

## THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ARCHITECTS.

BY A CORRESPONDENT.

Even the most energetic and ubiquitous of reporters would have found it impossible to attend all the meetings and functions arranged for the edification and entertainment of the members of the 7th Congress of Architects. These had to be arranged to overlap because of the large number attending—some 1,700—and because everything had to be crammed into the space of one week. And a busy week it was, mornings and afternoons and evenings being all filled up—in many cases doubly and trebly—so that members had to make a selection of the subjects and places of most interest to them. The evening functions to which all were invited were very crowded. The making of all the necessary arrangements must have involved an enormous amount of thought and labour, and the smoothness with which everything moved showed how efficiently the work was done. The weather was ideal throughout.

That these Congresses accomplish the purpose for which they were designed may be assumed from the fact that they continue to be so largely attended by busy men from far distant points. It appears to be decided that the next one—in 1908—is to be held in Austria, and Mr. Cass Gilbert put in a claim for the succeeding one being held in the U.S.A., while the representative of Japan looked forward to welcoming his confreres to the land of the rising sun. The catholicity of art is emphasized by the large number of nationalities represented. Locally and individually architects may have their petty rivalries and jealousies, but there is no international rivalry of this sort, and a true international rivalry in art is a large-souled thing that can only be productive of good. Such Congresses as these must tend to further the ideas of *l'entente cordiale* and Imperial federation just as certainly in their degree as the inter-parliamentary one now being held in London. Accredited delegates were sent by nearly all of the Governments of Europe and by a large number of societies and municipalities in these countries and in the U.S.A., while ten societies in the British Colonies sent delegates, as did also the municipality of Montreal. The name of the O.A.A. was conspicuous by its absence from this list. It struck some of us as being a little odd that out of all the delegates from the British Colonies no one was named to reply to the address of welcome at the Guildhall, nor to the toast of "The Foreign Delegates" at the banquet. Perhaps this should be taken as a delicate compliment designed to make these Colonial delegates feel at home by the implication that "we're a' John Tamson's bairns," and so not to be treated as strangers.

Such a Congress as this is probably more valuable from a social than an educational point of view in that it affords architects opportunities of becoming personally acquainted with their brethren of other countries. The reading and discussion of papers must necessarily be somewhat per-

functory amid so much hurry and bustle, and the discussions are sometimes difficult to follow, owing to different languages being spoken. One cannot but notice how usual it is for professional men on the Continent to speak fluently, besides their own language, at least one or two others of which English is usually one. Many of the foreign delegates spoke in excellent English. In this matter English-speaking people are far behind. But fortunately Latin and Greek are not now the fetishes they used to be. It was encouraging to meet the other day a well educated Canadian youth who knew no Latin, but did know French and German. The papers were of the kind usually read at such meetings. New and striking ideas are not to be expected there. It is not surprising that some of the resolutions passed on the questions discussed were rather colourless, if not inept, e.g., that in regard to educating the architect as a craftsman. That referring to the preservation of ancient monuments was good and advocated necessary repairs as opposed to restoration.

It was noticeable that of the buildings visited solely for their architecture, only two were contemporary work. Probably all the members would be familiar from photographs and books with the monuments of ancient architectural art which were visited. But in seeing the actual buildings with the scenery and surroundings in which they are set, one gets a truer impression of them than any photograph can give. The mind is carried back to the times when they were built and can realize how expressive a living art is of the character of the men who wrought in it and the conditions under which such results were produced. The lion oak in the park at Hatfield was pointed out by Colonel Balfour, who did the honours there, as having been mentioned as a landmark in Domesday book. If that venerable oak could only speak! The pity is that modern eclecticism produces so few works that can be shown to visitors as being worthy to be ranked with those of the past.

The exhibition of architectural drawings and pictures was so good and so well arranged that one wishes it could be made permanent. The attentions shown to visiting members maintained the traditions of British hospitality, and some great houses inaccessible to ordinary visitors were opened to them. The banquet which closed the proceedings was an unqualified success and was attended by some 500 ladies and gentlemen. For the first time, ladies had an official status by being given the opportunity to become members, and were thus enabled to take part in all the Congress proceedings as a matter of right. This added much to the brilliance of the banquet in particular. Many of the foreign as well as the British members were accompanied by their wives, and many different types were there from the fair Saxon of the North to the dark-hued daughter of the Sunny South. The President of the R.I.B.A. made an admirable chairman, and the speaking was good and to the point. Altogether it was a fitting and happy conclusion to the Congress.