

## Imports.

1857 ..	\$334,974 ..	\$188,989 ..	\$75,291 ...	\$599,254
1858 ..	138,110 ..	80,535 ..	36,030 ...	354,675
1859 ..	208,671 ..	44,452 ..	41,437 ...	289,560
1860 ..	261,824 ..	64,150 ..	63,776 ...	389,750
1861 ..	341,942 ..	75,544 ..	55,592 ...	473,178
1862 ..	322,844 ..	107,181 ..	116,757 ...	546,783

The Minister of Agriculture after a brief recapitulation of what has been done to promote the cultivation of flax and hemp in the Province, concludes his report for 1862 with the following words:—"The Legislature should, therefore, vote a SPECIAL AMOUNT this year for this purpose."

In a subsequent number we shall venture to advert to the form which that legislative encouragement should take, as suggested by a review of the impediments which have hitherto checked, and the discouragements which, it is alleged, have thwarted the best efforts to promote these important but neglected branches of home industry and enterprise.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF DESIGN.

BY W. SMITH WILLIAMS.\*

Ornamental value consists in its being used to add beauty to common things, and to relieve the blankness of bare walls, floors and ceilings. Since the Puritans banished color from English churches until the present time, decorative art has performed perpetual penance in a sheet of whitewash, and our national ecclesiastical architecture has been mutilated and deformed, not only by tasteless church-wardens, but by accomplished architects, who, in respect of English architecture, were as ignorant as their employers. But let us not forget what we owe to Wren; nor that to his discerning encouragement we owe the development of the genius of the greatest ornamentist this country has seen, Grinling Gibbons, whose wood carvings have been so well appreciated and emulated in our own day by Mr. W. G. Rogers.

In entering upon the wide field of ornament, it becomes necessary to draw a distinct line of demarcation between the several branches of ornamental design; namely the ornamentation of architecture, of vessels, utensils, and implements, and of textile fabrics. Each of these is governed by different principles, but in all the practice of illusory imitation is alike objectionable. True art repudiates shams. The great blank space of raw white plaster that shocks the sense as well as the taste, in almost every room we enter, from the poor man's garret to the gilded saloons of the wealthy, is a relic of puritanical aversion to color, and the drab hues that make dreary our parlour and dining-rooms are only a quakerish compromise.

In painted decoration, and in the patterns of

paper-hangings, curtains, or carpets, form ought to be regarded chiefly, if not wholly, as a vehicle of color. How tiresome and tantalizing is the reiteration of patterns in a paper-hanging, especially when great blotches of red or some other powerful color is scattered over it, or cutting lines of positive blue divide the walls into strips. Intense colors ought to be used sparingly and distributed skilfully, so as to enliven the mass of secondary tints; for a room is made to seem smaller by strong contrasts of color or harsh outlines, as ceilings are apparently lowered by deep mouldings or powerful hues. Indeed, vivid colors are not essential either to the elegance or cheerful aspect of a room; the walls should form a chaste but not dull background to the furniture, pictures and occupants. Gaudy carpets of large patterns are therefore objectionable; if positive colors are used, these should be subdivided by the intricacies of a small and undefinable pattern, like the Persian or Turkey carpets, which have never yet been equalled for richness and sobriety combined.

In designing patterns for textile fabrics, the uses to which the drapery is to be applied, requires to be more considered than is commonly the case. Obviously the pattern for a dress should not be so large as that for a curtain, yet one sees silks and satins in the mercer's windows, the wearers of which would certainly appear as if robed in window curtains or wall hangings. The elaborate imitation of flowers in dresses is wrong upon principle, because the effect is to direct attention from the *ensemble* presented by the dress and the wearer; the nondescript patterns of India shawls in which the effect is seen in the mass, are still superior to modern designs. A great nosegay of flowers on a shawl, or a dress sprinkled with bouquets, is only a degree less absurd than the horns and trumpets which decorate the dressing gown of Signor Lablache in "*Il Fanatico per musica*." The effect of harmonious combinations of color is what the designer should rely upon; and of these the variety is endless. Form is the medium for displaying color; in draperies that hang in heavy folds, like curtains, it is evident that the shape of the pattern is not seen truly; its effect as shown in the play of color is infinitely varied by the folds, and therefore a large bold pattern, as in damask, is preferable. In dresses where the folds are smaller, and especially in scarfs, angular patterns are not only admissible, but pleasing, because the multitude of cross folds not only destroys the formality of pattern, but gives rise to an infinity of piquant combinations.

Form and proportion are paramount; no ornamentation, however rich or fanciful, can redeem

\* From the *Universal Decorator*.