Excerpt from - EVERY MAN HIS OWN PAINTER by W. and T. J. Towers
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Directions to Make and Apply the Flatting (Flat Wall Paint)

Mix the best English ground lead with spirits of turpentine, to the thickness of molasses; put in Prussian blue, finely ground in equal parts of oil and turpentine. To make a superb gray, lake must be substituted for vermillion. Great care must be taken to match the shade of the last coat; by comparing the flatting with the remains of the last color which may have been left in the paint pot. It should be observed that the flatting must be made about one shade lighter; as the ground color will not be so apt to show through; and it will thereby, give the work a more solid appearance. When the flatting is brought to the proper shade, strain it, and thin it with turpentine to the proper consistency, for use. It is also necessary to observe, that good soft spreading brushes must be used; other wise it will be impossible to make good work. If the wall be from eight to ten feet high, it will require two men to flatt it. Fix a scaffold from one end of the wall to the other, a proper depth from the ceiling, in order to reach with ease the top of the work. Let the color be properly thinned and stirred from the bottom, and be careful to have every thing provided; as you cannot leave off work till one flank is finished. The bottom of the wall must be commenced first, painting not more than twelve or eighteen inches wide at one time. Move the brush in a perpendicular direction, and when you have painted as high as you can conveniently reach, carefully cross the work with a light hand, in order to give the color a uniform extension. When this is done, finish the work, by laying it off very lightly; beginning at the bottom and striking the brush up about a foot, then from the top, lightly draw the brush to the bottom. When this is done, the man on the plank must begin where the other left off, and finish the top. In the mean time, the man standing on the floor must begin another width; and so proceed till one side of the walls is finished.

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