

NOTES ON WALL-PAPERS.

BY AYMER VALLANCE.

AUTHENTICATED instances of very early wall-papers are so rare that until recently it used to be asserted that the craft of wall-paper design and manufacture is altogether modern. This proposition, however, cannot now be maintained.

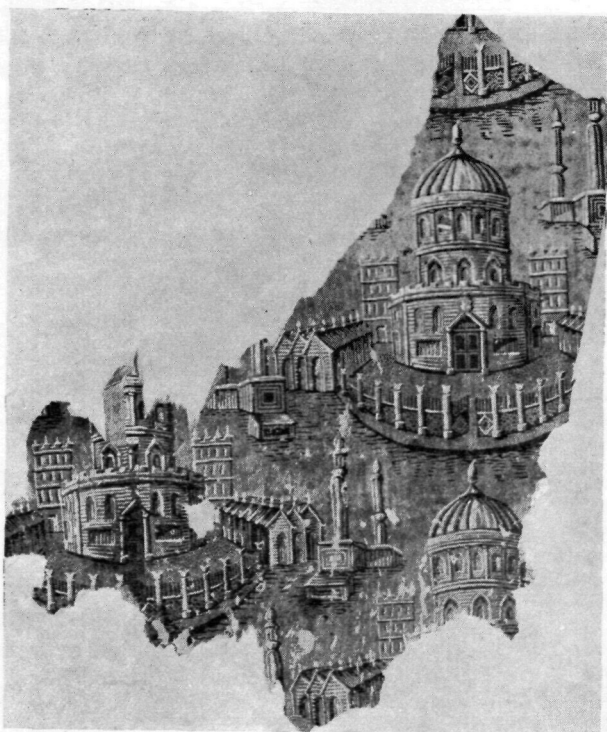
An early instance of paper hangings—a written record this, not the thing itself—occurs in the Inventory, drawn up at the Priory of Minster in Sheppey by Sir Thomas Cheney and others, dated 27th March 1536. In this document is to be found the item of a “chamber hanging of painted papers.”¹

A house on Boley Hill, Rochester, now known by the unwarrantable name of the “Old Priory,” and such that stands east of, though not immediately adjoining, Satis House, provides a further instance of old wall-paper hangings. The house in question was acquired about two years ago by Miss Shinkwin, of Satis House, who set about restoring it, and in the process uncovered two specimens of old wall-paper—one a pattern of vine-like leaves in green with very thin stems, the other a geometrical pattern of loops and knots carried out in dots of a dull golden-brown. The former example may be of the late-seventeenth, or early eighteenth century, while the latter is considerably later, perhaps even so late as about 1800.

Again a recent discovery, here reproduced, is that of a wall-paper, apparently of early nineteenth century date, found in Norwood House at Milton-by-Sittingbourne. The house itself dates back to the sixteenth century. The paper is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The unit of the repeat is of the simplest, viz. a domed structure suggestive of some north Italian baptistery. It is not to be supposed that it can be identified with any building existing, at any rate, in this country. Rather it seems to be the product of pure fantasy on the part of the designer.

¹ *Arch. Cant.*, VII, 296, line 25.



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NOTE. Thanks are due to Miss Shinkwin for kindly showing me her house, to the Rev. Canon Wheatley, M.A., F.S.A., for supplying me with valuable information, to Messrs. the Sutherland Publishing Co., Ltd., for loaning their block of the wall-paper at Norwood House, Milton, and to Messrs. L. and H. R. Jordan, of Milton, for informing the Society of the existence of the wall-paper in the first place.