

COMMENTS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE MODERN DAY ARCHITECT—PRACTITIONERS MUST BE PRACTICAL MEN AS WELL AS ARTISTS.

THE ANTIQUATED, MUSTY IDEAS of architectural practice, held by some of the more aesthetically inclined practitioners, are gradually but surely giving place to a saner, more practical, and more scientific conception of the true functions of architecture.

It is now being realized more and more that the architect of to-day must be a thoroughly trained man, not only in the distinctive branches of architecture, but he must be practical. He must be a trained business man, with ability to use sane business judgment.

This is purely a commercial age, and, while it is true that there are many structures in which the utilitarian must be made subservient to the aesthetic, it is, nevertheless, a fact that even a monument must be erected under modern conditions, and in accordance with modern methods of construction.

The architect of to-day must be more than a designer. He must have knowledge of the scientific branch of building construction, as well as the artistic side of the profession. The more quickly this fact is realized, and architects cease to attempt to transplant the antiquated work of a thousand years ago, from European countries, to the New World, and the sooner they realize that even the profession of architecture must be influenced by modern requirements and local conditions, and the sooner they get down to terra firma, and apply themselves in studying modern requirements, economy in construction, utility of plan, adaptability of materials the sooner shall we have an architecture fitted to our commercial and social life, an architecture distinctive of our own age, and our own country, and an architecture which employs materials we, as a nation, have at hand.

The other day a New York architect, Mr. J. Stewart Barney, made a notable speech before the Architectural League, in New York. He spoke as a free thinker in the craft and frightened the prebendaries, deans, and curates of the old architectural regime. Mr. Barney expressed the idea that American architectural styles ought not to be imported, like millinery, from Paris; that they ought to grow up, indigenous, from the soil, and to suit the climatic conditions and general uses of American life.

This proposition strikes a great many of the architects of the Old School, as conceited and absurd. Mr. Whitney Warren and Mr. Francis H. Kimball, in particular, both prominent United States architects, have come forward to say that a New World style of architecture may perhaps put in an appearance in an aeon or two, but meanwhile it will be necessary to shin along as best we can, with the imported models.

Messrs. Warren and Kimball's talk about the long, slow evolution of architectural styles, is, to speak testily, the patter of pedants. It did not take long to evolve a log cabin out of the necessities of our woodsman, or a sod house out of the cattle country, an abode out of the arid plains, or an entirely characteristic American mansion house, so says a United States writer, out of the prosperity of Salem shipmen.

In commenting on this proposition of Mr. Barney's, the same writer points out that the architecture of the southern plantations or of New England villages, a century ago, was as well fitted and proper for the time and country, as the acropolis to the periclean Athens, but in the Nineteenth century, he continues, this country (the United States) went through a painful period of mental and moral confusion not unrelated to its parlous political state, and its sense and taste in buildings suffered contortions.

That was the age of the village magnates, big French-roof houses, with a cupola, and with iron dogs on the lawn. It passed, but has long left its mark upon the minds of some metropolitan architects, who go on think-

ing about iron dogs and cupolas, Corinthian porticos and Roman colonnades, without regard to any earthly use.

This writer believes that the distinctive American idea is that art should keep closer to science, than ever it has been before. The beauty of buildings should grow upon their utility. If men in America find dignity in their work, houses should do the same.

These comments upon the revolutionary statements of so prominent a free thinker in the profession, as Mr. Barney, by a writer who speaks as a layman, have some interesting kernels of thought, that architects will do well to take note of.

UNALTERABLE OPPOSITION OF BAND OF TORONTO ARCHITECTS AGAINST COMPULSORY ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION.

"FOR E'EN THOUGH vanquished he could argue still." The characteristic argumentative propensity of Oliver Goldsmith's schoolmaster seem to be the basis of the opposition to a provincial architects' license law, inaugurated by a band of architects in Toronto, who seem inclined to declare themselves against everything that may be proposed by others than those who are of them.

That the licensing of architects would do much to raise the lower strata of the profession in the province, is a fact that no fair-minded man, who knows the situation will deny.

That it would have a tendency to guarantee to the public a protection against the incompetent, which it now has not, is a fact beyond dispute.

That it would discourage the dishonest operations of speculative builders of architectural monstrosities and structurally defective shacks, is a fact that has been established.

That it would make the architect responsible to the community as well as his client, for the safe and honest planning and construction of buildings, is a fact that cannot be honestly denied.

That a licensing law has operated successfully and satisfactorily wherever it has been enacted, is purely a matter of record.

That every practical and prominent practitioner has been a friend to such a measure wherever it has been proposed, is evidenced by the enthusiasm with which the members of the profession have welcomed the law wherever agitation for its adoption has been created.

In the face of these indisputable facts, we ask why is it that there is opposition to such a measure in Ontario, the premier province of Canada. We answer that this opposition, inaugurated by a few, is not justified by the facts of the case, but, we are forced to believe, almost against our will, that it is the result of a determined organized effort to oppose the measure purely upon the principle of disliking to agree with that which has been proposed by another. To say the least such an attitude is undignified and unbecoming of reputable members of so noble a profession as architecture.

In justification of our contention, we beg to relate some of the contradictory stands taken by these opponents of compulsory education. When it was proposed to make the Ontario Association of Architects a closed corporation, their efforts were strongly opposed by the members of the, then, Eighteen Club. When the A.I.C., petitioned the Dominion Government for a charter designed to make it a closed corporation, this club rightfully opposed such legislation.

CONSTRUCTION strongly opposed this method of registration as well, and gave much space to the views of many prominent architects who were not in accord with the close corporation idea. On December 3, 1907, at the annual meeting of the Toronto Architects' Society, of which Mr. Eden Smith was president (who is generally looked upon to represent the views of the organization