

TORONTO CHAPTER OF ARCHITECTS.

THE regular meeting of the Toronto Chapter of Architects was held on Monday, March 8th, Mr. W. R. Gregg in the chair. Mr. Jos. Keele, of the School of Practical Science, gave an interesting stereopticon exhibition of architectural views, and Mr. G. F. Strickland read a paper entitled "Modern Methods of Electric Wiring." The three retiring officers of the Executive Committee were nominated for re-election.

MONASTIC INFLUENCE.

PROF. Capper recently delivered at McGill University his tenth lecture on Architecture, the subject being "Monastic Influence, as seen in the Development of Ecclesiastical Architecture." The Durham Cathedral was illustrated and described as one of the finest Romanesque churches in existence. The existing buildings attached thereto still showed the typical arrangement of a Benedictine monastery. These were compared with the much earlier plan (dating from the ninth century) still preserved of the monastery of St. Gall; some of the special points embodied in the famous Rule of St. Benedict, promulgated in 529 A.D., were touched upon to emphasize the work done by the monks on behalf of progress and civilization and the arts during the centuries when Europe was slowly raising herself from the barbarism that followed the northern invasions and the fall of Rome. The Benedictine Rule rapidly spread over Western Europe, though not to the total exclusion of other rules, notably the Augustinian. Architecturally considered, however, the rules were practically identical, and gave rise to a definite type of plan, in which a rectangular cloister, with certain definite buildings grouped around it, was invariably attached to the nave and one transept of the church. These buildings were, on the east the Chapter House, on the west the undercroft, usually containing the great cellar for stores, and, on the side furthest from the church and running parallel to it, the refectory of the monks. The dormitory was usually in an upper storey on the eastern side and connected with the transept by a stair, so that the monks, for whom matins began at midnight, might have ready access to the church. The cloister was the workroom of the monks. In it, against the wall of the nave, was situated the library of the monastery, the scriptorium, in which the literary work of monks was executed, being in the cloister alley next the church; the separate cells, or "carrels," were divided off by low partitions, usually of wood.

Several beautiful views of existing cloisters were given, all, however, save that of Le Puy, in France, as rebuilt at a later period.

The finest scriptorium that has come down to us is probably that of Gloucester, rebuilt in the fourteenth century, where the "carrels" are of stone and form a beautiful architectural composition. Some examples of illuminated MSS. were shown, and the lecturer took occasion to remark upon the excessive labor represented by such work, for which the world could not be too grateful to the scribes of these old cloisters, who must have toiled, often infinitely weary of their task. The Benedictines (to whom teaching was a duty of religious obligation) became inevitably a learned order, comprising within their ranks "some of the strongest and ablest men" of Christendom; but literary work was by

no means their only form of labor. On the contrary, the great strength of St. Benedict's Rule was that it raised labor of all kinds, from the humblest to the highest, to be definite work for God, consecrated, therefore, as religious duty, a complete revulsion from the degradation of Imperial Rome, when all manual labor was regarded as servile, the work of slaves, unfit for free-born men.

LUXFER PRISMS.

THE wonder is that the simple, well-known power of refraction in a glass prism was overlooked so long, and not utilized until the investigations of Mr. J. G. Pennycuik led him to make a practical use of the semi-prism to carry ordinary rays of sunlight, dispelling darkness and replacing objectionable gas or electric light.

By using a great number of small semi-prisms to cover a considerable surface of the window, the light from the sky, in passing through them, is refracted or diverted, and leaving the prisms, is carried along on a horizontal plane to the furthest limit of the room—hence the name "Luxfer" or "light carrying" prism. Through ordinary plate glass, a part of the light is reflected outside, and the remainder comes through the glass in a straight line, illuminating the floor close to the window and leaving the rest of the room comparatively dim.

About a year ago The Prismatic Glass Company, of Toronto, took up Mr. Pennycuik's invention and brought it before the public as an article of commerce. The result has more than exceeded their expectations. At the same time, the company spared no efforts to improve and perfect the original invention. A laboratory has been fitted up and scientific experts employed to make a number of experiments and, by practical tests, to determine the exact size and angle of prisms required to attain the best results under the varying circumstances found in broad or narrow streets and in low or lofty buildings. The company can now undertake to supply "Luxfer Prisms" suitable to buildings of any size or location.

In addition to perfecting the prisms the Company has also adopted a new process of electrolytic glazing, which is a great improvement on the old method of lead or copper glazing. By this new process the small prism squares are united in sheets of any size, by a thin framework of copper, deposited between the squares by electricity, making a neat, strong, weather tight sheet of the prisms. This process also adds about 20% more effective refracting surface for the transmission of the light.

In stores a transom light of Luxfer Prisms will spread a diffused light throughout the darkest store. In office buildings the upper half of a window glazed with Luxfer Prisms will light up the dark corners of the office, leaving the lower half clear for other purposes. In private houses, dark halls or back rooms can be brightened up and made cheerful by a panel glazed with Luxfer Prisms.

Luxfer prisms are also used with the greatest success for lighting dark basements, through sidewalk or area lights. Basements that would be otherwise dark and damp can be filled with light and made suitable for business purposes, adding just that much valuable space to the earning capacity of a building.

Owners of old buildings as well as new ones can make their premises attractive to prospective tenants by offering them bright, well lighted stores and offices—and the renting value of property can be much increased by judicious use of this new invention.

For the purpose of demonstrating in a practical form the utility of this new method of lighting business premises, the Luxfer Prism Company have put in an exhibit at their new premises at 58 Yonge street, Toronto, showing the different methods of using Luxfer Prisms both for window and pavement lighting. They show a novelty in the form of a glass and iron pavement by which a basement can be brilliantly illuminated, without gas or electric light. Architects and builders are specially invited to inspect the various exhibits on view.

TO KEEP LIQUID PAINT IN GOOD WORKABLE CONDITION.—A good idea has occurred to an inventor to prevent liquid paint which, for convenience sake, is kept in small quantities and flat receptacles, from evaporating and drying. He gives the vessels such a shape that they can be placed one on top of the other without danger of falling over, and provides the under side with a porous mass, felt or very porous clay, etc., which, if moistened, will retain the water for a long time. Thus, in placing the dishes one on top of the other, a moist atmosphere is created around them, which will inhibit evaporation and drying of the paint. A similar idea is guiding the inventor in producing covers with a tight outside and porous inside, for the purpose of covering up, during intermission in the work, clay models and like objects which it is desired to keep soft. In order to avoid the formation of fungus growth on the constantly wet bottom, it may be saturated with non-volatile disinfectants, or with volatile ones if their vapors are calculated to act upon the objects kept underneath the cover. If the cover is used to cover up oil paints, it is moistened on the inside with volatile oil, such as oil of turpentine, oil of lavender, or with alcohol.