

appropriate for panel decoration than for the light treatment which it generally receives. One of the principal reasons for its being used in this way is, that it stands the action of the atmosphere better than any of the hammered metals; but if greater care were taken to design in a method more appropriate to this material, its usefulness would be greatly increased. The use of hammered copper as a means of interior decoration, such as in the panels of chimney pieces, as friezes, etc., will, I think, develop in the course of a few years to a great extent. The various tints and shades which this metal can take, points to it as a most useful material, and one in which we may expect much greater things to be done than we have hitherto seen.

But I cannot, if I am not to detain you unduly, dwell longer on these most interesting subjects, but must proceed to give you some remarks on the other accessories which have been mentioned. Of these I will first notice plaster work. This is a material which, from the facility with which it can be worked, and the fact that decoration in it is generally out of reach, and consequently out of danger of being broken and mutilated, lends itself in a great variety of ways to the ornamentation of our conceptions. The fact also that it is moderate in cost, and when properly used, effective, makes it one of the most popular materials. From the architectural work of past days it is not difficult to find how to use this material properly. There is hardly an old castle in the length and breadth of Scotland where we do not find some panelled ceiling, or other piece of beautiful and interesting plaster work. And in our old towns the same fact holds good; in Edinburgh, especially, to anyone who has the curiosity and will take the trouble to hunt up this class of work, there is a particularly wealthy field, but in almost every town the same holds good. City improvements are gradually doing away with most of the old houses in towns; but architectural societies, notably the Edinburgh one, are doing good work, in preserving records of the best examples; and in their recently published sketch book there are several ceilings which are most interesting in themselves, and valuable as showing what ought to be done in plaster work.

Of these to me the characteristic feature is the delicacy and fineness of the moldings used, the cornice is generally small and self-supporting, *i. e.*, without wood brackets, and the ceiling, instead of being a plain surface, with a large and unmeaning centre flower, is panelled with slight bands, and divided into compartments of varied forms. The existence of these old examples is a somewhat severe criticism on a great deal of our modern work, with its cornices enriched with brackets and modules, dentils and eggs, and darts, representing a class of design only appropriate for a stone treatment, and that almost never-omitted, but utterly unreasonable centre flower, which is the glory of most of our tenements, and which, from its gorgeous and ostentatious form and coloration, speaks forth the taste of the producers of that class of work, and hampers the decorator unnecessarily in his desire to make our rooms beautiful. The use of plaster fiber for panelled ceilings, from the nature of the material, makes it easier for us to design in that way, and from the fire-resisting nature of some kinds of it, helps in a great measure to make our houses fire-proof.

But now let me direct your attention to the subject of decoration, a subject which of recent years has received a great deal of attention, and which ought to command, from the large part it plays in the beautifying of our homes and buildings, a still larger interest than it at present does. The art movements of the day have to a great extent placed decoration on a more reasonable basis than it formerly occupied. The taste for marbled pillars in stucco, with ingenious painting, has to a great extent departed, and our staircases and halls do not so often, as formerly, present to the eye the appearance of costly marbles and granites reproduced in a charmingly inexpensive manner, the polishing being represented by the judicious use of two or three coats of varnish. Now there seems to be a tendency to allow that paint is paint, and paper paper, and that surfaces may be beautiful without at the same time being false. Graining also is to a great extent a thing of the past, and it is difficult to know how much we owe to Mr. Ruskin for the able manner in which he has seen fit to show up this falsehood. If we cannot always use hard woods, we are now coming to the conclusion that it is not absolutely essential that we should always appear as if we were using them, and we are beginning to realize that using less costly materials and producing pleasing surfaces by well-selected tints is not after all a disgrace.

The foregoing remarks tend to show that a more reasonable taste is setting in in decoration, and that we are coming to the conclusion that our houses are more beautiful the truer they are, and that it is not essential for every man, no matter what his position, "to dream," for after all it was only a dream, the falsehood of which was patent to all, "to dream he dwelt in marble halls." Some decorators sigh, I believe, for the good old times, when art was well nigh dead, and when picking out in gold leaf and marbling and graining were the order of the day, and when interior stone work was never left its natural color, but was painted and marbled beyond recognition. But these and such as these belong to the order of things that are past and days

that are done, and if they intend to hold their position had better come to the resolution to let bygones be bygones, and had better try to fill their position in the general development, and consider that the improvements which are being made now are but the earnest of the improvements that shall still be made.

In no department of decoration is there a more marked improvement than in the design of wall papers. The stereotype forms and the loud and vulgar coloration are not so universal, although still to be found, as they once were. Conventional forms, in pleasing and harmonious colors, are to a great extent taking the place of natural forms, badly drawn in unnatural colors. And it is even possible in some instances to use self-colored papers, or tints which, a few years ago, would not have been tolerated for a moment. The class of papers which seem to me to be most worthy of being used are those in which there is not a great number of colors, but on which the pattern merely gives a pleasing suggestion of a rich effect. When there are forms on the paper they should be well drawn, and any such pattern should not be obtrusive or pronounced, but should hold its own place, and merely add to the general effect.

The use of frescoes in our public and private buildings can be made a source of education, but fresco, as used by the mediævalists, is now almost a thing of the past. In France, where the class of decoration known as fresco is more used than in Britain, the process is now entirely departed from. The fact that frescoes form an integral part of the building, and may be easily destroyed by the presence of damp or accident, has led to the use of canvas and oil paint, which, as it can be removed when desired and placed in another position, or in a place of safety when the times demand, seems to be a movement in the right direction. The painting on canvas or linoleum, or any of the materials now used, gives also a much greater opportunity to the artist to alter and amend his design, and render it as perfect as he is capable of making it. When possible, however, paintings of this class ought to be done in the position they are to occupy, and with the surrounding in which they are to be set, as without this precaution there is great danger of the work not harmonizing with its surroundings, or with the other works of a similar kind already occupying a similar position in the building. As far as possible the works of this class in each room ought to be done by one man, or immediately under one man's supervision and responsibility. If this is not done, you may have as many different effects as you have artists, and the whole suffers accordingly. The exact effect of this may be very distinctly seen in the Pantheon at Paris, which has been decorated by the most distinguished French painters, but as each man has worked out his own idea, there is a great want of continuity in the various compartments, not of history, for they are all scenes in the history of Paris, but in color and form. Although I mention the Pantheon, I do not say that that is the type of decoration at which we ought to aim, for to my mind there is only one decorative work, *viz.*, that of M. Previs de Chevannes; the other works, from their naturalistic treatment, being pictures put in to fill compartments, and not really decorations at all.

In this class of work for the decoration of building conventionality is an essential, for if there is no convention the decoration must really represent a scene such as might be seen through a window or opening, and consequently represent a hole in the wall, which, of course, is not decoration. Anyone who has seen the sparkling and jeweled mosaics of Ravenna or Orvieto will know how valuable such an accessory as mosaic may be to architecture; but in Scotland we have little opportunity of using it, except in the case of an altar or baptismal font. Surface tiles and floor tiles are, however, often within our reach, and from the exquisite colors and rich polished surfaces it is possible to get in these, they also form a valuable aid.

It is now my intention to direct your attention very briefly to cabinet work. Time was when the architect paid little attention to this branch of his art, but was content to leave that to the cabinet maker, he merely doing the house without considering what was to go in to either in the matter of decoration or furniture. But with a greater knowledge of architecture there has grown up quite a different spirit, and the architect now is not considered capable unless he can carry out and direct the work from the foundation to the time when the house is occupied. From the amount of fineness, and the delicate molding and carving of which furniture is capable, you can easily understand how to many it has proved a most attractive study. The same principles hold good here as in other branches of our art, which have been summed up in the well-known adage of "decorate your construction, do not construct your decoration."

The last accessory of which it is my intention to speak to-night is landscape gardening. Half the beauty of the jewel is lost if the setting is ungainly or vulgar. If we are to have beautiful houses, we must see that they have beautiful surroundings. The proper placing of the building, the proper intersection of paths and roadways at appropriate points, the placing of our grounds, summer-houses, fountains and other embellishments, which add so materially to the beauty and comfort of our surroundings, clearly proves that a study of landscape gardening is one of the first duties of an architect.