

sign and execute some great electrical undertakings, but, before adopting his plans, submitted them to their local engineer and fireman to report on. The fireman received \$2.00 a day, and the expert \$100.00. What architects would award their painting to the plumber, or their plumbing to the bricklayer? Then by all means give electrical work to the electrical contractors. This is not intended to disparage the plumbing firms who have well-equipped and well-organized electrical departments, some of which are amongst the leaders in the trade; but to advise against the sticking in of wiring anywhere so that whoever gets it farms it out to anyone, and often to some incompetent friend, who takes it at a price that he must either do it without wages or steal the material, this last fact being only too manifest to the trade.

Electric wiring is a trade, and should be recognized as such. We hear a lot about electric fires and yet, strangely enough, people will pay as little attention to who does their wiring as though they were awarding a contract for digging post-holes.

Speaking again of the so-called danger of wiring, I would not have my hearers go away with the idea that danger is an unknown quantity. There is danger in bad wiring, but in good wiring there is not, provided it is not tinkered with after completion. Let people who desire to make alterations and additions send for a capable electrician, or, under favorable conditions, keep one firm around their work. Let big firms arrange to have quarterly or other suitable periodical inspections, all of which we can and will undertake.

Scare talk is also an injustice to the local electrical supply companies, inasmuch as it frightens people from using electricity. I know of firms in Toronto to-day who are burning gas because they have been frightened from using electricity; and, in such cases, they are living in a fool's paradise, because, under their circumstances, the gas is more hazardous. These people are scared to death by a phantom, whose visitations are the exception. If people desire to use electricity in any of its many beautiful and useful forms, let them demand an inspection from the underwriters, and they can rest at least as securely protected against fire as when using any other illuminant.

Many people burn coal oil because they are afraid of horrible dangers and inconveniences, and still continue to be undisturbed when the gruesome tales of lamp explosions and fires resulting therefrom are published, which reports are all verified, while electric fires are in most cases only assumed.

The greatest protection against electric danger, beyond that of good work, is to turn the current off when leaving the premises. Every building, store and dwelling in the city is provided with a "service switch." The simple opening of this switch will completely cut off the current, and the wires throughout the premises will be as harmless as they were when serenely coiled away in the warehouse before being put into commission. Let the nervous owner of a mill, warehouse or shop detail someone to see that the "main line switch" is pulled the last thing upon leaving the premises, and he can rest assured that no fires will start—from this cause anyway. Many people have never heard of or seen this "service switch," and many who have do not understand its functions.

Looking into figures, I find that of all the fires in the United States, reported as having originated from electric wires, upon careful investigation only 20 per cent. could be fairly attributed thereto.

I am not here to boom electric light, as one might infer, but, in justice to the trade and those directly interested therein, I hope I may be able to in some degree dispel a portion of the unnecessary alarm, and, if possible, present some facts in their true light.

In conclusion, there are some points I desire to bring before architects, and that is the provision for and proper installation of telephone and call-bell wires in office buildings and apartment houses. Danger is invited by the neglect of this point, as these wires are often strung into buildings in any way, regardless of safety or appearance, and it is time this point was seriously investigated. I would be pleased to furnish architects with the rules and specifications governing this work. The fact that these services do not in themselves carry any heavy currents is no guarantee of safety, because they can and do become conveyers of dangerous currents from outside lines, with which they may and do become crossed. This fact, together with the unsightly appearance they present around the walls and corridors of buildings, is sufficient reason why they should be looked after.

At the conclusion of the paper a hearty vote of thanks was given to the speaker, and some discussion followed. Conduits were considered the proper measure of safety for large and important work, and an ordinance requiring their insertion in a certain district was thought desirable. The question of inspection was also discussed, and it was agreed that the enforcement of the national code of rules would be a good thing.

## ABOUT THE ROOMS OF THE HOUSE.

**THE DRAWING ROOM OR PARLOR.**—Of all the rooms that tax the ingenuity of the furnisher to make pleasing, the drawing room, and its smaller counterpart, the parlor or reception room, stand pre-eminent. For concentrated stiffness and glaring lack of welcome, these rooms are famous. As the drawing room holds all the formal intercourse which the house enjoys with the outside world, it is in consequence rightly more conventional than the other rooms. The room should show a gracious, well-bred welcome to each guest, warm but not effusive, unaffected and full of courteous restraint, yet never sacrificing comfort for the purpose of effect.

**THE DINING ROOM.**—In the room where we dine and meet with the others of our most intimate world, all adornments and furniture should be of a nature to add to the comfort and pleasure of the diner a spirit of warmth, hospitality and good cheer. Both light and air are essential in the keynote room of the house, which, if possible, should have an easterly or southerly exposure.

**THE LIBRARY.**—Each house, whether rich or poor, should have its library, as the "sitting room" of more simple times has been transformed and then transferred into a place among the books, papers and the magazines. The library has become the most unconventional, free-and-easy room beneath the roof—the only one whose door is always open, and the one in which the family life is best developed. A western or southern exposure is to be recommended. This is the hearth. If but one fireplace be allowed in all the house, here it must be. The furnishing and coloring of the room should be both strong and rich. Of all rooms this is the one for easy chairs, a couch with ample supply of cushions, a large and serviceable table for current books and magazines, a desk and a lamp.

**THE DEN.**—This room is usually small and, being of a modern origin, has no traditions to fulfill as to its furnishing or decorations, and is open to any agreeable invention which may occur to the individual experimenter. Turkish, Indian and Dutch ideas lend themselves readily to the decoration of the den. The exposure of this room is quite immaterial, as its occupancy is principally only after sunset.

**BED ROOMS.**—Here, as everywhere, there should be a harmonious relationship between the effects produced and the uses and comforts of the room. The bed room should be quiet, sweet, clean, cheerful, and faced to catch the best view and light. Individuality is clearly to be expressed here better than elsewhere and should be allowed full play. If possible the bedstead should not face a window with an easterly exposure, or be located in a draft, or exposed to view from the hall.

**THE KITCHEN.**—The modern kitchen is not as large as that of our grandmothers, and every foot of space should be utilized to lighten the burdens of the housewife. The plumbing should be open, with no spot where dust can accumulate. Kitchen walls, floor and ceiling should be tiled, painted, or covered with some sanitary, readily-cleaned material. The sink should be provided with a hinged or removable dripboard. The range boiler, fitted with a safety valve, should be set on a galvanized iron stand. The old-fashioned dresser has been properly replaced by a modern removable kitchen cabinet containing a self-cleaning flour bin with sifter attachment, a sugar bin, a spice cabinet, and, in fact, a compartment for everything needed in kitchen work. It is also desirable to provide a store closet, and a place for storing the extra dining room table leaves. The cooking apparatus, located under a hood connected with a separate flue, should be placed not only where the cook will have a good light on her work, but also where she will have the relief and the diversion of a change of scene afforded by a near-by window.

**BARREL SWING.**—For making barrels conveniently accessible in the pantry, kitchen or store-room, it is advisable to provide a simple pattern of barrel swing which is easily installed and adjustable to swing any barrel.—*From House Hints, by C. E. Schermerhorn.*