

rare detail of scroll and floral work, sharp as the first cut of the knife, guaranteed to keep its edge, light as a feather, handsome as marble. There, a dozen shields of various pattern, some close in detail, others broad; in all designs, classical, modern, renaissance, conventional, natural, formal, and sketchy in every style of the decorator's art. Stacks there are of brackets, pilasters, centre flowers, cornices, architraves, friezes adorned and plain, capitals, pediments, spandrels; arches, arch screens, over-doors, panelings, dados; consoles, soffits, beam-casings, everything that architects design and builders use in all the varieties of buildings, from cottage to palace, from public hall to garden porch. There are medallions of all sorts and conditions of artistic excellence—in short, everything imaginable. The satisfactory thing about them all is that they are examples of a great and growing local industry.

The stacks of things practical and workaday are not the sole occupants of the show-room so well lighted. There are examples of the special artistic work of the company's people. For example, an entablature of a girth of ten feet, ranged on the wall under the cornice, looming palatial and imposing; also hunting, fishing, and peace trophies brilliantly executed; likewise mantels of elegant design, and light apparently as they are elegant; specimen panels of the many put into the numerous buildings in all parts of the colony that have passed through the hands of the company, and are indebted to the same for their beauty of detail and fine finish. These things, specialties, and the rest, are advertisements of the company. They tell us both what the company can do, and what it has done, and what it is doing. Colonists in every part of the country will recognise the details as they have seen them in the Bank of New Zealand, Wanganui; the Royal Café, Christchurch; the Grand Hotel, Wellington; the dome of the Royal Oak in the same city; the details of the Railway Hotel, and the Municipal Opera House, Palmerston North; interior decoration of the new Hastie's Hotel at Feilding, interior of the rebuilt Nelson College; Young & Tripe's buildings, D.I.C. buildings, Wellington B. and I. Co.'s buildings, the ministerial residence, and a host of private houses; Invercargill Municipal Theatre, and other buildings too numerous to mention. These stand for the work done. There

is statuary and ornamentation of all kinds for work that can be undertaken for special occasions. And there are the stacks and piles of workaday ornaments which await purchasers, and may be fixed to the ceilings or the walls with the help of a few galvanised iron screws.

Adjacent is the modelling studio where the designs are prepared. The moment you enter you see that here is the place of a master of his craft. In one corner are a noble pair of eagles growing up in the clay form to adorn a corner and carry a shield for the National Bank new building. The breadth of the treatment, the richness of the correct detail, the splendid pose of the birds, the depth of the shadows, the freedom of the modelling, and its accuracy, all these proclaim the artist. Alongside is the clay presentment of the cornice for the skylight of the same building. Further on are designs of floral effect, classical studies, artistic every one both in the conception and the treatment. It reminds one that when Mr. Schaefer went home to buy the patent rights of this material he explained that he wanted to secure the best artist in modelling that it was possible to secure. He was told he would find the man he wanted at the exhibition at St. Louis. He went there and very soon discovered the artist, who had a considerable reputation and had been specially engaged to design work for leading Continental firms at the exhibition. A French artist of the best French School, his work was the theme of universal praise at St. Louis, and won the grand prize, being the highest award and diploma offered. It is meeting with similar admiration all over New Zealand.

From the books and the papers and the tools of the modeller the designs descend to the workshop on the basement. Here the moulds are lying about in various conditions of use, and in all the stages of preparation. The indented parts and the plain relief portions of the design are confided to hard plaster, while the delicate intricate reliefs have to be moulded first in gelatine. This material is melted in a great pot, and when cool, comes out exactly like a rubber print of the modelling, flexible, soft, easily handled. It is placed with the rest of the mould and the complete casting is made with the Stuccolin mixture. When complete, the casting is taken out to be dried. This operation is performed in a large drying-room heated by an

adjacent furnace to a heat of 150 to 200 deg. F. The castings are stacked in this chamber and from five to six hours is the time for them to come out "bone dry," as the workmen say. When dry they find their way to the stock rooms without delay. Thus there are two shifts of drying during every working day. The scene is busy and most interesting: men melting the gelatine in one place, pouring it into the moulds in another, taking it out in the rubber stage in another, adding it finally to the mould which is then fit for the Stuccolin. Men arranging the moulds for the Stuccolin, placing the same in the moulds, with deft strokes of their tools, stamping, cutting, plastering, going through every motion necessary for the soothing, so to speak, of refractory material. Further on you see them opening the moulds and taking out the castings, which they finish softly putting in the last touches, after which they prepare the moulds for the next casting—and so on, *ad caput*, till the orders are filled. One can not consider a visit to the place complete without a visit to the drying-room. The average visitor enters and makes the customary expression about the heat. It is much like being in a Turkish bath, and one is very glad to get out again. One thinks it is lucky for the workmen that this is a light material; otherwise carrying the castings into the dryer would be terrible work.

Hard by is the store where the company's materials are stacked up ready for use. First—eliminating the Stuccolin which is made on the premises—to interest are the piles of "Calif" This material being elastic does not crack, and takes nails easily. It is used for the ground-work of walls and ceilings, to which the ornamental castings are affixed in the manner usual to this industry by galvanised iron screws. In addition there is cement in quantity, and plaster of Paris of all degrees, also the celebrated marble plaster. Laths (Oregon) are a speciality of the company likewise, and there are big stacks of these. Such are the incomers.

The outgoers are the packing cases, boxes, and crates, full of the castings going away in fulfilment of orders, which seem to keep the storemen pretty fully employed.

Such is the factory of the Carrara Ceiling Company at Wellington South. It represents a very important and rapidly growing industry, of which the growth



THE MOULDERS AT WORK.