of bright color which would give them distinction.

This much desired result has now been achieved by the introduction of patterns done in mosaic, rather primitively, but still in keeping with the somewhat elemental shapes themselves,—added as a painter hangs a bit of azure or vermilion on a neutral surface.

Color is, first of all, required to give emphasis to structural features not sufficiently marked in form and to satisfy and delight
modified tints of mosaic combined with it are practicable for the most riotous mass of larkspurs, tiger lilies, zinnias and other glowing blooms.

In designing these mosaic and concrete plant holders, it is imperative to keep in mind the fact that they should contain color as a part of their necessary surfaces, and not merely as external addition; that it should link itself with the characteristic expression of the shapes, rather than have any excess of moisture from “watering” to flow off instead of being held, causing the roots of the inserted plant to rot.

Illustration No. 2 shows a vase related in treatment to the first one mentioned. It was, however, designed to be placed on a pedestal, or balustrade, or at the end of stone steps. It has insets of a rugged character, emphasized by the beveled edges.

The lower corner features on the hexagonal surfaces of No. 3 are suggestive of rivets, and the greater size of the insets on the thickened band at the top, as compared with the closer angles at the bottom,
of ornaments giving a decidedly Hungarian suggestion. The overturning, or folding back of the lip edge and the scallops, with the semi-woven color, is not unlike a type of leather cup made in that country. Many such jars are conceived on this principle of strengthening the effect of the shape, as well as of deepening their tone color.

The neck band which encircles the illustrated jar, No. 5, is admirably conceived, as the pendants give the emphasis which the narrow space allowed for the single line of tesserae could not alone accomplish. They catch the light besides as it falls most fully on the shoulders of the jar. This banded effect obtains also in jar No. 6.

The Byzantine pedestal, No. 7, is an altogether original creation and of unusual character. Circular, square, hexagonal and octagonal supports abound; and it is interesting to see the revelation this five-sided innovation is. The awkward sharpness of the angles has been modified by the slender, twisted columns at the corners; and the slight curving of the sides has taken away a flatness otherwise apparent. This device gives the hint of a cylindrical shape.

The suggestive heraldic decoration on the vase accompanying the pedestal offers a large field for the wise designer. The black and yellow tesserae are exceedingly effective in the gray cement.

It must always be remembered that these objects are not designed to serve as ends in themselves; but wholly in relation to the plants placed inside them, their destination being the garden. They are not for ornamental purposes pure and simple, but serve to increase the effectiveness of the blossoms and foliage.

FOREST NOTES

Uncle Sam's forest rangers require that permanent camp sites within the forests shall be kept in sanitary condition. The ubiquitous tin can must be buried, and waste paper burned when a camp is left. Aside from their hygienic value, such rules will help to preserve the beauty of our native woodlands.

More than 3,000 small logging operators now buy national forest timber; at least 25,000 persons—settlers, miners, stockmen and others—obtain timber from the Government's big woodlot for their own use free of charge.