



## INTERIOR DECORATION.

By E. N. RICH.

WHILST so many important structures are being added to the list of great buildings in our cities, a few suggestions on the above subject may not be considered out of place. Considering first ecclesiastical decoration, the opinion is ventured that many crude and hazy ideas are held on the subject of beautifying the interior of sacred edifices, even by some who should be authorities, cramping their efforts in this desirable direction with unnecessary limitations and slavish adherence to absolute rules and traditions. If the same breadth and freedom permitted in more secular work were applied on the walls of a sacred edifice, not only would there be no "irreverent Philistinism," but more true worship in the sense that Ruskin preached it, by adhering more closely to Nature, and inferentially acknowledging the universal sway of her great Author. My idea is, in whatever form of decorative art, we should go to Nature first and always, not for leading ideas only, but continually renew touch with earth to regain vitality. As Achilles did, keep to Nature in the design, and in the execution of every detail of that design. As an embodiment of this theory in ecclesiastical decoration, subjoined is a sketch of the baptistry of a church in Northaw, Herts, England, recently executed by the writer, with, it may be added, satisfaction to architect, donors and all concerned. The ground panel consists of a broad belt, whereon are depicted in conventional form water lilies, cats' tails (or bull rushes), vellum ornament on a ground of three blues with gold water lines. Next there is a cresting of gold shells on a terra cotta ground, water plants on water lilies, with gold and silver fish. Above that is a blue ground with diaper of tongue of flame and cross in gold, centre of dove white, with gold rays pointing towards font. The border above is on blue ground and represents clouding. Above that again, on a vellum ground, is an olive pattern, Waterhouse brown with gold olives. The splay of windows are lilies with scrolls and appropriate texts, on same ground as cross, and frame with pale blue ground and gold stars in upper part.

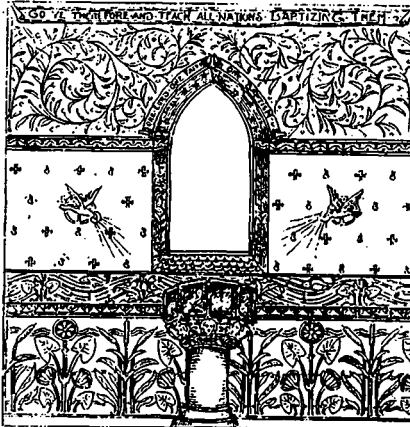
All this, though conventional in arrangement, and conforming somewhat to the character of the surrounding features of the building, nevertheless admits of natural forms being retained and the matchless harmony of tints that Nature alone displays to those who will diligently seek for them. We know of her more pronounced moods—her dying sunsets, and the glories of her autumn foliage—but how many decorative artists seek for samples of her more subtle graces—her symphonies in grey and silver, sunrises and sombre settings. At our very feet lie neglected lessons in the lichen and moss on the trunk and root of hoary forest trees, the boulders on the hillside, or shells and pebbles on the sea shore.

One of the greatest decorative artists of the age, the late Clement Heaton, of England, decorated the interior of Eaton Hall, the residence of the present Duke of Westminster. During the three years I was engaged on that one interior, under the supervision of Mr. Heaton, the designer, I learned many useful lessons. So complete a practical designer, and so enthusiastic a lover of Nature was the principal, it was almost impossible to avoid the contagion of his enthusiasm. So thorough was the adhesion to Nature, for instance, that the Duke's keeper had instructions to supply the artist with any thing alive, from a deer to a squirrel, or a hawk to a robin. Conservatory and garden were ransacked, all fruit and foliage laid under contribution, and yet there was no attempt at picture painting; it was conventionalized and subservient to a well-digested plan, but Nature, pure and simple, was the keynote that ran through all.

To briefly apply one of these lessons, bear in mind that in determining the prevailing tint for a room, re-

gard should be had not only for its purpose, but also for its aspect, as thus: giving warm, comforting hues to the north, and cool, refreshing tones to the south.

As an idea for a dining room, take in the rough as follows: A rich brown band at base to represent earth, with the greens in tone and in conventional form of shrubs, plants, grasses, frogs, mice or other "small deer" for greater animation; then trees with fruit, birds in keeping, and finally sky, with birds on the wing: you would thus have skirting, dado, cresting, filling, frieze and ceiling.



BAPTISTRY OF CHURCH AT NORTHAW, ENG.

Take a drawing room and treat it similarly as to subdivision, but adhering mainly to flowers and flowering shrubs, with medallions, perhaps, of poets, musicians or painters.

Halls and stairways may have a continuous pattern, with Æsop's fables. An ornamental arrangement for a staircase is a climbing squirrel on ascending pattern, combined with a hazel nut. Many such quaint suggestions in adapting Nature to ornamental forms, the west has learned from the "most eastern east"—from

These rough suggestions are thrown out in the hope of inducing art lovers to accept the principle I have tried to enunciate, and the practice of which would inevitably awaken purer harmonies, greater service to true art, and more reverent and devoted love for Nature.

## COLORS IN DECORATIVE PAINTING.

THE most valuable colors in decorative painting, says the *Decorator and Furnisher*, are the ochres, which vary from a bright, though not vivid, yellow, to a color nearly approaching a tawny brown. The best ochre produces quiet tints in white and other colors, including a valuable green when combined with prussian and other blue. In combination with vermilion, Indian and Venetian red, it produces refined and quiet colors of great value. Most useful reds are light-red, Indian and Venetian red; these may be lightened to any required degree with vermilion. The three reds produce good ground colors when mixed with white, white and yellow ochre, or white and black. Lake and vermilion produce a rich crimson. Of all blue pigments, blue ochre is the most permanent, and prussian blue the most useful. Blue, combined with white, is of the utmost value to prepare permanent greens, and produce pleasant tones. Cobalt blue is highly commended for preparation of clear, bright blues. The finest small blue is durable and useful, being unaffected by lime. As a general rule, blues, with a slight greenish tint, are more pleasant in decoration than those which incline to purple. Greens for decoration should, as a rule, be mixed with pigments. The ordinary greens of commerce cannot be depended on. Bright and shining greens should be sparingly introduced

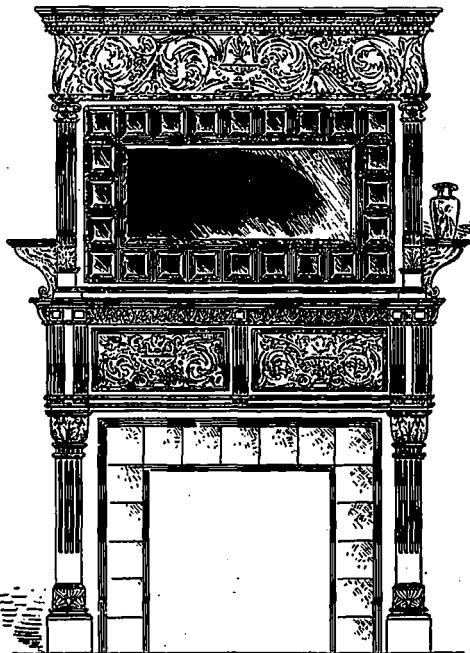
being too hard and forcible, but all tones of suitable green may be found in autumnal foliage. Such greens are readily produced with prussian blue and cobalt blue, and permanent yellow with the ochres, lemon, yellow, and raw and burnt sienna. To compounds of these Indian and Venetian reds, Vandyke brown and burnt umber may be added. All greens may be brightened with bright and lemon yellow. Lake, vermilion, Venetian and Indian red are to be valued for the bright intensity of their colors. All colors of a decidedly neutral character prove tame and ineffective. Beads and chamfers, in gold and gold and black, are always appropriate and telling in effect on panels. Lines of light or full colors should be sparingly used on borders, finials and crockets in flat paneling. In the painting of mediaeval times, it is noticeable that pure colors are rare; these are most generally toned, and with admirable effect. The absence of the primaries is a rebuke to the writers on theory colors, who lay down in a way to indicate the presence of such colors as indispensable to rich decoration, the proportions in which they should appear. The toning of colors is a very simple matter, but it requires system. The adoption combination changes colors. Where the form of pattern undergoes repetition in stenciled ceiling, bands is the most satisfactory made, as it helps to remove, in a considerable degree, the unavoidable hardness of such bands, and a quiet effect will be secured by bringing the counter-changed colors close to one another in intensity.

A good ground for dark oak is made of pure white lead, golden ochre, and royal red. Deep orange chrome is sometimes used for ground for dark oak when a bright tone is desired. The graining color is made of burnt sienna, raw sienna, and Vandyke brown.

Slightly tinted green glass is introduced by decorators in certain rooms having abundant light, as grateful to the sight and having a subduing influence on the decoration.

THE highest art education is that which fits one for the making of a home—a home, not a storehouse or curiosity shop.—*Edmund Russell*.

A picture we may pass by, and seldom study or feel. It tells a story, and we go to it when we want to be interested. The color of our walls we dwell in; it surrounds us as sunlight and atmosphere; it does not speak to us, but envelops us; it forms our material environment, and is as subtle in its effects as our spiritual one. Color is the moral element of the material world.—*Edmund Russell*.



DESIGN FOR OVERMANTEL.

Sepoy, Burmese, Chinese, or last of all, Japanese artists, where, through every quaint line of the most pronounced national character Nature can be easily traced. An almost infinite variety to suit every phase of public or private life, could be made of objects of permanent beauty on these lines.