

THE POPULAR IGNORANCE OF FINE ARCHITECTURAL EFFECTS.

By MINERVA PARKER.

Portia says in the "Merchant of Venice": "If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages, princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instruction. I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching."

I cannot hope in the brief time I have, to give you many of the principles of architecture—the thing after all that most concerns the public, is the result of the architect's labor, not the means by which that result is gained. Our current magazines seldom devote their pages to a purely architectural subject. When an article appears, it is apt to be a mere framework, a subdued background for a superb collection of drawings. Our architectural illustrators are, with scarcely an exception, artists, instead of architects. The public at large, going through an architectural exhibition, is apt to be impressed by the skill of the rendering; the composition, delicacy of design and ornament are lost in the crisp light and shade effects.

The throngs that daily move up and down our streets, quickly detect a new shape in bonnets. One sees little knots of interested spectators at each window. The gigantic photographers' frame, with its collection of local actors, prize-fighters, schoolgirls and white-capped nurses, always draws and holds an interested crowd; but our new buildings are passed by with a hurried glance. The few who stop to study, are fellow architects, mechanics in search of labor, or the real estate dealer who is looking for suggestions in the building or alteration of his own property. It is impossible to elevate and refine our architectural expression, as long as the public takes no real interest in its advancement.

One can find dozens among their list of friends, who are familiar with all the different products of the potteries of this country and Europe. They appreciate the exact value of form, ornament and coloring; they detect the value and purity of gems, with unerring judgment. The vast audiences that fill the theatres at each

concert of classic music, show that the public appreciate the work of the great composers. It is not to be supposed that all who compose the audience are skilled musicians, but they require from the performers the utmost skill. They are not satisfied with a rendering that gives the general effect of the composer, but demand accuracy and fidelity to the composition.

Artists and sculptors bend every effort, and utilize every art in reproducing nature faithfully—not alone nature's objects, but her expression, every shadow, the glint of sunshine through a rift in the dome of leaves; and we respond sympathetically to the mood of the artist and nature. The architect working faithfully to reproduce nature, combining utility and construction, bending every art, and science under the yoke of submission, until they become willing servants for your comfort, seldom gains for his work more than a passing glance. He often works unsuccessfully. He has learned that his best efforts are unnoticed by the public whom he serves. It is impossible to raise any industry above the demands of the general public, and the highest results cannot be attained until the public is well informed, is interested in what is good architecture, recognizes and sets the stamp of approval upon that which is good, and honestly criticises that which is faulty in construction, ill-proportioned, fantastic or unfaithful to the style which it attempts to follow. When it recognizes that a building which destroys the symmetry of its neighbor is unsuitable, though beautiful in itself, that each building shall be a unit in the permanent improvement and adornment of the city, that we owe our neighbor who has increased the value of our own property by his improvements some consideration, a little humoring will easily harmonize the design without losing the individuality of the architect or owner.

Every plant bears its own crown of loveliness, and we could not if we would, have our garden all roses.

Each composer touches a responsive chord in a different nature; if our music

ter as if she thought the key of knowledge must be somewhere in his possession,

"I learned most of it watching the bees," replied Walter. "But I read about them too in a book."

"If I was a bee," said Pussy, "I'd just cuddle up in one of the cells and take a nice nap."

"They do sometimes, when they are very tired," said Walter.

"I should think they would roast to death all huddled together so," said Clara.

"They have a way to cool themselves off," responded Walter, beginning to wonder at the extent of his own knowledge.

"Some of them stand among the others that are at work and move their wings to and fro like a fan. That is what makes such a buzzing in the hive."

"I have seen a bumble bee's nest in a heap of stones," said Rawlins Buckley; "some make them in the ground and some bore holes in the wood."

"There is a kind of bumble bee," said Walter, "that makes its nest in a hollow and roofs it over with moss. When it finds a nice clump it will get a lot of the bees to stand in a line from the moss to the nest. Then the first bee picks out a piece and, after she has combed and straightened it with her jaw, kicks it behind her to the next one, who does the same way, so it goes through the whole line, till at last it gets to the nest."

"I don't exactly see how a bee can get the bread out of its pockets," said Clara.

"Why," said Walter, "she stands with her fore feet on one side of the cell and her hind feet on the other, and then pushes out the bread with her other two feet."

"Oh, dear! what a funny little body a bee is!"

(Continued.)

FOR FOUR DOLLARS you can secure the BUSINESS WOMAN'S JOURNAL and *Harper's Monthly* for a year if order is sent to this office.

"A COMFORTABLE SORT OF A WOMAN."

"It comforts me," said the bent little old man as he spoke tenderly of his dear wife, "It comforts me to know that Sally would allus lie down every afternoon an' sleep a bit. Some folks tho't 'twas a dredful lazy habit, and 'twas no wonder we didn't get rich faster, but she suited me jest as she was. Sally was comfortable sort of a woman to have around, never frettin' at a feller or faultin' him when things didn't go right. When feelin' troubled she'd often say, 'Father, I believe I'll lie down for a few minutes;' then back she'd come spry and chipper as a canary bird. Sally didn't drive and scold, but she wasn't lazy, an' she brought up the youngsters to do their part. I don't see that drivin' women get on one mite better than she did. It does comfort me to know that Sally would take her rest."

A good many people who are overworking to do things which are not half as necessary as a live mother is, might well take a lesson from this "comfortable sort of a woman" and "lie down for a few minutes," and take their rest. And if mothers would bring up "the youngsters to do their part," instead of working themselves to death while sons are lying in bed and daughters are playing the lady, we might have more healthy, cheery grandmothers than we now have, and their children, when arriving at the years of discretion, would be thanking God, or mothers who *taught them to work*, instead of mourning over the graves of mothers who worked themselves to death instead of laying a part of the burden on the shoulders of thoughtless children who were much better able to bear it.—*Exchange*.

DISTANT RELATIONSHIP.—Stranger—"I notice your name is De Million. Are you related to the wealthy De Millions, of New York." Poor but respectable De Million—"I am a—distant relation, sir." "Indeed! How distant?" "Well, sir, as distant as they can keep me, sir."—*New York Weekly*.

were all written in the same key, many souls would ever remain unawakened by the hand of the composer. Each chord leads to the fulfillment of the theme of the author. A musician loathes a medley. I heard an electrician speaking of the wonders of the audiphone, say: "Think of the possibilities it opens to the musical world; a piece may be reversed and a new creation ground out, or several pieces thrown in together, and a composition undreamed of produced. Every musician detects the absurdity of such a thing. Composition is a science of harmony. Exactly the same theory is true of architecture; the law of architectural composition is as unalterable without producing discord, as the science of music.

It is absurd to change from style to style, and erect our buildings as examples of architectural patch-work. There are numerous styles; every nation has made its contributions. When we pass from the plain building which merely fulfills the requirements of utility, and enter the field of ornament, it is well to consider what style of ornament we wish to adopt, and having made a selection, see that the theme is adhered to. Each part has a distinct bearing on the other; they are inseparable. We have a few examples in the city where the architect seems to have turned his unbridled fancy loose among the heirlooms of architecture, selecting from every style and period, with a reckless *abandon*. If the client protested, he did it in secret, unwilling to betray his ignorance. It seemed a little unsatisfactory, but perhaps his taste was not cultivated. It reminds one of the story of the king who employed a weaver to make him a suit that was invisible to the unfaithful. Each courtier and knight admired and praised the product of the empty loom, ashamed to acknowledge that he could not see the cloth, which the weaver described so elegantly. The king, dressed in his invisible suit would not acknowledge that he failed to see its imaginary beauties; the multitude praised the garments of the unclad king, until a little child suggested that he had not on a robe.

Architecture suffers degradation from passing styles, because its patrons have not the courage to cry out against its folly. The blind follow the blind, and

those who see fear to speak lest they disclose their blindness.

With the more advanced education of the Nineteenth Century, in disregarding in any degree the possibilities of architecture, we are overlooking one of the most fruitful sources of modern education. No sham has ever been permanently successful, and until we range ourselves strongly against architectural pretences and falsehood, we may go on rearing our buildings, story above story, towering above each neighbor, without advancing.

Many of our present buildings are state-ly to a degree never before known; they rival in size, workmanship and material, the Parthenon. One goes over their parts—each is excellent in its way—but the eye rests on nothing; the attention is continually caught by some new and fantastic feature, evidently given its position for no other reason than to attract attention. The height of a tower in itself is nothing; it is purely a piece of clever civil engineering to raise a monster pile hundreds of feet, so that the papers may record the fact that your church has the highest tower in the city. What of it, if space or height are only of value as a means of gratifying utilitarian or artistic need? If every added foot be a necessity for the convenience of its inmates, the money is wisely spent. If every foot in that great monument of stone is a necessity of aesthetic and phonetic art, utilitarianism yields gladly to its prominence, and the tax-payer goes deep into his pocket to advance the art and usefulness of his city; but if it is to gratify a vanity, it is indeed a monument of folly, against which the poor and homeless of the city offer a mute protest.

The law of artistic unity demands that the contrasts in the homes of the great laboring masses, the very poor, and the rich shall be less striking. To this country of ours, each year, come armies of emigrants, exiles and toilers, in the hope of escaping the grinding poverty of their native countries, the worse than slavery to which the poor of all nations must be reduced where they build extravagantly. In every country where architecture has made requirements and contributions which its people could ill-afford, wherever a so-called high degree of architectural art has flourished, it has fed like a rank weed upon the welfare of the great laboring masses.

In the construction, furnishing and designing of habitations, much of the labor and material of our country is utilized, and being built, they exert a constant influence on those who occupy or visit them.

This is especially true of the homes where the family is reared. Our public buildings, visited occasionally, should fitly represent the financial and educational development of our country, but never trespass a hair's breadth upon the right of every native-born child—the heirs and jewels of our republic—to wholesome, sunny homes. If architectural splendor must feed upon the rights of the poor, it must be modified, simplified and repressed.

Our masses are elevated but what of the unity of our public and home lives, the symmetry, harmony and grace, the honesty of construction and ornamentation?

It is impossible, with our public institutions, for us to build as the older nations have. We could not if we would press into the ranks of our workmen a toiling army of conquered slaves, who build walls and carve stones under the lash of poverty and despair.

Foreigners are always most impressed by our American homes; not tenements and hiving places, but homes.

Architects are in a sense the servants and the masters of the people, in regard to architectural expression; and on them rests largely the responsibility of rescuing it from its present tendency toward senseless and extravagant expenditure.

It is not difficult to be original, and judging by the examples of our present work, it is the Mecca of our labor; but it is hard to be rational, holding faithfully to the temperate and useful in art and architecture. Every honest, brave nation has built honorably and bravely, without affectation or pretense; ornamenting easily and gracefully; but with a sparing hand.

These are a few of the conventional headlines from which the architectural novelist evolves his plot. The texts are always unalterable, but their reproduction and expression remind one of those ministers who boldly take a text, wander out of sight of it through an entire sermon, and then return at the close with a grand flourish of conviction. The other texts I cannot give you; they are chained to the forest, the mine and the quarry. The

architect and sculptor of every nation sees the imprisoned ideal in every great pine and unquarried block, firm in the faith that his is the hand to wrest it forth and to erect from their unfailing harvests shrines for the living and the dead.

Every nation offers its contribution, the results of hundreds of years of time, the skill of countless brains and hands; the symbolism of the loftiest forms of religious and civic life; a sacred heritage of art; and it rests with us to add one more volume, written on these tablets of stone, that shall fitly represent the honor and integrity of our American citizens.

A DIVIDED INTEREST.

I ONCE knew a man—he is *in pace* now—who loved to lay his large powerful hands upon any little properties which came in his way. He was honest; he meant to be just; he was a man of thought; he paid those whom he owed, and demanded his dues from those who owed him; when his careless neighbor borrowed butter, he weighed it, and charged it; when the same shiftless fellow not only forgot to pay for the butter, but added thereto sugar and flour, and meat, he did likewise; in reasonable time he presented his bill, and it had to be paid. And, in general, I think he was right. A certain class of persons need to be taught that they shall not hang upon long enduring friends like leeches, sucking from their healthful veins sufficient nourishment to prolong disgraceful lives. The scripture precept that whoso will not work, neither shall he eat, should be emphasized in such cases, and on them.

This man was the unquestioned head of his family. He held the purse, whoever composed the family, or wished to do so. Anyone who deals or doles out money to you, always knowing how much you have, and what you do with it, is master. Financial dependence ties your tongue, and dictates your pursuits, it decides the larger part of life's movements. If a meek-faced collector of ten cent offerings for the heathen of the East Indian Empire, called at the house, Uncle Eben's wife always told her that she would speak to her husband, and the result was that the collector never heard

American magazine.

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