

that it is not the great gifts and qualities of men which make them general favorites so much as the possession of that tact which prevents them from boring others, and the sympathy and quickness of mind which is necessary if they wish to follow the thoughts of others and to meet them on their own mental ground. The architect who attends a building committee meeting resolved to put his own special views before his clients may frequently meet with defeat, while another who is quick at understanding and gaging the personal equation of his fellow-men will obtain the result he wishes for with little effort. To be a good listener is good, but to be a good listener because one has nothing to say is not enough, and the architect who would be successful should be able to hold his own in any society and to take part in a discussion at the fitting time. It should be borne in mind that the world being what it is, most of us are made happier by being with those who appreciate and like us, rather than those who try to impress us with their ability, and many men have made great positions for themselves mainly because they possess a spirit of camaraderie, tact and good nature. Mankind is, in fact, not strenuously on the lookout for merit, but chiefly asks that a man should in the first place be a good companion, and in the second competent and discreet. And the essence of discretion is to be able to avoid the corners of others.

We believe the architects of the new area, if they are to succeed and to effect the "education of the public," should resemble the "surveyors" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, men of the world and masters of affairs, able to understand the standpoint of the society in which they live, and will not be pale and anaemic enthusiasts living in a self-contained temple of art and somewhat despising the average run of their fellows. For do what we may, and think what we will, we are part and parcel of the sum of humanity on whose support we are dependent, and whose wants and tendencies we should study and associate ourselves with. All the work of all the schools and all systems of tuition will be valueless for the architect who has neglected the broader foundations which he, in common with men of other callings, should build upon. Not only is the proper study of mankind man, but it is the essential groundwork for everything else.

No single problem in our life stands by itself; thus housing and economics are interlocked and relative, while question of finance will determine and limit almost every building scheme. Our commercial future, bringing with it building or stagnation, is dependent on the relations of capital and labor, on tariffs and other political issues.

This being so it is necessary for the architect

to study and understand more than his own work in order that he may have his proper weight as a citizen and fit himself to play the part of a man of the world.

The man who overestimates the value of what he does is living in a fool's paradise, often with dangerous results to himself, and close and exclusive absorption in one field of study tends to render us oblivious of broad and important issues which may be paramount in the estimation of clients.

Professional Ferment

The following is taken from an article by Wm. Phillip Comstock, which was published a short time back in the "Architect and Builder" (U.S.A.). It has since appeared in several other architectural contemporaries, and deals pertinently with a condition which is not wholly without evidence here in Canada:

There are, even in this day and hour, architects who have business of considerable volume on their boards, and many of our contractors can hardly be said to be starving for lack of work. Yet the architects as a body, and with them many in the construction industries, view the present situation with concern, and well they may.

Building construction methods are in a period of mutation; new species bid fair to be created, and the old order is on the wane. Not that this condition is a sudden development—as some may think—for the odor of it has been in the air for many moons. Building conditions, like a huge structure founded in a quagmire, have courted disaster until with a precipitation of an earthquake, they are now suddenly engulfed, and the architectural profession, with many of its satellites, finds itself floundering—and wondering why.

The world war is the immediate cause of this cataclysm, and, as usual, the immediate cause receives the blame, though the structure has long been showing dangerous settlement cracks caused by the improper foundations laid down in the past. Good foundations are a necessity in all good building, and the architect knows this better than anyone else, yet in his very life-work has he neglected the precepts he has made to others.

With lofty thoughts and stilted ethics he has strode along without an appreciation of the progress about him, ever changing, searching, specializing. Business—life—is a continuous revolution. New precepts rule, to be superseded by even other newer precepts. The professional practice of architecture has not kept pace, and is therefore doomed. It must be reborn from the ashes of the past, even as the legendary phoenix.