



JOSEPH S. KNOWLES, - - - Editor and Proprietor.

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[For the Torch.]
FEBNS.

III.

Only a leaf! but it speaks to me

Of a soul as pure as the souls above:

Only a leaf! but a history

It breathes in my ear of saintly love.

Only a leaf! to my dim eyes

It doth the chamber of death recall,

And a far away churchyard where slumbering
lies

One that was childhood's all in all.

H. L. SPENCER.

[For the Torch]

ESTHETIC EMBERS.

BY HARRY FLETCHER

The church building excitement has had one good effect on the members of our household. It has awakened an interest in matters of art and architecture which could never have been obtained before, and since that time we have been brushing up what little we knew about such matters, and art in its various phases has been often the subject of our conversation. We were sitting one day after dinner, when Miss Agatha spoke of the new furniture which one of our neighbors has recently been purchasing. She explained to Halicarnassus that it was so "elegant," and so "stylish," and "very fashionable" when Vitruvius broke in with, Fashionable fiddlesticks! Why is it that such an absurd guide is allowed to be the excuse for so much of the outrageous design that is foisted upon us? When will people grow out of the idea that fashion is a mere bauble of the imagination, and that an article of furniture is less likely to be good when it is fashionable than the reverse. I am out of all patience with people who decide upon their furniture or their clothing, by the arbitrary rule of fashion, and whose criterion is the argument of the shopman whose only aim is to sell what will bring him the greatest profit, Fashionable—Bah!

MISS AGATHA.—But surely you would not have us make frights of ourselves and cloisters of our houses. I am sure I do not think your much boasted Eastlake is pretty or graceful at all. Some of the most horrid things I ever saw are those Eastlake suites at the furniture dealers.

VITRUVIUS.—You are certainly right in calling them horrid for I have not yet seen a

dozen pieces of furniture at which Mr. Eastlake would not be faint at heart, and which he would not condemn with deepest indignation. Eastlake wrote, not to set up any particular style or detail of style, but to inculcate principles which, if followed would result in good design. He criticized what was bad and made some suggestions as to what would be good in its place. But he did not intend to start any new order of design, but only to direct the judgment in what was already begun. Indeed he has suffered violence at the hands of his would be disciples, and they have truly taken him by force. If he could see the enormities which have been executed in his name, he would certainly utter the heartfelt prayer, "Save me from my friends." For the manufacturers catching the letter, but losing entirely the spirit of his teachings, have perpetrated the most unendurable outrages. Because he argued against ostentations display as a mark of bad taste, they at once rush to the other extreme and adopt the principle that plainness and severity, whether appropriate or not, are necessarily Eastlake in style; and thus seizing a few points, they strove to enlist him and the popularity his name carried with it, in their own personal aggrandizement. Not for love of art worked they, but for filthy lucre, and anything was fish that came to their net. But the good that he did, and the truth that he inculcated will, one day, rise above the evil and false ideas of taste that men have tacked upon it, and will assert itself in a way which will be felt, even by those to whom at present his gospel is a dead letter. He has, at least, made it possible to get some good articles of furniture where they have been unknown before, and there has been an advance made, if not all that we could ask, certainly more than we dared hope, considering the state of the art market. For, as I have said before, it is not what is good or genuine in art that is demanded, but rather what is "new," or "unique," or "striking," and so forth. It is really amusing to listen to the average shopman as he describes to his customers the merits of his stock—and yet no higher criterion than this sort of advice is the guiding principle of selection in the majority of cases. People buy, not what they like or what they would choose if left to their own unbiased judgment, but rather what is recommended to them as "very much used," or "very stylish." And it is noticeable too, that with every new design, the same arguments are advanced, so that what is so "lovely" to-day, by next week "is quite fashionable at a time," and next month is entirely "out of date," that is if the dealer has not a stock on hand of which he wishes to dispose. That kind of counsel, and the confidence in it is altogether too common. As long as we

depend upon our shopmen to supply us with ideas, we shall continue to be under the bondage which has so long kept us in chains. Their object is to sell, and their policy to introduce what is novel rather than to stick to what is good; and this absurd love of change which they endeavor to create and to which they cater is carried to such an extent that if one desires to replace a missing piece of furniture, even a short time after it has been purchased, it is difficult to do so, and the answer invariably is, "out of date, sir, we couldn't supply it now."

MISS AGATHA.—O, excuse me, Vitruvius, but that reminds me that I must go to-morrow and match that silk for my new suit. Mrs. Dorcas, will you drive out with me after lunch and we will call and see Mr. Van Rensseler's new house?

OUR LANDLADY.—Certainly, I should be most happy to do so, and we will take Vitruvius with us, if he will go, and you. Raphael can give us some idea of his pictures, can you not? I am anxious, however, to see the new cooking range which he has put in for, be you ever so artistic in your tastes after dinner, I notice that overdone roasts and badly cooked pastry really affect you more than you would be willing to admit.

VITRUVIUS.—Mrs. Dorcas, you are right. *De gustibus non disputandum est*, and I assure you that I can as soundly berate a bad dinner as a bad design.

THE COLONEL.—Come, let's have a smoke.

If "Extracts" you want,
And have any sense, sir,
You'll purchase at once
From Wortman & Spencer.

A LIVE COUNT.

ALICE.—Did you say Mary that the young man you are going to marry is a real live Count?

MARY.—Of course he's *accountant* in a Bank!

COLLECTOR'S EXPERIENCE.

JOHN.—Can you oblige me, sir, with the amount of that little bill?

MR. B.—Excuse the digression—"but can you tell me why you are like a place in which criminals are occasionally confined?"

JOHN.—No sir, I can't.

MR. B.—Well I'll tell you. "It's because you're a *don*, John."

—Grace Greenwood is about 60, and is vigorously slinging ink on Washington letters for the *N. Y. Times*. That Greenwood must be pretty well seasoned.