

OUR DEPARTMENTAL SERIES.

WALL PAPER SECTION.—Part I.

Introduction: Historical Review of its Manufacture—How it is Made To-day—Hints about Buying and Selling Wall Paper—How to make a Successful Display.

INTRODUCTORY.

MANY merchants are content to move along in a rut. They acquire a certain amount of trade in certain lines, and then they cease branching out. They become oblivious to the possibilities of further extension. It is just for merchants of this kind that the following articles are written. They strive to show, perhaps rather imperfectly and briefly, how a bookseller should conduct his wall paper section. To such as are already in that business, the paragraphs may contain very little that is new. To those who have not a wall paper department in their stores these articles should throw some light on its establishment and management.

To-day, when great businesses are being built up out of small beginnings, retailers should not be content to stagnate. Let them try to get every cent out of their businesses that they can. To do this let them spread out, and by means of the establishment of new branches bring in a higher percentage on their capital.

"Flock" papers, which were used a great deal early last century, were manufactured in quite an ingenious manner. After a design had been printed, the flock, i.e., wool of the necessary color, cut very fine, or else metallic powder, was sprinkled evenly all over the paper. This adhered only to the pattern of course. When a well-marked relief was required the process was repeated, and the whole thing pressed between rollers.

Until a comparatively recent date, a great difficulty lay in producing more than three or four colors. This difficulty has now been removed by the invention of marvellously intricate machines, which will print dozens of colors all at once.

HOW WALL PAPER IS MADE.

SIX different persons are concerned in the manufacture of wall paper. From the artist who creates the design to the experienced operative who controls the rolling machine, the services of half a dozen skilled mechanics are required, each of whom adds his share to the completed production.

Primarily the success of a paper rests with the artist. He it is who invents the color scheme and creates the figure. Usually the design consists of the tendrils and blossoms of flowers, strangely and curiously interwoven.

When a design is accepted it is handed over to the "transferer." By means of oiled tracing paper he outlines the design on suitable material. This reproduction is wrapped about a wooden roller 18 in. in length and six in. in diameter, and by pressure an exact imprint is left on its surface.

The roller is now passed on to a trained workman who follows out the lines of the pattern with brass tape. This he drives into the wood, leaving a narrow edge raised above its surface. Each tape is intended to print a definite color, and, as there is a different roller for each color, great care must be taken that each raised outline for one color should be clear of the corresponding outline for another color. So delicate is this process that sometimes it requires months to finish a single roller.

Next the space between the brass outlines is filled with felt, hardened by a chemical process. The filling is made exactly even with the top of the brass lines.

The presses are now made ready with the set of rollers that has been prepared. Sometimes as many as 12 colors are printed at once. By means of delicate pins the rollers are held in position in such a manner that they will strike the paper exactly when required.

First, the paper is coated with a color for a background. This is done on another press, the paper running rapidly under brushes which supply the color. The paper is carried on to



Ingrain Frieze manufactured by Staunton Limited, Toronto.

HISTORY OF WALL PAPER.

ALMOST all the earliest examples of wall paper in use are to be found in China. In some of the Chinese provinces wall paper has been used for several centuries. In Europe the idea of having colored paper hangings for walls was first taken up in England. These coverings were made to imitate as closely as possible the velvet wall hangings of the great Genoese and Florentine merchant princes. They were introduced into the homes of wealthy Englishmen, and the conventional patterns chosen were rarely altered or changed.

The method by which the paper of our forefathers was manufactured differs considerably from the rapid manner in which the beautiful wall papers of to-day are turned out. The patterns were first cut in relief on wooden blocks, of which there was one for each color. The blocks were some 21 in. wide, and considerable care was taken that the various colors should register exactly. The pattern was printed off by hand on small square pieces of paper.