

The writer, in his book on *House Painting*, says of the use of white for exteriors:

It is a kind of Puritanism in Painting, which has no warrant in nature, which in such matters should measurably be our guide and instructor. If we go to her for instruction, she will point us to the vaulted arch above, freecost by day with a thousand shapes and hues of loveliness and beauty, and by night with myriads of stars; to the cool, gray tints of the morning twilight, and the gorgeous blazoning of the summer sunset. She will show us a landscape whereon with lavish hand she has painted forms of beauty of every color and hue, and tint and shade, and pencilled with exquisite touches the tiniest leaf.

It must not, however, be supposed that, in seeking instruction from nature, we are to copy the natural disposition of colors in the decoration of our houses, either in kind or proportion. The fact that nature in the vernal season spreads a carpet of living green beneath our feet, and at all times a canopy of azure above us, is not of itself good reason why the base of a house should be painted green, and the roof sky-blue. Both these colors should have little or no place in the external ornamentation of a building, *for the reason*—if for no other—that *nature exhibits them in abundance*, and of a purity that art cannot hope to rival. It should be remembered that a building is not in any sense a natural object; but, with its formal lines and severe angles, is artificial to the last degree, and must, under all circumstances, be treated as such; and any attempt to make it appear a natural object, by painting it with such colors as nature most largely displays, is ridiculous.

The true theory in painting a country house is to render the building conspicuous, but not obtrusive; to enhance its good features, if it have any, and diminish or hide its defects:—to bring it into harmony with its surroundings, and with the general landscape. The use of the primary colors, red, blue and yellow, and the extreme colors, black and white—excepting the latter in small quantity—is not admissible in exterior house painting.