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# THE NEW PATH.

VOL. II.]

AUGUST, 1865.

[No. 8.]

## HOW SHALL WE FURNISH OUR HOUSES?

### CURTAINS AND CARPETS.

"THE Dutch have, perhaps, an indeterminate idea that a curtain is not a cabbage. In Spain, they are *all* curtains—a nation of hangmen." This is Poe's dictum, in the essay quoted in our former paper on furniture. His summing up: "The Hottentots and Kickapoos are very well in their way; the Yankees alone are preposterous;" while near enough for his purpose to the truth, does not declare what estimate he had made of the capacity of the Yankees to use drapery.

This capacity, it must be seen, is of the lowest order. There is no part of our house decoration that baffles more completely all efforts to make it seemly than the curtains. It is not strange that it should be so, for Americans have very little use for curtains. One remnant of the old traditions respecting them still lingers, but it is a remnant of tradition only. The last general usefulness of them ceased when French bedsteads came into fashion, and bed-curtains were taken down as things no longer needed.

Bed-curtains seem to have been the first draperies used in private residences; beginning our reckoning with the beginning of modern civilization—they and their like of like use. This use was to protect from the cold and from drafts of air. Castle chambers, in the tenth century, were huge and walled with stone, without glass or other means

of closing the window-openings. Later, they were lined with plaster or with wainscoting of wood, and wooden shutters were hung; and even glass set in sashes was very generally supplied by the beginning of the twelfth century. However they might be finished and fitted up, there were currents of air, and the wind blew in through crevices and down the wide-throated chimneys; and the heavy tapestries and stuffs of woolen and linen, made in the middle ages, were found useful to shut out the weather. There still remain a few specimens of an utensil, once very common, often illustrated and mentioned in manuscripts—a sort of spur or projecting arm of wood close at the side of a window or door. This was to carry a curtain. Sometimes these spurs were hinged; the curtain was to be shut against the wall so as to cover the window, or opened, at pleasure. Sometimes it was stationary; it was desired only to keep the wind from a certain bed or fixed chair. The bedsteads in wealthy houses, huge, richly ornamented, immovable structures, were hung around with curtains of heavy material. And smaller squares and parallelograms of tapestry were at once the "afghans," the carpets, and the screens of the time; for a square bit of stuff could be hung over the high back-rail settle, or spread over the knees, or laid under the feet at pleasure.

It is commonly supposed that the use of carpets is a wholly modern luxury. This, however, is an error, for as early as the thirteenth century we first hear of floor-cloths in England, and their use was then introduced from the continent of Europe. Another error is in quite the opposite direction; it is that "arras," or hangings, were in common use throughout the middle ages. In fact, though, no certain record is found of their use to cover walls of private residences prior to the thirteenth century. The historical facts are nearly these: Rich oriental hangings and European imitations of them were in use in churches as early as the ninth century, but were too costly for ordinary use. When first introduced into domestic life they were used where most needed—at doors and windows; but the beauty of material and pattern, which had made them suitable decorations in the most splendid churches of the time, recommended them also for the walls of the wealthy, and they gradually superseded wainscoting and plaster, and were hung to mask the rough walls from ceiling to floor. It is to be observed, that this means of covering walls was eminently suited to the circumstances of the time when rooms were large and but little encumbered with furniture. Of these hangings the best were wholly embroidered with the needle, and with chronicles of the events of the time or with scenes from romantic fiction. Others were wholly woven, but very rich in design. These hangings, when used for the wall-coverings of a room, hung across the doors, acknowledging the existence of these only by a slit or a partly sewed division between two pieces; and the whole fabric hung from the ceiling or from a moulding at the top of the wall, immovably fixed above. But the windows were curtained separately by pieces of stuff which were sewn to rings sliding upon a rod, so

that the shading curtains might be, at pleasure, easily slid back and the window left unobstructed.

So much of history it is well to know. For it is wise, before inquiring to what uses curtains can be put, to ask to what uses they have been put.

We have little use now for hangings to shut out the wind. Our windows fit tight, and our chimneys are narrow and tortuous, not even rain-drops fall into our coal fires. Even bed-curtains are abolished. Window-curtains remain. Now, for use, we have "roller-shades," which shut out the sun thoroughly and are not at all in the way; and these can be made of material of any color, from translucent white to nearly opaque dark green linen, and can roll from top or bottom of the window. These have their definite purpose, and answer it. Then, to screen from observation from without the interior of the room; by day, in a way somewhat less disagreeable than by using wire-gauze, we have the lace curtains of city drawing-rooms. These are good, and just what is needed; the material is well suited to its purpose, and hangs gracefully. Even the embroidered muslin curtains, which form a cheaper substitute for lace, are unobjectionable. All these should, of course, hang easily and not too full, and should just reach or not reach the floor; the undue length of curtains which lie a foot upon the floor, even when hooked up, as is the fashion at present, is merely fashion and inconvenient display of magnificence. Moreover, we have wooden blinds outside or inside, or both, and these tend to render all window curtains unnecessary, for we know of very pleasant rooms where rich carpets and costly furniture are, which have no curtains and need none. But the curtains and shades we have spoken of are without objection and have their uses.

So much for utility. But, in considering present customs, we find much

that has no view to utility. White muslin curtains are dear to the hearts of ladies, because of their display of clean, fresh, crisp material. As decorated with ribbons or cords, which tie them up or pretend to, and immovably fixed on each side of the window, they are the principal ornament of cottage bedrooms, and are much desired by young ladies for their bowers everywhere, both in city and country. The male critic, however, can hardly regard them with complacency. They obscure the windows, they collect dust, they are dangerous in the evening when lamps are lighted, and burn down nearly all the country houses that are burned; they are much in the way when one would open or shut window or blind; their use has never been discovered, and their beauty is ugliness. The removal of these from a pleasant country room and substitution of white or buff shades on rollers, is the first touch necessary, in most cases, of that manipulation which will make such a room as pretty as it might be. Besides these, there are the heavy curtains of wool or silk, which are in common use, and which seem to be the direct descendants of mediæval arras. These have, indeed, one use—to draw close at night when the fire is bright and the lamps are lighted, and when the winter had better be shut out by heavy folds through which warmth cannot escape nor noise enter. But the common arrangement of these curtains—secured at top behind a gilded “cornice,” which is utterly without use or meaning, only to be opened at bottom; kept open there by brass hooks or by cords, in stiffly curving plaits which never change; darkening the room in a way in which a room ought very seldom to be darkened, by shutting out all light except from the bottom of the window;—this whole affair is as bad as it can be, both for looks and for use, and should be speedily

abandoned. They should, of course, be so arranged as to draw easily. A stout metal rod should be secured above the window, and the curtain-rings which slide upon it should be of sufficient size to move easily along it, and should be tolerably close together. Perhaps a thin brass tube an inch in diameter is the best rod, and the rings may be of brass, or perhaps, of *lignum-vitæ*. So arranged, the double curtain can with one twitch be brought close across the window, and can almost as easily be flung back, well behind the window casing.

It often happens that a room is very well without curtains. If they are needed for any purpose, let the material and arrangement be used which will best answer that purpose. Do not suppose that drapery is beautiful and decorative in itself; it is not. It takes its sole value from the use to which it gracefully lends itself. Rich stuffs, indeed, may be beautiful in themselves, though with us they seldom are; but even if you have twenty yards of a silk brocade of really beautiful design and splendid colors, do not hang it up for a curtain where it is not needed. Better lay it, folded, on the wardrobe shelf until there is need of it, it will have a twofold beauty in its right place.

It will be very well, however, to consult mediæval practice for the possible uses of curtains. It will be found that more use can be made of them than is generally supposed. Consider, for instance, the doors of a house. Many houses are badly planned in one respect, viz.: the doors of chambers are in such places and open in such a way as to show the interior too plainly. Doors, too, are too thin and vibratory; sounds pass through them too easily—conversations are overheard which had better have been kept private. Every doorway in a good house, certainly every chamber doorway, should be fitted with two doors; one opening outwardly, and

one inwardly; or else the door should open outwardly, and a curtain should be hung within, ample enough to cover and fold about both sides of the door casing. In large doorways, as between drawing-room and dining-room, a curtain alone is often the best and most convenient inclosure. In a beautiful library we know of, two beams (or, strictly speaking, girders) cross the ceiling of the room, which is about eighteen feet wide by twenty-four feet long; and underneath one of these beams is a rod from which two curtains are hung with rings. These curtains, when drawn, divide the room into two uneven parts; the fire-place is in the larger part, sixteen by eighteen feet; the only entrance door is in the smaller part. All day the curtains are thrown back, and fall in close folds against the walls, leaving the room unobstructed. At night, when the family or any members of it would be undisturbed to converse or to study, the curtain is drawn; then, if the door open, the person entering is not at once in the room, he is in a vestibule as it were, where his step is heard by the inmates, who need not be taken by surprise.

The decoration or finishing of the whole interior of a room by means of linen or woollen-stuff is not unknown in our own time. Boudoirs in Europe, at least, are not uncommonly fitted up with chintz or printed linen, which, however, is generally secured to the wall at intervals, and "tufted," as the upholsterers say. We have seen a lodge-room hung with dark red, and another hung with grey worsted stuff, the hangings in these cases being secured at the top only, gathered so as to hang very full and just touching the floor. Now, none of these are altogether suitable to a drawing-room or library; the first plan is not beautiful, the second is inconvenient where there is much furniture. But there are cases when

some interior wall-covering is wanted, different from those commonly in use.

It is hard, for example, to finish the walls of a room so as to equal in richness of effect the splendid furniture and rich carpets it may contain. Wall-paper is very limited in its application. Painting in polychromy is good; but who is to do the work? Wainscoting in hard wood may be inconvenient and will generally be too costly. Wainscoting in white pine will still require polychromatic painting. Tapestry may well be used if it can be obtained fit for the purpose,\* and it always can be from England by any means which involve an opportunity to make proper selection. Now, if the lower part of the wall be wainscoted as high as the backs of the chairs, or, say three feet and six inches above the floor, tapestry may hang from the top of the wall to the top of the wainscot, and be there secured at the lower edge; not, however, as it is at the upper edge, but less often, and not drawn tight. It should merely hang along the wall. At the top it should be secured every inch or two, or, still better, continuously.

One word more, and we are done with hangings and curtains for awhile. If a church or lecture-room is haunted by a disagreeable echo, the covering of its walls with such hangings as we have been describing will lay the ghost. This is not an untried experiment.

\* [Happening in, the other day, at Mr. S. P. Avery's pleasant rooms, 694 Broadway, where one is always sure of finding something curious, or rare, or beautiful, perhaps all three—he showed us a piece of Gobelin tapestry, brought by our soldiers from Columbia, S. C., when that place was destroyed by the rebels. We should have said, saved from our soldiers; for, it is one of a set of four pieces, the other three of which, in their ignorance of the difference between Gobelin tapestry and carpet, our men had cut up for saddle-cloths! It is not every day that one has a chance to buy a bit of Gobelin with a story woven into it! Perhaps some one of our readers will take this hint.—Ed. "New Path."]

The essayist of *The Cornhill Magazine*, whose paper we quoted before, after speaking briefly of curtains in a way confirmatory of our convictions on this subject, speaks intelligently of carpets. He says:

“Among the many fashions of the day which tend to unpicturesqueness and expense without any corresponding advantages in point of comfort, is that of cutting out and fitting our carpets so as to exactly follow the plan-outline of the room. Yard upon yard of stuff is wasted in the earnest endeavor to cover up the floor in every recess occasioned by a window or the projection of a chimney breast. Nor is this all, for the carpet thus once laid down will not again fit any other room without a farther sacrifice of material. This inconvenience might easily be avoided by allowing the carpet to assume the form of a simple parallelogram, not extending further in any direction than the inmost projections of the area.”

The author goes on to give examples of the better practice he advises; but our own examples will suit our purpose better. Nearly every one has seen, in some city or country house, a room floored with hard wood carefully laid down and smoothly oiled and waxed, the carpet occupying the middle of the room, a plain parallelogram, leaving a margin all around where the floor was visible. We know of houses of very moderate size and of no pretensions to splendor, where the custom is followed. No plan, however, suits so well with a handsome room and rich furniture. The carpet is to be laid down for winter. For the summer the bare floor is better than carpet, straw matting, or linen floor-cloth. The carpet may be secured to wooden pins, projecting from the floor about the thickness of the carpet itself; or it may be so loaded at the edges, or edged with a heavy fringe that it will lie smoothly. Suppose the room to be

sixteen by twenty-two feet in greatest dimension, and the hearth to project two feet into the room. Let the parallelogram of carpet be twelve feet wide and sixteen feet long. Then the chairs and sofas next the wall will stand upon the floor, but the feet of the sitter, who occupies one of them, will rest upon the carpet.

“But,” urges a doubter, “the floor will be so expensive.” Not necessarily. Those who will have nothing worse than polished walnut, oak, and maple for their flooring-stuff, would have Saxony or Axminster carpets. Remember that our proposal, if adopted, would save wonderfully in carpets. A very pretty floor may also be made at moderate cost. Every good house has its floors of narrow flooring-planks, not over four inches wide. The best houses have their floor-planks an uniform width of two and a half or of three inches. About New York these flooring-planks are always fitted together with the tongue-and-groove joint, and nailed so that the nail-heads are concealed. In and about Boston they are often laid without the joint, merely nailed down close together, but then the flooring is always double. In either case the alternate planks may be stained a dark color, the whole oiled, waxed, and rubbed, and the floor need shame no one, or contrast unfavorably with a very rich carpet indeed. Many varieties in the flooring are possible. The narrow planks may be cut into short lengths and laid “herring-bone” fashion, zig-zag, or in diagonal squares, as in the entrance-hall of the Academy of Design. Of the luxuries of *parqueterie* and *intarsiatura* we do not treat at present.

When the carpet is treated as described above, it becomes of a somewhat less paramount importance, and governs less absolutely the other decorations and furniture of the room. This is a great gain. For the carpet, though

generally considered "the soul of the apartment," from which "are deduced not only the hues but the forms of all objects incumbent," cannot so control the room without injuring the whole effect. The painting of the ceiling, if it be painted, the painting or papering of the walls, the color of the material that covers important articles of furniture, the table-cloth, the curtains, if there are curtains, are each entitled to a voice in the general effect as potent as that of the carpet. For our own part, that carpet pleases best which is not noticed at all. The color may be warm and rich—mingled colors are the best, but may not be glaring and attractive of notice.

Now hear a word from Mr. William Burges, a first-rate authority: "In all these carpets (some splendid oriental specimens) it will be seen that the border plays a most important part, and probably the last thing that would enter into the head of an oriental would be to cut out a carpet to the shape of the room and then nail it down, so that it should be impossible to clean the floor without the trouble of unnailing it again."\* Two points, observe, are stated in this brief abstract. First, that the best designs for carpets are not to be cut into and cut to pieces, but, like good designs of any kind, need every line and hue of the whole, and must be used as they are made. Second, that a carpet should be a convenient thing to take away and clean, and allow the floor to be cleaned. A good friend and most artistic young architect has given his opinion in our hearing, that every carpet

should admit of being rolled up once a week and carried away to be shaken or swept—not beaten with sticks—a hebdomadal cleaning need not be so radical as that. He would abolish brooms altogether, as distributors of dust. The bare floors should be swept, as bare office-floors are, with a long-handled soft brush.

Moreover, as Mr. Burges reminds us, the beautiful carpets of the east were not meant to be trodden on with muddy boots, but are of silk and velvet. Well, when carpets are rightly used, we shall see some arrangement generally adopted such as this: A room need not be limited to one carpet, there may be a splendid eastern floor-cloth, but it will not be laid down when there is danger of injury; another and a less delicate and solemn fabric may be kept for ordinary occasions.

The question of colors and combination, and the question what can be done easily in America, cannot be answered now. Our principal purpose is to ask readers to think for themselves about things concerning which they do not think at all, but follow the upholsterer's instructions. There is one word of advice: Should you find a practical difficulty in the way of any new notion which we or your own thoughts suggest, do not, therefore, reject the notion. Our present system of furnishing and upholstery has had years of attention, rival dealers and manufacturers striving each to surpass the other, each generation simplifying and improving the processes of the last. A carpet which is to be laid down as we have advised may be laid down in many ways. The best way is to be found by experiment.

\* "Art Applied to Industry," by William Burges, F. R. I. B. A. London: Parkers, 1865. Page 89.

## ANOTHER ENGLISH LETTER.

DECEMBER 11th, 1864.

A GENTLEMAN whom I met at the National Gallery while copying one of the "Turners," gave me an invitation to call at his house, and he would show me some Turner drawings, and a copy of Claude, by a countryman of mine, G. L. Brown. I called and had a treat. Among the drawings were four of the illustrations to Finden's Bible, about 6 by 8 in., exquisitely finished, one of them, the sublime "Babylon," magnificent beyond description. There is no use talking, they do knock everything else higher than a kite! The others were, "Joppa," "Desert of Sinai," with "Rock of Moses" and "Ramah," then there were about a dozen sketches, some of them quite large—beautiful effects of color—golden sunset skies with dark blue mountains—glowing effects of sunshine over Italian cities, with lovely blue along the quiet horizons.

After looking over all these, there was a copy of the *Liber Studiorum*, purchased from Turner for £40, now worth, I am told, £300. Most of the drawings for this work are at the South Kensington Museum done in sepia. The prints are fine, but not so generally finished as the drawings.

As for Brown, if he would copy nature as well as he copies Claude, he would do good work, but I suppose he thinks Claude is better (no doubt he is the easier). Knowledge sufficient to appreciate Turner will make you feel that Claude is childish and silly in comparison; but I am not surprised at his popularity; to the ignorant, his work must seem like a trick in legerdemain, wonderful in its deceptive reality, but to those who understand it, it is no reality at all. There are two famous works of his in the National Gallery, "The Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca,"

and "The Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba," with two Turners hung between them: "Dido building Carthage" and "Sunrise in a mist," the last, I like best. Of the "Carthage," I believe, Ruskin has expressed not a very high opinion. I quite agree; I do not care for any of his imitations of Claude, and this is perhaps the best.

In the exhibition of water colors (Old Society), an oval drawing of a female head, by W. Hunt, was beautiful in color and exquisite in finish. Birket Foster's drawings are the acme of the clever. Davidson's are rich in color and truthful. Upon the whole, I like his best among the landscapes, they are all simple subjects; nothing fine. The whole collection makes a nice show; most of the artists seem to agree in working for strong, pure color. They fail, principally, from not being able to draw. Naftel's work is elaborate, but hard and flat, with considerable awkwardness in drawing. I think they ought to do better, with Ruskin and Turner before their eyes to mark out the way.

There are exhibiting at present here two pictures of Holman Hunt's—"The After Glow in Egypt" and "London Bridge," both evidently faithful delineations of two widely different subjects. The subject of the first is an Egyptian maiden coming towards you from a grain field on the banks of the Nile, with a sheaf of wheat on her head, and a green jar in her hand. A flock of pigeons is flying about her; one clinging lightly to the sheaf, with its purple wings against the golden wheat; others picking up the seed at her feet. Behind her head is the warm, sunny sky, and the mountains, showing only as a narrow flush of rosy light in the far distance; nearer are some palm trees traced in



delicate green above the glowing gold, and some mounds with buildings on them to be above the floods. Then, the golden grain-field half reaped, the sheaves stacked gleaming in the glowing light. The colors are brilliant enough for sunshine, yet there are no shadows towards you; the grain-field merges into rich green grass and weeds along the margin of a stagnant pool, which down among the rich colors reflects the upper blue sky. This part of the work is most admirable; the soft, mysterious forms of the vegetation, except where they are defined against the light, and the delicate gradation of color in the water, changing from purple to green, is lovely; and all this comes of watching nature, and losing yourself in her infinitude of beauty. The figure is life-size, and painted up with all the power of the palette, dark against the glowing back-ground. Her head covered, and her rich brown face enclosed, in a scarf of many colors; her arms bare,—with the right, she steadies the sheaf, with the other, supports the green jar,—with the brown color of her arm against the bright distance make a fine piece of color. Her arms above the elbows are covered with a blue (almost black) robe, which reaches nearly to the feet, and gives great brilliancy and force to the picture. In the immediate front, the soft, white breasts and purple wings of the pigeons contrast with the dark earth and green grass.

The "London Bridge" is very carefully painted, but I do not care for the subject;—perhaps being a Black-republican has something to do with it.\* The effect of moonlight on London smoke is faithfully rendered.

Seddon's "Jerusalem" is at South Kensington; I like it much; it is very like Farrer.

\* The subject of the picture is, "London Bridge illuminated in honor of the arrival of the Princess of Wales."

There are a great many Landseers, Leslies, Mulreadies. Leslie is fine. Landseer is best in his interiors and simple portraits. His out-door scenes are quite false; none of them do I like as well as Turner, and I should, if they were as well done. W. Hunt I like as well. Lance, Linnel, Creswick, and a host of others that I have seen, indicate no power of painting truthfully.

DECEMBER 24th, 1864.

Sir Joshua's work I like. "The Age of Innocence" is graceful and childlike; and there are five portraits of a child in different positions, called "angels;" with wings on their shoulders; just their heads, in one picture. I think them very lovely, never get tired of looking at them, there is such a sad, yearning expression about their little faces. One is gazing upward, another is looking modestly downward, another is looking towards you, its soul in its little eyes, and all so graceful and childlike! These "Angels" and the "Age of Innocence" are quite delicate and pure in color, but there are a number of portraits, some full length, and a Holy Family, very dark-black back-grounds, but all are fine, no claptrap.

Gainsborough I like. It is quite surprising to me how work so conventional in all respects can be worthy of admiration, and yet, I think, with Ruskin, it is worthy of great respect. It is very interesting to me to see all the pictures, those that have been familiar by the engravings in the "Vernon Gallery," and which I had so often wished to see; here they all are, and you cannot imagine with what zest I devoured them on my first visit. Here are Constable's "Valley Farm" and "Cornfield"—pictures that he has evidently worked on hard, but so unsatisfactory, for want of faithful drawing and color; so much idle and ignorant daubing with the brush; nevertheless, I like them better

than any of the landscapes here, except Turner and Gainsborough. Creswick, Lee and Linnel are very poor; I do not hesitate in saying I would as lief have a Hart or Shattuck.

Leslie is a thorough master of his art; everything is done with ease, a transient expression on a face, a smile or a frown, is caught without effort, and a little work goes a great way.

I hardly think I like Mulready so well. There seems a want of feeling in his work; all is manipulation. He seems to have done them to show how well he could do them, not caring for the subject. There are three or four chalk-drawings by him, of the nude figure, quite wonderful in their way. Being mere trials of skill, they are satisfactory.

There are a number of Stanfields. "Texel Island" is about the best; but I look at that, and think of the beautiful green water I saw coming up St. George's Channel, and wish he had painted it like that. All is so drab in color, gray and brown, with a bit of red or blue on the figures.

APRIL 4th, 1865.

Every one advises me to stay and see the Royal Academy Exhibition, now

that it is so near at hand; it opens the first week in May. I suppose there will be a great deal of rubbish; still, Millais will have two or three important works, which I should like to see, and then, I should get the best idea of the modern English School, which I am told I do not get from the present exhibition.

I shall be glad if it is so, for the British Institution and Society of Artists present, in my estimation, a most deplorable show. Among so many things (over 1,000) there is not one bit of truthful, earnest work; among six hundred persons not one growing weary of his false labor, or caring to strive for the beauty and glory of nature. Is it not sad? About the best thing was a study of a country church, by Anthony—careful, but wanting in color and effect. The difference between these and our Academy pictures, is in the amount of flaring color. I recollect your statement, that our artists dare not paint color. Well, the artists here, with no more knowledge of nature, *dare* to do it; and you may imagine the result! It is not that they have no light, for they have Turner, W. Hunt, and a number of "Preraphs," with Ruskin, but, that they love darkness best. Is it not strange they should be so blind?

### JOSIAH WEDGWOOD.\*

#### A HINT TO AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS.

A friend has put into our hands an address by the Honorable W. E. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, delivered at Burslem, Staffordshire, October 26, 1863, on the occasion of the laying the foundation stone of the Memorial Building in honor of Josiah Wedgwood, the famous English potter,

the manufacturer of the celebrated Wedgwood Ware,—an institution "intended to comprise a Museum, School of Science and Art, and Free Library, and designed to form a complete Educational Institute, peculiarly adapted to the requirements of the district in which it is situated.

\* "Wedgwood," an Address by the Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone, M. P., Chancellor of the Exchequer. London: John Murray, Albemarle street, 1863.

Although this address is nearly two years old, it is new to us, and may be unknown to some of our readers. We therefore make a few extracts. They

will be found worth reading, in spite of the chancellor's ponderous dulness.

"—there are certain principles applicable to manufacture, by the observance or neglect of which its products are rendered good or bad. These principles were applied by Wedgwood with a consistency and tenacity that cannot too closely be examined, to industrial production. And these principles, being his, and being true, were also in no small degree peculiar to his practice; and deserve, on this account, to be in the permanent annals of art especially associated with his name.

\* \* \* \* \*

We may consider the products of industry with reference to their utility, or to their cheapness; or with regard to their influence upon the condition of those who produce them; or, lastly, with reference to their beauty; to the degree in which they associate the presentation of forms and colors agreeable to the cultivated eye with the attainment of the highest aptitude for those purposes of common life for which they are properly designed.

\* \* \* \* \*

We come, then, to the last of the heads which I have named; the association of beauty with utility, each of them taken according to its largest sense, in the business of industrial production. And it is in this department, I conceive, that we are to look for the peculiar pre-eminence, I will not scruple to say the peculiar greatness, of Wedgwood.

Now do not let us suppose that, when we speak of this association of beauty with convenience, we speak either of a matter which is light and fanciful or of one which may like some of those I have named, be left to take care of itself. Beauty is not an accident of things, it pertains to their essence; it pervades the wide range of creation; and, wherever it is impaired or banished, we have in this fact the proof of the moral disorder which disturbs the world. Reject, therefore, the false philosophy of those who will ask what does it matter, provided a thing be useful, whether it be beautiful or not; and say in reply, that we will take one lesson from Almighty God, who, in His works hath shown us,

and in His word also has told us, that "He hath made everything,"—not one thing, or another thing, but everything,—"beautiful in His time." Among all the devices of creation, there is not one more wonderful, \* \* \* —than the profuseness with which the Mighty Maker has been pleased to shed over the works of His hands an endless and boundless beauty.

And to this constitution of things outward, the constitution and mind of man, deranged although they be, still answer from within. Down to the humblest condition of life, down to the lowest and most backward grade of civilization, the nature of man craves, and seems as it were even to cry aloud for something, some sign or token at the least, of what is beautiful, in some of the many spheres of mind or sense.

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It appears to me that in the application of beauty to works of utility, the reward is generally distant. A new element of labour is imported into the process of production; and that element, like others, must be paid for. In the modest publication which the firm of Wedgwood and Bentley put forth under the name of a catalogue, but which really contains much sound and useful teaching on the principles of industrial art, they speak plainly on this subject to the following effect:—

'There is another error, common with those who are not over-well acquainted with the particular difficulties of a given art; they often say, that a beautiful object can be manufactured as cheaply as an ugly one. A moment's reflection should suffice to undeceive them.'

The beautiful object will be dearer than one perfectly bare and bald; not because utility is curtailed or compromised for the sake of beauty, but because there may be more manual labour, and there must be more thought, in the original design.

Therefore the manufacturer, whose daily thought it must and ought to be to cheapen his productions, endeavouring to dispense with all that can be spared, is under much temptation to decline letting beauty stand as an item in the account of the costs of production. So the pressure of economical laws tells severely upon the finer elements of

trade. And yet it may be argued that, in this as in other cases, in the case for example of the durability and solidity of articles, that which appears cheapest at first may not be cheapest in the long run. And this for two reasons. In the first place, because in the long run mankind are willing to pay a price for beauty. I will seek for a proof of this proposition in an illustrious neighbouring nation. France is the second commercial country of the world; and her command of foreign markets seems clearly referable in a great degree, to the real elegance of her productions, and to establish, in the most intelligible form, the principle, that taste has an exchangeable value; that it fetches a price in the markets of the world.

But, furthermore, there seems to be another way, by which the law of nature arrives at its revenge upon the shortsighted lust for cheapness. We begin, say, by finding beauty expensive. We accordingly decline to pay a class of artists for producing it. Their employment ceases, and the class itself disappears. Presently we find by experience that works reduced to utter baldness do not long satisfy. We have to meet a demand for embellishment of some kind. But we have now starved out the race who knew the laws and modes of its production. Something, however, must be done. So we substitute strength for flavour, quantity for quality; and we end by producing incongruous excrescences, or even hideous malformations at a greater cost than would have sufficed for the nourishment among us, without a break, of chaste and virgin Art.

Wedgwood's most signal and characteristic merit lay as I have said in the firmness and fulness with which he perceived the true law of what we term Industrial Art, or in other words, of the application of the higher Art to Industry; the law which teaches us to aim first at giving to every object the greatest possible degree of fitness and convenience for its purpose, and next at making it the vehicle of the highest degree of beauty which, compatibly with that fitness and convenience it will bear; which does not, I need hardly say, substitute the secondary for the primary end, but which recognizes as

part of the business of production, the study to harmonize the two.

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He did not in his pursuit of beauty overlook exchangeable value, or practical usefulness. The first he could not overlook, for he had to live by his trade; and it was by the profit derived from the extended sale of his humbler productions, that he was enabled to bear the risks and charges of his higher works. Commerce did for him, what the king of France did for Sevres, and the Duke of Cumberland for Chelsea; it found him in funds. And I would venture to say, that the lower works of Wedgwood are every whit as much distinguished by the fineness and accuracy of their adaptation to their uses, as his higher ones by their successful exhibition of the finest art. Take, for instance, his common plates, of the value of I know not how few, but certainly a very few, pence each. They fit one another as closely as the cards in a pack. At least I, for one, have never seen plates that fit like the plates of Wedgwood, and become one solid mass. Such accuracy of form must, I apprehend, render them much more safe in carriage. Of the excellence of these plates we may take it for a proof that they were largely exported to France, if not elsewhere, that they were there printed or painted with buildings or scenes belonging to the country, and then sent out again as national manufactures.

Again, take such a jug as he would manufacture for the washhand-table of a garret. I have seen these, made apparently of the commonest material used in the trade. But, instead of being built up, like the usual, and much more fashionable, jugs of modern manufacture in such a shape that a crane could not easily get his neck to bend into them, and that the water can hardly be poured out without risk of spraining the wrist, they are constructed in a simple capacious form of flowing curves, broad at the top, and so well poised that a slight and easy movement of the hand discharges the water.

A round cheese-holder, or dish, again, generally presents in its upper part a flat space, surrounded by a curved rim; but a cheese-holder of Wedgwood's will make itself known by this, that the flat is so dead a flat, and its curve so marked

and bold a curve: thus at once furnishing the eye with a line agreeable and well-defined, and affording the utmost available space for the cheese. I feel persuaded that a Wiltshire cheese, if it could speak, would declare itself more comfortable in a dish of Wedgwood's, than in any other dish.

Again, there are certain circular inkstands by Wedgwood, which are described in the twenty-first section of the Catalogue. It sets forth the great care which had been bestowed upon the mechanical arrangement, with a view to the preservation of the pen, and the economical and cleanly use of the ink. The prices are stated at from sixpence to eight shillings, according to size and finish. I have one of these; not however black, like those mentioned in the catalogue, but of his creamy white ware. I should guess it must have been published at the price of a shilling, or possibly even less. It carries a slightly recessed upright rectilinear ornament, which agreeably relieves a form otherwise somewhat monotonous. But the ornament does not push this inkstand out of its own homely order. It is so tasteful that it would not disgrace a cabinet, but so plain that it would suit a counting house. It has no pretension: all Wedgwood's works, from the lowest upwards, abhor pretension.

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I have spoken of Wedgwood's cheapest, and also of his costliest, productions. Let me now say a word on those which are intermediate. Of these, some appear to me to be absolutely faultless in their kind, and to exhibit, as happily as the remains of the best Greek art, both the mode and the degree in which beauty and convenience may be made to coalesce in articles of manufacture. I have a *déjeuner*, nearly slate-coloured, of the ware which I believe is called jasper ware. This seems to me a perfect model of workmanship and taste. The tray is a short oval, extremely light, with a surface soft as an infant's flesh to the touch, and having for ornament a scroll of white riband, very graceful in its folds, and shaded with partial transparency. The detached pieces have a ribbed surface, and a similar scroll reappears, while for their principal ornaments they are dotted with white quatrefoils. These quatre-

foils are delicately adjusted in size to the varying circumferences, and are executed both with a true feeling of nature, and with a precision that would scarcely do discredit to a jeweller.

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"—He has before explained, as I have already mentioned, that the utmost cheapness can hardly be had along with the highest beauty. He goes on to vindicate his prices, as compared with those of others; and concludes his apology, in terms which do the firm the highest honor, by declaring plainly, "they are determined to give over manufacturing any article, whatever it may be, rather than degrade it." A clear proof, I think, that something which resembles heroism has its place in trade. With this bold announcement to the world was combined, within the walls of his factory, that unsparing sacrifice of defective articles, and confinement of his sales to such as were perfect, which down to this day supply the collector, in a multitude of cases, with the test he needs in order to ascertain the genuine work of the master.

The lightness of Josiah Wedgwood's ware, which is an element not merely of elegance but of safety; the hardness and durability of the bodies; the extraordinary smoothness, and softness to the touch of the surfaces; their powers of resisting heat and acids; the immense breadth of the field he covered, with the number and variety of his works in point of form, subject, size, and color—this last particularly as to his vases; his title almost to the paternity of the art of relief in modern earthenware; all these are characteristics, which I am satisfied only to name."

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The address concludes with some remarks on Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," in which the poet's political notions are seriously discussed and criticised. But Goldsmith would have smiled at any attempt to hold him responsible for his notions on any subject. He is a singular example of a writer who owes his immortality almost entirely to the charm of his style, which invested a myriad common-places and fallacies, together, of course, with a

great many shrewd and true observations, with an almost magical beauty.

If Goldsmith wished to tell us that two and two make four, his way of stating it turns the formula into poetry; but here comes one of England's most accomplished gentlemen, a man who has had every advantage that schools, universities, travel, the highest social converse, and experience in affairs can give, a training, in short, of which poor Goldsmith never had the least share; from which, indeed, he was completely cut off by his birth and the very constitution of his mind; and yet with all these gifts of fortune, Mr. Gladstone is powerless to make even an attractive subject attractive. The story of Wedgwood, with all the historic interest of the art he practiced, added to that story, or, the story itself—think what Goldsmith would have done with it! Think what Ruskin would have done! But out of Mr. Gladstone's oppressively "proper," correct, and labored address, without enthusiasm and with very little practical, or practically put, information, we have been able to extract only these few paragraphs which are likely to interest our manufacturers.

But little has been done thus far among us in the way of calling in the assistance of cultivated minds, of men of talent, to add the element of beauty to our manufactured goods. In truth, we produce very little in the way of ornament, although we use, and pay for, a good deal. But all, or nearly all our designers for printed goods, cotton or woolen, the decorators of our china, the makers of patterns for our wall-papers and carpets, the designers and carvers of our furniture, the designers of our jewelry, are either foreigners, or steal their models from abroad. We wish it were otherwise; but, so long as no large mind springs up among the manufacturers to see what is to be gained for the country and himself by establishing

a new order of things, we shall go on imitating or buying foreign goods, neglecting the vast storehouse of native beauty in flowers, plants, and the myriad suggestions of nature which surround us in bountiful profusion.

The "School of Design for Women," originally intended by its charitable and intelligent founders to bring about this very result, and which, if it could have been managed with the energy that, displayed by the same ladies, among others, has made the Sanitary Commission one of the most splendid features of our war—would have opened to American women a hundred happy avenues to honorable employment—has, since the Cooper Institute swallowed it up, been turned entirely away from its original purpose, and, with the exception of the wood-engraving department, has become a mere drawing-school, presided over in this, its latest stage of decline, by a principal without ideas as without knowledge, and as thoroughly un-American as English bigotry, narrowness, and prejudice can make her, assisted by an Italian who can supply in ample measure all that might be wanting in any of these qualities. Under such auspices, the School of Design is rapidly becoming a means of diffusing as much useless and pernicious knowledge on the subject of art as is possible for one institution to accomplish. Of course, the girls who study there are learning nothing that will do them any good. With Mr. Farrer's resignation of his place, all chance of their ever learning to draw from nature is taken away. And thus the best hope we had, that a class of workmen might be in training for the work that will surely be required before long in our manufactories, is gone for a good while, and a hundred or so bright intelligent girls are to waste their time and their money in pursuing a system of study that, after a fair and intelligent trial in every country in Eu-

rope that has given attention to the subject, has been finally rejected. The absurd "study from the flat," the delight of lazy incompetence in teacher and pupil, is, as we understand, to be restored in full vigor.

We do not know if we are telling tales, but we will risk saying that in the case of two manufacturers in this country, there has been a disposition manifested to take a step in advance; a step which, if taken boldly, and followed up, would inevitably have important consequences. A great carpet manufactory and a wall-paper house have solicited

designs from a gentleman who is not so much an Englishman as he is a man of most unmistakable and original talent, Mr. Jacob Wrey Mould. No man anywhere, we venture to say, is more capable than he of supplying us with delicate, original, and varied designs; and any manufacturer who should be so fortunate and so wise as to secure a monopoly of that fertile brain and facile hand for a few years, would turn his manufactory into a palace, and make all who bought his goods his joyful and thankful debtors.

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### A WORD WITH "X"—A KNOWN QUANTITY.

In the "Evening Post" of June 7th, there was published a communication from a person signing himself "X," ridiculing the "Pre-Raphaelite" picture, in the Exhibition. The letter was not long, but the skillful writer of it contrived by clever packing to get into it a slander, a futile attempt at prophecy, and a mean, unfounded insinuation. The slander was thus exposed by Mr. Moore, in a note published in the "Post" of Thursday, June 15th.

#### *To the Editors of the Evening Post:*

Your critic "X," in his notice of my picture in your issue of the 7th inst., makes certain statements which I notice only because they are so plainly false to the facts. Open discussion upon these matters and frank statement of opinion is not only right, but very desirable. But a writer should be careful to state nothing which he knows to be directly false, in order to support his position. Your critic says, "We never could count the trees, nor the fence-rails, nor the stones ten miles off, &c. But you see it is done." This is absolute and unmitigated falsehood. Let "X" take his most powerful "magnifier" and he cannot count the trees, nor the fence-rails, nor the stones ten miles off, in my picture.

There is no more detail given in this picture than any person may see with perfect ease, and with the naked eye, if he will look. It required no "microscope" to produce this work; but only reasonable care and patience. I thought the scene worth faithful recording, and did my best; but with the utmost care and labor found it impossible to represent the tithe of what I plainly saw.

Yours, truly,

C. H. MOORE.

Catskill, N. Y., June 13.

Mr. Moore might have spared his ink. These men misrepresent with a deliberate purpose of untruth. They hope to effect by ridicule what they cannot do by their own works—break down the band of faithful young students who are slowly pushing them from the field they have usurped so long. "X" and his fellows brought this same charge last year. They have brought it again this year, and they will probably try it again next year. The writer of this article, who to-day is "X," and yesterday sported the *alias* of "A Lover of Art," keeps a pet jest which he is fond of introducing into his public and private criticisms. "Myopian" he has learned, from some source or other,

is Greek for "near-sighted." It would not be much of a joke to call a certain set of pains-taking, truth-telling young artists, "The near-sighted school." But the idea becomes immensely funny to "X" and his friends when it is translated into "The Myopian Club." Well, is it not better to see all that there is, than to see what there is not? To what Club does "X" himself belong? In a certain public gallery in this city there is a picture by him, in which the following transcript of what he says he saw in Nature occurs. To make a pleasing foreground, the artist seized upon a bit of rail fence, consisting of three rails, supported by four posts. His reason for choosing this thrilling incident is made instantly plain to the spectator on the discovery that Nature in an "ideal" mood of remarkable virulence, has given to three of the posts the shadow-a-piece which belongs to them, while the fourth, for some unknown reason, has *two*, distinct and clearly marked! The five shadows of the four posts, moreover, having once broken through the ordinary restraints of Nature, immediately proceed to break another law; and, though they are not three feet away, they all converge to the spectator's feet! Pray, what peculiar sort of eyes has this wonderful man, who sees what does not exist; and with what face does he attempt to criticise an artist like Mr. Moore, who works with a faithful industry of which "X" has no conception, producing results that all our really noble men have admired with an honorable unanimity?

The little attempt at prophecy in which "X" indulged, and which, if he had really wanted to be fair he might have spared himself and us by the small expenditure of twenty cents, was exposed in another note to the "Evening Post," which was published June 12th:

#### THE "NEW PATH" CRITICISMS.

*To the Editors of the Evening Post:*

Your contributor "X," in his review of the Pre-Raphaelite pictures in the Academy, after ridiculing Mr. Farrer's works, concludes his notice with these words: "All of which the *New Path* will of course duly notice with honorable mention."

If the writer of these words will purchase the *New Path* for June, published May 26th, he will perhaps have the candor to confess that before prophesying what that journal will say in the future, it would have been as well to find out what it did say thirteen days ago. Mr. Farrer's pictures, it will be found, are there criticised fairly and honestly, and in a thoroughly independent spirit. "X" has ridiculed them, we have criticised them. Yours respectfully,

EDITOR OF THE "NEW PATH."

New York, June 7th, 1865.

Finally, the mean insinuation in which, to make it more palatable, the writer ingeniously wrapped a little falsehood, was to the effect that these young men cannot sell their pictures, or, if they do, they are bought, out of charity, by their friends.

Now, even if we had not known who "X" is, this would have been enough to prove that he is no good artist, not to say, no gentleman. Fancy Eastman Johnson writing such a dirty little bit of spiteful slander, or Mr. Vedder, or C. C. Coleman, or Mr. McEntee! Nay, the artists are very few who would condescend to do so small a thing. We have often spoken with disrespect of the pictures painted by Mr. Rossiter, Mr. Lang, and Mr. Huntington, but we believe that they are all honorable and amiable gentlemen; at least, everybody who knows them speak so of them, and we believe that they would think it beneath them to resort to any such underhand way of injuring a brother artist. But "X" is always doing such things. Last year he wrote a scurrilous letter signed "A Lover of Art," for which he was very abruptly brought to his senses



by one of his friends, and of which we have no doubt he has long been ashamed.

Now, if it were possible to suppose that such a man could be a good artist, his being so would make his criticisms of some value. We might wish them more amiable, but we should feel that we learned something from them, harsh as they were. But, will the public take our word for it—for we cannot mention his name—he is one of our very poorest painters. His pictures are never noticed anywhere, because they are too utterly weak and devoid of interest, feeling, knowledge, or desire for truth, to make it worth while to notice them. Mr. Moore, Mr. Farrer, Mr. Griswold, Mr. Richards, Mr. Patterson, have not the slightest difficulty in selling their landscapes. "But," says "X" "they are bought by their friends!" We have no doubt they make friends for the artist, of all who do buy them! But, pray, Mr. "X," who buys yours? Do your enemies make a wild rush for them, for-

getting their hatred in their mania to possess specimens of such a master? Nay, do your friends even? How much hard work, how much elaborate engineering is required in a year before you can dispose of a few pictures?

The mild reader objects that this is personal. Indeed it is. For once, for example's sake, we bring it to that issue. We are heartily tired of the mean, underhand, dishonorable way in which a few well-intentioned, high-minded, laborious young men, who are silently working at their art in a spirit as unselfish and unmercenary as it is rare among us—have been treated by the paltry crew that find a hospitable vent for all their ridicule and want of common fairness in the "Evening Post." We give fair warning that so long as the "New Path" exists, it will not hesitate to strip off any mask that hides a coward of this stripe. We throw down the challenge. Pick it up if you dare, gentlemen of the Old School!

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HORATIO GREENOUGH.—"At Florence, chief among artists, I found (1833) Horatio Greenough, the American sculptor. . . . Greenough was a superior man, ardent and eloquent, and all his opinions had elevation and magnanimity. He believed the Greeks had wrought in schools or fraternities—the genius of the master imparting his design to his friends, and inflaming them with it, and when his strength was spent, a new hand, with equal heat, continued the work; and so by relays, until it was finished in every part with equal fire. This was necessary in so refractory a material as stone; and he thought art would never prosper until we left our shy, jealous ways, and worked in society as they. All his thoughts breathed the same generosity. He was an accurate and a deep man. He was a votary of the Greeks, and im-

patient of Gothic art. His paper on Architecture, published in 1843, announced in advance the leading thoughts of Mr. Ruskin on the *morality* in architecture, notwithstanding the antagonism in their views of the history of art. I have a private letter from him—later, but respecting the same period—in which he roughly sketches his own theory. 'Here is my theory of structure: A scientific arrangement of spaces and forms to functions and to site; an emphasis of features proportioned to their *gradated* importance in function; color and ornament to be decided and arranged and varied by strictly organic laws, having a distinct reason for each decision; the entire and immediate banishment of all make-shift and make-believe.'"—EMERSON'S "English Traits."