

WALL PAPER AND DECORATIONS.

A LECTURE ON DECORATION.

THE following is a paper read before the eleventh annual convention of the Master House Painters' and Decorators' Association of New York:

As defined in the dictionary, the term "decoration" signifies "that which adorns, enriches or beautifies." Under this title, therefore, would be included all branches of art, whether in plastic or color; the art of the sculptor or architect as well as that of the painter and decorator. The field for research and study is a wide one, and as the scope of the different branches is almost unlimited, each must be developed on its own lines. Thus have originated the different professions of architect, painter, sculptor and decorator. I shall naturally limit this paper to such statements as pertain to our profession, and shall speak more particularly of the treatment of walls and ceilings of the modern residence.

The statement is sometimes made by persons of ultra-aesthetic tastes that a pure white room, or perhaps one plainly tinted, is superior to one that is decorated. Now, the only condition under which this statement would be true is when some decoration, poorly drawn and atrociously colored, is held up as a shining example. What reasonable person could deny that a bedroom, for instance, whose side walls are tastefully papered and the ceiling decorated with a few flowers and dainty ornaments, is not more cheerful and cosy than one that is simply left in its virginal whiteness; or that a drawing-room in a house, richly decorated in the style of Louis XV or XVI, is not more appropriate to some festive occasion than one kalsomined white?

The eye, to be fully satisfied, requires color, and this must be applied to suit the varying conditions that arise. Not only must we consider the style of the house, but also its situation, whether in the town or country. The location and the purpose of the different rooms must also be carefully taken into consideration. Moreover, the rooms must be treated in light or dark, brilliant or sombre colors, according to the intensity and directness of the light.

Among the propositions that Owen Jones advances, there is one that appears to be particularly appropriate, namely: "No composition can ever be perfect in which any one of the three primary colors is wanting either in its own natural state or in combination." In connection with this it is well to remember that bluish colors retire, yellows advance, reds are intermediate—that is, if we wish to raise the apparent height of the ceiling or the size of the room

we will gain that object by using blue, and vice versa with yellow. It is really remarkable to what extent this optical illusion can be effected by the use of these colors.

The nature of the design also tends to increase or decrease the size of the room. If a bold, clear drawing is used, it tends to bring the walls closer; whereas a wall with a small, soft pattern would recede. In New York City these circumstances arise to quite some extent. On several occasions we have added to the size of the ceiling in the following manner. In an 18-foot or 20-foot house, the reception room—one of the most important rooms in the house—is a sad affair, 10 feet or 11 feet wide, and 20 feet long, the ceiling of which is cut up by heavy moldings and an enormous centre piece. We tore out the centre piece moldings and cornice and put in a large, round cove, carrying the ceiling some 18 inches down on either side. Now there is some surface to put in your decoration: for example, sky panels, with flowers and cupids and relief ornamentation in the style of Louis XV. The walls may be paneled with silk hangings to harmonize with the whole. The silk hanging can be imitated very effectively in oil colors, and when well done, is a very good substitute at a much smaller cost.

For a dining room a most suitable ceiling is the beam ceiling with the beams sufficiently far apart to allow of an ornament, possibly in the dull colors of the German Renaissance style. The walls may be hung with tapestry or painted a warm olive or red color. A very artistic effect can be produced by using painted tapestry, that is, white goods woven like tapestry stuff and painted with glazing colors, especially prepared for this sort of work. The imitation can be made almost perfect, and is naturally much less expensive than the genuine tapestry.

A very stirring effect in the treatment of a wall may be obtained by picturing a hunting scene of the middle ages. The accessories of dress and accoutrements of that period, the horses, stags and hounds, all combine to produce a most artistic and forcible picture. Another successful dining-room, though of quite a different nature, may be obtained by the use of the Indian or Persian styles, with their rich Oriental coloring and design. These latter styles, and more particularly the Moorish, are also very well adapted and very extensively employed in the decoration of smoking or lounging rooms. I don't know why we should associate these Oriental styles with smoking, unless it is that the people of the east are naturally of a leisurely temperament; that

leisure promotes the taste for smoking, and that, therefore, when we see anything connected with the Eastern people, we are likewise tempted to cast aside our cares under the soothing influence of the weed.

Besides these methods of decoration there is one which, to my mind, deserves more than passing attention, namely, the painted stucco. This style, which some years ago was very popular, consists in ornament painting to represent relief, and may be treated either in color or in the neutral tint. It allows of more freedom of expression and a distinct individuality; and certainly if one desires to depart from the customary treatment in flowers and relief work, it will open up an almost inexhaustible mine of ideas. In some of the old houses good examples of this method of decoration are still to be seen, and as this is the age of revivals, it might be quite appropriate to again push it to the foreground. But it should, however, be used with discretion, and such attempts as representing niches with statues should be avoided, even though they might be plausible—with a considerable stretch of the imagination.

The business of the interior decorator of to-day not only includes applying paint and paper, but his scope is much wider; in fact, it is almost impossible to say where it stops.

He cannot be expected, for instance, to decorate successfully a room as a dainty rococo boudoir that has a heavy plastic ornamental cornice and stiff Neo-Jacobean woodwork. At any rate, the interior remodelling and woodwork of a house should be done under the supervision of the decorator, for only under these conditions can a harmonious and artistic result be obtained. —Wall Paper News.

CANADIAN PAPERS ABROAD.

Our wall paper manufacturers are not only holding the Canadian trade, but are "carrying the war into Africa," the Watson, Foster Co., having secured some large orders from New York, Chicago and other large American cities. One order calls for 65,000 rolls embossed gilts.

Canadian wall papers are also meeting with success in Australia and South Africa and there is no reason why markets should not be found in South America, Mexico, West Indies and even in England. A chief obstacle to placing our papers in England will be the prejudice of the average English dealer against a change, and in foreign countries the lack of direct steamship lines is certainly a drawback. Still these can be overcome.

Of course, our manufacturers, to secure a permanent footing in any foreign market,