

## POPULAR ÆSTHETICS.

BY PROF. J. W. GRAY.

Among the many questions of the day engrossing the public mind and immediately concerned in the education of the young, there is none engaging so little attention, and yet is of such vital importance, as the introduction into our schools of a judicious system of Æsthetic culture.

When we look around us, and take into consideration how much of life's duties are so very intimately connected with it, that not only the luxuries, but the common necessities in our household furniture, and the thousand and one little comforts we surround ourselves with, are so dependent upon their beauty, to the application of a pure and correct taste in their manufacture, the following questions suggest themselves to the mind: What are we doing to promote a purer taste among us? What opportunities do we afford our young mechanics and others to cultivate theirs? Is it great matter for wonder that when they are called upon for the exercise of it, they are found deficient in this respect, and prove incapable of infusing an artistic feeling into their work. Let not those who are ever ready to find fault with them, quietly fold their arms and complain of this want of taste in our young mechanics. This will certainly continue to be the case so long as such indifference is manifested to this great public want—the introduction of some proper method by which the young can be trained to the principles of correct form and harmonious combinations of colours. Nor should this boon be confined exclusively to those intending to become producers; for it is essential that the purchaser's taste should be cultivated, or the mechanic's work, no matter how beautifully it may be performed, will lack its proper appreciation.

In England the strongest drawback to the attainment of a pure taste in manufactures, has been found in the following causes. To the absence of a refined and cultivated taste among the masses, (or perhaps it is better to designate them by the name of purchasers;) to the pertinacious clinging of many of the manufacturers to old styles and pandering too much to the popular and uneducated taste, substituting beauty of form and chasteness of colour for gaudiness in the one and falseness in the other. This was one of the great evils the schools of Art in England had to contend with, and often when issuing good designs, they were met by the manufacturers saying "Yes it is pretty, but we must alter it. Where you have put sober colours, we must substitute gayer ones, then it will, the more readily, catch the customer's eye, and when we have changed this form into a basket of fruit or flowers, we think it will be right." And in this manner, stripped of its greatest beauty, the design is sent forth to the public and they tamely submit to the gay flowers and improbable fruit, to the gaudy roses that flaunt their questionable beauty upon us from wall