

WALL PAPER AND DECORATIONS—Cont'd. scope to his fancy for varied color. To talk of color is practically impossible. Its nomenclature conveys nothing beyond a vague general notion. If I ask for a scheme in red, I may obtain something as hot as fire, or as dry as sand would be to the mouth. Therefore, on this I must perforce be brief; and yet, I would like to say something which has a very definite bearing on the matter, for, if the form of design is important, surely color has far more claims.

The most joyous of designs may be saddened by color, and yet a sombre motive may be treated with dignity in a scheme of bright red, which is supposed to be the most exhilarating. I say, "supposed to be exhilarating," for, after all, it is more the association of ideas than the raw color which affects you. If we examine the rooms we live in, and the scheme of decoration appropriate to each room, one of the questions which almost naturally arises is, "Why should a dining-room be always dark red?" Is it to match the underdone beefsteak, which continental prejudice believes to be our favorite diet? But, on the other hand, why should a drawing-room be colorless? Is it thus as a foil to the conversation, which is often highly colored? Nor need a breakfast-room be too simple and virtuous. The early morning suggests innocence and candor, it is true, but it brings also letters and depression. Gay colors seem to me as needful to begin the day as to end it. A sunrise is often as well schemed as a melodramatic sunset.

Ought we not at this time to consider very seriously the relative positions of English artists as designers and colorists? Latterly, the pure invention of pattern which the designers of this country have evolved has attracted European attention. I say this because I know it, and am proud of it; for even in my own humble sphere the manufacturers of almost every European nationality have given me commissions for goods, ultimately to be disposed of in the English market and their own. But this is not sufficient. I firmly believe we do "hold the field" above all nations for originality and invention in design; but as regards color, that is another matter. I would not venture to claim our supremacy in that respect. A merchant can commission the English designer for something "new" in form and idea, and be sure he gets it; but when the stuff is made a designer must often own to his sorrow that his scheme and color has been greatly improved by the printer and manufacturer. Indeed, this is a matter sometimes left entirely to the buyer, the designer only supplying the outline. This is not as it should be, and I have often wondered whether there are causes other than merely climatic reasons for this short-

coming. We have schools of design where invention of a kind is cultivated, but as for teaching pupils to emphasize the development of a finer sense of color, there seems to be none.

I am here following in the wake of my friend Alex. Millar, who, in a lecture on carpet designing given recently at the Society of Arts, called special attention to this deficiency in our national art of training. He made a suggestion that seemed to be of the greatest value. In fact, I cannot lay too much stress on the stupendous importance and influence which it might have if carried out thoroughly. It was that "color"—as distinct from form—should be taught as a separate subject—taught as thoroughly, and held of equal importance to form. Neither is complete without the other; but we take the one very seriously,

and leave the people to pick up the other anyhow. For a long time after 1851, when men were supposed to have changed all this, the designing capacity of this country continued at a low ebb. During this period anything good of its sort was invariably produced abroad.

Indeed, manufacturers would hardly deign to look at an English design. Now that our designers have attracted European attention, I feel more anxious than I can well express that the onward march to the maintenance of our national supremacy in industrial design should not be crippled and hampered for the lack of that charming companion, color. Form, beautiful as it may be, is but dry bones, the mere skeleton of an idea. It must be clothed with life, and color is to form what breath is to the body.

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