

As it is to-day, the plumber is null and void three times out of five, as the manufacturer is standing in the plumber's place. The manufacturer goes to great expense in fitting up a grand show-room, pays big rent and employs expensive clerks—who, by the way, deserve great credit for the able manner in which they display themselves when your client happens to fall into their hands. Seldom do they lose their sale, for they have got just what the plumber should have—their own specialties to show the public.

I do not wish to be understood as expressing myself maliciously toward any of our manufacturers while on this subject, but I do feel as though the plumber of to-day should endeavor to practice the good example which the manufacturer and jobber have placed before us. We can readily see how easy it is to make a sale when we have the goods to show. The plumber should have his goods to exhibit just the same as any other retail merchant has his goods, and I feel that we are coming more and more to this feature of the business every year. We have good examples of a dozen or more of our members who are awakening to the fact that it is a good thing to have a show-room fitted up with a nice line of sanitary goods. It is highly necessary at the present time for the plumber to stop and consider what position he occupies with his patrons and the public. A great many times he is ignored altogether, and often he is not considered the proper person to consult concerning the class of fixtures to be used. This should not be the case. The plumber should call attention to the fact that the plumbing is the most important work that is put into a building, and he should endeavor to influence his client in the matter of the selection of the best material. He should not be afraid to tell his client that certain goods which he is about to put in are not what he ought to have, that they are not the best fixtures, and try and have him get nothing but the best, so far as it lies in his power.

The curse of the plumber to-day is the cheap, shoddy goods, a big discount as their only recommendation, which supply dealers endeavor to foist upon the trade, the use of which should not be permitted; but as long as they can find buyers they will live and get rich, at the cost of the plumber. But he is himself to blame for this, as he well knows that a good article cannot be bought for the ridiculously low prices which some manufacturers make. It is the sale of to-day which they are after, and not the plumber's benefit; and as long as you buy their goods, they will continue to live. It would be a blessing to the public, as well as the plumber, should the cheap man be wiped out of existence and buried forever, to return no more. Once upon a time goods were sold on their merits, but now the cry is, "How cheap can I sell them?"

ARCHITECTURE.

ARCHITECTURE is a tradition, is a science, and is an art. Inasmuch as it is a tradition, it necessitates a knowledge of the past, where there is an inestimable treasure-house for those who have the key. Being a science, it demands that a knowledge of the resources of construction should be at the disposal of an architect, as also a knowledge of how to most satisfactorily employ these resources. Finally, since it is an art, architecture belongs to the domain of esthetics, which, however, does not here consist of a purely metaphysical elaboration, but rather of a precise and clear expression of the scientific necessities combined with an artistic sentiment in harmony with modern civilization. We shall in this paper, examine briefly the first of these three phases of architecture, reserving the two last for the future.

Architecture, by the visible evidence of the growth of the successive styles, forms a link between the civilizations of the past and that of to-day, although it is a link which has escaped the attention of historians, because architecture is generally ignored by them.

This property of our art of attaching the past to the present by a visible chain, gives it, in addition to the qualities it has, all admit, an importance and a grandeur of character which, it is to be regretted, are not better known and appreciated by the public and especially by our profession. Upon this very fact should be based an argument against fragmentary instruction in the styles of architecture. Instruction limited to the serious study of only one style of architecture hides, not only the unity of the general evolution of our art, which thus ceases to be the constant and faithful reflection of human development in past ages, but also it falsifies to a certain point the style which is being taught. That very style is left isolated like a rock in the midst of human

development without any comprehensible beginning or end; instead of itself being, as it is, a living thing developing and growing on lines parallel to man himself.

Each style of architecture being born of the intellectual and moral forces of a human society which seek to work for its profit in its best manner, the constructive resources at its disposal, each style of architecture, I say, has become naturally the expression of a certain civilization, that is to say, of a certain social and religious doctrine, and consequently will not serve as an expression of two distinct civilizations. The using again of a style of architecture, or the adoption by one age of a style as its own other than that which it has itself created, is hence in itself a false principle.

This adoption, or renaissance, which cannot be more than temporary, is, however, easily explained. At epochs of social transition like our own, or like that at the time of the Roman empire, there exists a conflict between the past which some wish to retain, and the future which others wish to prepare for or enforce before its time. This conflict renders the creation, or even the preservation, of a style impossible, since every style being the expression of an accepted social doctrine presupposes all to have the same general esthetic taste.

At present there is no general agreement as to the social doctrines that should be adopted. The old doctrines are indeed falling into decay, but the new has not yet been entirely formulated, much less generally accepted. Hence there is a struggle between the past and the future, from which for the moment results the impossibility of creating a new style of architecture, or even adopting for the time being any one of the old historic styles.

One can, however, foresee the approach of a new style, and even catch glimpses of its essential characteristics. But, while awaiting its final advent, which must be accomplished by slow steps as society changes from day to day, every architect should search in the practice of his art wherever he believes he can find assistance, whether it be from such and such styles of the past, or whether it be from all these different sources at once, but without other guide for his choice than good common sense, or the absolute requirements of his clients.

We shall come out of this temporary disorder as soon as the social doctrine of the new era shall have been definitely settled. Let no one think that this waiting shall be indefinitely prolonged, for from all quarters we hear the echoes of this incessant work of elaboration. If, then, we do not yet possess this doctrine in its clear and incontestable unity, we at least see plainly the tendencies, and it is these tendencies which the architect ought at this hour to study attentively and do his best to express in his work.

He may then take for the basis of his composition whatever style he will; he is free, but he must also respect the liberty of others. The different schools which formerly represented distinct artistic doctrines, and which are now scarcely more than groups, whose members are united by natural tendencies or habits, ought also to be tolerant toward each other, as all are already respectful toward science and disposed to profit by all the inventions of our improved industries.

Can one not see by these signs of the times, by these numerous points of contact, which already bind the different schools one to another, the approaching unity of all schools of architecture? They will rally about one science of which all will accept the laws—about one esthetic centre and about one industry, which all shall put to their own profit.

The sun is yet below the horizon, but already the clouds reflect the first rays. The rising sun of the new art—I have the firm conviction—will rise in its splendor, before the delighted eyes of our near descendants. I wish to be a prophet for once in my life, although I must here acknowledge that my prophecy is only the logical interpretation of the history of the past and of the observation of the present times.

I hear at this point the voice of some practical reader who cries halt! and who insists upon the fact that ordinarily an architect has to live by his work, and has scarcely the leisure to devote himself to the studies I recommend. He is right, a thousand times right, and it is for this reason that I have demanded, and always shall demand with such instance, organizations for the *higher studies of architecture*. This would be the formation of a special group of workers devoted to research and the exposition of everything which is of a nature to contribute to the progress of science whose forces must be given to the architect, by means of methods calculated to spare his time, without, however, allowing him to lose any of the practical utility of these durable aids.

They should also aid in competitions by keeping the requirements always to the highest level of all discoveries as rapidly as they are made public.

They should enlighten the practical workers upon the best organization of workshops, etc.

The higher studies would give the strength of conscious unity to the different efforts made in view of our progress, and they would exercise a valuable influence upon instruction as well as upon all the practical branches of our art.

Its first benefit would certainly be to create unity in the histori-