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THE RECIPROCAL DUTIES OF ARCHITECTS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS. ARCHITECTS' RESPONSIBILITIES.



It is customary with almost every person who has employed an architect to design and superintend the construction of a dwelling, to throw blame upon him after its completion for many things that really the architect was in no way responsible for, and we know many who have employed almost every architect in the city of Montreal and felt equally dissatisfied with the services of them all. Surely they were not all incompetent or to blame. We are inclined to believe that there are many people in this world who are never satisfied, always discontented, always believing every man to be a rogue, and too often thus judging others as they should be judged themselves.

The heaviest charge at first brought against architects by their employers is that of going beyond their estimates. That, we acknowledge, is too often the case, but in most instances the fault lies with the employer. When the extra pulls on his purse commence for sums beyond the original estimate, then commences dissatisfaction, charges of negligence, and suspicions of venality on the part of the architect. On the other hand, the architect complains that too often he even incurs the displeasure of the owner—tacit or expressed—more for attempting to control his employer's inclination to lavishness than endeavouring to lead him into avoidable expense. In nine cases out of ten, however, these additional expenses have been incurred by additions and changes the owner has gone into, voluntarily himself, after the contracts have been given out and the work commenced, which, had he known his mind at first, could have been executed at half the cost. When the day of reckoning comes, and the extra bills paid, the owner finds it a relief to his feelings to lay the blame of over-expenditure on another's shoulders. On the other hand, some architects are in the habit of

leading the tastes of the employers into the adoption of a great deal of costly, glaring, pseudo-ornamentation in the expectation that the public will be attracted by the glare, and that it will be an advertisement at their employer's expense.

In the case of public buildings the facilities for increasing the expenditure, whether lawfully or unlawfully, are greatly in the excess. The matter being left in the hands of a building committee, no member of which is personally responsible, and often personal interests, more or less direct, to advance local, social, or family; or perhaps direct pecuniary interests being connected with some line of the building trades to which he himself belongs. Some members of these building committees have considerable influence and weight, but are so ignorant of architecture that they frequently are the cause of estimates exceeding in cost—by even a third—the original estimate, of which Trinity Church is now a notable example.

We have always held the opinion that architects have a moral responsibility on the side of the public as apart from their own personal emoluments and professional ability (which, however, the financial manager of public buildings seldom allow to them.) An architect is morally bound to use whatever influence he possesses to dissuade building committees from wasting the money collected for religious or public beneficence on showy facades or meretricious ornament at the expense of interior space and convenience and sanitary arrangements, and, consequently, at the health and expense of the community for whose health and comfort the money was given. The money wasted upon churches by building committees composed of extravagant, unpractical and interested men has been the cause of dissensions and differences that have gone farther to drive people from worshipping God in a proper humble and lowly spirit than to bring them to Him.

Unfortunately, faithfulness to what is right on the part of the honest and independent architect, will not be rewarded according to his integrity to what is right, but according to his pliance, egotism and greed; and the effrontery and impudence, the trickery and falsehood which are born of them. These are the men who generally pretend to be so philanthropic as to make designs for churches gratuitously, and thrive upon it, but somehow involve the churches in a debt perhaps to nearly