

question, the client would most naturally be inclined to act upon it, whereas, in the majority of cases, a client learns that his architect has done his duty fairly and squarely, and that had he gained his own point at the time an injustice would have been committed against the contractor. It is to be feared that an architect is more likely to be dismissed than not, for the simple reason that a suspicion may at any time arise in a client's mind against which it is impossible to guard. The clause must have the evil effect of making the architect of necessity favor his client at the expense of the contractor, rather than run the risk of ignominious dismissal. The architect's position is a peculiar one. He is his client's advisor, and he should not at the outset be threatened with dismissal in the event of his client objecting to his advice. Time enough to talk about dismissal when it becomes evident that the architect is failing to fulfil his part.

PRIZES FOR GOOD DESIGN.

The prizegiving by the municipality of Paris for the most beautiful houses of the year is established. There are to be six prizes given in the year. The architect gets the prize and the owner is exempted from one half his tax for local improvements. It is comparatively easy in Paris to make a fair decision about a question of design even when the matter is in the hands of the municipality. There is but one style of design; the canons are fixed, and in case of doubt there is authority to appeal to in the School of Fine Arts. But the great thing is that everybody regards a matter of art as a question deserving of serious consideration, and a decision in such a matter of genuine importance. What would be the fate of such a prize in the hands of the aldermen of an American or Canadian city. Among the list of applicants each would soon find someone whom he would like to help along; and would he be likely to stand in his way on the question of a little matter of appearance that is of no consequence? It is not want of honor we should have to complain of so much as want of appreciation of the merits of either the building or the prize giving. Yet it is in these countries if anywhere that the giving of such prizes is needed. In Paris they have both fine examples of architecture of all periods, from which the naturally gifted may cultivate a sound taste, and also a standard style, which must materially reduce the difficulty of judgment on the point of excellence for the less gifted. It is here where we have no tradition, no standard and no prevailing excellence that just such distinction is wanted as is being given to good work in Paris. There it is a reward for excellence generally recognized and applauded. Here it would be a pointer to the public as to what is good work. It would not be at all surprising to find the decisions at first bewildering to the public and to those admirable critics the local reporters. The body which made the decisions would need the courage of their opinions. But, if the decisions were right there is no doubt that the stamp of approval put upon buildings by persons supposed to be able to judge of merit would attract to the buildings a questioning attention that they would not otherwise have received, with the certain result that their merits would grow upon the observer and in course of time the presence of the acknowledged good would drive out the bad. It is an unfortunate thing that it is not only the public who do not know, that want a standard, but architects who

do know. It is a doctrine among some architects that the business of the designer is to suit the public taste. There is only one end to a career founded upon this error. But the first fruits are no doubt promising; and it may be sometimes hard to distinguish between rising to meet the client's needs and falling to meet his taste, under the idea that the man who pays should get what he wants. What he pays for is good advice and that is what he should get. It would be a stiffener to an uncertain mind of this sort to know that there is an instrument for establishing public opinion and a chance for his client to measure his house not by his own opinion but by authority.

The crux of a proposition of this kind is its feasibility. Who are to act as judges? Yet the idea is not altogether chimerical. What is practical politics in Paris ought not to be an impossibility to think of in other enlightened countries. And it is worth thinking about, for something to form a guide to public taste is much needed.

TREATMENT OF WOOD.

THE American Paper Trade announces on "the best inside authority" that "if the present price of spruce land is kept up, in five years from now there will not be a stick of timber standing in the United States." It concludes the article by saying "the cry of the manufacturers is 'On to Canada'." It is a pity that something cannot be done to stop the use of good building material to make a pulp for which trash is good enough. There is no doubt that, when the spruce is gone, American ingenuity will discover a substitute; the pity is that the need of a substitute will not be pressed upon them sooner. A price for our spruce that gives no reason to look about for a substitute is too low a price. Spruce has a value far above its value as pulp. It is not our best wood; but its destruction implies the destruction of pine, which, in the absence of spruce, must be wasted in inferior work for which spruce would do. The destruction of both pine and spruce is in progress.

To contemplate the exhaustion of the forests is to sing the praise of wood. There is nothing like it. It has strength and stiffness greater, as compared with weight, than any other material. It is more easily and quickly worked. It is a non-conductor—an excellent thing in these days. There is nothing that will resist fire, without losing its structural strength, so long as solid timber.

We cannot afford to waste so precious a material. To some extent its less extensive use is inevitable and the substitution of stone and iron will be an improvement in some ways. But we cannot dispense with wood, and its value will continue to increase as its abundance diminishes. With the increase of value comes increased care and science in its use. We read continually now of processes invented to preserve wood from decay. The usual way is by impregnation with a preservative. The Southern Pacific Railway treats piles 110 feet long, by evaporating the moisture at 230 degrees and filling its place by creosote at the same temperature. This process is said to be perfect. All microbes, bacilli and animalculae avoid creosote; and the teredo, which makes nothing of the hardest timber, is said by the Portland Oregonian to "stand off and gnash his teeth in rage as he contemplates the creosote treated piling" of the Southern Pacific. This process is expen-