
## SOME REMARKS ON TILES.

The art of tiling may be considered the connecting link between the fine and useful arts. The combination is of beauty and utility, says the *Decorator's and Painter's Magazine.* The glazed tiles for decorative uses are of four classes, and are commonly called art tiles, enamelled tiles, embossed tiles of majolica, and encaustic tiles.

The first are hand-painted, and are used for decorating grate-cheeks, pilasters and cabinet works. The enamelled tiles are also used for these purposes, as well as for handsome flower pots, wall linings, and purposes of general utility and architectural decorations. The embossed majolica is used in the same way. Encaustic, plain and mosaic tiles are used for pavements. Inlaid encaustic tiles of extra thickness are used for hearths, and self-colored glazed tiles of white celadon, turquoise, olive and buff, in squares and geometrical figures, are used for wall linings.

The encaustic tiles, now commonly made of an earthenware intermediate between common tiles and porcelain, are extensively used for paving churches, halls, baths, conservatories and other places. They differ from those of antiquity in the manner in which they are finished. The ancient artists made use of the stylus and wax, which gave rise to the term—from the Greek *en,* and *kaustikos,* burning. The exact mode of burning-in the design has not been learned by the modern artists, who made use of oil instead of wax.

The manufacture of the celebrated Minton decorative tiles is as follows: The clay is first put through a variety of washings and purifications, and then passed through fine lawn-sieves in a liquid state. It is then boiled until it is in a plastic condition. The pattern is cast in plaster and placed in a metal frame of required size. A piece of the clay is then rolled out like pie crust and pressed upon the plaster pattern to receive the correct outline of the design. The metal frame containing the plaster mould is divided horizontally and the surface put in, the frame being put together again and filled with coarser clay of the required thickness. The tile is then put under a screw-press to receive the proper degree of solidity.

The durability of these tiles is such that nothing short of the destruction of the world would destroy them. Their durability relates both to the strength of the material and to the depth and intensity of color.

The oldest specimen of glazed tiles discovered in England was the ruined priory church in Norfolk, a portion of which is in the British Museum. These tiles are ornamented with escutcheons of arms, and on each is the name of "Thomas."

Scarcely a house in Pompeii seems to have been without mosaic pavement.

In Greece, inlaid pavements of variously colored marbles were used for the sumptuous decorations of the time of Alexander of Macedon. They were in fretwork and geometrical patterns, but the most famous is the one mentioned by Pliny as the masterpiece of one Sosos of Pergamos, called the "Unswept Hall." It is inlaid so as to represent crumbs and fragments which would be found on a floor after a banquet, with the doves which had flocked in to partake of the feast.

Another masterpiece of the tiler's art was the floor of the great ship Hieron II., which was of small cubes of stone of every color, representing the history of the siege of Troy; a work which occupied 300 workmen a year.

Mention is made of a tiled court in sacred history as early as 521 B.C. It is described as a pavement of red and blue, and white and black marble. This was the garden court of the palace of Ahasuerus, and the art of enamelling in glazed colors was well known to the artisans of that locality at that time. Blue was a favorite color, combined with black marble.

The "Dutch tiles" are famous the world over. Washington Irving, in "The Alhambra," gives the history and origin of these tiles, which have figured so largely in the useful arts. He says they were brought into Spain by the Moors, and were used by them in the building of their Spanish palaces. From this country they were introduced into the Spanish Netherlands by the Dutch soldiers, and from there into Holland. The polished surfaces of the tiles commended them to the Dutch housekeepers, who have always been famous for cleanliness. They took such hold upon the people that manufactories were set up, and the numbers turned out rendered the cost within the limits of the householders in general.

The polished surface of tiles and the durable nature of the material still commend their use strongly for the maintenance of exquisite cleanliness. From a sanitary point of view, tiled floors for apartments commend themselves. From an artistic point of view, tiles present the most captivating forms of beauty.

The highest artistic talent is employed in the conception and execution of the designs with which tiles are decorated. Even giving the colors to tiles is an operation requiring great skill and care. It requires three days, and the tiles are then dried from two to three weeks and then fired, being exposed to an intense heat for sixty hours.

## PRODUCTION OF STRUCTURAL MATERIALS.

The latest report of the Dominion Geological Survey gives the production of structural materials in Canada for 1894.

We would like to see these official reports brought more closely up to date, as at the present rate of development in Canada, statistics that are two years old are of comparatively little value.

The report states that owing to the intermittent working and large area covered, it is impossible to give accurate statistics of production of the quarrying and brick-making industries. The total value of the various products for 1904 is stated as follows:—

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| Building stone | $1,930,000 |
| Marble | ..... |
| Granite | 150,000 |
| Slate | 23,000 |
| Flag stone | 6,720 |
| Cement | 1,338,239 |
| Lime | 780,000 |
| Bricks and terra cotta | 2,983,000 |
| Sewer pipes | 440,894 |
| Fire clay | 8,592 |

The Bullen Brick Company, of Chicago, are reported to have purchased 156 acres of land at Weston, on which to establish a brick manufactory.