

Our Industries.

No. XIII.—THE CARRARA CEILING CO., Ltd.

ONE of the most important, perhaps one of the finest, exhibits at the Christchurch Fair is the palatial structure erected and furnished by the Carrara Ceiling Company of Wellington. Occupying a prominent position, the corner in the Main Avenue leading north—next to the Grand Hall—it commands the attention of every visitor, with its three frontages of delicate white marble or what appears to be that material. One asks at once about that material, and one is as promptly introduced to Stuccolin, the manufacture of the Carrara Ceiling Company. The elevation of the building, with its sharp detail and artistic design, impresses you with the quality of this material, more especially if you learn that the design and the execution all represent local work. Here clearly is a striking addition to the industries of the colony. You decide to enter the building and investigate. But before going in, the architectural beauty of the facade keeps you awhile. It is a handsome design in the Louis XVI. style, a fine arrangement of pilasters and capitals supporting the entablature, of characteristic and exquisitely designed architrave, frieze, and cornice. This duly leaves a portion of the side elevation and the whole of the front open to view, thus forming a portico of elegant proportions.

Within is a noble hall, the wall and ceilings of which are richly ornamented in a style in keeping with the exterior design. On the floor stand grouped in great variety collections of objects of

artistic design and delicate ornamentation. These prove on examination to be panels, mantels, over-mantels, central ornaments, shields, cornices, trophies, overdoors, all of the company's manufacture. Prominent among them, disposed on easels, are modellings of great beauty and artistic value: a peacock with tail spread out, admirable in detail and finish; a frieze panel with children at play in the midst of floral surroundings; a hunting trophy with boar's head superbly modelled—a most spirited design—with the weapons of the chase about it in picturesque confusion, well ordered.

An archway of unique design, period of the first Empire, leads to the drawing-room, ornamented in the prevailing key, which here is in the Louis XV. style; walls and ceiling lavishly embellished with relief, a perfect masterpiece of stylish decoration. The ceiling, carrying a fine outlined design of Cupids and flowers, culminates in a handsome dome of coloured glass, which gives a charming effect of light to the artistic details of the room. The groundwork of the ceiling consists mainly of "Calif"—an elastic plaster, one of the company's special importations—and the ceiling ends in a handsome cornice of delicate design, clear and sharp. Below this the walls are finished off with a handsome dado, and between dado and cornice the space is divided into panels, designed for framing some of the best artistic works, such as fishing trophies, centre-pieces, brackets, and the rest. "The very latest developments in plastic progress," it is claimed by the company's people, "pliable and practically unbreakable, showing conclusively that the application of this new material, Stuccolin, has no limits in the region of decorative art." The most striking feature of the

Drawing Room is the mantel, together with its over-mantel, designed and produced of course by the company's art-workers—an innovation in plastic work. The fine head (of "Winter"), the harmonious outlines of both this mantel and the figures and floral decorative work of the under-mantel and overmantel, are as effective as marble, from the close resemblance the material bears to the best Carrara.

Such is the exhibit of this company at the Exhibition. It does not contain by any means all the work shown by the company at the great Fair. Comprised in that work are the facades of the Main Building, of the Machinery Hall, the Canadian Pavilion, and the Victorian Court. These have been so greatly admired by the visitors that it is hardly necessary to say anything more of them here. The only remark that seems to be called for is that the whole of the work was done in the colony, from material made in the factory.

All this gives food for thought to all who have at heart the advancement of the colony. So much so that the establishment wherein such work is turned out becomes of the first importance. Its appearance does not suggest anything of the kind to the passers-by on the thoroughfare of Riddiford street. The building is, like many other good things, plain and unpretentious. Within, it is a revelation of artistic preparation, well organised industry, and splendid results.

Firstly, what is Stuccolin? It is a new patent fibrous plaster composition, for which it is claimed that it is incomparably superior to any similar material made. It certainly is extremely light, very tough, exceedingly elastic, and keeps its sharp outlines undimmed by any condition of atmosphere, and being free of timber, is absolutely unshrinkable always. It is adapted for the most delicate open-work art designs, which may be fixed by any competent tradesman at a small cost to any plastered ceiling or wall, and lends itself equally well to the severe simplicity of the classical lines.

Those examples of the designs in the Exhibition have their counterpart in the factory show-room here in Wellington. With this difference, that for the most part they are here in stacks, against the single specimens shown there. The show-room is the first to engage the attention of the visitor. Here is a stack of twelve-foot panels covered with



THE MODELLING STUDIO.