

WALL PAPER AND DECORATIONS

MR. FOSTER IN ROME.

F STUART FOSTER, of The Watson, Foster Co., Limited, is now in Rome. Mr. Foster intends, before returning, to visit the art centres of the old world to obtain the most artistic designs possible for the company's issue of samples for next season. S. S. Boxer, of the above company, states that Mr. Foster has been so far most successful in this, and that the range of samples which the company will show next season will undoubtedly be among the strongest in the market. Artistic designs and colorings with many novelties will be the strong feature.

Mr. Foster's health is steadily improving, and his Canadian friends will soon be welcoming him home.

JOBS OFF THE MARKET.

The National Wall Paper Co. have withdrawn their samples of job lots, and their salesmen from now on will show the current season's goods. This puts the market on a firmer basis. The other factories, we understand, have agreed with the National company to hold back stock goods until after July 1.—Wall Paper News.

THE FASHION FOR INGRAINS IN CANADA.

The Watson, Foster Co., Limited, have had an exceedingly large sale of ingrains during the past season. This is not to be wondered at, as they had a fine showing of colorings, all selected with great taste; but the strong feature is the friezes and ceilings which match the side walls. Among these we may mention No. 1741, a 22-inch Louis XV. frieze. This is shown in nearly all the dark colorings, and is most effective. Another handsome frieze is No. 1698, 22-inch, style Louis XVI. This, in the lighter shades is a very beautiful frieze. No. 1692, German Renaissance, is equally good in dark or light shades. No. 1668, 18 inch, Louis XIV., makes a beautiful parlor frieze, where neutral tints are desired.

Dealers who have not yet placed their orders for ingrains, or who wish to sort-up their stock, should write for samples.

INTERIOR DECORATION.*

It is difficult for a decorator, as indeed it is for one in any calling, to divest himself of the interest he has in his work sufficiently to stand aside and judge of its importance

and place in relation to other things. And yet I am convinced that in many cases there exists such an erroneous conception of the functions of decoration as to justify a more emphatic assertion of its importance than is usually made. I imagine that few, even among architects, would consent to the proposition that a certain room or hall should be designed mainly for the display of decorative treatment, and yet many of the best known buildings and apartments in the world are of little use except for the display of their decorations, and were primarily designed for that purpose. The Sistine Chapel, Loggia of the Vatican, portions of the Louvre and Versailles, the palace of Augsburg and many others suggest themselves. This at once gives dignity to the art. One hears continually of the necessity for making decoration a background for something else, such as pictures, furniture, dresses, people, and in many cases it is desirable, but by no means in all. It would manifestly be impossible to apply a purely decorative treatment to a very moderate proportion of the work undertaken, yet in a modified degree it should be applied to every work of any importance. The ceiling of the room may always be treated purely for decorative effect. Consequently in standard work we find the most elaborate decoration applied there. Nothing interrupts the view, nor is the ceiling so much within the ordinary range of vision as to weary one. But there are rooms in which the walls may be treated almost as elaborately as the ceiling and with satisfactory results. The plea for the pictures is in most houses such a hollow one as not to be worth serious consideration. I have seen the greatest care taken in the selection of a wall paper for a room, both as to pattern and color with reference to the pictures, and afterwards have seen the walls hung with the most inartistic pictures imaginable. One of Morris', or Crane's or Shand Kydd's bold designs would have been infinitely preferable.

I speak of wall papers because they are of necessity the almost universal covering material for walls. Of comparatively modern invention (no trace of them exists previous to the 16th century), no other material has offered itself nearly so satisfactory for transferring design and color to wall surfaces. And the material itself must be completely ignored, the most successful paper being that in which behind the design and color there is no thought of paper. To conceal

the material in this case is perfectly legitimate, as it is only a means for transferring the design to the wall. On this account, we are free to draw upon a great range of other materials, and while there need be no attempt at deception, the fine qualities of silk, tapestry, leather, etc., are obtained at a cost which makes decoration possible.

As in most other work, simplicity is the keynote of decoration. I do not mean by this weak color or the absence of design. Ordinarily, there is neither time nor opportunity for a special planning of each scheme that presents itself for arrangement. So that, in most cases, a general rule must apply. I have found this to be safest. Allow one color to strongly predominate in the room. The other and smaller mass should be an analogous color. Any other color should be contrasting and small in quantity. Simplicity in color is obtained by this means. Then ornament should not be weakly scattered over the surfaces, but massed in parts. Large, plain surfaces are always grateful to the eye. Such decoration as the Moorish or Japanese diaper is no exception to this, for their repeated patterns become really plain surfaces. The decorator's task is made more difficult by the variety of lines he sometimes meets. Among the most trying rooms to treat are those in which the architect, without apparent reason, has made several heights for doors and windows, and has placed these openings without regard to the space on the walls. This indifference to spacing of the walls and lining of doors and windows gives no end of trouble in the after decoration and destroys the repose of the room. In fact, the only safe road, when such conditions exist in a marked degree, is to cover the whole wall with one treatment, and thus dodge the difficulty. It is well also to avoid inharmonious color schemes in the fixed materials, such as woodwork, tiles, etc., not only with each other, but with the probable after-treatment of the room in harmony with its character.

Rich coloring is almost indispensable to successful decoration. Even where light tints are used, plentiful use of gold should take the place of color, for gold itself is very rich and satisfying. As to the use of various colors, very little can be said in a paper of this nature, but a few suggestions may be of use. Stronger colors may be used on the walls than might be thought possible with good results. The lighter blues are receding and the deeper blues are useful in an over-lighted room. Reds are nearly all assertive, but the strongest reds can be introduced into the color scheme with happy results. The same may be said of the yellows, some of which will bring

*Paper read before the Toronto Chapter of Architects, by W. H. Elliott.