

mind in which the emotion is raised almost as much as in the object which raises the emotion. Beauty, then, is something that can not well be formulated, so as to meet the ideals of all people, though we may in a measure set up a standard—an elastic one—that will appeal to the emotions of an Aryan people, but, even then, we shall find tribes and local lines which mark a certain demarcation of taste. No doubt, on the other hand, there are principles which are of more universal application. The negro represents the devil as white; but, the negroes as a rule, admire the white man rather than the black or the dusky; even as the latter admires the white woman rather than the black. Homer clothed his immortals in robes of light, goodness and purity, and thus gave to them a beauty that reached beyond the confines of human imagination, or even of human worship, and so it is that the aspiring artist must ever hunger after a beauty that no chisel and no pencil can represent.

Nature is to be considered merely the germ of ornamental art; art must develop nature's suggestions, combine her forms and, besides pleasing the eye, subserve a purpose. Forms and colors seem in nature to excite admiration of a different kind from that involved by the productions of artists. The latter must please the eye, gratify the taste, and exhibit fitness for its special intention. The art of the past, that aggregation of experience derived from the application of the suggestive hints of nature is simply a means of study to the ornamentists, an aid to the mastery of principles and rules. The range and variety of illustrations to be found in nature represent every principle on which beauty depends; its study supplies a fertility of resource, even as regards construction, as well as the harmonious arrangement of parts, the ornamentation of those parts, and as to the degree of prominence which decoration should assume. But it is in decoration setting forth the special qualities of the artistic mind, confirming what is material to a designed purpose, expressing the perception and feeling of beauty and truth in the designer, that its great interest lies.

In designing the decorator has to take into account two kinds of expression, the one definite and certain, the other conventional and capricious, the former dependent on natural principles, the latter upon association. The force of association was illustrated when in France, archaic severity in ornament, at a period when republicanism had triumphed, was regarded as "the thing," and decorations assumed a funereal aspect. In projecting ornamental designs, as in realizing this effect, mental impressions have to be taken into account in artistic rendering. Thus, in form, angular expresses strength and durability; the curvilinear, softness, delicacy and fragility.

Definite forms may be classed as the rectilinear and rectangular, the rectilinear, but oblique angled, curvilinear forms without contrary flexures, curvilinear forms with geometrical contrary flexure, and curvilinear forms with contrary natural flexure. The discovery of the means by which the expression is given to them involves an extensive process of comparison. Often their conjunction and admixture have merely the significance that attaches to playfulness and delicacy.

The adoption of ornamental treatment suitable to a material has a decisive influence on design, as in gold in sheets—beaten, raised in lobes, fluted to give strength and shadow; in wire—as in coiled, spiral, and numberless curved forms. Stone has its natural expression

in masses, chambers, etc. This condition does not exclude one material taking designs proper to another. Foliage should perform no office other than ornamental, such as adding richness and variety, filling out forms and covering junctions, as in metal work. Hence the impropriety of using floral designs for brackets or bosses that are supposed to require strength and stability.

The Persians, in seeking to produce masses of brilliant and variegated color without offensive gaudiness, betook themselves to mosaics for the adornment of their walls and the exterior of their mosques, showing magnificent incrustations glistening in vitreous glaze. The radiant hues being natural, the colors and tints of real stone could not offend the sight; there was a certain sobriety even in the splendor of surface. Beautifully veined and naturally tinted woods have a charm independent of the design into which they enter, whilst the design, taking them into account, is also enhanced in its effects.

The character of material used for decorative purposes necessarily affects the essential features of the ornament. Lustrous, or dead surfaces, hues, or intrinsic qualities, are themselves constantly suggestive of new devices and effects. Mechanical operations and chemistry, brought to the preparation of materials, wonderfully augment the resources of the ornamentist. Both the art and science are illustrated in enamels, which, having for their base hard, resistive substances that are ground to an impalpable powder, and blended with cohesive elements, are rendered plastic and absorptive of color, finally being fired, so placing an essentially perishable colored design beyond the reach of change.

There are mysterious properties in colors that serve the purpose of the ornamentist, and suggest various departures in design that result in excellent effects without apparent rule. The eye, for instance, possesses the power to supply the complementary color of the hue on which it rests.

A celebrated French painter remarked that "every bed of violets was surrounded with a halo of purple." Again, whatever the laws that regulate color—and theories and deductions on this point differ—their aesthetic value or influence on the sentiments must be taken into account for satisfactory treatment.

A reed, a flower, a broken stem, what significance may not attach to them when elevated to decoration? as the reed in the flutings of Corinthian columns, the flower in moulded form or beaten metal as a symbol or emblem, like the lotus of Egypt, the broken stem setting off curvilinear lines in capital or in the mouldings of a cornice, a band or frieze on a vase, or on a panel in simulated carelessness of rendering?

To what are we to ascribe the simply perfect use of color by the Orientals? Whether they use the brightest or most subdued tones, it makes no difference, the patterns are harmonious and gratifying. They value the color only as it assists the purpose of design. As all pleasing effects obtained in decorative art are referable to the conjoined or separate expression of the laws of harmony and contrast, it would seem as though by some latent principle of mind, or passive reception of the subtle teachings of nature, they had unconsciously acquired their marvelous aptitude to treat color, not only appropriately, but so as to secure the best results. It is the same with their pottery, their enamels, their silk stuffs, and their tapestry and embroideries, executed with surprising manual rapidity,