

WALL PAPER AND DECORATIONS.

DESIGNERS IN WALL PAPER.

A NEW YORK manufacturer of wall paper says regarding the pretty, fanciful designs that decorate household walls: "Many of the best designers were once comic valentine artists. The pay for the latter work is meagre, but the artists do not entirely depend on sketching for a living. The majority are unfitted for high-class work, but one here and there drifts into black and white. Wall paper designers earn good wages. Five years ago a valentine artist threw up the ugly caricatures in disgust, he earns from \$25 to \$50 weekly now, his floral patterns being at once striking and original. Any girl designers? A few here and there, we are told of a young lady who, formerly a Christmas card artist, turned her attention to wall patterns. Though less artistic than bird and landscape painting, it pays her better. Light designing is very suitable for ladies with an eye for pleasing patterns."

Colin McArthur & Co. are determined to maintain the lead in artistic goods, and ask our readers to watch out for their announcement in next issue.

WALL PAPER FOR THE KLONDIKE.

And now it is Dawson City that wants to fall into line. We have known for years that that progressive firm, Colin McArthur & Co., have sent wall paper to the West Indies, South Africa and New Zealand, and last year they sent a representative to Australia, who opened up a very satisfactory trade, and it was not surprising when our representative called at the factory a few days ago and saw a large consignment of wall papers being boxed and addressed to the richest gold country on the face of the earth.

Incidentally we may remark that the above paragraph conveys most assuring knowledge, for, wherever a mining camp of a year old develops into the city of to-day, with all the comforts of civilization, not forgetting artistic wall paper decorations, it stands as a most positive evidence of progress, and Canadians may well be justified in their pride in this new gold country which is only now beginning to be known.

A CHAT WITH WALL PAPER DEALERS AND DECORATORS.

It is an interesting study to observe the rise and development of ornamental art, from rude beginnings up to modern times.

The æsthetic development of a country is not simultaneous with others, and considerable time is required before popular tastes emerge which might be termed national, and science in ornamental design is developed in the fullest sense of the term. It is gratifying to notice that Canada has now arrived at this stage of advanced growth—earlier attempts at architecture and decoration have almost vanished under time's effacing fingers, and we can hardly trace their growth from rude beginnings until they are consummated in gorgeous palaces and temples such as will stand to tell of man's achievements in the fields of art and culture. This development has been accomplished very naturally with us. Nature around us is replete with forms of boundless variety which we cannot help but see, and, as all things we see and fashion must be in some form or other, we can readily appreciate the mystic feeling and dainty fancy displayed by designers in their fascinating, subtle conceptions and efforts to imitate the surrounding beauties of Nature.

Now, to single out interior decorations, and wall papers in particular, it is wonderful to note the completeness of assortment which can be found in the leading stores of the country. There seems to be an almost inexhaustible variety of patterns and colorings, and it is certainly a treat to be able to discern the beauty, richness and harmony of color. Of course, this is largely due to the active efforts and enterprises of the wall paper manufacturers, and it is gratifying to note that they are keeping so well in touch with the movement of artistic fashion in other spheres, thereby giving us the benefit of their acquired knowledge and science. It has been the privilege of our representative to have a glance at part of The Watson, Foster Co.'s line of papers, which they are now preparing for next season. It is simply amazing and a revelation to see some of the best pieces of draughtmanship in the world being reproduced through modern mechanical devices and turned out in the most intricate patterns to such a degree of perfection. We do not wish to be premature and indiscreet, as the management of this leading factory will not permit us to make a general review of their assortment until the collection is complete, but we can, however, assert that from what we have seen of The Watson, Foster Co.'s paper hangings, they will be simply bewildering and will stand the test of the most fastidious and severe criticism.

The many housewives who prefer paper to any other style of wall covering will certainly have an unusual opportunity next season to select something rare and artistic. The variety of beautiful floral patterns, in bewitching colors, gorgeous blossoms, garlands and wreaths, so well adapted for bedrooms, shows that flower designs are still the popular fad. The Watson, Foster Co.'s line will also comprise a very large variety of other popular styles, which seem to have been selected with the most judicious taste and care.

ETHICS OF DESIGN AND COLOR IN DECORATIONS.*

Inasmuch as design plays so important a part in interior decoration, I may not be out of place in making a few remarks on the ethics of that subject. Somebody has said that a plain sheet of white paper is more beautiful than any pattern or painting ever worked on it. This statement belongs to the popular class of depreciations that the incompetent have to hurl at those who attempt. If such a statement is true, it is only so in the sense that silence is golden is true. Would knowledge have advanced if all practised golden silence? If we all had adopted the cult of the white paper, where had art come in? Fallacies are the sheet anchor of matter-of-fact persons. Common sense (as Philistia understands it) is based upon the lack of understanding, whether pattern or politics happened to be concerned. To be satisfied with nothing is the pride of those who cannot obtain anything. Therefore, as we are not satisfied with bare walls, we must have design. If we have design, we must endeavor to realize the purpose to which the particular design is applied. The first is to grasp and adhere to the fact that walls are perpendicular and that the surfaces are flat. Also, let it be continually borne in mind that, almost without exception, a room has its definite purpose. It also contains, as a rule, doors, a fireplace, windows and recesses. The wall spaces are broken up by the fittings, furniture hangings, and pictures. Therefore, the continuity of the design is certain to be interfered with in the ordinary course of things. These conditions are emphatic, and must be accepted and likewise turned to advantage.

Let us briefly consider the various purposes of the various rooms. A sensitive worker is necessarily influenced by different emotions, in sympathy with the character of the rooms for which the design is being prepared. It is only by realizing acutely what these are that a fit and proper result can be achieved. For the mistress of a

* From an address delivered before the Royal Institute of British Architects by Arthur W. Silver