

## AMERICAN DECORATIONS.

Next to the comfort of our homes, the decoration appeals so strongly to every cultivated taste, that any art which tends to gratify it, deserves a prompt and general recognition.

Every house throughout the land can be made attractive, at comparatively small expense, by means of wall decorations which American enterprise has now placed within the reach of all.

When we reflect that without them, the bare walls of so many homes would always remain cold and cheerless, a liberal encouragement should be given to that branch of industry, which constantly contributes to the happiness of our lives. It is not enough that costly fabrics are laid at our feet, but the walls of our rooms deserve even more tasteful and beautiful coverings. Indeed, true art first decorates the walls, to which the furniture of the room, although in harmony with them, should, nevertheless, be subordinate. Costly pictures but few can afford to purchase. But to compensate to some extent for their loss, artistic designs in paper are prepared, which delicate and elaborate machinery multiplies, so that all persons can now ornament their rooms to suit their means and tastes.

At the American Institute Fair a collection of paper hangings was exhibited by Frederick Beck & Co., of this city, which illustrated the excellence which American hangings have attained. But a few years ago all the finest and costliest decorations in use were imported. To-day American hangings challenge comparison with foreign productions in variety and beauty of style, while the cost is so much reduced that the great majority of the people are no longer denied their use.

The business of manufacturing wall-paper in this country has already become very large. Fine factories have been built, skilled workmen employed, and expensive machinery constructed, to meet the yearly increasing demand for elegant decorations. So rapid has been the development of this art, that the great market for the finest hangings in this country is now supplied by home manufactures. Some idea of the extent of this business here, may be inferred from the fact, that the factory of the exhibitors alluded to, is not only the largest in the United States, but is larger than any similar one in England or France. The goods they have produced would surprise any one who has not kept pace with the improvement which this country has made in the art of decoration within the last few years. Velvets adorned with gold, Embossed Stencil Decorations, Oriental Satins, Brocade Gilt, Illuminated Borders constitute a portion only of their collection.

The Oriental Satins are an entirely new and beautiful class of paper-hangings. Nothing of like character has ever been made either here or in Europe. The surface has a silvery whiteness, and when embossed, produces an exquisite effect of quilted satin or fine corded silk. These goods are refined and graceful, and if any discrimination should be made in the collection, the preference would probably be given to them. The process of manufacture has been patented.

The Brocade Gilt is also a new style of hangings, resembling fabrics interwoven with threads of gold, and producing a rich and novel effect. A third valuable contribution to wall decorations, which this firm has made, is Washable Tints. They exhibit eighty-five different shades of these tints, many of which are of a most delicate and beautiful color. They are intended to save the expense of painted or frescoed walls. Heretofore, when the ordinary tints were employed for this purpose, they have required a coat of varnish before they could be washed, but this always produced an unnatural and disagreeable gloss. By a patented process these tints can be washed without any preparation, while their texture and color remain unchanged. Thus, with an appropriate border, all the effect of a finely painted, or costly frescoed wall is obtained.

The tints which this firm make, whether washable or not washable, have, moreover, this decided superiority over any heretofore produced, in that they are entirely free from the shaded lines—known as lath marks—which have always been a serious objection to using this class of hangings. When, therefore, a tint of any required shade can be obtained, which presents a uniform and unclouded surface, which is soft and clear in color, and which, without any preparation, can be washed, one must conclude that this last invention, in point of merit, will take precedence over any recent improvement, as the most valuable contribution to the art of wall decoration.

Besides the goods already mentioned, the exhibition embraced imitations of Chintz, Cashmere, Cretonne, and Tapestry, so like fabrics as to require a close inspection to determine what they really were.

The American Institute have awarded to the manufacturers named the First Premium for Paper Hangings; and the award is the more valuable as an encouragement to artistic merit outside of pure mechanical invention, and gives assurance, that, as a cultivated taste demands artistic designs and elegant and elaborate workmanship, Americans will not have to look outside of their own country to find them; but they can now obtain at home decorations, which are not surpassed by the English or the French.—New York Globe.

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