

most extensive structure as yet erected on this continent, we mean the new Houses of Parliament at Ottawa. Many conditions indispensable to the production of a splendid work of art are here united. The site has been well chosen; it possesses great natural beauty and is separated from its immediate environs by the peculiar conformation of the ground—a circumstance which adds to the general effect. The object for which the building is intended offers a most favorable opportunity for display, no edifice, excepting a temple of public worship, admitting of a style so elevated, or of proportions so imposing, as one of this nature. The result shows that notwithstanding certain obstacles inseparably connected with public discussion, ample means have been placed at the disposal of the talented men charged with the execution of the work. Let us see how these favorable circumstances have been turned to account.

On approaching Ottawa by way of Prescott, the broad and imposing river opens to view, its shores rising abruptly from the water. From the summit of a picturesque acclivity, high slanting roofs, ornamented with feathery crestings, are projected against the sky. These are the pinnacles of the Parliament Buildings, which, harmonizing singularly with the wild beauty of the landscape, impart a fairy-like character to the scene. From this direction the eye takes in the rear only of the vast pile, the details of which are lost in the distance; still the impression is striking and well calculated to give a favorable idea of the genius of the artist who, taking advantage of every circumstance, has so skillfully added to a spot of rare beauty, its graceful and harmonious complement. As we draw near, the scene changes at each step, until we have reached the principal façade. The beauty of detail now disclosed, as well as the stateliness of the general design, reveals the manifold resources of art and apprizes the spectator that he stands before a nation's palace.

The main edifice faces a spacious square, 700 feet front by 600 feet deep, of which two sides are occupied by the Departmental Buildings. These are different in design from the Parliament House, and produce a pleasing contrast which serves to heighten the general effect. The style is the mixed Gothic of the Renaissance, of which the most admired specimens are at Venice and Florence, in Italy; and at Chameoncaux, Blois, Amboise, Chambord, and Fontainebleau, in France. The different pavilions connected together by a main building, the decided inclination of the roofs, the high chimneys affecting a peculiar style of ornamentation, the crestings in open iron-work—all form distinguishing features of the most celebrated palaces of the Renaissance; the only difference which we have remarked is that in the Parliament Buildings, the doors and windows have uniformly the pointed arch, whereas at Blois, Chambord, in the Hotel-de-Ville at Paris, and in similar constructions elsewhere, a greater variety is to be met with in this respect, semi-circularly arched and square windows predominating. We desire particularly to point out this circumstance, so that anyone who shall be disposed to regret a deviation from celebrated models of another class may be reminded of the fact that these buildings are strictly in a style which marks a memorable epoch in the history of art.

The façade of the Parliament House is nearly 475 feet in lineal measurement, excluding the return of the wings. The chief apartments are in the main building, which is flanked by seven imposing towers. Through the highest of these, which occupies the centre of the façade and attains an altitude of 180 feet, is the principal entrance. The other towers have each four stories (including the basement) and attics lighted by dormer-windows; their height is about a hundred feet and their diameter thirty, more or less. The windows of the first tier, on the same floor as the legislative halls, are large; those of the second story are smaller and well proportioned. Ornamental string-courses and mouldings divide the different stories or adorn the salient angles; and a deep and highly wrought cornice runs around the entire building, along the top of the walls. The material employed for the ornaments and dressings, is the Ohio freestone; for the arches over the windows, a reddish sandstone obtained at Napcan, near Ottawa; and for the spaces between the arches and the upper

windows, blocks of different colors and irregular sizes set compactly together and forming a rich and varied kind of mosaic. Tall chimneys, in richly sculptured Ohio sandstone, rise on all sides, standing in bold relief against the deep blue slate of the roofs; and an appropriate finish is given to the whole by the dentilated lines of bronzed and gilt crestings which top the roofs and towers, scintillating in the sun like myriads of orient gems.

It is intended to enclose the square with a railing and a suitable gate, and to lay out the ground into avenues. The gentle slope of the site will also be cut into terraces, thus adding to the beauty of the perspective; and trees and grass-plots, so essential to the full display of architectural beauty, will also adorn the enclosure.

Let us pass into the interior by the main entrance which opens under the central tower. Several features of interest arrest the attention; we are struck with the dimensions of the great vestibule and the beauty of the columns and arcades by which it is surrounded. From this entrance hall, two flights of stairs lead, one to the antechamber of the Legislative Assembly, the other to the antechamber of the Legislative Council; and a third ascends to the top of the edifice. The last is in open stone-work and a masterpiece of art justly considered one of the marvels of the place.

The first floor, which has a superficial area of more than 30,000 square feet, comprises, besides the vestibule, a gallery running throughout the entire length of the building, the antechambers already referred to, committee and reading rooms, apartments for the clerks and officers of both houses, &c. Immediately above is the story through which the gallery of the Assembly is reached; it is laid out similarly to the first floor. The legislative halls occupy each a transept or wing projected from the rear of the edifice and which opens upon the vestibule.

These magnificent apartments are of the same dimensions as the legislative halls of the Imperial Parliament; namely, 90 feet long by 45 feet deep and 66 feet high. Elegant arcades run round the interior, producing a very fine effect; galleries also extend on three sides; and double rows of stained-glass windows of a design in keeping with the general decorations, are pierced opposite to each other. The ceilings are of pine, divided into richly carved compartments which retain the natural color of the wood, but present an infinite variety of detail. Similarly wrought ceilings adorn the galleries, halls, antechambers and vestibules, and are among the greatest beauties of the palace. A gallery connects the two wings together, and another leads to the Library. All these apartments, though joined by spacious corridors, enjoy practically the advantages of isolation as regards light, air, and security from fire. The Library is ninety feet in diameter and about one hundred and twenty in height; it is surrounded by five large towers which have a greater elevation than those of the main building, the central tower excepted. These lofty appendages serve both to enclose heating and ventilating apparatus and to adorn this part of the edifice, the effect of all these high roofs and cupolas, as seen from the river, being very fine. In form, the Library approaches the old rotundas of Italy, so much admired for their elegance, and of which only a few specimens remain at Florence and Pisa. This form, revived by modern architects, adapts itself to almost any material, and is one of the most beautiful known to the art. A polygon of sixteen sides, this graceful structure has three retreating stories and is surmounted by a lantern through which the interior is lighted. In the lower story, around the large apartment, are retiring rooms intended to afford an opportunity for study, withdrawn from the noise and bustle. It is worthy of remark that the form of the building itself corresponds with that of its site, a rock of circular shape overhanging the waters of the Ottawa at an elevation of 160 feet. It would have been impossible to devise for this granite pedestal a more suitable ornament than the light and graceful edifice by which it is surmounted.

As we have alluded to the happy adaptation of this pretty fabric to its site, a word may be added upon the general harmony of the entire group of buildings. Not only have the architects