

perly illustrate the proposed work; specifications and quantities are unnecessary; and the conditions contain no statement that the Committee will secure professional advice to decide upon the respective merits of the designs."

The above is a clipping from the *Hamilton Spectator* relative to the Hamilton Free Library competition. We have inserted it that we may explain the position of the Ontario Association of Architects as we understand it. There is little to object to in the above with the exception of the word "boycott," which we think should not have been used. It has been and is the custom of building committees to institute competitions with the object of obtaining a design for unimportant buildings. Architects, or supposed architects, have been only too ready to enter these competitions, which were more often a lottery of the worst description, than fairly, honorably conducted competitions. The Ontario Association of Architects propose to stop all unnecessary or unfair competitions, and to that end the Board of Directors send out circulars asking the members to refrain from competitions of which they do not approve, and stating the reasons why they should so refrain. They at the same time try to induce the Building Committee to alter the conditions to meet their wishes, and when they do not, they allow the Committee to proceed without any further remonstrance or action. At present it is a matter of little or no consequence to the best men whether a competition is conducted fairly or not. They have sufficient work to keep them busy, without paying any attention to crude competitions under the management of men who are really unable to distinguish between a good and a bad design, and who almost invariably choose the one having the least intrinsic merit. The profession as a body have become disgusted with matters as they now are, and have determined to improve them if possible. And who have a better right than the men who are continually being asked to compete for the erection of a building, to say what the terms under which they will submit designs shall be? They are at the trouble and expense of preparing plans, and certainly have a right, under the circumstances, to make every effort to receive fair play in the decision. What right has any committee to ask a man to spend \$50 or \$500 in getting up a set of drawings, and then treat him with injustice? The injustice may be the result of ignorance, but it is an injustice nevertheless when the undeserving man secures a prize which should have gone to another. Architects contend that laymen are incompetent to judge of the merits of architectural design, and ask that professional advice be taken in making the award. There is nothing unreasonable in this. It is only a necessary measure to prevent injustice to the competitors, and secure for the committee the best design sent in. If building committees sought professional advice in all competitions, the condition of architects would be very much improved. We would have fewer buildings which the general public call "lovely," and which the educated architect abhors. Some people maintain that if you place a good and a bad building in respect of design alongside of each other, the most ignorant will prefer the good. We do not agree with them, but maintain that the tastes of the masses require cultivation before they can appreciate what is good in art. One might as well affirm that an uneducated man would prefer Milton or Shakespeare to a dime novel. We all know that the trashy novel is read by hundreds where one person reads Milton or Shakespeare, and yet no educated person would compare the best novel ever written with the writings of either Milton or Shakespeare. If the architects can bring about a better knowledge of architecture in this country, they deserve to be encouraged in whatever methods they may adopt. At this point we will take the opportunity of stating that the press in Canada have about as little knowledge of what constitutes good architectural work as has the average base ball player, and from it little or no help will be obtained. When committees are so penurious that they state that express charges must be prepaid on all designs, and refuse to return the rejected ones to their owners, it is about time that those who have to expend time and money, look after their own interests more closely. All they have determined to do is to refuse to take any notice of competitions when the terms are unreasonable. Architects are one of the parties concerned and have a right to see that their interests are conserved with the same care as the other parties. Where is the man who

would not consider that a person had a very large amount of assurance who would ask another to make him an article worth \$50 or \$100 on the understanding that if he liked it he would buy it from him at one half the cost. And yet that is exactly what these most intelligent (?) and liberal (?) building committees are doing continually. How often it is stated that the architect whose plans are selected will be paid the commission of 3 per cent., or possibly 4 per cent. Sometimes they actually auction the work off by asking the competitors to state the commission for which they will execute the work. This is certainly an advantage to the inferior men, as they have an opportunity of gaining a commission by a low bid, if they cannot do so through merit of design. Very often a building committee will select an architect to do their work, and then hold a competition to secure a number of designs from which to select what they may deem of value; and cases have occurred where they even refused to pay the expense of returning these designs to their respective owners, after having kept them for weeks while the favorite was making all the use he could of them. Is it any wonder that architects have determined to put a stop to these very ignoble and contemptible practices?

ART TRAINING.

EDITOR CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER.

THE fact that 30 young men in Toronto have formed themselves into a society called the "Art League" is sufficient proof that if the means of art training were supplied in the city there would be a large number of ardent students. The Art League held an exhibition of the work of its members on Friday afternoon last. There was a very fine display of drawings, and much judgment was shown in the number selected and the method of hanging. It is not my purpose to criticize the work done, more than to say, that while the average was fair, many of the drawings could only be described as indifferently good or bad. There were a few drawings which were really good, and showed much ability in their authors. My main object is to draw attention to the fact, that there is in Toronto an Art League comprised of young men most anxious to study art in all its branches. These young men have not waited to be assisted, but have with a determination worthy of success, gone to work in an energetic manner to train themselves as best they can in the respective branches of a profession which they must love in no ordinary degree. This effort must be a heavy drain on their resources as a society and as individuals, and with the time they give, proves most conclusively that they are enthusiastic in their love of art and desire to improve.

That these young men find it necessary to work alone to improve themselves, must mean that there is no other means whereby they can gain the training they desire. There is an Art School under the control of the Ontario Government which should be able to give these men and boys the opportunities for advancement they desire. It cannot do so, or they would surely avail themselves of it to the fullest extent. It may be that the members of the Art League are really desirous of receiving an art training, and the Art School does not give that training. From what I know of the school, I should judge that to be the trouble. That it is only an Art School in name in the opinion of many, requires no proof; but when we inform the reader that the school is under the management of persons who have little or no conception of art, and that the teachers are equally ignorant, any one will be able to judge for themselves why young men with artistic longings prefer to join a society, and work together along fairly correct lines of study. The Art School at one time had a competent staff of teachers—now it has not; nor will it ever have so long as the management cannot judge as between a good and a bad teacher, except by depending on the candidate's ability to produce certificates of capability from Art Schools often without standing. Occasionally the certificates only state that the holder has attended the school giving the certificate, which is of no value whatever, as many of these schools give such certificates to every student when leaving the schools.

An effort has been made to boom the Toronto Art School, but it has failed and will always fail, so long as the attempt is made to maintain an Art School which does not instruct in art.

ART STUDENT.