Imitations of wood and marbles may be classed amongst the useful arts. There are thousands of homes in the construction of which no other wood is used but the common pine, full of ugly resinous knots, and which, for that reason and many others, has to be painted and puttied to make it passable. And if we could use real oak and mahogany for our doors—that is, if it were cheap and plentiful enough for that purpose—it would not be wise to leave it unpainted, as it would require so much time and trouble to keep them bright and clean, that nine-tenths of the world could not afford the necessary time and cost to keep them in order; consequently it is not only more convenient but economical, but it is really better to have painted woodwork in the majority of our houses—better because woodwork painted, grained and varnished, is the most cleanly-looking and serviceable method of decorating the doors and other woodwork in all those rooms in our houses which are most used, or which require to be done so that they will not easily soil. For we cannot always dwell in a china shop, and must have some rooms where we can move about at our ease, and where we are not continually afraid of spoiling something. Now for this purpose nothing can be more appropriate or better adapted than imitations of wood, well done and well varnished. Its lasting properties are very great, and at any time a wash down and a coat of varnish make all new again. For public buildings where real oak or mahogany is not used, we cannot substitute anything equal to it. If we paint them in dark low-toned colors, and varnish them, they will not last so long, nor look so cheerful, nor so appropriate, for even the objectors to imitations of all kinds will agree with us that wood painted in imitation of wood is much more in accordance with good taste than if painted in any other manner. If we were to paint a door in imitation of marble, we should be committing an offence against good taste and good sense, notwithstanding that there are real marble doors, of which the Russian malachite doors in the Great International Exhibition of 1851 were examples; but if we paint them in imitation of wood, we do not offend our sense of propriety, simply because it is wood, and has the structural character of wood. If we were to paint a column, or a pillar, or pilaster, or a plastered wall in imitation of wood, we should be doing wrong—we should err in judgment, in taste, and against structural propriety. In the interiors of our dwelling houses and public buildings there cannot surely be any impropriety in finishing them in imitation of stone or marble, of which materials they ought and would be built if they were only cheap enough. The utility of the practice is unquestionable; that it is economical is proved by the fact that if once properly done, and ordinary care taken of it afterwards, it will last and wear almost any length of time. Work of this kind which has been done upwards of fifty years, was, with the exception of its color being a little darker than when it was first done, quite as good as when new; this very fact alone is a sufficient proof of the legitimacy of such methods of decoration. What can be better adapted for a public staircase than a good imitation of one of the granites, gray or red? If well done and well varnished it will last for scores of years, and will wash and clean with little trouble, and although thousands of people may pass up and down the staircase, its serviceable qualities are so great that it will suffer no great harm. In this case we, of course, only mean that the granite should be done up to a certain height for purposes of utility. The upper part may be painted or ornamented in any suitable manner, either in distemper or oil color. We shall find there is a suitableness and an unsuitableness in the application to special purposes, and that independently of any abstract views we may have in regard to beauty, or this or that style, we are bound by the circumstauces of any particular case to consider not which would be the most beautiful, but which will best combine beauty, usefulness and durability. For instance, we had occasion a few days ago to go into a first-class shop in one of our principal streets in which the counter was painted in imitation of black walnut wood, and the moldings were part black and part gilt. The gold was in a very dilapidated state, scratched, and rubbed quite bare, and injured by the continual dusting and cleaning necessarily required in such a situation. The gold being upon the round beads (which were the most prominent members of the moldings), was of course much exposed to wear and tear, and soonest spoiled, and there is nothing looks so bad as gilding when it has got into such a state. Now here a great mistake has been made. The principle of utility had been entirely lost sight of—sacrificed to the vulgar desire for glare and glitter. Had the decorater been content with his work without adding the gold to it he would have produced a very successful work, and one which would have been serviceable, quiet and good, instead of which the reverse was the case. As a matter of taste we object to gilding on grained woods; the two do not assimilate, and seem to have no connection with one another. If the work were real wood polished, we should never dream of gilding any part of it. There is really no necessity for it, and it is, therefore superfluous. In the choice of paper hangings, furniture, carpets, and other aids and necessaries for our comfort and happiness, we are bound to take into consideration utility as well as beauty. *American Cabinetmaker.*

## METALS AND PAINT.

The subject of painting metallic bodies is not generally understood by many painters or architects, and as in this climate there is a great necessity for the proper covering of all metallic surfaces, to shield them from the elements, the subject will bear investigation with profit. Metallic paints, and many other compound chemical mixtures, are heralded as the paint for all work, whether wood or metal. It is true of these and many other kinds, that they are good for *painting*, but not for *preserving* metals from oxidizing. All fine preparations of the carbonates and oxides of lead or copper, are unsuitable for this purpose for the reason that a *pure* oxide, when applied to other metals, will assist in the action of the elements to oxidize the metals they cover. The vehicle of all good paint is boiled or raw linseed oil, and this, when thickened with pigments, covers a less given space; and the material being an oxide, holding more oil than is imparted to the surface to be painted, soon throws off its share and is ready to absorb the air and convey it to the body of the metal, where natural corrosion will take place, and then the two oxides unite chemically. In other words, all paints, in the absence of a solvent, which time soon releases them of, act upon iron or tin as a filter, feeding the porous spots with moisture, like a porous plaster of *rust*; and as like produces its kind, the decomposed metals work like a happy family, and roll in beds of rust. This fact is observable on flat surfaces, or in gutters where inequalities occur. Here the fine dust or powder collects and keeps the water in them until the oil is decomposed; then the work of oxidation commences. There is another fruitful source from which rust on the upper or *under* side of roofing tin comes, and that is, mixing paints in common cheap oils of kerosene, containing sulphuric acid. This oil never dries. It may harden the film of paint so as to allow the acid it contains to corrode the tin, and the best paint in the world on the opposite side cannot prevent the acid-eaten holes from coming through; and judge the effect, where both sides happen to receive the same potent mixture. The best paint for tin or iron is composed of pure linseed oil and earthy ochres, red or yellow. The coarser granulated powders are best as a pigment, as they offer less air-holes and give a firmer hold for the oil on the grits, and thus bind them to the metal. The oil in this manner gets close to the metal, and offers resistance to the air in removing the atoms from its cohesion. Beware of all metallic oxides or *mineral paints*, especially on lofty towers or inaccessible coverings of metal. Roofing tin should, when laid, be kept clean from windfalls of dust, and painted once in every two or three years, by the day—never by contract. Metals applied in the angles of roofs as flashings, where shingles are laid behind parapet walls, should be well painted on both sides, and the exposed crevices between the laps puttied and painted, and thus cut off leaks in corners "which no feller can find out." I have known of a case where leaks in an outer wall from an A No. 1 tin roof were undiscovered for years. Carpenters were called, imperfect boards were removed from the exterior wall side, and the whole repainted. Still, there was the leak unabated for years; and at last, the painter being called upon to find out the source of the trouble, found upon examination that the clap-boards on the inner side extended down to the tin, or nearly so, thus preventing the paint from reaching the angle of the tin back of the boards. There the dust collected, and dampness had eaten through, and a ruinous leak was discovered by simply sliding a putty knife under the edge of the siding. Wood work never should be allowed to close down on the metal, but instead, a space of one or two inches should always be left, so that the paint can be easily applied to all flashings on all sides, and where the dust can be easily swept out. Many troublesome leaks occur from the base of balustrades shutting down so close that dirt is completely imprisoned, and consequently in time decomposition sets in, and the metal coverings are ruined. Bay windows, with balconies, or with other ornaments, if put on with an idea of permanency, should leave ample room for the painter's brushes to reach every angle, nook, or corner, and thus save a thousand leaks.

J. E. W. C.