

DECORATIVE ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN ENGLAND.

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[Second Paper.]

IN passing from the consideration of works of a public and semi-public character I can not refrain from paying some tribute to the most influential decorative artist whom England has produced, and whose death in April last all lovers of beauty are still mourning. Mr. Owen Jones carried into decorative art that spirit of archaeological accuracy—one might almost say that profound scholarship—which was brought into pictorial art by Delaroche in France, Baron Wappers in Belgium, and Maclise in England. It is said that there was but one thing in England which the Shah of Persia wished to carry back with him to his palace—the Alhambra rooms at the Crystal Palace; but of all their possessions there is hardly one that the London people would so unwillingly part with. Yet it is probable that as little as the Shah the thousands who every week find in those rooms their *châteaux en Espagne* realize what it really cost to put them there. Mr. Owen Jones had passed his youth and his early manhood journeying both personally and mentally on the track of the race of mankind to which he belonged: he had studied the mystical figures and lines of Egyptian temples; he had pondered the principles by which reason and truth find expression in stone amidst the ruins of Greece; he had learned the secrets of simplicity and grandeur in Rome, where were poured the converging streams of beauty from many tribes, each bearing its freight of faith and aspiration to be deposited in marbles and monuments which are the gospels and bibles of a primitive world. By this path, which meant for him a growing culture, he came to dwell on the heights of Granada as the recluse and devotee of Beauty, and when he thence returned to his native land he brought with him a new era. He expended a fortune on the grand folio

of colored drawings of the Alhambra, which brought him no return, but a single copy of which now is a collector's fortune. When proposals were being received for the decoration of the glass palace of the International Exhibition of 1851, Mr. Owen Jones offered to Prince Albert and the royal commissioners his plans. The prince held out against them for some time; but the fascination was on him, and again and again he returned to the exquisite designs, until he gave in. He selected Owen Jones with some tremor, but every year since the palace has been transferred to Sydenham has shown that it was the most felicitous incident of his life to have encountered the right man for a task which was to be of far more permanent importance than he supposed. Since then Mr. Owen Jones has not only given the large interiors of the great business establishments that beauty which makes many of them worthy of study and admiration, but he has won for himself and his country the highest honors of the three great Continental exhibitions. It was with some amazement that the world found itself pointed to England as the leader in decorative art by the French Exposition of 1867. "It requires," said the official catalogue of that exposition, "but a slight insight into modern domestic life in England to perceive how great a change has taken place within the last ten or fifteen years in the internal embellishment of the dwelling-houses of the upper and middle classes of society; and there can be little doubt that the extension of art education will lead still further to the production and appreciation of articles which combine the three requisites of fitness of purpose, beauty of design and ornament, and excellence of workmanship." It might be supposed by those who have not seen this master's work that it consisted merely



OWEN JONES

in clever imitations of the Moorish and other designs with which his name is associated; but, on the contrary, his chief excellence was that he showed how the ideas and principles which underlie the great works of the past were capable of being led out into new forms and adaptations. In taking the chair at the Society of Arts in 1851, on the occasion of a lecture on the arts and manufactures of India by Professor Royle, Mr. Owen Jones, having accorded superiority to the Indian and Tunisian articles in the exhibition of that year over all contributed by Europe, added: "Many of these specimens have been purchased by government for the use of the School of Design, and will no doubt be extensively circulated throughout the country. But it is to be hoped that they will do more than merely teach us to copy the Indian style. If they only led to the origination of an Indian style, I should think their influence only hurtful. The time has arrived when it is generally felt that a change must take place, and we must get rid of the causes of obstruction to the art of design which exist in this country."

The *Daily News* (to an editorial article in which on the death of Owen Jones I am indebted for these notes concerning him) truly says, "It was to bring the beautiful in form and color home to the household, and to mingle its subtle influences with the whole frame-work of social and family life, that the great designer we are lamenting labored all his life with the patient, unselfish enthusiasm of one to whom, though full of the keenest sympathy with all the great historic movements and events of his time, his art was his life."

The devotion of such a scholar and refined gentleman as Owen Jones to decorative art has helped to make an era in that kind of work. Before that it suffered in England from being regarded as a sort of upholstery, implying neither talent nor culture. Some gentlemen of culture and wealth recognized the

genius of Mr. Owen Jones at a time when the Prince Consort was still inclined to regard him as a superior kind of upholsterer or house-painter, among whom must be especially mentioned Mr. Alfred Morrison, well known for his antiquarian and numismatical accomplishments. His residence in Carlton House Terrace is the truest monument of the genius of Owen Jones, and it is a work which need fear no comparison with any other, of whatever age or country. It makes the chief palaces of Northern Europe vulgar. Sádi tells us of one recovering from an ecstasy, who said he had been in a divine garden, where he had gathered flowers to bring to his friends; the odor of the flowers so overcame him that he let fall the skirt of his dress, and the flowers were lost. Some such account one must needs give of a visit to Mr. Morrison's house. A thousand of the touches, the felicities, which combine to produce the happiest effects in this mansion can by no means be conveyed from the place where they would appear to have grown. I will only mention a few suggestive features of this system of decoration.

The house is one of those large, square, lead-colored buildings of which so many thousands exist in London that any one passing by would pronounce characteristically characterless. It repeats the determination of ages that there shall be no external architectural beauty in London. Height, breadth, massiveness of portal, all declare that he who resides here has not dispensed with architecture because he could not command it. In other climes this gentleman is dwelling behind carved porticoes of marble and pillars of porphyry; but here the cloud and sky have commanded him to build a blank fortress, and find his marble and porphyry inside of it. Pass through this heavy doorway, and in an instant every fair clime surrounds you, every region lavishes its sentiment; you are the heir of all the ages. Entering a room for reading and writing near the door, we are conscious of a certain warmth of reception even from the walls. They are of silk, made in Lyons after a design by Owen Jones. The shade and lustre are changeable, but the prevailing color dark red. The design is as if an endless series of the most graceful amphoræ had suddenly outlined themselves, and the lines had taken to budding off into little branches. The surface is Persian, and the whole sentiment of the room is Oriental, without having in it a single instance where Oriental work has been copied. The carpet is Persian, but the design is by Owen Jones, the most noticeable figure being the crossed squares, making a star shape to match a similar one on the coffered ceiling. This tapestry of silk starts a theme, so to say, which is carried with harmonious variations throughout the building, expanding in the larger rooms, until it recalls every variety of Etruscan shape, and taking on the most beautiful colors. There is a Blue Room, a Pink Room, a Yellow Room; yet in no case is there any thing "loud" or garish in the tints. The ceiling of the reading-room is somewhat after the fashion of the best Italian work of four centuries ago, a kind of moulding in deep relief, which probably ceased to be much used because it was found difficult to make it without incurring the danger of its falling, so great would be the weight. But Owen Jones invented something which he called "fibrous plaster," by which the most heavily coffered ceilings can be made with perfect security. It consists in first making the shapes to be used in wood; the wood is then covered with canvas, and this canvas is covered with repeated coats of the finest plaster, which is rubbed down into any mouldings required, and painted. The coffers here are star-shaped, and in each an inverted convoluted shell of gold. It is an indication of how finely the decorator has blended Oriental lustres and classic designs that the various

antique objects and fine metal-work, done by the best Spanish, Italian, and Viennese workmen, after classic models, every where set about the rooms, have an easily recognizable relationship with the scrolls and forms on carpets, ceilings, and walls.

But neither the Lyons silk nor the Persian carpets can be pronounced unique in the same sense as the wonderful use of various woods made in this house. In the dado, jambs, chair-boardings, we find no carved work, but simply the most exquisite combinations of ebonized and many-colored woods. Some of these, as the Indian holly, are so fine that the grain is invisible to the closest inspection. Other woods are so soft and beautiful that they have the surface of flower petals. Trees belonging to every land and clime of the earth have sent here their hearts, and, without a particle of pigment being used on any one of them, they gather to form rosettes on the chimney-pieces, cappings for the dados, and finest featherings around the doors—white, golden, red, cream-colored, brown, and these of every shade. The tables and chairs of several rooms are of this tarsia-work of forms untouched by staining or by metal.

In the library the book-shelves, which do the duty of a dado around the room, have alternate doors of glass and wood, and the latter are adorned with a foliation over two feet high, growing from the bottom of the panel and leafing out at the top, which can not be surpassed by any ancient marquetry. Above these shelves the green and gold lustres of the wall rise to a cone, which has the appearance of a blue and gold enamel, above which is an early Tudor ceiling of checker pattern between reliefs of a large star with four shadings of different colors, or star within star, golden, dark, and white. The chimney-piece here may be regarded as a large arched cabinet, with fire-grate beneath, having two wings, in which are contained specimens of porcelain from Persia and Cashmere, which, old as they are, have an appearance of having been designed by the decorator of the room, who certainly never saw them until they came into the harmony he had prepared for them.

The drawing-room, whose windows overlook St. James's Park, is a very large apartment, whose division, if it ever had any, has disappeared, giving an unbroken range to the eye, which, whether it takes in the whole effect, or pauses to examine a detail, is simply satisfied. The fretted ceiling; the frieze of damask picked out with gold; the tarsia dado, a necklace surrounding the room; the chimney-pieces, one of which Lepec of Paris was two years in making—they are all fine without frivolity, cheerful without fussiness. One mantel-piece reminded me of what Baron Rothschild is said to have remarked once when a fop was displaying his malachite

shirt studs—"Very pretty: I have a mantel-piece of it at home." Some of the incised ornaments here are gems indeed, but in no case have they the appearance of being set there for their costliness; they are all parts of the general artistic work. One of the best features of this drawing-room is that it is not stuffed with things. The objects in it are comparatively few, yet they are sufficient in number and variety, and being beautiful and interesting, one can look at each without being bewildered, as in some houses where an idea seems to prevail that the model for a reception-room is a museum.

Mr. Morrison is a strenuous opponent of the general belief that the arts are deteriorating. He believes that as good work of any kind whatsoever can be done now as in any other age of the world, if one will only look carefully after the men who can do it. His experience has certainly been fortunate in discovering those who are able to make entirely original designs, and yet conceived in a purely artistic spirit; but then he has had all Europe at his command. The best metal-workers he has found in Spain and Vienna. In the former country he found out Zouloaga, a workman residing in the little town of Eybar, and from him has obtained chased and engraved metal-work such as almost any of our connoisseurs would be apt to date before the Renaissance on a cursory glance. One piece of work by Zouloaga is in the drawing-room, a large coffer, nine feet by three, covered with all manner of figures and scrolls in iron, wrought in relief, and with a finish which would have made Andre Buhl himself rejoice that his own fine cabinet (of which Mr. Morrison is the fortunate possessor) should have found a place under the same roof with that of the Spaniard. Mr. Morrison told me that he felt sure the man could do a fine piece of work if encouraged, so he advanced him a thousand pounds, and told him to begin something on that. Zouloaga worked at the coffer for four years, and its owner saw at once that he had but paid an installment of the real value of this marvelous work.

But though Mr. Morrison has had to go to Spain for ornamented metal-work, to Paris for his mantel-pieces, to Lyons for his silk, he has found that in no other country than his own was he able to secure the best wood-work. It may be, indeed, that if his desire had been for the most perfect carving, he might not have had the satisfaction of obtaining it in his own country—though some of the workers that Mr. George Aitchison appears to have got hold of may render even that doubtful. But in pursuing inquiries as to the means by which the exceedingly bold designs of Owen Jones for ornamentation with the colors of woods could be carried out (and the inquiries were not confined

to this country), Mr. Morrison found that no house out of London was prepared to undertake a task that necessitated importations of select woods from all parts of the world. In Mr. Forster Graham, Owen Jones found a man able to enter into his ideas and to give practical effect to them. Indeed, the famous architect and decorator acknowledged his indebtedness to Mr. Graham for some effective suggestions for the improvement of the original designs. Those who know Mr. Morrison will easily guess that he too was by no means a mere by-stander while the work was going on. At any rate, he may now rejoice in having secured a home that has converted some portion of his wealth into a more real value, and of having thereby enabled one idealist to realize his vision. For there is nothing in this house not harmonious with its purpose. Every chair is as philosophically as it is beautifully constructed, and nearly every one is different from the other—one suggesting the perforated chairs of the Delhi palaces, and another the old Saxon throne in Westminster Abbey. It is related of a sensible and busy banker that on being visited by some one, he said, "I have a line or two to write; pray take a chair." "Do you know who I am, Sir?" said the visitor, haughtily; "I am the Envoy Extraordinary of —." "Oh, are you?" said the banker; "then pray take two chairs!" This little story occurred to me as I was looking upon Mr. Morrison's chairs, and I fancied the Envoy Extraordinary, if asked to take one, would probably have considered it as a significant mark of respect.

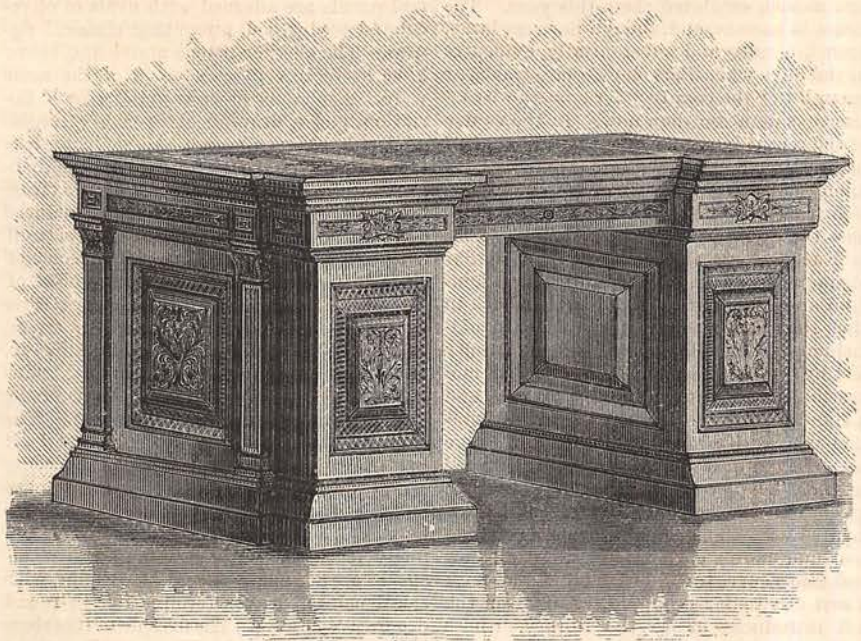
There is no sham in this house—no wood pretending to be metal, and no iron affecting to be marble. As each particle of a rose under the microscope has the rose's beauty, so here each part of the mansion bears witness to the care and taste with which the whole is constructed—the table-leg as truly as the Lepec mantel-piece. We may ascend the magnificent stairway, past the globes of light upheld by bronze candelabra rising seven feet from the floor, and as we go from story to story find good, painstaking work meeting us every where, in the bedrooms, the nursery, the closets, some of the best ornamentation in the house being a pale blue and gold scroll surrounding the sky-light at its top.

It is a pleasure to know that decorative skill has not passed away with Owen Jones. The house of Frederick Lehmann, Esq., in Berkeley Square, is the *chef-d'œuvre* of Mr. George Aitchison, one of the most celebrated architects and decorators in England, who has made the most of very favorable conditions, has called to his aid congenial artists and carvers, and has completed rooms which one would fain see themselves hung upon the walls of the Royal Academy, and not merely the designs of some of them, which

are, indeed, exhibited there this year. The house is ancient, and, though not very large, built liberally and substantially, evidently in the days when Berkeley Square was near enough to "the country" for space to be of less consideration than now. In the course of the recent improvements there was found behind an old chimney-piece a playing-card upon the back of which is written an invitation from a Mrs. Murray to Lady Talbot to pass the evening at her house; and Mr. De la Rue declares that no card of a similar character has been manufactured for a hundred and fifty years. Even farther back in time than that we may safely place the old-fashioned, nearly square hall—about twenty feet by seventeen—which is at once hall and vestibule. It contains tables, cabinets, and a stand for flowers, and the modern decoration sympathizes with what appears to have been the old idea of a vestibule—a sheltered cortile. The general tint is a very pale green, the surface-paneling large, and ornamented with stems starting from a common root and ending each in cones. The stems and cones curve toward each other, and form a sort of circular grouping. A door on the left introduces us to the library, whose walls are shelves of richly carved walnut, above which is a dark leather frieze, which elegantly sets off the treasures of ancient pottery and other antique objects which make the interesting finish of the well-stored book-shelves all the way around the room. At a certain point the books prove to be dummies, an unsuspected little door flying open at a touch and revealing a lavatory. In this library, where startling effects of any kind would be out of place, there are no plays of color, but ample light falling upon the exquisitely carved table for writing in the centre, which is the most remarkable for its conveniences and contrivances that I have ever seen.

Ascending to the drawing-rooms, we enter first a small apartment, whose floriated ceiling gives the effect of a bower. Between this and the golden cornice is a cove of inlaid gold, upon which are traced leaves of wistaria, interspersed with light pink clusters of the phlox. The chief ornament is a large cabinet reaching nearly to the cornice—ebony and ivory—recently brought from the Vienna Exhibition; it contains specimens of Eastern porcelain, etc., collected by Mr. Lehmann, who would appear to have voyaged around the world and found relics of all civilizations and all the ages of art. This, however, is but an anteroom to the chief drawing-room, with which it communicates by a large double sliding-door. This door, and another like it which admits to the dining-room, are truly superb. They have a frame of ebonized wood inclosing panels of finest-grained amboyna. The ebonized wood is foliated with gold, and the long cen-

tral panels are adorned with ovals of olive-colored wedgwood, presenting classical figures. The smaller panels above and below have at their centres squares of the same ware. Each door has a capping of gold floriation, and a draping of French embroidered silk, at once heavy and delicate, like tapestry. The walls are of a dark reddish-brown color, arranged in large panels (from floor to cornice) inclosed by a fine painted edging. This background elegantly sets off the pictures, which are all excellent, some of them being among the best water-colors of Turner. The ornament which chiefly strikes the eye in this room is a matchless frieze, painted by the eminent artist Albert Moore, the design being peacocks, their long trains in repose. The cornice above this is of the egg pattern, with a fretting above. The ceiling is, in a manner, paneled; that is, it has on each side stiles or beams crossing each other, making the large central space and the side spaces almost deep enough to be called coffered. These cross-beams are finely feathered with gold, and the interspaces are adorned with curved boughs, with small pointed leaves terminating in round decorative flowers. The fireside of this room is highly ornamented. The grate is antique in general appearance, but novel in structure; the silver owls (life size) sitting on either end of the fender bar and the old brass mountings of the fire-dogs have come from the past to guard a grate which slides backward and forward as the regulation of the heat given out may require. The tiles are representations of six varieties of humming-birds, a paroquet, a sun-bird, and several other feathered beauties. Near by is a folding screen of brilliant Japanese silk. The room is covered to the border of the parquetage with a bright Persian carpet. In the dining-room the original ceiling, with dark oak reliefs (curved), has been retained—not happily, I am afraid, such ceilings always absorbing too much light. Mr. Aitchison has given the spaces a luminous decoration, but nevertheless the dark wood-work above can only be retained by the use of a corresponding shade in the furniture. This furniture is of rare beauty. The side-board is most delicately carved, and the serving table inlaid with medallions of ivory, the designs of which, by Albert Moore, represent various animals and fruits suggestive of the uses of the room. There is a chimney-piece of ancient work—ebony, with side pillars and excellent gold settings; but a comparison of this bit of last century work with the furniture recently made is likely to raise a question in the minds of those conservatives who insist that the making of beautiful things is a lost art. It is a pleasure to find hung in a room where each object bears the trace of really fine art that portrait which has long been acknowledged to be the ablest



EBONY SERVING TABLE—MR. LEHMANN'S HOUSE.

work of Millais, representing Mr. Lehmann's little daughter seated on a Minton garden seat on a lawn. When this picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy a few years ago a writer in the *Fortnightly Review* pronounced it the work which, among modern English productions, most recalled the peculiar vitality and sentiment which have given the old masters their fame. I had the pleasure of seeing the little lady herself in her own boudoir, to make which beautiful, Mr. Aitchison appears to have put forth his talent as earnestly as Mr. Millais to paint her picture. A blue border incloses the large panels of the walls, on which are *fleur-de-lis* spots, and a bittern at each panel centre. The frieze is painted in graceful floriations of lemons, and the cove above is adorned with balsam and jasmine. The apartments of this little girl, thus tenderly but not gaudily adorned, open into the sleeping-room of her parents. This also is simply beautiful. The walls are of a delicate blue shade, and all the textures appear as if inwoven with softened sunshine. Mr. Smallfield's genius has here been brought into requisition, and he has painted beautiful groups of flitting birds over the doors. The same artist has painted boughs of apple blossoms upon the door panels in the boys' room. But his finest work is a frieze in Mrs. Lehmann's boudoir—for such her monogram woven in the Persian carpet and carved in the marble mantel-piece announced it to be—which consists of doves, swallows, and flowers in pots. Mrs. Leh-

mann's boudoir is on the same floor with the dining-room, from which it is separated by a charming little sitting-room: The walls of this last-named room are entirely covered with the finest Gobelin tapestry, above which a deep cornice of chased gold supports a cove, chocolated, with decoration of silver leaflets.

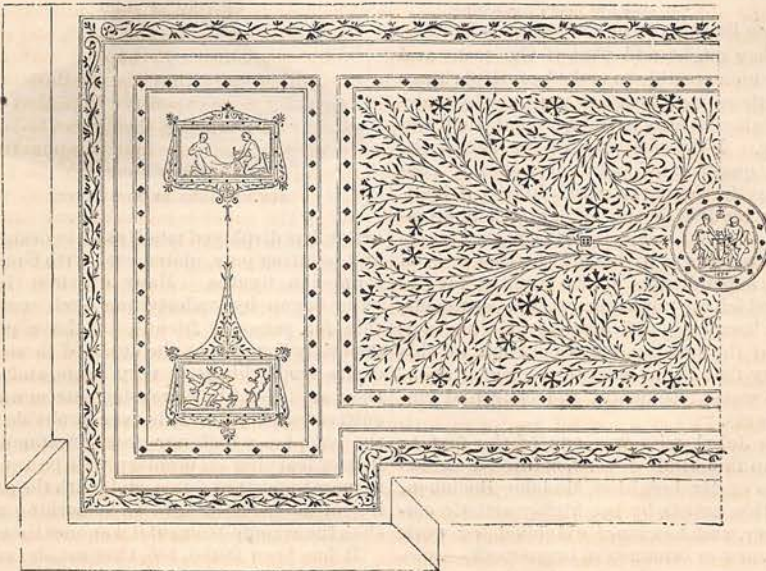
No wall-paper at all is used in this house. The ornamentation of the walls throughout has been put on by the hand, and generally by pouncing. Perhaps it may be well enough to state that the method of pouncing is far more expensive than that of stenciling. In pouncing, the figures to be painted on the wall are first pin-punctured on paper; this paper is then laid on the wall and beaten with bags of colored powder. When the paper is removed each ornamental form is delicately outlined on the wall in innumerable fine points. It is then necessary that the decorative artist should trace the figures with a pencil, and afterward paint them. Stenciling, which is less costly than this by about one-third, consists simply in direct painting through perforated metal, though it is necessary in most mural work that the blank interstices so left should be painted over by hand. The latter work is, however, always more stiff than the pounced. The friezes have been painted on canvas, of course, since no gentleman would allow his possession of works by such artists as those whom Mr. Lehmann has employed to depend upon his remaining in any particular house. It is indeed a very significant thing that

such men as Albert Moore and Smallfield should have been found ready to undertake work of this description; for though it is a return to such work as Giotto and Michael Angelo were glad to do, we have heard of late years occasional sneers at "mere decoration." Rightly speaking, *all* art is mere decoration. There are other instances also where the artists of the greatest eminence have done excellent work of this character. In the house of the Hon. Percy Wyndham, Belgrave Square, there is a grand staircase which has on the wall near one of its landings five life-sized classical figures by Leighton, the Academician, and at the top a deep frieze of cormorants, storks, and other wild birds; and the dining-room of the same beautiful mansion has been elegantly adorned by Mrs. Wyndham—herself an artist—aided by Mr. V. Prinsep.

The pleasure with which I have visited Mr. Lehmann's house is just a little tempered by the difficulties I have found in the effort to convey some impression of it. When I passed down the stairways amidst the delicate hues lighting them up at every turn, and through the doorways curtained off from halls by rich Oriental draperies, and found myself again in the embowered square at the front of the house, I felt conscious of an utter inability to give any reader an adequate conception of the decorations amidst which I have invited him to wander in imagination. Let any one who has passed a morning in visiting the interiors of the old Venetian palaces attempt to describe them! He will have a dreamy impression of soft colors fading into each other, of apartments

that have caught on their walls the tints of rosy morning and golden evening, and held them in a thousand little contrivances to catch such sunbeams, and he will feel that the subtle influences of beauty have overpowered his analysis. The finer secrets of art elude detection, much more explanation, like those of nature.

The houses I have been describing are those of millionaires. Whatever may be thought of the large sums expended on their mansions, they do not suggest the remark made by a wit to a gentleman as remarkable for spending little as for making much, "You can not take all this gold with you, and if you did, it would melt." They have preferred that their gold should be transmuted in this world, and into forms that are none the less beautiful for being costly. They are men who occupy a somewhat abnormal position even in wealthy London, and one which admits of a correspondingly rich and even grand environment. They have occasion, and are able, to have rooms which relate them to a large and cultivated world, while they can reserve for domestic privacy apartments which fulfill the want which to others is the only end of a home—a centre amidst a busy and weary world for friendship, love, and repose. Even in these grand palaces one may, indeed, witness a modesty and reality which contrast favorably with the at once stimulating and exhausting splendors of the princely dwellings of the past. There is no attempt here to heap into the rooms the great works of art which appropriately belong to the community, and should be set up in edifices built for



TOP OF SERVING TABLE—MR. LEHMANN'S HOUSE.

the common benefit. One perceives, too, that the time has passed away when Madame De Guerdin could define the life of an apartment as consisting in "fires, mirrors, and carpets." The life of an apartment consists in the degree to which it subserves its end. The decoration of the salon may well sympathize with the gayety of festive occasions, for it does not exist for the family alone; but in the more private rooms the tired limbs will require rest on chair or couch, and equally the eye will need rest upon soft and subdued shades.

There will, however, arise in the mind of many a reader of the poor descriptions I have been able to give of these two houses (which represent an exceptional class) a moral misgiving. Is not all this a waste of money that might have been expended for greater and nobler purposes? Is not all this mere luxury and extravagance? Well, in the first place, it is difficult to draw the line between the beauty which Nature seeks as she climbs to flowers and man as he decorates his dwelling, and the luxuriousness which makes external beauty in itself an end rather than a means. Take away all that has been added to our homes by art, and we all become naked savages living in mud or log huts. But, in the second place, what about this "waste of money" so often charged against expensive decorations? Poor Zouloaga, working in a little peasant village of people poor as himself, might not have the same charge to bring against the wealthy Englishman who found him out. He and a host of artists and artisans in this and other countries might find more wisdom in Rhodora's philosophy, that

"if eyes are made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being;"

and they might add that if the taste and skill which are able to make beautiful things exist, there may be good reason why a demand should also exist for what they can supply. I do not propose to argue the vexed question of political economy concerning the degree to which luxury is justified by its distribution of capital among laborers, but it seems very clear that there can be no reason to deplore the free or even lavish expenditures of the wealthy for objects which are not in themselves pernicious. It has been one particularly gratifying incident of the passion for decoration in this country that it has been the means of opening to women beautiful and congenial employments.

Miss Jekyl, who was one of the first to take up this kind of work, attracted the attention of Mr. Leighton, Madame Bodichon, and other artists by her highly artistic embroidery, and has since extended her work to repoussé or ornamental brass-work—especially sconces—and many other things. She has, I hear, acquired not only distinction but

wealth by her skill, some specimens of which are exhibited in the International Exhibition at South Kensington this year. There also may be seen the work of other ladies who have followed in her footsteps, some of the finest being by a Miss Leslie, a relative of the celebrated artist of that name. Indeed, there has now been established in Sloane Street a school for embroidery, which has succeeded in teaching and giving employment to a number of gentlewomen who had been reduced in circumstances. Miss Philott, whose paintings have often graced the walls of exhibitions, and have gained the interest of Mr. Ruskin, has of late been painting beautiful figures and flowers on plaques, which, when the colors are burned in by Minton, make ornaments that are eagerly sought for. A Miss Coleman has also gained great eminence for this kind of work. Miss Lévin, the young daughter of a well-known



POT DESIGNED BY MISS LÉVIN.

artist, has displayed much skill in designing and painting pots, plates, etc., with Greek or Pompeian figures. Many of these ladies have begun by undertaking such work as this for personal friends, but have pretty generally found that the circle of those who desire such things is very large, and that their art is held in increasing esteem among cultivated people. It is even probable that the old plan which our great-grandmothers had of learning embroidery will be revived in more important forms, and, with the painting of china, be taught as something more than the accomplishment it was once thought.

It has been found, too, that artists, architects, decorators, and the numerous workmen they employ have great respect for any

woman who can do any thing well, which contrasts favorably with the jealousy which the efforts of that sex to find occupation in other professions appear to have aroused. One example of this is particularly striking. Nearly twelve years ago I heard of a young lady of high position who was making almost desperate efforts to win her way into the medical profession. She had taken a room near one of the largest hospitals in London, to which she was not openly admitted, that she might study cases of disease or injury, but where, through the generosity of certain physicians, she was able, as it were, to pick up such crumbs of information as might fall from the table of the male students. By dint of her perseverance means of information and study increased. I visited her room near the hospital, and found this young lady surrounded by specimens such as are conventionally supposed to bring fainting fits on any person of that sex at sight. I found that, being excluded from the usual medical and surgical schools, she had been compelled to employ lecturers to teach her alone. Fortunately she had the means of doing this, but it amounted to her establishing a medical college, of which she was the only student. That lady is now known as Dr. Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson, an eminent physician, who has done not her sex alone but this entire community a great benefit, by showing that a woman's professional success is not inconsistent with her being a devoted and happy wife and mother. By the side of the long struggle through which she had to go to obtain her present position—a struggle in which many a woman with less means and courage has succumbed—I am able to place the experience of her younger sister and of her cousin, Agnes and Rhoda Garrett, who have entered into a partnership as decorative artists. These young ladies, it may be premised, have by no means been driven to their undertaking by the necessity of earning a livelihood. They belong to an old family of high position, and are as attractive ladies as one is likely to meet in the best society of London. But like the better-known ladies in the same family, Dr. Garrett-Anderson and Mrs. Professor Fawcett, they are thinkers, and they have arrived at conclusions concerning the duties and rights of their sex which forbid them to emulate the butterflies. A few years ago, when the decorative work of such firms as Messrs. Morris and Co. began to attract general attention, it appeared to them that it offered opportunities for employment suitable to women. They determined to go through a regular apprenticeship; and though they were met by looks of surprise, they were not met with any incivility. One gentleman allowed them to occupy a room at his offices, where they might pick up what knowledge they could in the art of glass-

painting, and here they awaited further opportunity. The architect who had been connected with this glass-staining firm separated from it, and, having begun a business of his own, accepted the application of the Misses Garrett to become his apprentices. They were formally articulated for eighteen months, during which they punctually fulfilled their engagement, working from ten to five each day. Of course there were good stories told about them. Some friend, calling upon them, reported that though the interview was interesting, the ladies could not be seen, as they were up on a scaffolding, lying flat on their backs close to a ceiling which they were painting. From that invisible region their voices descended to carry on the conversation. The ladies themselves were quite able to appreciate all the good-humored chaff attending their serious aim. When their apprenticeship reached its last summer they went on a tour throughout England, sketching the interiors and furniture of the best houses, which were freely thrown open to them. They have now started in business for themselves at No. 3 Cornwall Residences, Regent's Park, with fair prospect of success. Mr. J. M. Brydon, of Marlborough Street, is the architect who has the honor of having had these ladies for apprentices; and they assure me that during their stay there and in their work since they have met with no act of incivility. Occasionally the workmen may stare a little at the unaccustomed sight of ladies moving about with authority, but they are most respectful when they find that there is intelligence behind the authority. From a friend of these ladies I heard a significant anecdote. They directed that a certain kind of mixture with which paint is generally adulterated should not be used. When they came to look at the work they found that the mixture had been used, though it is what no untrained eye could detect. They called the painter to account, and he said he had used very little of the mixture indeed.

"That is true," said one of the ladies, "but we told you not to use a particle of it."

The painter was amazed, and at last said, "Will you be kind enough to tell me how you knew that mixture had been used?"

It is precisely this *knowledge* which every where secures respect. The Misses Garrett have made themselves competent decorators; they undertake the wall decorations, upholstery, furniture, embroidery, etc., as fully as any other firm. Nor are they the only firm of women engaged in this business. Two ladies of high position and education—Mrs. Hartley Brown and Miss Townshend (the former a sister of Chambrey Brown, Esq., a very accomplished architect)—have set up in the same business at 12 Bulstrode Street—a quaint and interesting old house, by-the-way, built by the famous Adamses, with a frieze

representing some of Æsop's fables. These ladies, who have been employed to decorate the interiors of the new Ladies' College (Merton) at Cambridge, have not only devised a number of new stuffs for chairs, sofas, and wall panels, but also for ladies' dresses. In the ancient code of Mann it is said, "A wife being gayly adorned, her whole house is embellished; but if she be destitute of ornament, all will be deprived of decoration." It is not a little curious to find the remote descendants of those whom Mann thus instructed including female dress among the concerns of decorative art. This is, indeed, theoretically done in the lectures given at South Kensington, and Charles Eastlake has interspersed some valuable hints concerning ladies' dress in his work on *Household Taste*. But the practical way in which Mrs. Hartley Brown and Miss Townshend have taken up the matter indicates, if I mistake not, a quiet revolution which has been for some time going on in certain London circles. It is said that the artists of England once thought of getting together and making some designs for dresses, which they would recommend to ladies; they did not do so formally, but they have certainly availed to modify very materially the costumes visible in thousands of English drawing-rooms. The "pre-Raphaelist lady" with her creamy silk, short-waisted and clinging—at once child-like and great-grandmotherly—is now a well-known figure in evening companies. But there is no uniform for ladies any more. At a fashionable party lately I was unable to pick out any two ladies out of a hundred whose dresses were cut alike, and the variety of colors suggested a fancy-dress ball. Yet these colors were all of moderate shades, and Hippolyte Taine himself must have admitted that very few of them were "loud." It would not at all surprise me if the world which has so long laughed at the Englishwoman's dress should some fine evening glance into one of these quiet Queen Anne interiors and feel as if the ladies in their Queen Anne costumes—and the other rich but also quiet variations of it now becoming frequent—are among the most agreeably dressed of womankind. But I must return from this digression.

The Misses Garrett appear to have an aim of especial importance in one particular. They tell me that they have recognized it as a want that a beautiful decoration should be brought within the reach of the middle class families, who are not prepared or disposed to go to the vast expense which the very wealthy are able and willing to defray, thereby occupying the most eminent firms. They believe that with care they are able to make beautiful interiors which shall not be too costly for persons of moderate means. This can surely be done, but it can only be through a co-operation between the owners

of the house and the decorators which shall make it certain that there shall be nothing superfluous. If an individual wishes a beautiful home, especially in dismal London, it is first of all necessary that he or she should clearly understand what is beautiful, and why it is desired. The decoration will then, in a sense, be put forth from within, like the foliage of a tree. In each case the external beauty will respond to an inward want, and be thus invariably an expression of a high utility. Nowhere more than in the homes of the great middle classes is there need of beauty. Their besetting fault is a conventionality which often lapses into vulgarity, and their thoughts (so called) are apt to be commonplace. The eye is often starved for the paunch. The pressure of business sends every man engaged in it home fatigued, and yet it is only when he enters that home that his real life, his individual and affectional life, comes into play. On the exchange, in the office or shop, he has been what commerce and the world determine; he has been but perfunctory; but now he shuts the door behind him, and his *own* bit of the day is reached. What is the real requirement for this person? Does a house that furnishes him bed and board suffice him? or, which is of greater importance, does so much alone suffice others who dwell habitually in it?

In the ancient Chinese *Analects* we read that Kih Tsze-Shing said, "In a superior man it is only the substantial qualities which are wanted; why should we seek for ornamental accomplishments?" Tsze-Kung replied, "Ornament is as substance; substance is as ornament: the hide of a leopard stripped of its hair is like the hide of a dog stripped of its hair." It would be difficult to find in literature a finer or more philosophical statement of the deep basis of Beauty than thus comes to us from a period of near three thousand years ago, and from a race whose applications of decorative art to objects of every-day use are models for Europe. The spots of the leopard are the sum of its history; its hair is the physiognomy of its passion and power; it bears on its back the tracery of the leaf and sunshine amidst which it hides, and the purpose of the universe hides with it. Transferred to floor or sofa in a room, the coat of that cat is a bit of the wild art of nature, full of warm life, purely pictorial; more beautiful than the skin of our domesticated cats, because these have been adapted to other purposes, and reduced to an environment of less grandeur. But strip the two of their hair, and they are only larger and smaller pieces of leather, and the depilated hide of a dog is the same. All of which confirms Tsze-Kung's dictum that ornament is substance, and it at the same time suggests the converse truth that throughout the universe there must be substance to insure true ornament. When we

ascend to the region of finer utilities—those, namely, which are intellectual, moral, spiritual, social—we discover that household art is another name for household culture. What germ in the child's mind may that picture on the wall be the appointed sunbeam to quicken? What graceful touch to unfolding character may be added by the modest tint of a room? Who can say how much falsehood and unreality have been shed through the life and influence of individuals by tinsel in the drawing-room and rags up stairs?

Just now we are the victims of two reactions. Our ancestors made external beauty every thing, and the starved inner life of man rebelled. Puritanism arose with grim visage, turning all beautiful things to stone. From it was bequeathed us a race of artisans who had lost the sense of beauty. A reaction came, in which the passion for external beauty displayed itself in an intemperate outbreak of gaudiness and frivolity. We are sufficiently surrounded by the effects of that reaction, sustained by wealth without knowledge or taste, to make Charles Eastlake's description appropriate to ninety-nine out of every hundred English homes. "This vitiated taste pervades and infects the judgment by which we are accustomed to select and approve the objects of everyday life which we see around us. It crosses our path in the Brussels carpet of our drawing-rooms; it is about our bed in the shape of gaudy chintz; it compels us to rest on chairs and to sit at tables which are designed in accordance with the worst principles of construction, and invested with shapes confessedly unpicturesque. It sends us metal-work from Birmingham which is as vulgar in form as it is flimsy in execution. It decorates the finest possible porcelain with the most objectionable character of ornament. It lines our walls with silly representations of vegetable life, or with a mass of uninteresting diaper. It bids us, in short, furnish our houses after the same fashion as we dress ourselves, and that is with no more sense of real beauty than if art were a dead letter. It is hardly necessary to say that this is not the opinion of the general public. In the eyes of *materfamilias* there is no upholstery which could possibly surpass that which the most fashionable upholsterer supplies. She believes in the elegance of window-curtains of which so many dozen yards were sent to the Duchess of —, and concludes that the dinner-service must be perfect which is described as 'quite a novelty.'" Mr. Eastlake well says, also: "National art is not a thing which we may inclose in a gilt frame and hang upon our walls, or which can be locked up in the cabinet of a virtuoso. To be genuine and permanent, it ought to animate with the same spirit the blacksmith's forge and the sculptor's atelier,

the painter's studio and the haberdasher's shop." Under the influence of such scornful words as these persons of taste and culture have risen in reaction against the reaction, and the result is that there are now in London several thousands of homes which have filled themselves with those old shreds of beauty which Puritanism cast to the winds. Most of these are the homes of artists or virtuosi, and as they have thus set the fashion, a still larger number have tried to follow them. A genuinely old thing is competed for furiously, and as it is apt to go with the longest purse rather than the finest taste, we find the past as often re-appearing in a domestic curiosity-shop as in a beautiful interior.

Now Puritanism in its day was one of the most useful of things, and if we do not see the traces of beauty which it has left, the fault is in our own eyes. The artists know very well that if it had spared the old tapestries and furniture for the main uses of our present society, the effect would be as unlovely as if our homes were all buttressed and turreted in feudal style. Feudalism and Puritanism have alike left to us just as much of the styles of their ages as we need—enough to give, as it were, a fair fringe to the appropriate vestment of to-day. A house made up of antiquarian objects is a show-room, a museum, but not a home. We have fallen upon an age when cultured people know that external beauty is but one means to integral beauty, and when the prophets of that higher end can see that the very flowers of the field are ugly if they drink up that which ought to turn to corn and wine. Much is to be said for the antiquarian taste if it does not run into an antiquarian passion. It may safely be admitted that our churches need not be sombre nor our services gloomy, that a few good pictures would not harm the one, nor more poetry and music the other; but what is to be said of those who find in albs and chasubles and incense-burners the regained Paradise of man?

But if there can be no real beauty secured by building for a life that is to be lived in one century a mansion that grew out of another, as little can a high taste be satisfied by the conventionality of its own time, which admits of no relation between the individual and his dwelling-place. In a normal society each man would be able to build his house around him as he builds his body, and to take the past, the east, the west, for his materials as much as brick or stone. "Let us understand," says the wisest adviser of our time, "that a house should bear witness in all its economy that human culture is the end to which it is built and garnished. It stands there under the sun and moon to ends analogous and not less noble than theirs. It is not for festivity, it is not for sleep; but the pine and the oak shall gladly descend

from the mountains to uphold the roof of men as faithful and necessary as themselves, to be the shelter always open to good and true persons—a hall which shines with sincerity, brows ever tranquil, and a demeanor impossible to disconcert; whose inmates know what they want; *who do not ask your house how theirs shall be kept.*"

One residence particularly has connected itself in the course of my observations with the high place given, in this extract from Emerson's chapter on "Domestic Life," to the individuality so essential to a home, and so difficult to obtain. Those who have found delight—as who has not?—in the paintings which the American artist, Mr. George S. Boughton, has given to the world will not be surprised to learn that he has built up around him a home worthy of his refined taste and his delicate perception of those laws of beauty which enable it to harmonize with individual feeling without ever running into eccentricity. Few of those who have enjoyed the fine hospitalities of Grove Lodge, Kensington, can fail to recognize that the much-admired residence is as unique a work of the much-admired artist as any of those charming pictures of his which so tenderly invest the human life of to-day with the sentiment and romance of its own history. Passing lately through his hall, touched every where with the toned light of antique beauty, to his studio, the picture which he was just finishing for the Royal Academy appeared as a natural growth out of the æsthetic atmosphere by which he was surrounded—some girls of Chaucer's time beside an old well and a cross, filling the water-bottles of pilgrims on their way, amidst the spring blossoms, to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket, "the holy, blissful martyr," at Canterbury. The embowered English landscape closed as kindly around the figures and costumes and symbols of the olden time as they do now about the features of a new age; and no less harmoniously do the ornaments and decorations of this beautiful home surround the cultured society which the young host and hostess gather to their assemblies. The house is, as I have intimated, remarkable for the impression it gives of being the expression of individual taste. It might well enough bear on its threshold that signature which bears such increasing value, so truly does it represent the man—as free from ostentation as from conventionality.

Entering the door, we find ourselves in a square vestibule, separated from the main hall by rich and heavy curtains of greenish-blue tapestry. The walls are here, for a distance of one-third of their height from the floor, covered with a paneled wainscot colored in harmony with the hangings. For the rest, the walls are covered with a stamped leather papering of large antique scrolls, outlined in gold. A rich light fills this lit-

tle apartment by reason of the quaint and deep-hued glass of the door and side window. In these both roundels and quarries are used. In the door there are roundels above and quarries beneath, furnishing a neat border to larger stainings representing marguerites and clover blossoms on a blue ground. Above the door is a curious horizontal glass mosaic, set in lead, as indeed are all the squares and circlets of both window and door, with bees and butterflies at the angles of the irregular lines. The zigzag flight of the little winged symbols of industry and pleasure required that the pieces of glass should be irregular, and this result was secured by an odd device. The decorator having come with his oblong pane of precious glass, asked how he should cut it up. The artist promptly ordered him to let it fall through some feet on the door-step, and then gather up the fragments. This was done, and as the pieces came of the fall, so were they put together, with the bees and butterflies at their angles. The effect of this irregularity is very fine indeed, as setting off the precision of the patterns in the rest of the door.

Passing through the curtains, we enter a hall running about two-thirds of the depth of the house to the dining-room. The hall is lined with fine old engravings and cabinets, with here and there an old round convex mirror. The general color of the walls of the dining-room is sage-green, thus setting off finely the beautiful pictures and the many pieces of old china. There are several cabinets which have been designed by Mr. Boughton himself, and a *buffet* somewhat resembling that drawn by Charles Eastlake (Fig. 12, *Hints on Household Taste*), but improved, as I think, by being made somewhat higher, and having a small ornamental balustrade on the top shelf. And I may here say that Mr. Boughton's art has enabled him to make his many beautiful cabinets, the antique ones as well as those designed by himself, particularly attractive by introducing small paintings on the panels of their doors or drawers. These figures are generally allegorical and decorative, and are painted upon golden backgrounds. They are of rich but sober colors, and usually female figures with flowing drapery, great care being taken that their faces shall have dignity and expression. In some cases an old cabinet has small open spaces here and there which will admit of medallion busts and heads being painted, and if care be taken that the colors shall not be too loud, and especially that the designs are not realistic, the beauty and value of the cabinet are very much enhanced. The *buffet* to which I have referred has a curtain over the arch beneath, and such an addition may be also made to a cabinet which rests upon legs with good effect as well as utility, if care be taken that the color of the curtain shall not be obtrusive.

This dining-room is lighted by a large window set back in a deep recess, curtained off from the main room with hangings of red velvet, and exquisitely environed by original designs. The window is composed of the richest quarries, holding in their centres each its different decorative flower or other natural form, and these being collectively the frame of large medallions of stained glass representing Van Eyck, Van Orley, and the burgomaster's wife from Van Eyck's picture in the National Gallery.

It is a notable feature of the ideas of glass decoration, and, indeed, of paper decoration, in houses where English artists have superintended the ornamentation, that realism in design is severely avoided. In this respect I can not doubt that we are in London far more advanced in taste than those decorators of Munich, and some other Continental cities, who try to make the figures, in their glass at least, as commonplace real as if they were painting on canvas. Even if the material with which the glass-stainer works admitted of a successful imitation of natural forms, the result could not be beautiful. No one desires roses to blossom on his window-panes, nor butterflies to settle on the glass as if it were a flower. The real purpose of the glass can never be safely forgotten in its decoration: it is to keep out the cold while admitting the light; the color is to tone the light, and prevent its being garish; and if, further, any form is placed upon the glass, it is merely to prevent monotony by presenting an agreeable variation from mere color. But the form must be in mere outline, transparent, else it suggests an opaque body, which were a denial of the main purpose of the glass, *i. e.*, to do away with opaqueness. Even when the ornaments on the little panes are thinnest, they are hardly suited to the English sky, which sends us little superfluous light.

The drawing-room at Grove Lodge is adorned on the theory that its function is one which requires a degree of richness bordering on brilliancy, which were out of place in a study, or studio, or sitting-room. Here are to be happy assemblies of light-hearted people in gay dresses, and the room must be in harmony with the purpose of pleasure which has brought them together; but then the drawing-room must not obtrude itself, it must not outshine their lustres nor pale their colors; rather it must supply the company with an appropriate framing, and set them all in the best light. I have rarely seen a more picturesque drawing-room than that at Grove Lodge, and none that has seemed to me a more purely artistic creation of a beautiful out of a rather unpromisingly constructed room. A paper of heraldic pink roses, very faint, with leaves, in mottled gold, makes a frieze of one width above a wall-paper of sage-gray, which has no discernible

figures at all on it. This sage-gray supplies an excellent background to the pictures—which are moderate in quantity, charming in quality—and for the picturesque ladies, who are too often fairly blanched by the upholsterer's splendor, as they might be by blue and silver lights in a theatre. At the cornice is a gold moulding and fretting, making an agreeable fringe to the canopy (as the star-spotted ceiling may be appropriately called). The ceiling is not stelled, however, with the regularity of wall-paper designs, but with stars of various magnitude and interspaces. It must be, of course, a room in which the deep tones of color preponderate which could alone make such a ceiling appropriate. In this instance it is rendered appropriate not only by the character of the hangings of the room, at once rich and subdued, and by the carpet, which Mr. Boughton has had made for this room, the basis of whose design is the greensward, touched here and there with spots of red, but also by the fact that it is a double drawing-room, lighted in the daytime only at the ends, and requiring therefore a bright ceiling. There are two old Japanese cabinets: one is richly chased, but with nothing in relief except the gold lock-plates, and some twenty-eight hinges (themselves a decoration); the other is more complex, and has figures in relief. In addition to these there are two cabinets of unique beauty, designed by Mr. Boughton—one possessing a beveled mirror running its whole width at the top, the other with panels on which the artist has painted Spring and Autumn in gold.

Before leaving this charming residence I must mention that some of its best effects have been produced by the extraordinary lustre of color and quality of surface in the stuffs used for curtains, furniture covers, and upholstery. These are such as are not ordinarily manufactured, and can be procured in London only by searching for them. Manufacturers in this country, and no doubt in America also, are in the habit of bleaching their stuffs as white as possible, and the consequence is they will not take rich and warm dyes. The secret of those Oriental stuffs upon whose surface, as they appear in our exhibitions, English manufacturers are so often seen looking with despair, is that they never bleach to whiteness any thing that is to be dyed. If the Eastern dyers should put their deep colors upon a surface bleached to ghastliness, their stuffs would be as ghastly as our ordinary goods speedily become. The Oriental dyer simply leaves the natural color of the wool or cotton creamy and delicate, and the hues never turn out crude and harsh, as do those of English stuffs. This bleaching, moreover, takes the life out of a natural material, and is the reason of the superior durability of colored Oriental fabrics.