

The fact is we are starving, or, rather, our abilities are being stunted for the want of artistic food; something upon which the mind may feed—something to gratify the eye. We are frequently hearing from our young men who go to the large cities in the United States and Europe that they are constantly having opportunities of seeing the works of masters in decorative work, such as stained glass, pottery, painting, etc. They inhale the atmosphere and are consequently benefited intellectually, artistically, and I might add physically, as the mind has acquired a satisfaction it has long craved for.

So we must have museums of good works—masterpieces of the various ages in all the arts—examples of which can now easily be obtained through the wonderful development of the graphic photo-reproducing processes. Our Government should make an annual grant for the purpose of collecting such works. Let us not be behind our sister colonies. What a grand example Australia is showing us; the Government grant some thousands of pounds annually on the art collections for their museums.

In conclusion, I will suggest something which might be done to give art students a stimulus and increase the interest in that branch of education. At present, in our city especially, there are quite a number of large public works in course of erection—The City Buildings, University, Parliament Buildings, etc. Some few weeks ago I was commissioned to take a look around the new Parliament Buildings to make sketches of interesting points, ornamental detail, etc. I wandered around with a feeling of disappointment that such a grand opportunity for appropriate decoration had been neglected. Although it is hardly justifiable to criticize the buildings in their present unfinished condition, still enough was completed to prove to me that quite an improvement might have been made in what is being done in the way of carving. I noticed that any panels or portions of the building with a suggestion of carving are being filled up with that common, very common, stereotyped piece of ornament which can be seen in almost every building that has been erected here within the past few years. Every dwelling of any pretensions has, seemingly without any motive, a little piece of this ornament either in terra cotta or carved in brown stone, all of which suggests to my mind that the stone carver is given full license to carve what he likes. I do not wish it to be understood that I find any grave fault with the present style of residential architecture; on the contrary, I must congratulate the architects of our city upon the strides that have been made of late in house building and decoration; and also the citizens upon their faith in and appreciation of the architects' and decorators' endeavors to create the beautiful, as evidenced by the many fine dwellings that have been erected in our city lately. We must exercise care even here, however, lest we err on the side of the ridiculous by employing too much meaningless decoration. I think I notice a growing tendency to plaster on ornament anywhere and everywhere without evidently the slightest thought of symmetry of design. In fact, some of our most costly houses are becoming monsters of ugliness.

I was speaking of the stereotyped and meaningless pattern of design used as ornament on the Parliament Buildings. Instead of all this scroll ornament, why not use, invent or cause to be invented, some new conventionalized ornament of Canadian wild flowers or *bas relief* of historic and allegoric events in Canadian history. Had we properly organized Art Schools and museums, inducements might be offered to pupils to submit designs for the different portions of such buildings. Even though a number of them might not be practical, something might be gleaned from

them to suggest a good design, and I'm sure that some gratifying results could in this way be reached. Such action would result in giving great stimulus to art education.

Although too late for the outside work on the Parliament Buildings, there will be a great amount of interior decoration where some special inducements might be offered for designs; or, without going to such a high standard as should be required for this work, why not take a suggestion from Ruskin and offer prizes for the decorating of our Public School interiors which, with their bare walls, are an eyesore, and as for their outside appearance, the less said the better.

#### MODE OF MAKING FINE PRESS BRICK.

GEORGE CARNELL, of Philadelphia, Pa., the well-known manufacturer of hand and power brick presses, gives the following concise directions for making fine front bricks:

1. It is important that the clay should be well tempered, a clay tempering wheel producing the best.
2. It is necessary to have sheds built expressly for that purpose, the roof being made so it can be opened to admit sun and wind; when required doors are also made to protect the sides of the shed in case too high winds prevail. In sheds built this way, the bricks can be dried with better regularity.
3. The bricks should be moulded free from flaws or sand cracks; the moulds, when in use, must be kept well cleaned by the off-bearer, as the accumulation of sand or dirt on the sides of the moulds, if not scraped off, will make a variation in the sizes of the bricks when they come to be pressed.
4. The bricks are placed on the floor to dry. When nearly dry, a light sleving of sand is put over their faces and they are then turned over that they may dry more regular. When the bricks dry too fast, a damp carpet can be placed over them and sprinkled occasionally with water.
5. When the bricks are ready for pressing, say when they can be handled without finger marks, the press is then taken to the bricks (*or vice versa*); the bricks are then carefully placed in the press mould, care being taken that they are not marked while dropping them in. The bricks must be kept free from finger marks.
6. The mould, plate and lid should be kept clean; a sharp-pointed hard wood stick is best to clean the corners of the mould out with. This should be done, and the mould wiped out every few bricks; occasionally it will be found necessary to raise the bottom plate and scrape the dirt from around the sides; after cleaning, apply a little oil.
7. From the press the bricks are carried with paddles and laid on their flats, about six high.
8. When the bricks are partly dried, they are rubbed carefully with the hand, and hacked on their edges, pigeon-hole shaped, for drying. By pigeon-hole hacking, we mean placing the bricks two on two, and reversing them every course. After they have become hard enough to handle without danger of injuring them, they are placed on a barrow, with pieces of soft carpet or blanket between the courses; they are then hacked in sheds and are ready for the kiln.
9. After the day's pressing is finished, take the plate and plunger out of the mould, scrape all the dirt off, wipe clean and oil the mould, plate and plunger. By keeping the press and mould clean it will give better satisfaction.

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