

CORRESPONDENCE.

CAN CONCRETE BE MADE ACID PROOF?

To the Editor of the CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER:

SIR,—I beg to inform you that concrete is not acid proof, as stated in an editorial in your August issue. I have an example right here in my office. I placed a piece of concrete in a glass jar and poured in enough nitric acid to cover the concrete. In a short time the lump of concrete had turned into a soft slush about the consistency of mud.

N. T. GAGNON.

Montreal, Sept. 28th, 1899.

[The article referred to, is simply a quotation from "Specification" and is so stated. The article does not claim that ordinary "concrete" is "acid-proof," but that it "can be made acid-proof." "Specification" is an eminent English authority. — Editor C. A. & B.]

TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRIAL ART.

OTTAWA, September 24th, 1899

To the Editor of the CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER:

SIR,—The letter to "A Manufacturer," which was published in your September number, containing my opinion of our Ontario Art Schools, has caused much indignation amongst other Art School teachers and officers, and I do not wonder at it, but shall be glad if you will let me make a little explanation to them through your journal.

This condemnation of the Schools has nothing whatever to do with the individuals at work in them; it is as impersonal as was Cadillac's objection to the theory that the earth was stationary. During this year I have met many Art School officials and teachers, and know they are just as earnest workers as I am, but we see something different from that which they are seeing, and although we may stand alone for a while in the effort to prove whether or not we see rightly, we are content to do so. If we are wrong we shall simply fail to accomplish any good work and our ideas will reach their proper place—oblivion.

One other point; although I have not visited every school, I included all in that condemnation. The reason for this seeming inconsistency is this: We were advised to apply for the government grant to Art Schools. We read in the book sent us from the Department of Education, the Act of Parliament covering this field of work; nothing detailed was there in regard to subjects or methods of instruction, and thinking our school entitled to the grant, we made application for it. The reply sent us indicated, however, that our school-work must include the list of subjects covered by the departmental examinations. Although we are for other reasons not entitled to this grant, this part of its requirements we could not agree to at any time; this deflection debars us from it permanently; and we see that all schools which obtain it must follow a course of study demanded by these examinations, and therefore must contain that weakness which in your August number, Mr. T. S. Brown, says, leads to the stultification of skill and the recording "to future generations our utter sterility of imagination if not our want of common sense."

Again let us say, we do not blame those who arrange these examinations; they think them right, but we wish to work in a different way and the paper entitled "Metal Work," page 156, is (for us) most opportune, because a re-reading of it by those who have been shocked perhaps by my first letter, will give them some knowledge of our ideals, when we say that our deviation from the prevalent system is caused by our desire to apply to daily, hourly study, the principles so clearly stated by Mr. Brown.

In the meantime we are content to have our work stand the test contained in another statement of your August number. "In course of time the presence of the acknowledged good will drive out the bad." This same frame of mind makes us consider that the whole question of Industrial Art and Applied Design education is not so difficult of solution as many suppose.

Canadians can do anything they want to do, even if it be to work out the best industrial system in the world.

Respectfully yours,

MARION LIVING.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER:

SIR,—Following up my remarks of last month touching on "Schools of Industrial Art and Applied Design," another system of schools also suggests itself to me as of such importance that I trust you will pardon me for again trespassing on your time if I go a little into consideration of them.

I refer to Trade Schools, with the following for their objects: To teach a boy or girl a trade; to teach them in what class by physique, age and conditions they are most likely to be a success; to teach them the importance of knowing the importance of understanding the fundamental principles necessary to success—precision in execution, obedience, sincerity and integrity.

For the girls, sewing and cooking should have first position

which could be supplemented by other trades to which female ability is best adapted, such as stenography, telegraphy, type-writing, etc.

For the boys, carpentry, plumbing, tin-smithing, sign painting, machine shop practice, cabinet making, upholstering, and in addition a fair department for the advancement of agriculture.

In these times when the greatest benefit to our country is the development of farms, would it not be fair to suppose if our youth were made better acquainted with what might be accomplished in the country, it would offer an occupation to many who now are only thinking of a situation in the city behind a counter, because they cannot afford to study for a profession? Botany is hardly deemed of any use to-day by most school children, except as an accomplishment to be classed with the use of the piano, singing, etc., and is not recognized as of untold value in a proper understanding of agriculture. Chemistry and physics are thought by boys and girls to belong mainly to drug stores and doctors, whereas their association with agriculture is all important.

It is within our recollection that when at school a particular study had our fancy; with one it was grammar, another geography, and so on. Would not a boy's future find a readier solution were he given a chance to elect what vocation he would follow, instead of being pitchforked into a job because he no longer could be kept at school, and after tramping the town and finding some one affirmatively answer the question "Do you want a boy?" finds himself as an apprentice in a machine shop when his instincts are for carpentry or probably the farm.

Could not this question be taken up by the school-boards, and having visited some of the trade schools, such as the Hirsch schools of New York, probably some of the monies now uselessly expended in the cramming system could be made to yield better and more lasting results.

Yours etc.,

"MANUFACTURER."

To the Editor of the CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER:

SIR,—Allow me to applaud "Manufacturer's" letter, which appeared in your September issue, anent "Technology and Industrial Design." To all who are interested in the higher development of industrial art in Canada, it must be gratifying to hear that our government contemplates the establishment of schools for this important purpose. The founding of these schools, however, is one thing and their proper equipment and maintenance is another. It is to be hoped, before a definite plan is mapped out, that the question of equipment will be most thoroughly inquired into, and that only the best of the best will be sought after, because the result will be largely determined by the beginning. To this end a thorough inspection should be made of the leading English and Continental schools of industrial art, and instructors procured therefrom, or from other approved sources, to aid in establishing, on proper lines, this highly valuable branch of national education.

"Manufacturer" objects to the embryo school being termed "Technical," and suggests the more comprehensive name, "School of Industrial Art and Applied Design." I think such a name covers the ground more fully, as it not only embraces "technique," but includes therewith "application," and is altogether wider in its scope than the latter only. "What's in a name?" A great deal, I answer. I would go still further than "Manufacturer" by suggesting, "The Canadian School of Industrial Art and Applied Design," thus giving it direct national importance, so that whatever merit might ultimately accrue from its production, Canada would be recognized as its birthplace. But while there is much in a name, the possible achievements of such a school are of far greater importance, and that Canada is ripe for it is attested by the extensive importation of articles bearing the imprint of careful art training, thereby increasing the revenue of other countries at the expense of our own, for there is no reason possible to advance why we should not, under proper conditions, hold a high place in applied art work. Canada has long enough been regarded as a babe in arms, too young to venture out alone. She is now a vigorous child, full of pardonable ambition. Her blood, brains and energy simply require to be properly directed, and the result will, quite within a decade, prove to be a good national investment.

There is yearly, in Toronto alone, enough wealth expended on architectural monstrosities and meaningless objects of so-called art to make the city glisten with interest if the same were but invested in cultured design and craftsmanship such as would eventually result from properly organized art training schools.

Our present art schools, in spite of the efforts of an occasional instructor and an odd piece of meritorious handicraft, are a mere apology for what our nation needs. The government cannot commence any too soon to provide in every leading centre of manufacture such aid as will tend to develop the talent which certainly awaits it. Every country under the sun possesses the germs of art and design and the inborn spirit to apply these gifts to useful purposes. That is God's universal gift to man, and it remains with man to develop it. Is it too much, therefore, to suppose that, under proper guidance, our sons and daughters may eventually aid in making our commercial art products things of beauty and joys forever?

In architectural design, construction in carving, decorating and furnishing, with their many profitable and alluring branches, there is rich food for our youth. Canada has reason to show right early that she is not only a land of lumber, grain and cheese, but one of science and art, which are so essential to the betterment of all communities.

"Manufacturer's" letter is along the right lines, and should tend to further the desired end.

Yours truly,

ROBERT McCRAWLAND.