



(Correspondence of the CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER.)

LECTURE BY PROF. CAPPER ON "ANCIENT ROME."

THE course of public lectures organized by the Province of Quebec Association of Architects for the winter of 1897-1898, comprised three lectures, delivered by Professors Adams, Colby and Capper, all of McGill University. As last year, the lectures were arranged to fall in with the course promoted by the Art Association, and were delivered in the large hall of the latter society in Phillips' Square. These lectures are evidently much appreciated by the public of Montreal, all being exceedingly well attended. The last of the series was delivered by Mr. S. H. Capper, McDonald Professor of Architecture at McGill University, on March 29th to an overflowing audience, under the chairmanship of the Rev. J. Edgar Hill. By the courtesy of the lecturer the following abstract has been placed at our disposal:

Professor Capper took as his subject "Ancient Rome," the lecture being illustrated by a fine series of about fifty lantern slides. The lecturer made an appreciative reference to Prof. Adams' lecture on "Pompeii" (the first of the course), pointing out that in Pompeii, as nowhere else, the domestic architecture of the ancient classical world could be studied in wonderfully complete preservation and detail. At Rome, on the other hand, examples of domestic architecture were almost wholly lacking. The remains that had survived the ravages of time and violence were those of public and imperial architecture—the great buildings of the metropolis of the world; but the private dwellings of the Roman citizen had wholly disappeared. One house only remained in a tolerably perfect condition, the so-called "House of Livia"—really, in all probability, the house of Germanicus—discovered in 1869 on the Palatine Hill.

Into the scope of a single lecture it of course would be vain to attempt to condense the vast field of the archaeology of Ancient Rome; the lecturer therefore confined himself to a survey of the Palatine Hill and its immediate surroundings, from the Coliseum to the Forum Romanum. In so doing, he made ample acknowledgement to the unremitting and splendidly fruitful labors of Signor Rudolfo Lanciani, undoubtedly the foremost living authority, to whose published works the audience were referred as the repositories of the fullest and most recent knowledge on the subject.

The original settlement on the two-peaked Palatine Hill was first dealt with, and its primitive features were noted. The earliest Romans, or "dwellers in the river-town" (as the name has been interpreted), were probably refugees from the Alban hills whose homes had been overwhelmed by volcanic eruptions much in the same way as, centuries later, the citizens of Pompeii and Herculaneum were overwhelmed in historic times. This earliest settlement was of a pastoral people, who had ample room on the easily defended hill-top for housing both themselves and their flocks; the surrounding valleys were largely marshes, liable, as down to quite recent years, to be submerged when the overflowing Tiber rolled down in heavy flood to the sea, which then was several miles nearer to Rome than is now the case. Passing from these early and prehistoric times, still brought home to us by tradition and myth (in which historical facts can yet be discerned), the lecturer took up the existing remains of imperial architecture, which occupy, though in fragmentary ruins, the same site, and described, with the help of plans and views shown by lime light, the palaces of the Caesars, from the early and modest house of the Emperor Augustus to the later and much more magnificent buildings carried out through several centuries by his successors. Of the earlier buildings of imperial times, the house of Germanicus (to which reference has already been made) is the best preserved. It is a comparatively small dwelling, and was probably spared throughout the succeeding alterations and additions to the imperial

residences owing to the extreme and affectionate veneration in which the memory of Germanicus was held. The vast buildings of Tiberius and Caligula, of which only the substructures remain, were next traced; in the long gallery or crypto-porticus of the latter the young Emperor who built it was murdered in the dreadful tragedy so thrillingly told by the historian Tacitus, the murderers actually escaping by way of the house of Germanicus adjacent. The Domus Gelotiana—or Paedagogium—was also added by Caligula, who bought it because of its proximity to the Circus Maximus and the jockeys' quarters there, the young prince being as much addicted to the racecourse as any modern English aristocrat or American millionaire. In this building were found some of the most interesting graffiti—or mural scribbles—extant, including one believed to represent in caricature the Crucifixion.

The vast public and reception halls of the imperial palace added by the Flavian Emperors were next traced. To carry these out the entire ravine or valley separating the two peaks of the Palatine was filled with huge substructures, and on the gigantic platform thus made the magnificent state apartments were built.

Leaving the Palatine Hill, after reference to the later buildings of Septimius Severus, the lecturer took up the grand and world-famous buildings occupying the valley that bounds it on the north-east. The Arch of Constantine and the Coliseum, the Arch of Titus with its sculptures, the Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine, and the Temple and Cloister of the Vestal Virgins were successively reviewed, all being very fully illustrated and discussed, both from an archaeological and a more especially architectural point of view, this concluding portion of the lecture thus embracing the buildings of the Sacra Via, perhaps the most famous street of the ancient world, until at the northern spur of the Palatine it opens on to the Forum Romanum, the centre and heart of Ancient Rome.

MONTREAL BUILDERS' EXCHANGE.

At the general meeting of the Exchange held on the 3rd inst., there was a large attendance of leading contractors. The principal feature of the meeting was an animated discussion of the employment of foreign architects and contractors by public companies and institutions of the city, to the detriment of local interests. The numerous handsome and substantially built buildings erected by local architects and contractors in this city were pointed to as evidence that there is no lack of ability on the part of local architects and contractors to meet satisfactorily all requirements in this direction, and that this fact, combined with loyalty to the city's interests, should restrain these public corporations from employing foreigners in preference to those on whose shoulders rest the responsibilities of citizenship. The following resolution referring to this matter was unanimously adopted, accompanied by a vote of thanks to the city council for having stipulated that in the erection of the new G. T.R. offices, only local architects and contractors should be employed.

"Whereas, according to a practice of recent introduction, both on the part of some architects and proprietors, and especially of public companies, of bringing in aliens and non-residents for the carrying out of work in the building line that our own builders and contractors are fully competent to execute, the members of the Builders' Exchange of Montreal hereby strongly and emphatically protest against the countenance of this unpatriotic, unfair, and injurious practice, and request all those who have the interests of our city at heart to use their influence to put a stop to what has, in the past, worked serious injury to our city and citizens. Especially is such action desirable in view of the fact that the contractors in the province of Quebec have to carry responsibilities for a length of time not called for in any other country that we know of, and which necessarily cannot be enforced against aliens.

Resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Press, the Board of Trade, Architects' Association, and various public institutions.

We have the honor to remain

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) { JAMES SIMPSON, President.
GEORGE J. SHEPPARD, Secretary.

MASTER PLASTERERS' ASSOCIATION.

THIS Association has recently been thoroughly reorganized and is now on a good working basis. Efforts will be made to protect the interests of the members against incompetent jobbers, and place plastering in its proper rank among the building trades.

LIBERAL CONTRACTORS' CLUB.

At a meeting held in the new club rooms, 90 St. James street, on the 7th inst., the president, Mr. Sauvageau, being in the chair, a discussion took place on the desirability of having the provincial law amended so as to reduce the period for which contractors may be held responsible for the safety of their buildings, from ten to five years. The discussion was participated in by Hon. Mr. Dodidoux, Mr. Louis Gonne, M.P., C. A. Chenevert, M.P. for Berthier, J. O. Lamert, Mr. J. P. Blosgraw, G. I. Leveille, Joseph Beland, Pierre Ricotte and Joseph Lamarche. This is said to be the only province or country in which the law places such a responsibility upon contractors.

DEGREE CONFERRED.

In recognition of his services in giving to the engineering students a course of lectures on the actual design of bridges, Mr. Ira G. Hedrick has received from McGill University the degree of B.A. Sc.

Messrs. Mesnard & Daoust, architects, have dissolved partnership.