

STUDENTS' DEPARTMENT.**PROPORTION AND PRINCIPLE.**

There was much sound sense in the address to students of the president, Mr. W. Emerson, read at a meeting of the R.I.B.A. Mr. Emerson touched on "proportion" in connection with the practice of the art of architecture, a word whose value and meaning, as he remarked, may easily be lost sight of. To the architect's mind may probably immediately be suggested the comparative relation of one architectural detail to another and to the whole composition. But besides the objective symmetry and harmonic degree of form or size, proportion may be considered by the architect in other ways. Of course, proportion in this sense is the very first essential of fine architecture. It should be an inherent faculty in the architect and artist but it may be cultivated. And proportion must descend also to the smallest details. Proportion in color is also a most important factor in the excellence of artistic work. The study of nature is the guide as to how much of any one color will harmonize with another. There is also a proportion in architectural work which requires to be maintained between coarseness and refinement. This is a very subtle point in all good work. Too much refinement in architectural work tends to weakness of effect and deprives it of its masculinity. At the other extreme, "muscular" architecture, as it has been termed, may degenerate into coarseness. It is the carefully balanced proportion between these that avoids either extreme. The effect of all the finest architecture has been attained by a combination of strength and power with refinement of well-proportioned and beautiful detail. Too much care cannot be bestowed on the proportion that sculptured and other decorations bear, first to the whole composition and secondly to each other. In all

this the architect's should be the guiding spirit, however much may be done by the craftsman or sculptor.

Then, he continued, there is the necessity for a proper proportion being maintained between work and rest. There is such a thing as staleness. The want of recreation makes a man dull, unfit for companionship or sympathetic mingling with or interest to his fellows; and his work suffers in consequence. Also, there must be margin for reflection and thought. Great achievements usually germinate in quiet moments. Of much importance in connection with the practice of the architect, as in all other businesses in life, there is another thing that must be borne in mind, and that is right principle. This in architecture will mean an avoidance of shams and false construction, which somehow always manage to look wrong, even though worked on such a grand scale as the external walls of St. Paul's, or the impudent ugliness of our shops with stone facades, apparently standing on nothing. Truth makes work look consistent and correct; lack of it offends good taste. Palatial decorations in offices, ecclesiastical embellishments in restaurants, the affectation of cottage simplicity in a palace, or vice versa, imply a want of appreciation of the fitness of things, and are wrong in principle; and this element of truthful principle in architectural art should be carried down to the smallest detail if the work is to live. Then there should be right principle in your motive of action; and this is the most important point if you desire not only your personal position to be respected by others but also wish to uphold the dignity and status of your profession generally. Professional respect must ever depend on the character, conduct and aims of the units in the profession. The architect should, on principle, enrich his mind and render himself proficient in all branches of his work, as his duty to his clients, and should deal fairly and avoid harshness in dealing with those over whom he is set as a supervisor.

CANADA FOUNDRY COMPANY, LIMITED,

(SUCCESSORS TO ST. LAWRENCE FOUNDRY COMPANY OF TORONTO)

Engineers, Founders and Machinists

STRUCTURAL IRON ^{AND} STEEL WORK

Beams Channels, Angles, Tees and
Cast Iron Columns always in stock.

WRITE OR PHONE FOR ESTIMATES AND PRICES