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# THE NEW PATH.

VOL. II.]

SEPTEMBER, 1865.

[No. 9.

## A YARN BY AN OLD SALT.

IN a late number of the NEW PATH a writer remarks, "I often think when I am looking at pictures and statues, indeed I cannot separate the notion from other elements of judgment, how do these things stand in relation to our common humanity?"

The question is pertinent, and deserving of attention, but the author alluded to has by no means exhausted the subject; there are many things yet to be considered, the first in importance appearing to be the bearing of form, outline and projection, in the geometrical sense, on the human mind. Artists too generally ignore, or at least slight the study of form for that of color. Now an artist cannot know color too well, but may know form too indefinitely. Color is beautiful, but it is transient, varying with every change of relative position of object and light; this variation often increases the beauty of the object, but is beyond the reach of most artists. Of the common senses, color appeals to the sight alone. Form is beautiful, form is comparatively unchangeable; form is perceptible to both sight and touch, and, therefore, is of first importance, by the difference in the satisfaction of merely seeing, and of both seeing and handling a thing, as seen in those who are said to "carry their eyes at their fingers' ends." There are various kinds and degrees of "color blindness;" but he is more than "color blind," who is deceived in the outlines of black and white, and it were a queer case when one's touch deceived him in the form of

a thing at rest; square is square, and round is round to all. Why then should "form" be left so entirely to the sculptors and the blind, both of whom are so limited in their choice of subjects, that even in bas-relief—a style of work of less repute and poorer results than it should be—many things are beyond the sculptor's reach? Why then should the painter so entirely ignore form? for of so little importance is it deemed by them, that a professed critic gravely assured a young artist that, "a knowledge of geometrically true perspective, beyond what he could acquire in one day, would be perfectly useless to him as an artist, and he advised him not to waste his time on it." The doctrine, that any possible amount of knowledge of his subject could be utterly useless to an artist, sounds very like a jesuitical desire to keep him ignorant, or else comes from the habitual weariness of one who cares not to study. On the contrary, any increase whatsoever of the artist's knowledge of his subject must increase his confidence, and improve the quality of his work. Did any artist in the late exhibitions show a surplus of knowledge of perspective? If so, read him out of the profession at once as a stranger, for such he must be in this world.

Did not these same exhibitions rather show a low, a miserably low average of knowledge on that point? It is common to hear painters say, "What a beautiful color," or "What a perfect chord of color;" but who ever hears them remark a beauty of form or out-

line, unless indeed it be that of a woman, which it happens to be fashionable to profess rather than possess a knowledge of. An artist painted on the spot a sketch of a portion of the coast, and sent it some hundreds of miles to a boatman who had formerly "run" there. It was returned as fairly colored, but the outline condemned, and a pencil sketch from memory sent to illustrate the criticism; the artist took the sketch to the same point of view to compare with his own and with nature, and acknowledged himself corrected. In this case the boatman showed only a very ordinary amount of knowledge of the make of the land; the outline of earth against sky, which is different in some slight degree in form or elevation from every different position, and the knowledge of which differences is often, in the dark night when the line of earth and water is invisible, and that of earth and sky nearly so, the coaster's only guide, and one to which he trusts his life, his reputation, with such an almost unconscious degree of certainty that—his vessel being by long usage as it were a part of himself—he says, and almost thinks, that his sloop "knows the way between her accustomed ports, and would go of herself, if her sails were hoisted and the lines let go."

The human mind is more reflective than a mirror. As the "jodle" of Norway, Switzerland and Tyrol repeats the echoes of their mountain gorges; as the Irish "lyke wake" swells and sighs like the wind over the lonely peat bog; as the "melody" of the Scottish Border sounds of much human life, in a country of more mist than sunshine; as the Highland "strathspey" has the change of the mountain torrent borne on the fitful gale; as the Spanish music seldom loses sight of the sierra, and the lone moors of La Mancha, though well mingled with the voice of trees in great number; as Italian airs echo the light zephyr and the "dolce far niente" of

the land of myrtles and olives, so designs in form and color must reflect the scenes of their birth, as is seen in the art wherein America excels—in shipbuilding. For the ships of different nations show the nature of their native seas. Thus in America, the long sweep of the Atlantic wave, deep water, open to the steady wind, and with comparatively little current, is reflected in the sheer of the clipper from ship to sloop; in the Chesapeake and Southern sounds, shoal water and much calm straightens the line, as shown in the schooners of that region; in the West Indies shoal water and much calm, make smooth water in spite of strong currents, till the "long low" is proverbial of the "Gulf." In Europe, the German ocean has strong currents interwoven with shoals and gales, and true is the reflection of its short, crooked waves in the Dutch galliot, the English "billy boy," the "geordie brig;" indeed, the change from there to Cape Finisterre, whether in the short chop sea of continual turmoil, or in the build of the French lugger and English yacht, is hardly describable in words not scientific, but "sheer" and wave agree. Go up the Mediterranean; deep water, little current, and much calm, the sea short at times, often flat, some long sweeps, never so large as the Atlantic swell, but much like it in form, and Spanish, French and Italian—the ships of Trieste are almost American in appearance—show well the nature of their seas; the gondola of Venice lies as long and flat in its curves as the lagoon on which it floats.\*

\* Curious, that there should be in an obscure village on the American coast, a pattern of skiff characteristic of the place, and also identical in form, size, curve, and manner of building, with the most common of the cheaper patterns used by the fruit and flower venders of Venice; but, the American rows in common style with two oars, the Venetian, as in the gondola, prefers one; there is doubtless some of the same race in both places, but some of this coincidence of fancy may be laid to resemblance of the waters, certainly none of it to communication between the places.

The Caravelli, Feluccas, and Grecian craft, with as much "sheer" as a Dutch galliot, contrast their parabolic, pure, cold curves, with the elliptic, warm, sensual curves of the North, just as sea contrasts with sea; the rule will apply to the canoe of the South Seas, to the Norwegian "froam," to the junk of China, and the steamboat of the Mississippi, which contrasts its warm, sensual, elliptic "sheer" with the cold, pure, parabolic line of the North river or "Sound" boat, exactly as the short eddying wave of the muddy, whirling, tangled, and headstrong stream contrasts with the pure, steady, quiet, and regular waters of the Eastern bays and rivers. In these studies the proper criterion is the coasting craft, that seldom leaves its native seas; it is characteristic, while those that "go foreign," and sail on "blue water," of course assimilate thereto in a greater or less degree, according to how near the national character is to the generic type of deep water, little current, steady winds, &c. America coming the nearest to this on her coast, of course comes the nearest to it in her "sheer lines." Brazil, Chili, and the Hawaiian Islands, should do as well naturally—perhaps do, but not doing so much, their efforts are lost sight of in the shadow of the United States. Europe never will, let her imitate as she may; her character must remain that of the waters around her. Australia should do well, and probably will, when they build and show us. Russia may show more beauty at the mouth of the Amoor than at Cronstadt or Odessa; if Southern Africa would build, the Kafir might beat the Englishman for beauty.

But the rule applies everywhere; observe the wheelwrights; the curves of their carriage-patterns differ from those of ships in just the same manner and degree that the warm curves of the form of a horse differ from the curves

of the sea; sometimes, perhaps, modified also by the make of the land, and other local causes. It is curious to see that the European, disliking to change his own work, and having unwittingly built his coach in style to agree with his horse, should, when building an iron road and horse of essentially straight and level lines, put and keep the same old pattern of coach on it, however clumsy and inconvenient; while the American, having no objection to changing a pattern that he did not originate, for one of his own design, easily perceives the fitness and beauty of straight lines in his cars. Nor yet was this change made by him without fair trial and condemnation of the old patterns, for the writer of this rode in horse-cars in Philadelphia (on the Columbia road), that bore a great resemblance to a huge stage coach, nearly thirty years ago, and has heard a tradition of the elders, that all of the first railroads started the old-country pattern of cars. But the car-builders, in dropping European rules, and putting up a car fitted to their roads, have set a splendid example to the artist, who would do well to drop the "veiling vapors" an American rarely if ever sees, and leave them to their native place, the "chops of the channel." "Good American weather," as the sailors call it, is better worthy their attention. It is a pity some American painter should not visit the "Sargasso sea:" it is noted among the severest of judges, the sailors, for beauty of sky. This matter of "veiling vapor" was a make-shift adopted with joy by the European, who found therein an excuse for imperfect form, outline, and perspective, and it covers far more ignorance and bad work than all its beauties, even in the Biscay, will compensate for; it is not natural in America, nor can work depending upon it ever be, or deserve to be, either popular or great

here. The smoky haze of Italy is not so bad; there is here, especially in June, a very near approach to it in the same semiopaque dryness of the air, but beware of putting it on a winter scene. An American December morning gives the landscape a sharper outline, more distinct and clear, than inhabitants of England ever saw there—the engraver can scarcely equal it; but some approach to it is necessary before the American mind can feel to say, “Well done,” and to give it requires the deepest knowledge of perspective and form that the artist is capable of; until this is done, the cheap lithograph, of harsh, but tolerably correct line, of color crude and staring, but of air clear, and objects distinct, will—and that properly—outrank the paint and canvas of the “European Ape,” an animal unluckily not confined to the Rock of Gibraltar.

In figure painting, no European education is necessary; there are in America all the various European models, and that in beauty of development that would delight Angelo or Lavater; and here also is the advantage of having them conveniently assorted, there being often in one small village more different races than are to be found in large cities in the Old countries, where intercourse and change of locality is so much restricted. The costumes of the different races in America are not so varied as in Europe; true, but, for an American public, must be painted American costumes, good or bad, and even here, as in the ships and rail-cars, fashion has outrun the artist, and American costumes fit the country, and are more beautiful in connection with American scenes than the imported ones. In this, as in the ships, there is a common ground for nations of much intercourse; but examine the poorer classes, who travel less, and is the Belgian’s wooden shoe, at the Castle Garden, in point of beauty superior to

the fireman’s boot when the City Hall bell strikes? Compare, not for beauty of fitness only, but look at the fireman’s boot in good position, that is, “high action,” and the reader may choose his own time for looking at the wooden shoe in this country. If the artist wishes to describe foreigners let him travel, his work shall have the value of a traveller’s tale; but if he would paint history let him stay at home and paint the portraits of his acquaintances. Let him not search out the oldest building in the city and think that he is painting a characteristic of New York; rather let him paint the most common, the most “New Yorky” front seen from his own window, and his work shall have the value of a true record of his period.

To paint a picture to sell, requires that it should please the mind of the purchaser in one of two things, it must have an interesting subject, or skilful rendering; to be great, it must have both; but how can an artist hope to either select an interesting subject or to paint the subject chosen skilfully, who spends more time in studying how to “wine and dine” some patron into giving him a commission, than in studying how to fill such commission when obtained. It is as dangerous to wink at a painter as at a mock auctioneer, unless one wants a bushel of worthlessness sent around next day with “that little bill.” The artist says he must live; perhaps so—opinions differ; but if by his pencil, let him color photographs, or draw on stone (lithographic artists are generally at a premium), or do any regular journey-work, with regular pay; then his mind may settle to its study and bring forth fruit; for he who works ten hours per day, knowing that he will be paid, however little, is independent of patronage, and may defy the critic, and can give his mind to the subject that delights him.

*(To be continued.)*

## HOW SHALL WE FURNISH OUR HOUSES?

CHINA, GLASS, AND SILVER WARE.



No part of the furnishing of our houses is so generally satisfactory to ourselves as the furniture of the dinner-table. We do not take much interest in the form of tables and chairs, or in the patterns and colors of carpets and curtains; and if we ever are induced to observe a little more carefully than we have done, we find them incapable of exciting interest, and, often, very ugly. But a well-furnished and "elegant" dinner-table pleases everybody. The lady who sits at its head looks upon it with much satisfaction; and this not only because it gratifies her pride of possession, or her desire to excel in splendor of display, but also because it is really pleasant to her sight. The visitor has probably seen during the day no inanimate thing which seemed so fair; and this not only because he loves a good dinner, and sees in this the promise of it, but also because it is more nearly beautiful than his office, his friend's parlor, any household furniture he knows, or anything he sees in the streets.

The reasons for this are not far to seek. In the first place, neatness is a charm to many to whom the sense of beauty seems almost entirely denied; and the presiding genius of table-decoration is neatness. Not cleanliness, only, but brilliant, snowy, dazzling spotlessness. All the accessories of the table must be flawless and perfect, and of such nature, and such make, that they are not easily soiled. Steel knives must be silver-plated; because steel is not uncontaminated when acids form part of the meal. When their edges are a little worn they must be replated; not because they are less clean, but because they look so, or look as if they might easily become so.

The glossy, white china must be put to humbler use when a chipped edge or a crack appears, for, brown flecks upon its purity, no matter from what cause arising, cannot be endured. The glass must be as clear and as glittering as diamond, for nothing suggests such absolute purity as unclouded transparency. Plain white table-cloths, or rather white with a white figure, are the only wear; the blue and red edged ones will pass for breakfast and luncheon, but would hardly be endured even then, if their blue or red stripes lay upon the top of the table. The neatness of a well-prepared table is a matter of art and skill, not so much of that natural feeling which makes people neat in their dress, as of art and skill. There are no more perfect tables than those of a great restaurant; but the waiter who makes the table he attends at the *Café Foy* or *Delmonico's* such an union of comfort and elegance, may not be naturally neat, but only a skilful waiter. And this look of perfect cleanliness in the aspect of our dinner-tables is almost beautiful, more nearly beautiful than anything in the look of our household furniture.

Another reason is as follows: The utensils that make up the greater part of our table furniture are small, and, as they must be fitted for constant and easy use, their forms are generally well designed for their uses, and are, therefore, not disagreeable. A spoon, for instance, in its general shape, is often as good as it could be made, for, although its curves are not the most beautiful, they are easy and natural, and could not be made very admirable without injury to the spoon's usefulness. So the best-designed tumbler or water-goblet is not very

beautiful in form, and the worst is not very ugly in form. The range of excellence possible to such utilities is not large, and the manufacturer must approximate to a well-known and established standard of convenient shape. Our knives and forks, and plates and dishes, are not models of graceful form, but we can use them contentedly because we have the feeling that they could not be made much better,—that their shapes are suitable and convenient—and that the suitable and convenient shape of a purely utilitarian thing is not disagreeable. In this case is the exact reverse of the facts concerning tables and chairs, and such other furniture, for the shapes of these things, we found, were often bad for use, and nearly always unmeaning and ugly.

There is still another reason, allied to the last. The ornament applied to our larger furniture we found to be obtrusive, unnatural, and ugly. But the ornament of our table furniture is often more suitable and always less offensive. It is either bright colors and gold in small quantities, or it is little details of form, which indeed injure the general form of the object, but not seriously, or it is such almost unnoticed embossing and engraving as lends an air of perfectness and finish to the utensil which bears it, without asking much attention for itself. Much of this ornament, too, is natural, fit for and suggested by the material and construction of that to which it is applied.

What we have said of the superiority of table furniture over other household articles is true only of the simpler kinds of table furniture. The larger, costlier, more elaborate things are almost as bad in silver or in glass as in rose-wood or in walnut. The moment the maker thinks that ornamental design is required of him, that moment he is lost, and all his work is wrong.

Let us speak, briefly, of vessels and

utensils of silver and gold, glass and pottery. And first of the precious metals. Art of the highest order and most perfect development has, in past times, been embodied in silver and gold plate. Some of the greatest painters and sculptors have been educated in the goldsmith's shop. The arts of modelling the figures of men and animals, of engraving, of enamelling, of setting jewels, and of general design in graceful form are all concerned in the making of gold and silver plate. Now, of course, it is just as inexcusable to produce bad art in silver and six inches high as in bronze and colossal. It is just as desirable that engraving should be truthful and beautiful in silver and itself for the eye, as in steel and reversed for printing off upon paper. But the designers, modellers, and engravers of the silversmiths' workshops are not sufficiently accomplished artists to do anything very good. Now and then, indeed, a race-cup or regatta-prize has little silver sailors or horsemen about it, showing good intentions and some skill. Now and then a piece of engraving, done to order for an amateur who desires a class of work that will hardly sell over the counter, has liveliness and spirit in design, and some knowledge of drawing in the execution. But these things are few, and even these things of but little real value as works of art. And the swinging silver kettles; the tall celery-goblets; the salvers and trays; the cake-baskets; the coffee urns; all these aristocratic necessities, costing from seventy to three hundred dollars "gold," are quite devoid of any such artistic value at all. We have never seen for sale in a New York, Boston, or Philadelphia shop, a single article of any of the kind named above that was in any respect really good art. There is a difference in gracefulness of general shape; one year's fashions are less bad than another's; one dealer's ware is generally made

from better patterns than another's. But it is as the difference between the coats of one year and another, or made by one tailor and another; they are either positively ugly or negatively uninteresting, and there is no greater difference between them than this.

The barbarous folly we call *following the fashion*, has more to do with the worthlessness of our plate than any other single cause. How can the bad case be bettered, while the silver-ware of to-day will not serve for ten years hence? Is the workman likely to work with enjoyment and ambition, and give his soul and mind to the study of the higher graces of his art, when his work is not to last? The new patterns of each year are brought into the shop, and he gets the necessary knowledge of them and works by them, knowing that new ones are coming in six months; knowing, too, that in six years the coffee-pot, finished to-day, will be brought back to be melted up and made into an urn of some new design. Do not imagine that Cellini would ever have given his attention to silver ware, if this method had been followed in his day. A rich and beautiful piece of plate should be as indestructible by any wilful act of man as a bronze statue; as permanent a thing.

Some attempts have been made to produce church plate of good design, but these attempts are generally limited to copying mediæval chalices and patterns. Yet even this is better than going on as we do with domestic plate, producing new fashions every year, and managing so badly that the work of any period more than fifty years gone by is better than our best work now, and is worthy to be bought and saved for its superior artistic merit. We cannot now enter into the wide subject of church plate; but there is one lesson to be learned from the experience of those who have studied this subject, namely, that we must study the arts of past

times carefully and reverently, assured that even the every-day work of an artistic age can teach us more than the best work of an age which does not care for art.

If we ever get good domestic plate we must then abandon a bad habit which we had better abandon now. The desire to have everything look new leads possessors of silver-ware to polish it with rouge and with powders sold for the purpose by the silversmiths, giving it the unnatural and disagreeable gloss seen on the silver exposed for sale in the show cases and show windows. Persons who live with private families as waiters or butlers frequently possess or claim to possess the secret of some preparation by which the new look of silver shall be continually renewed. We have seen silver ware which had been for years in constant use, out of which all scratches and signs of wear were weekly removed, and the mirror-like polish of the shops given to the surface of the metal. It is evident that this cannot be done without constantly wearing down the silver. Scratches are little cuts into the surface; they can be removed only by wearing down the metal around them as deep as they. Silver-ware treated in this way always looks rounded and worn at the edges in a very disagreeable manner, and all delicate details, engraving, patterns in relief, &c., suffer from the process. But the principal objection applies to all the devices for polishing silver, and is this, that the polish is ugly and is not natural to silver at all. The silversmiths do not call it *polishing*, this rubbing with rouge, they call it *coloring*; and they are right in their technical word, the process gives a color to the dish or goblet which is not the color of silver at all. Silver looks as it should, if it is carefully washed, after being used, with soap and water. If it gets a stain, the spot must be taken out, and whiting or



“silver soap” will be necessary, but these or other detergents and all polishing powders and brushes should be banished from daily use. No one, surely, thinks that “colored” silver is more beautiful than silver not so disguised, but every one sees that it looks new, and as if just bought, and that is so desirable! When we outgrow this passion for new things, and learn that old ones, which are perfect in form and usefulness, are better for being old, we shall send our rouge and Tripoli powder to the light-house keepers, and engineers of locomotives, who really need them for their silver-plated reflectors, and trust to clean our own silver as we do our china, by hot water and soap.

The love of glitter which helps to make popular the abuse of which we have just spoken is seen in another matter of even greater importance, the general use of cut glass. Glass was known to the Romans and to the people of the middle ages as a ductile material which could be moulded and cast and blown easily into the most graceful and fanciful shapes; could be stained of any color, could be decorated with colored patterns of the most varied and fanciful devices, and, when finished, was light and more or less transparent. Cut glass was not unknown, but it seems to have been generally made to imitate jewels, and, indeed, some pieces of this work which came down from the Romans, were supposed until very recently to be jewels, and have been guarded as such in cathedral treasuries. The beautiful forms and delicate ornament of the Venetian and German glass of the middle ages remain to us as almost perfect examples of what glass-ware should be. But for about a century the notion has prevailed that glass ought to look like crystal, and that the chief decorative purpose to which it can be put is to be cut to as many faces and angles as possible, that it may flash and glitter as much as possible.

There are purposes for which cut glass is well fitted, but of these the purpose of decoration is not one. It is entirely unfit for anything which is meant to be beautiful. Glass-ware is made beautiful by form, color, and ornament engraved or stamped upon it. Cut glass cannot be beautiful in any of these ways—a vessel wholly or principally of cut glass is never beautiful. A thing cannot well be beautiful in form when its outline, turn it how you will, is always a series of short, broken lines, making irregular angles with each other. A cut-glass goblet or pitcher consists principally of an irregular polyhedron of a great number of sides. Take up your cut-glass goblet or pitcher, turn it about, see if it is beautiful in any aspect or position; see if anything designed on the same principle can be beautiful. Do not suppose that it must be right, whether it looks so to you or not, because crystals are like it. Crystals are not like it. Crystals, themselves among the least beautiful mineral forms, are exceedingly regular and symmetrical, are generally small, are seldom seen singly in nature, but almost always clustered into groups of striking symmetry and system, and the fairest of them are very rich in color. A large, colorless, comparatively unsymmetrical crystal is as nearly ugly as anything in nature. Ask any painter if he care to make a study of it. And yet it would be beautiful in comparison with a costly and perfect piece of cut glass. Ask any painter if he care to make a study of *that*. Not, observe, a picture of it, to sell, half-oranges and whole apples in a cut-glass dish; many painters will do that, as they will paint full-length life-size portraits of statesmen buttoned up in black frock coats.

The best glass-ware ordinarily sold in the shops is the plain, smooth, thin ware, very simple in shape, which is made into wine-glasses of four sizes, and water goblets. These are not as dear as

the best cut glass, but dearer than "pressed" glass; they have the disadvantage of breaking easily; but, so far as we know the china-stores of the great cities, the intelligent buyer's choice is limited to these or white china mugs. Not always, though. During the last winter some very good sherry and claret glasses were brought from England, and for sale on Broadway. They were well formed to take the minimum risk of breakage, and were graceful enough and stood firmly. A little decoration in color was applied to them; they were engraved with crimson quartrefoils and trefoils, in one case, with spiral lines of crimson in another, with a conventional flower pattern of blue in a third. Claret-jugs are sometimes imported by the silversmiths, and fitted with silver lids and spouts; and of these a few are very good; very fine in form, with quiet, subtle curves for outlines, and decorated with engraved leaf patterns and ferns and vines. These are luxuries. Indeed it is impossible to get anything beautiful, made of glass, except at an exorbitant price. Nothing good is made in this country, and the importer who fetches any really good thing from abroad, runs a great risk of not selling his importation, and must be well paid for it.

Although the English send us, now, very beautiful work, they have given us one foolish custom, which it will be well for us to abandon, namely, the use of colored wine glasses. They are known as "hock-glasses," and are about as appropriate to the purpose as the ugly word from which they take their name. When Port, Sherry, Claret, and Madeira, were the only drink in England, and wines of other countries and other kinds were almost unknown there, the name of one of the more commonly seen or better liked of these, Hochheimer, was cut down to Hock, and given to all German wines together. At the same time, he pale yellow color of these wines (the

red German wines not being easily transportable or often exported) seemed as feeble as their taste to the drinkers of darker colored and more fiery sorts. Where Sherry and Madeira were called *white* wines, what would naturally be thought of Hochheimer and Rüdeshimer? So, green glasses were invented. The use of these has even spread to Germany, and pale red glasses are also used there and here. There seems to be no excuse for it. The color of yellow German wine is beautiful; scarce any two varieties are of exactly the same shade, but are all lovely. The most perfectly colorless glasses should be used for them, and they will light up the table like an August sunset.

Colored glass might be used with advantage for finger bowls, and for fruit dishes for the larger fruit; not for drinking glasses for water, for it should be easily seen that the water is spotless, but in many cases other than this. There is ample room for improvement in this matter of colored glass, but we have not space to consider it at present.

It is the general voice of European writers on art, that the manufacture of pottery, in all its different departments, is far in advance of other manufactures in the artistic merit of the work done. There is, they all say, one thing of primary importance left to be done—to get the cheaper kind of china-ware and stone-ware better in form. If this were done, we are told, good porcelain, china, or earthenware vessels would be procurable by anybody for any purpose; good in form, in color, in surface, and in design of surface ornament.

This is true. But there is one thing more to be done before another golden age of pottery shall have come. Not only must good work be within reach of all; bad work must be put out of reach. It should be made impossible to make or to sell the bad things which are offered us at every turn.

It is very hard to find well-decorated china in America. Beautifully thin and fine in texture, and brilliant in color it is, and the color-patterns are put on with great skill and neatness, their surface flat and uniform, and their edges sharp. But the forms are seldom good; never except in the most expensive French china, and seldom even in that. And the patterns, except those which are most simple and delicate, are not beautiful or appropriate, badly designed, and made up of ill-combined colors. If one should want a really beautiful tea-set in a hurry, or even a few single pieces, his only chance will be to find a little Chinese or Japanese porcelain. However beautiful in color this may be, and however admirable in spirit and life are the designs of, at least, the Japanese porcelain, it is not creditable to Europe and America that New York should remain so nearly dependent upon the East for china-ware which shall not disgrace her dinner-tables.

The importers treat us very badly, and select, in Europe, with singular want of judgment. Perhaps this is more evident in respect to china-ware than in any other department of industrial art. What are the American manufacturers to do? They dare not produce good designs of their own, or reproduce good designs from abroad, when they see that buyers are content to receive and pay extravagant prices for the worst designs

that can be found in the catalogues of the great French and English makers.

They are not vases that we care to see imported, nor biscuit statuettes, nor any of the more expensive and uncommon *chefs-d'œuvre* of ceramic art; but dinner sets and tea sets, piles of plates, dozens of cups and saucers, fruit dishes, tea-pots, pitchers, and jugs. We want these, of the cheapest earthenware,—when any is found good in shape, and at least not wrongly colored; and of the costliest white china,—when it is ascertained where the most beautiful can be found; and of all the grades between. There are gentlemen in Europe now collecting, at great cost and trouble to themselves, specimens of the most beautiful and valuable porcelains of by-gone times—a plate here and a vase there of rich and splendid ware, which will teach us a great deal in decoration. But we want, also, modern and contemporary work, that we may know how our fellows in Europe are succeeding, and that our manufacturers may see more clearly than they now can, that china may be made after good designs, and money made by it still. Of the hundreds of Americans now going to Europe, or already there, we hope that a few will spend a little money on good china, bring it home, and exhibit it to the world in Haughwout's or Collamore's window.

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#### MR. STREET'S GIFT TO YALE COLLEGE.

The Yale School of the Fine Arts is the first of the new series of buildings that it is contemplated to erect for the College.

Mr. Augustus Russell Street, a well-known citizen of New Haven, and a graduate of Yale, is erecting this building at his sole expense. When com-

pleted, it will be the largest donation ever received by the College. The new Department of Fine Arts will be inaugurated in a building larger, more costly and appropriate to its purpose, than any of the present or prospective buildings. For, though the funds already presented for the purpose of erecting other build-

ings amount to nearly half a million dollars, it is not known that any one sum of money yet presented to the College will fully accomplish the object proposed by the giver. Mr. Street, however, designs that his gift shall be complete in itself. The College is relieved, in this case at least, from any embarrassing prospect of being obliged to complete a half-finished structure. The new building, designed by Mr. P. B. Wight, the architect of the New York "Academy of Design," is being erected on the green at the corner of High and Chapel streets. Ground was formally broken on the 13th of August, 1864, by ex-President Day, aged ninety-three, and Master John Foote, a grandson of Mr. Street, aged five, in the presence of a small impromptu company. The corner-stone was laid by President Woolsey, with due formality, on the 16th day of last November. Since that time rapid progress has been made with the work, except during the severe winter months; and now the stone-cutters and masons are well at work on the second story.

The art-building will provide both for instruction and exhibition. The basement story is twelve feet in height, four feet of which is above ground. It will contain, besides the necessary space for fuel and heating apparatus, a lecture-room, modelling-room for students in sculpture, and a workingmen's school. The first story, sixteen feet high, is devoted entirely to studios for the study of architecture, drawing, and painting, besides professors' and curators' rooms. The second and highest story will average twenty-one feet in height. It contains two large galleries for the exhibition of works of art; and a long room for collections of engravings and photographs.

The general form of the building is that of an irregular letter H, there being two principal wings with a con-

necting building. The southwest wing is the principal one, and is on the Chapel street side. Its outside dimensions are 46 by 86 feet. The second story of this part will be the large picture-gallery, which will be seventy-six feet long, and thirty feet wide. The northeast wing is 77 by 31 feet, and advances further upon the green.

There are two entrances. The larger one is on the Chapel street side. The other entrance is through a tower at the side of the smaller wing, and connects with the Chapel street entrance by an L-shaped corridor.

The whole building is based on a solid foundation of concrete, poured into trenches in the sand. The foundation-walls are of East Haven sandstone, very hard and glassy, and apparently from a sand-bed that has been partially fused. The material of the external walls above the ground is Belleville, New Jersey, sandstone. All the sills, lintels, water-tables, and trimmings, are of Portland, Connecticut, sandstone, laid on the natural bed. The alternate voussoirs of the arches and traceries, as well as all carved capitals and bases, are of Brown-holm, Ohio, sandstone. The Belleville stone is relieved by binding courses of the darker Connecticut stone.

At the angles of the wings there are small turrets for ventilation. Over the entrance from the College grounds is a tower, sixteen feet square, which will rise one story above the roof. The roofs are all hipped, and have an angle of 45 degrees. The upper part of each roof is of iron and glass. The lower part is covered with slate. The glass portion of the roof is to be surmounted with iron crestings and ventilators. The gutters are to be cast-iron, resting on a stone coping, and lined with galvanized iron.

From the College grounds the building will have a somewhat picturesque effect, as the wing on that side projects

somewhat, and is flanked by the tower, while on each side two of the turrets will be visible.

From Chapel street, when the contemplated building in place of the South College is built, only one wing will be seen. It is, therefore, made to be a complete architectural composition in itself, and does not depend, for effect or proportion, upon the rest of the design.

When the old buildings, now obstructing the principal front, are removed, and the new ones intended to adjoin this are completed, the whole will be seen to the best advantage; and the most effective, and, in fact, only good view of the whole building, will be from the middle of the Campus. Yet, the High street side will not be without interest, for, it should be borne in mind that this building is finished with equal care on all sides, and has many interesting constructive features in the rear as well as the front.

There is very little decorative work on the building, except that immediately about the entrances. As it stands alone, and is very irregular in outline, the amount of exterior wall is so great that to attempt to introduce many decorative features would be to add enormously to the expense. The effect of the design has therefore been made to depend largely upon the varied light and shade of the larger parts. There is, however, some very good decorative work about the entrance. The two columns that support the main arch over the Chapel street entrance are of polished Quincy (Mass.) sienite, of beautiful red color. These are the first sienite columns that we know to have been polished in America. Being from a new quarry, the material is not familiar to most beholders, and a great variety of guesses as to what the material is, are made by visitors. The work of polishing them is not, of course, done with that perfection that we hope

soon to see attained; but, altogether, they are very creditable, considering that it is a process entirely new to us. \* The columns have been quarried and finished by Mr. F. J. Fuller, of Quincy. The capitals and bases are of Ohio sandstone, the former elaborately and beautifully carved. They are, doubtless, the best specimens of decorative carving ever done in America, a statement which will surprise no one who learns that they were carved by some of the best workmen employed on our Academy of Design, Messrs. Setz and Clark, who have in this work shown their susceptibility to good teaching, and their ability to profit by what their own experience has taught them. These capitals are superior to most of the work on the Academy, in that, though carefully studied from natural forms, they are more conventionalized; and though still kept true to nature, are not so open to the imputation of being botanical.

The capitals in the angles of the main entrance from the College grounds are not inferior to these in fidelity or beauty. They are carved by Williams, another of the Academy workmen, and are, both of them, conventionalized ar-

\* It is a more difficult operation to polish granite or sienite than most persons would perhaps imagine. Marble, being a limestone of nearly uniform structure and crystallization, readily yields to rubbing with sand, while granite and sienite, being made up of several constituents, whose crystals are of different degrees of hardness, are but slightly affected when rubbed with it. They can only be brought to a surface with the hammer, and, even then, some of the crystals are apt to drop out, or be struck out, and then the surface has to be rubbed down about one-sixteenth of an inch, the difficulty of doing which will be readily understood. The most successful process that we know of is, to rub with successive grades of emery, and complete the polish with oxyde of tin. This, we believe, is the French or Continental method. Yet the result of polishing is fully worth the trouble and expense; for, the sienites of Scotland, and our own New England coast, produce colors and develop beauties, when polished, with which few other materials can compare.

rangements of liverwort leaves. The corbel of oak leaves, under the oriel, near this door, is also from his hands, and is in some respects superior to any of the above-mentioned work, especially in the expression of crispness and vitality given to the leaves.

The oriel window in the end of one of the long galleries is a feature which we seldom see constructed in this thorough fashion in American buildings. It is corbelled out from the wall, and is entirely built of rubbed sandstone, the entire weight of which is counter-balanced by the weight of the wall. A portion of this work is now set.

Judging by the present state of the work, the building will be finished some time next summer. Before winter, however, we hope to see it enclosed, when a good notion can be formed of the effect of the exterior. At that time we expect to speak more critically about it; to-day we have only desired to give a brief technical description of a building to which many interested eyes are

already directed, and which promises to occupy an important place in the history of Art in America.

We congratulate Yale upon the erection of the first collegiate building in America devoted exclusively to Art. Now that the building is secured, it becomes a consideration of immense importance—What sort of art is to be nurtured by it. Upon the answer to this question, given by those who have the control of this business, it depends whether the old ideas that have done so much to depress Art among us are to find Mr. Street's munificent gift a sort of Medea-kettle, in which the old bones and shrunk sinews of expiring academics shall be boiled into new life, and old King Cole and his school look up again; or whether young America shall take possession of the field, and give us an Art of which we need not be ashamed. Trumbull is a passably good Connecticut giotto to start from. We trust his worthy name will not be dishonored.

“EVERY gift is valuable, and ought to be unfolded. When one encourages the beautiful alone, and another encourages the useful alone, it takes them both to form a man. The useful encourages itself; for the multitude produce it, and no one can dispense with it: the beautiful must be encouraged; for few can set it forth, and many need it.”

WILHELM MEISTER.  
*Book VIII. Chap. V.*

“AND in these books of mine, their distinctive character, as essays on art, is their bringing everything to a root in human passion or human hope. Arising first not in any desire to explain the principles of art, but in the endeavor to defend an individual painter from injustice, they have been colored throughout—nay, continually altered in shape, and even warped and broken, by digressions respecting social questions, which had for me an interest tenfold greater than the work I had been forced into undertaking. Every principle of painting

which I have stated is traced to some vital or spiritual fact; and in my works on architecture the preference accorded finally to one school over another, is founded on a comparison of their influences on the life of the workman—a question by all other writers on the subject of architecture wholly forgotten or despised.”

MODERN PAINTERS.  
*Vol. V. p. 201.*

TURNER.—“Here was lately a cross-grained miser, odd and ugly, resembling in countenance the portrait of Punch with the laugh left out; rich by his own industry; sulking in a lonely house; who never gave a dinner to any man, and disdained all courtesies; yet as true a worshipper of beauty in form and color as ever existed, and profusely pouring over the cold mind of his countrymen creations of grace and truth, removing the reproach of sterility from English art, catching from their savage climate every fine hint, and importing

into their galleries every tint and trait of sunnier cities and skies, making an era in painting; and when he saw that the splendor of one of his pictures in

the Exhibition dimmed his rival's that hung next it, secretly took a brush and blackened his own."—EMERSON, "English Traits."

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#### NOTE FROM MR. CALVERT VAUX.

*To the Editor of NEW PATH.*

DEAR SIR: In the June number of your journal you speak of my Design for a Hospital, in the recent Exhibition, as a "Convention of Mr. Vaux's Country-seats." I was amused at the description, which is not only the truth briefly expressed, but is a humorous way of putting it.

The point I want to raise is—Can such a design, so conceived, be defended? As represented in the sketch or drawing, probably not; for the whole building is allowed to show as if it were expected to be viewed as a whole; but the real circumstances are different, a fact which no one, I allow, could possibly imagine without such a description as I am going to give.

The building is for a Lunatic Hospital. I was instructed by the Trustees to prepare the design in conjunction with Dr. Brown of the Bloomingdale Asylum. My province as architect thus became the interesting one of crystallizing, so far as I could approve, the ideas of a medical gentleman who had devoted his attention to this specialty, and had become eminent in connection with it. Under these circumstances the problem to be solved was not, what work of art would have the best general effect, but, what would best subserve the object intended to be gained—the improved health of the patients.

Dr. Brown's experience and his advice, when closely analyzed, amounted to a recommendation, in the first place, to avoid all appearance of a public building; to avoid striking and unusual effects; to avoid long stretches of façade that should interfere with the idea of

domesticity; to make the building as much like a summer boarding-house, or a quiet common-place hotel, or a country-house of moderate pretensions, as possible; and to arrange the interior plan on the same general principle, so far as optical effect was concerned.

I found that I agreed with him entirely; and, therefore, so designed the building that it should look as much like separate buildings as possible. I enclose a photograph of the principal front, in which I have shown how the whole or almost the whole of the connecting line of buildings between the principal "convalescent" entrance and the general "business" entrance is to be planted out; and the same idea is to be followed out in the front exhibited. The long fronts are to be planted with trees quite close to the building, the ends left exposed so as to look like country-houses.

Your criticism has brought my intention to my mind, and has led to the consideration of its propriety. Perhaps, taking all risks into consideration, it would have been safer to have designed it as a whole, with a due degree of subordination, &c. Still I cannot help thinking that the way adopted is the "naturalistic" way of looking at it, at any rate, *i. e.*, let the problem solve itself honestly, and take the chance.

I suspect that the "Convention" ought to have been composed of better examples; but still believe in the convention principle for a Lunatic Asylum, with a liberal introduction of screening trees.

Yours respectfully,  
CALVERT VAUX,  
*Architect.*

## NOTES HERE AND THERE.

APROPOS of our remarks in the August number, concerning the Philistines of the Cooper Institute, and their bad management of the School of Design, we quote the following from a late number of the London Athenæum.

*Art Education at Public Schools.*—Rugbyans, and all who desire that drawing shall be taught upon a serviceable system to a large number of boys, will be pleased with the appointment of Mr. J. L. Tupper, of the Royal Academy, and late of Guy's Hospital, as Teacher of Drawing. It is of great importance to have boys taught to draw so that they shall really understand what they are about, obtain what is quite as much an education for the eye as for the hand, and which, consequently, does not depend for its value upon manual practice in after life. That vulgar notion, which regards drawing as an "accomplishment" available only for the production of showy sketches of the "Harding" school, and, at its utmost, content with copying these from lithographs or pictures, is rapidly exploding. Teaching implied by these results is delusive, valuable only to the so-called "drawing masters," whose livelihood depends on it. "Rustic Subjects," or "Julien's Heads," as the various styles of rubbish are called, are practically impositions; no one can really learn to draw from them, if by "drawing" is to be understood the power to judge of the forms, substance, and condition of objects. Drawing is no "accomplishment," but should be regarded as quite as worthy of study as a language. In some respects it is of greater value than any language; it educates the eye to perceive not only the mere aspect of Nature, but her characteristics of the less obvious sort, and, above all, her beauty, so that, in fact, the draughtsman gets knowledge of a

universal language. The educated eye never falls out of practice, though the hand may do so; hence the power is always available, insensibly to the owner, but constant, because it lies in the development of a sense and in mental discipline. What is styled "landscape drawing," so much beloved by young ladies, is utter waste, and of less value than the study of "Berlin wool." We hope it will soon cease.

AN English suggestion this: we do not know how useful it might prove in practice. It strikes us rather pedantic, and we doubt if a really able sculptor would be much helped by it.

"One of the lecturers at the Middlesex Hospital, Dr. Woodham Webb, lately threw out a hint to sculptors which should be made public. Seeing how many impossible attitudes and limbs are every year produced in marble and stone, the doctor advises that sculptors should take as the framework for their life-size statues a real articulated skeleton, and lay their clay flesh and muscle on that, instead of on the wooden frames they now use. Straight bits of deal cannot be nailed or screwed into a proper framework for the human form divine; they cannot be made to turn, as an articulated skeleton would, to represent the varying positions of a limb. The advantage of the proposed plan is obvious, and it would not be costly, as the same skeleton could be used over and over again when cleared from the clay of each successive model."

IN speaking, in a former number of the *NEW PATH*, of the difficulty of covering the walls of our rooms, we might have added that, if we were all artists, the difficulty would be very easily disposed of. Thus, Gérôme, who has recently built himself a very elegant



house in Paris, employs a portion of his leisure in painting the walls in fresco. The studio, as a friend tells us, is nearly finished. The ground of the wall is black, and on it are Japanese, Chinese, and Cairene figures, carefully and beautifully painted, their richly colored dresses making the walls look like a garden of flowers. Gérôme's studio is also a museum where he has arranged a choice collection of Eastern arms, dresses, and utensils, gathered in that visit to the East of which his latest pictures are the splendid record.

But humbler hands than those of Gérôme may do something to make home beautiful. We remember how, years ago, we saw a country house, one of the rooms of which a daughter of the family had covered with spirited copies from some of Flaxman's designs for Homer. Perhaps her models might have been chosen from a better artist, but, notwithstanding, no wall-paper could have made that room so interesting as it was made by this young girl's work.

We have little expectation, however, that any very valuable results will be attained in this matter of house-decoration, until we cease to depend on cabinet-makers and upholsterers either for ideas or materials. A family of small means, with good taste and culture, can make a house interesting and beautiful with their own hands and with the expenditure of very little money. It is only necessary for them to throw 'fashion' out of the window; to consult comfort first, elegance next; and to let the elegance be simple and natural. All the people who went to see Max and his wife, were sure, in the course of the evening, to express a sort of envious admiration of the elegance with which the parlor of these good people was furnished. The first impression was that of delightful coziness; but, by degrees, the chairs and tables, the carpets and book-cases were found to have a charm beyond mere coziness. What was it? Could such a result be bought? What did this cost, and this? But the cost finally appeared to be merely the money paid to the carpenter for executing what Max had designed. It seemed that he never bought anything in the way of furniture in the shops. These

candlesticks were of maple-wood, turned to a good pattern of his designing, and decorated in this pretty fashion, with colors, by his own hands, of an evening, as he chatted with his wife and child. Meanwhile, she by his side painted this vase, made of yellowish clay at the pottery over the river, with borders and figures made up of flowers and leaves they had gathered in their afternoon walk. It is done as simply and naturally, almost, as a bit of thirteenth-century work. Their book-case, too, how pretty it is! Marcotte made it, you think? Calder the carpenter made it, in his shop in the village; no more skill than he is master of went to it. It is nothing, in fact, but a pile of long, narrow boxes laid one on top of another, the whole standing on a low base, four or five inches high, to keep the lowest books from being touched by the foot. There is not a moulding or chamfer on the whole book-case. The end of each box is pierced with a crescent-shape trefoil, so that it can be lifted by two people and carried off, if necessary, and the whole outside is painted a dark, deep green, and the inside and edges a good vermilion. Plain as it is, it would have been pretty enough as it stands, for the books make it gay with their bright, cheerful, and varied bindings; but Max was laid up for a week last winter, had a hurt foot, and, so, amused himself with painting in circles, one at each end of every box, the portraits of the half dozen great poets and great men he loves. Max is no painter, but he copied such portraits as he found suitable, and, though roughly done, they are a great addition. He and Laura shared the work; for while he painted a head in the circle at one end, she painted a flower in the circle at the other. Thus, he worked away at Dan Chaucer on one side, and she painted in daisies and their leaves and buds at the other. She didn't copy English daisies out of a book, but went out and got American ones from the field. Then Dante's face was matched with lilies, and Keats' with roses, and so no wonder unfashionable people like the book-case. But, it is in this way that Max and his wife, with a little money, a good deal of taste, and a love of home, have made their home beautiful.