

New Publications.

BOOK OF JAPANESE ORNAMENTATION, COMPRISING DESIGNS FOR THE USE OF PAINTERS, DECORATORS, DESIGNERS, SILVERSMITHS AND MANY OTHER PURPOSES.

By D. H. MASER.

The most obvious peculiarity of Japanese ornamentation, as compared with European and American forms of ornamentation, is its *unexpectedness*. That is to say, where for instance in our ordinary style, the four sides of a rectangle would have each quarter like the other, or each half like the other, the Japanese artist throws an ornamental ribbon, bar or border across one corner, or across the whole figure, say at a distance of one-third or two-fifths the length of the figure from its left-hand side. He rejects the idea of *balance*, to which European and American painters have always conformed with almost servile fear. Yet no one will deny to Japanese ornamental art a grace, a lightness and a consistency peculiar to itself, which makes it acceptable to the eye—just as freshness or originality in speech win attention to the speaker, and produce an undefined sense of pleasure in the mind of the hearer. Let the reader, however, not fancy that in this seeming irregularity of his, the Japanese designer produces a feeling of incompleteness or one-sidedness. On the contrary, marked by continuous surprises as his style is, you will see that all parts of the design harmonize—at least harmonize sufficiently to secure the result desired. Sometimes it seems as if the draughtsman or painter wished to suggest that a piece of broken ornament was thrown upon his work and stuck there—but he never fails to have such an intruding piece of ornament blend sufficiently with the whole. Not too much, however; he knows too much to wish to subordinate the play of his fancy entirely. We have known artists who were so careful about balance and exact harmony of color and form, that their work entirely lacked emphasis; no part of it was conspicuous—in short, the whole thing when done was so tame as to obtain little or no notice—although to attract notice was the chief object of its existence at all.

Let then the user of this book take to heart this fact, that within certain limits it is not necessary to have perfect balance and absolute harmony. That the outlines of a sign, for instance, ought of course to be uniform, generally speaking, but within the limits of that outline may be painted an oblique bar, a semi-circle, a quarter-circle, a bird, a kite, a ship or a vase, introduced in an unexpected position—looking, indeed, as if it might be by accident—which shall relieve that figure and all within its lines of monotony, and makes it fairly conspicuous, or emphatic. On the other hand, let the painter or designer beware of crowding his ground. If any one will examine Japanese ornament, especially any of the popular kind (for the very expensive articles in Japan are sometimes overloaded with ornament) he will see that the artist gains his effects with few touches. The American designer is tempted by the ease with which the thing is done to put in a bird, a bar and the quarter-circle, a vase and a tree; when one, or at most two of these give his design greater strength.

This book does not pretend to give a complete view of Japanese decorative art. That would be impossible within its present limits or at its cost. It would also require the aid of colors and a book at least ten times the extent of the one before the reader. What we have sought to do is to give as many of the most useful ornaments as possible within the space allowed. When wishing to make use of this volume, the designer or painter will select what he wants. A border, band or corner piece, for instance, will sometimes have two or three methods of treatment within a space of a few inches. The designer will take of this only the part most suitable, and carry it out to completion without regard to the other similar portions in the same figure, or he can often use the band with its variations. The intention is to furnish *ideas*, and to give as many as possible.

Shading is not characteristic of Japanese work, ornamental effects being obtained in most cases by flat work in contrasting colors. The human figure and drapery is sometimes shaded slightly. The colors are generally positive, though often a sky or water is introduced, beginning in a positive and melting into a middle tint. The Japanese artist has perhaps not at his command the many colors or tints to which the Western painter is indebted for his effects—at any rate, he depends mainly on Red, Yellow, Gold, Blue, Orange, Purple and Emerald Green.

The first specimens of Japanese work which came to the notice of our people seemed barbarous to eyes accustomed to an entirely

different school. The "loud" coloring, fantastic forms, and seemingly incongruous designs defied our own theories of decorative art. But as the first strangeness wore off, we began to perceive that the Japanese designs had a richness and force which formed an agreeable contrast to those which were prevailing with us. The uses to which "Jap" could be applied were found to be remarkably extensive, and at the present writing it bids fair to be the prevailing style for at least a season. That it will by and by culminate and wane is probable, but it will unquestionably for many years be extensively used and maintain its popularity for some purposes. It is, certainly, a very acceptable addition to our decorative art.

We trust the following pages will be found useful to those for whom this book is intended. If it should be found so, it will be followed at an early day with other works embracing designs calculated to suit the ever-changing taste of the public. The price of this book, which is quarto size, is \$2.00. Orders sent through the Editor of the SCIENTIFIC CANADIAN, 243 St. Denis street, Montreal, will receive prompt attention.

PROF. HUXLEY'S INTRODUCTORY.*

The long-promised introductory science primer by Prof. Huxley has made its appearance, and though the delay has been rather vexatious to those who were using the other primers, the quality of the matter makes amends. In his own manner Prof. Huxley touches upon the salient facts in nature and science, and in a few sentences conveys as much information to the minds of his readers as some writers can do in as many pages. The book answers strictly to its title; it is introductory, and leads the way to the study of the other primers in the series. In less than 100 comparatively small pages, Prof. Huxley has covered the whole field, so far as introduction is concerned, and covered it in such a manner as to make the old information partake of some of the freshness of new discoveries. The work is divided into three sections. 1, Nature and Science; 2, Material Objects; and 3, Immaterial Objects. The chief merit of Prof. Huxley's work is that he not only puts what he has to say very clearly, but he drives it home with some happy illustration that the student is not likely to forget. No one who carefully reads the few lines forming the section headed "The Reason Why" is likely to confuse cause and effect, or to imagine that he has completely explained a phenomenon when he has discovered its proximate cause. The fundamental principle of all progress is well expressed by the statement that "the improvement of the arts depends upon our learning more and more of the properties and powers of natural objects, and discovering how to turn the properties and the powers of things, and the connections of cause and effect among them, to our own advantage." In explaining what are the laws of nature, and the difference between law and cause, Prof. Huxley makes the distinction clear, and then enforces it by suitable comparisons. Stones do not fall to the ground in consequence of a law, but the law is a way of asserting that which invariably happens when certain causes are at work. He compares the laws of nature with human laws, and points out that just as a man who breaks the latter will speedily find himself "in trouble," so if any one attempts to live contrary to the laws of nature his life would be but a short one; for we cannot alter the seasons nor change the processes of nature, but by such knowledge as we can acquire of those laws we can take advantage of them. Then comes the question as to what is knowledge. All accurate knowledge is science, and all exact reasoning is scientific reason, but, says Prof. Huxley, there is not one person in a hundred who can describe the commonest occurrence with even an approach to accuracy. Either he will omit something which did occur, and which is of importance, or he will imply or suggest the occurrence of something which he did not actually observe, but which he unconsciously infers must have happened. Thus the difference between common knowledge and scientific knowledge is just the difference between the observations of the untrained and the trained observer, and consequently scientific observation is at once full, precise, and free from unconscious inference. Anything short of that is not scientific knowledge. Untrained observers, says Prof. Huxley, mix up together their inferences from what they see with that which they actually see in the most wonderful way; and even experienced and careful observers are in constant danger of falling into the same error. Hence, the really scientific man accepts nothing as true until it has been demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt. He will, however, accept a probable explanation, and treat it as a "good working

* Science Primers. Introductory. By Prof. Huxley, F.R.S. London: MacMillan & Co.