

of harmony, of sentiment, of love and adoration was theirs—Persano, Giotto, Donatello, Della Robbia, Ghiberti!

Religious faith was the stimulus which inspired their genius and devotion. How much is art indebted to these sculptors of the early Renaissance!

In the conception of a noble edifice, the architect has crossed the border line of a mere building—i.e., a huge cube with holes to admit light and entrance—and entered the domain of the painter and sculptor. Form, in its first stage, viz., the handling and arranging into harmony of the gross masses or masonry, so as to bring about the greatest effect of beauty and proportion; realizing a noble outline or form in the gross. The carver must now join him in decorative enrichments to make the work interesting and repay closer inspection—form in detail or abstract; still only ornament. The sculptor then takes him to a higher plane, with emblematic or symbolic figures, in *basso* or *alto* *relievo*, or round attached form in transition, in which the walls gently breathe the story or mind of the building, its history or purpose. No form of art is more profound, than these children of the mist emerging from fancy into reality—form in the first stage of statuary.

Every building of importance should be treated in this way, and would therefore be an object lesson and work of interest forever, not only to those who see it many times—perhaps every day of their lives—but also to the stranger; the most emphatic record of civic or national achievements, events or progress.

The Reformation gave the death knell to sculpture and ornamentation for a time in Protestant countries, till a church became bereft of all beauty. The Gothic was treated similarly to the Classic—shorn of its art—the shell only remaining, and all art suffered in consequence.

How sad it is to look upon our cathedrals in brick—not in form, but, alas, in texture and color. It is only during the last quarter of this century that we are beginning to awake from this iconoclastic superstition and believe that we can worship God “in spirit and in truth,” and at the same time beautify his house with tinted walls and stained glass, and other decorations.

Freedom and toleration are the spirit of the age, and the impulse in art is to discover something new and best adapted to our surroundings. In architecture we are in a state of transition, if not of chaos, and in danger of degenerating into confusion and ugliness. It is this critical stage that affords the opportunity for our architects to create a style that, while retaining all that is beautiful in the heritage of the past, will meet the requirements of the climate, and be distinctly national in character, ornament and expression.

Form is the first element of the beautiful in aesthetics, and influences everything we see and hear in nature and art, from the throat of a nightingale or a Patti, the melody of a Stradivarius, to the acoustics of a building, and should be the object of study from the lowest step to the highest pinnacle of a structure. In a wider sense it also affects the laying out of streets, parks, squares and gardens; the selection of a site, the raised plateau or eminence, grandeur upon which important edifices may be erected; the fountain, steps and terraced walk, with sculptured vases and ideal statuary, such as we see at the Crystal Palace, Versailles, the Tuilleries Gardens or in Edinburgh. All are form, perceptible to sight and touch, and instinct with life and power to give us joy and elevate our souls, improve our manners and relieve our daily burthens.

The modern Romanesque does not impress you with a sense of grandeur or beauty. Its basket-work ornament, unlike the longer and more graceful Gothic plant life, is indefinite and confusing, and with the horrible heads of animals called “grotesque,” is barbarous. It no doubt originated in the early stages of inability to imitate life better. It is unfit for a woman to look upon, and should be banished from the front, or any part of a building where the lesson of beauty should be presented. There is a place for the conventional—but as little of it as possible. The lamp of truth in art has been extinguished so many times by wars and puritanism, that form still goes on crutches in the respect of carving and sculpture.

Foliage, fruit, flowers and other imitations of organic objects, should keep as close to nature as possible, to be of interest, due regard being paid to the nature of the material employed. Organic nature should be more largely drawn from for objects of ornament, and executed in the fulness of its natural beauty. The divine sculptor has furnished us with many noble and beautiful examples for imitation, to wit—the lion, the tiger, the horse, the ox, the ram, the hound, the deer and gazelle; the eagle, the swan, the dove and other birds; the dolphin, the nautilus, and other denizens of the deep. Many of these are symbolic; all are grand or beautiful, and as ornament in appropriate positions, would be of far greater interest than conventional scrolls, and serve to remind us of the wonders of nature.

The higher stages of sculpture proper, viz., figure subjects in relief and the statue, or group in the round form, may be termed the “lamp of life,” and provision should be made for each of these forms in every building which claims to be a work of architecture. The relief has been described as the shibboleth or watchword of art, and has a philosophy peculiarly its own. It is specially adapted for emblematic figures, filling spaces in the architecture, and for special subjects in the history of the institution to which the building is dedicated, on the exterior or in positions where painting is undesirable.

The entrance and inner halls, vestibule and staircase, are suitable for natural or emblematic statuary, brackets for busts, and niches for statues of the *genus loci*, founder or benefactor, care being taken by the architect that light is provided at a suitable angle for both night and day.

The highest stage of sculpture has no necessary connection with a building, unless from local circumstances. It is reached in either the group or solitary figure, expressing an abstract motif, an emotion or passion, or any of the higher attributes of our being, or the elements of nature which may bear personification, or in national monuments where philanthropy, statesmanship or patriotism are commemorated.

The next important member of the aesthetic trinity is color, and when we consider the share this element occupies in the book of nature—how generously the Almighty has decked his creatures—whether our wondering upturned eyes gaze into the infinite azure of the brave overhanging firmament, fretted with golden fire; the jasper of the vasty deep; the carnation of the rose; the pallor or orange of the lily—each with its spiritual significance and relation to form and sound—we recognize at once the length and depth and breadth of his boundless generosity in this particular gift, and we marvel how it can be possible that in the 19th century, man should, even in his most joyous and festive moments, clothe himself in black from head to foot—a color that is always alluded to in terms of horror and associated with our worst enemy, and one that is the least seen in nature's kaleidoscope.

Color is nature's life and light and joy-giver, and when its presence is withheld from us, our spirits are in like measure depressed. To speak of her riches requires the rhapsody of the poet; to comprehend her glory, the eye and wings of the eagle, to carry us to the floor of heaven. The painter is privileged to penetrate her hidden mysteries and capture the fleeting subtleties of her ever-changing moods.

In architecture, the scheme of color decoration should receive the most careful consideration, and be in relation and conjunction with the carving and ornament in form. In all important buildings spaces should be provided in the halls, staircase and ceilings, arches and domes, for special frescoes by artists of ability, affording opportunity for tableaux of prominent inci-

dents or scenes in the life of the country, in alliance with the objects of the building. By this means the skill of our eminent painters could be utilized for the education, happiness and intellectual enjoyment of the people. Stained glass, mosaic, furnishing and lighting, should all be included in the one scheme of design, and require the same mind and care in their use—the cardinal virtue of all decoration being strictly observed, viz., the securing of cluster and space, and repose, so essential in art.

In order to effect a complete aesthetic harmony, texture—its substance, or rather, material—has to be considered, which, of course, is involved so largely in color that the one can hardly be discussed without the other, bearing, as it does, the same relation to form as form does to sound. The ancients saw the importance of producing color and texture, and where costly marbles could not be procured, the artificial substitute approaching as nearly as possible to the semi-transparent beauty of marble was provided. Stone is the next best material, especially for carving, but cannot be relied upon to stand climatic influences, besides not fulfilling the highest aesthetic requirements. Brick, as it has been used, is an abomination, but we are glad to see improvements taking place in its manufacture. Greater size and neutrality of color, combined with a soft or egg-shell glaze, may render it much more acceptable. Under this head I may mention a material which, now existing, but not in general use, having all the beauty of texture and colors of marble, is not affected by climate.

In the brief remarks the present opportunity has afforded me, I have endeavored to show the important place *Form* occupies in the elements of the beautiful, especially in its pre-eminent phases of architecture and sculpture, and the influence it must have upon the dignity and attractiveness of a city of learning, art and culture, and as the medium of expression of a nation illustrious in noble deeds and beneficence; yet I feel the fringe only of the subject has been approached.

Before concluding this paper, I venture to call attention to two or three matters seriously affecting the beauty of our city, and which constitute an outrage to good taste and common sense:

1st. The dangerous and unsightly trolley, telephone and electric light poles, wires, &c., which should never have been erected in a city like Toronto.

2nd. The want of public squares, tastefully laid out. The objectionable mode of taxing lawns at the side of residences.

3rd. The disposition to build up our principal corners to an angle instead of to an octagon or circus.

4th. We are now erecting municipal buildings of a costly character, and if the system of building without regard to beauty is allowed to continue, the view as you ascend Bay street will be narrowed, and the Court House dwarfed by some enterprising merchants. Such a course would be worse than a blunder, and should not be allowed to take place at any price.

Many other points in connection with the aesthetic welfare of our city demand immediate attention. What is required to prevent future mistakes, and perhaps rectify past errors, is the appointment of some central authority, such as a City Architect or Minister of Public Works, to prevent the erection of unsightly buildings, and preserve important open places as gardens. Such a person or board of control should be appointed for their known taste and abilities, and they should be backed up by an association of dilettanti, both professional and lay, who would carefully guard the aesthetic interests of the city, and render it the pride of her inhabitants, the admiration of its visitors and the envy of other cities.

Brethren in Art—As the genii and guardians of the beautiful, in all that concerns the artistic progress of your country, and the cities in which you dwell, you are called upon to devote your talents, your love and your watchfulness to her service; to bind yourselves together in the Brotherhood of Art, for her defence; for the vanquishment of the Philistine and the Utilitarian; for the prevention of errors and incongruities, outrages to taste and beauty, frequently occurring, and which now threaten irreparable injury to the few remaining places of interest in this city; that you apply your genius to the development of a distinctly Canadian Architecture, suitable to the conditions of the country, and upon which shall be implanted in sculpture and painting, the romance and lore of her history, the valour of her sons, the beauty of her daughters and the industry and resources of her people, together with the picturesque grandeur of your scenery and skies—notes of harmony and patriotism, which shall shed lustre upon your country, inspire the poet, the musician and the historian, and earn for yourselves a niche in the eternal temple of fame.

DISCUSSION.

The President said he felt we all must have greatly enjoyed Mr. MacCarthy's admirable paper. He thought the range of subject matter in the papers read at the present convention showed the great scope of the architectural profession.

Mr. Aylsworth said no doubt the members were being educated as architects and artists, but something further was needed. He would ask, are the people at large being educated as fast as they might be to a higher degree of artistic taste? Until there prevailed a sentiment of patriotism among the people it was useless to look for the production of grand public buildings, nor without a national religious feeling could be expected noble temples such as were to be found in other lands. In his reading he had come across an extract which he would like to read. It would have been a source of great satisfaction could he have told the Convention that it emanated from the City Council of Toronto, but truth compelled him to say that it came from the archives of the city of Florence, and it was some 600 years old. It would explain to a certain extent how the durable and magnificent buildings which delighted the eye of the traveller in older lands than our own, came into existence. It was the decision of what in our days would be called the Council, after the destruction of one of the Florentine churches:

“Whereas, it is of the highest interest to a people of illustrious origin, so to proceed in their affairs that men may perceive from their external works that their designs were at once wise and magnanimous; it is therefore ordered that Arnolfo, Architect of our Commune, prepare a model or design for the rebuilding of Santa Reparata, with such supreme and lavish magnificence that neither the industry nor the capacity of man shall be able to devise anything more grand or more beautiful; inasmuch as the most judicious in this city have pronounced the opinion in public and private conferences that no work of the commune should be undertaken unless the design be to make it correspondent with a heart which is of the greatest nature, because composed of the spirit of many citizens united together in one single will.”