Taken from Gaskell's Penman's Hand Book, 1883.

INKS.

Good Harry Dean wrote, eighty years ago-and things haven't changed much since then-about this essential, thus:

Ink has not only been useful in all ages, but still continues absolutely necessary to the preservation and improvement of every art and science, and for conducting the ordinary transactions of life. Simple as the composition of ink may be thought, and really is, it is a fact well known, that we have at present, none equal in beauty and color to that used in England in the time of the Saxons. It is an object of the utmost importance that the decisions and the adjudication of the courts of justice, conveyances from man to man, wills, testaments, and other instruments, which affect property, should be written with ink of such durable quality as may best resist the destructive powers of time and the elements. The necessity of paying greater attention to this matter may be readily seen by comparing the rolls and records, that have been written from the fifteenth century to the end of the seventeenth, with the writings we have remaining of various ages from the fifth to the twelfth centuries. Notwithstanding the superior antiquity of the latter, they are in excellent preservation; but we frequently find the former, though of more modern date, so much defaced that they are scarcely legible.

Inks are of various sorts, as encaustic or varnish, Indian ink, gold and silver, purple, black, red, green, and various other colors: there are also secret and sympathetic inks. Golden ink was used by various nations, as may be seen in several libraries, and in the archives of churches. Silver ink was also common in most countries. Red ink, made of vermilion, cinnabar or purple, is very frequently found in MSS. but none are found written entirely with ink of that color. Blue or yellow ink was seldom used but in MSS. The yellow has not been in use, as far as we can learn, for six hundred years. Pale ink very rarely occurs before the last four centuries.

RECEIPT TO MAKE EXCELLENT BLACK INK.

For 3 pints.

3 oz. Aleppo galls,
3 Oz. Copperas,

1 oz. gum arabic boil 6 ounces logwood, strain it through a cloth, and mix the whole.

The ink will be better if the galls are steeped several days first, the Copperas, etc., added afterwards.

"Pale ink," he says," very rarely occurs before the last four centuries." The older the world gets the paler and poorer the ink If Harry were alive to-day, we could show him such ink as he never dreamed of-it is so much worse than that of 1800 and it is used in writing schools and business colleges, and by penmen all over the country. They don't complain very much of it, because they think a really good ink cannot be obtained.

Almost everybody admires a rich, black, easy flowing ink. Good ink has much to do with the appearance of handwriting, as well as ornamental work, and the best ink, other qualities being equal, is that which flows freest. Thick, sticky ink should never be used; for while the color may be all right, it is impossible to write well with it. We have used the old fashioned ink which Dean prescribes, and can recommend it. It is of good color, and flows freely.

The following also makes a good writing ink:

Water, 7 gallons,

Bruised galls, 2 pounds,

Logwood chips, green copperas and gum, of each, 1 pound;

Boil two hours and strain.

Product, 5 gallons.

RECIPE FOR MAKING COMMON BLACK INK.

(Ink that is black when first written with.)

To I gallon of boiling soft water, add 3/4 of an ounce of extract of logwood. Boil two minutes; remove from the fire, and stir in 48 grains of bichromate of potash and 8 grains of prussiate of potash. Then stir.

For 10 gallons, use 6 and 1/2 ounces of logwood extract, I ounce bichromate of potash and 80 grains of prussiate of potash.

BLACK COPYING INK, OR WRITING FLUID.

Take 2 gallons of rain water and put into it 1/4 pound of gum arabic, 1/4 pound brown sugar, 1/4 pound clean copperas, 3/4 pound powdered nut galls, mix and shake occasionally for ten days, and then strain if needed sooner, let it stand in an iron kettle until the strength is obtained.

This ink will stand the action of the air for centuries, if required.

RFD INK.

In an ounce phial, put I teaspoonful of aqua ammonia, gum arabic size of two or three peas, and 6 grains Of NO. 40 carmine; fill up with soft water, and it is soon ready for use.

GREEN INK.

Cream of tartar, I part; verdigris, 2 parts; water) 8 parts. Boil till reduced to the proper color.

VIOLET INK.

A good violet ink is made by dissolving some violet aniline in water to which some alcohol has been added; it takes very little aniline to make a large quantity of the ink.

GOLD INK.

Mosaic gold, 2 parts, and gum arabic, I part ground up to a proper condition for using.

SILVER INK.

Triturate in a mortar equal parts of silver foil and sulphate of potassa, until reduced to fine powder then wash the salt out and mix the residue with mucilage of equal parts of gum arabic water.

INDELIBLE STENCIL PLATE INK.

One pound precipitate carbonate of iron, 1 pound sulphate of iron, 1 and 1/4 pounds acetic acid; stir over a fire until they combine; then add 3 pounds printers' varnish, and 2 pounds fine book ink, and stir until well mixed. Add I pound Ethiop's mineral.

EXCHEQUER INK.

Bruised galls, 40 pounds gum, 10 pounds; green sulphate of iron, 9 pounds soft water, 45 gallons; macerate for three weeks, with frequent agitation. Then strain and bottle.

This ink will endure for ages, and is one of the best inks ever produced.

ASIATIC INKS.

Bruised galls, 14 pounds; gum, 5 pounds. Put them in a small cask, and add of boiling soft water, 15 gallons. Allow the whole to macerate, with frequent agitation, for two weeks, then further add green copperas, 5 pounds, dissolved in 7 pints of water. Again mix well, and agitate the whole daily for two or three weeks.

BROWN INK.

A strong decoction of catechu. The shade may be varied by the cautious addition of a little weak solution of bichromate of potash.

INDELIBLE INK.

Nitrate of silver, 1/4 ounce; water, 3/4 ounce. Dissolve, add as much of the strongest liquor of ammonia as will dissolve the precipitate formed on its first addition; then add of mucilage, 1 and 1/2 drachms, and a little sap green, syrup of buckthorn, or finely powdered indigo, to color.

Turns black on being held near the fire, or touched with a hot flat iron.

INDELIBLE INK FOR GLASS OR METAL.

Borax, 1 ounce; shellac, 2 ounces; water, 18 fluid ounces. Boil in a covered vessel; add of thick mucilage, I ounce; triturate it with levigated indigo and lampblack, q.s. to give it a good color. After two hours' repose, decant from the dregs and bottle for use.

It may be bronzed after being applied. This ink resists moisture, chlorine and acids.