



THE ACCESSORIES OF ARCHITECTURE.*

BUT for the various other accessories of a more practical and definite nature which perhaps more properly claim our attention, let me tabulate in a desultory way some of those with which it is my intention to deal. These, as they occur to me just now are, sculptor work, figure and ornamental; bronze casting, hammered work in all materials, cast-iron, plaster work; decoration, interior and exterior, embracing such things as papers, painting, fresco, mosaic work, glass tiles, upholstery and cabinet work, and landscape gardening. Any of the topics above mentioned you will think might of itself offer sufficient consideration for the subject of a paper, and I can merely to-night make a few observations upon each.

Before doing so, I will say, however, that in the last 50 years there have been marked strides in every one of these departments, and that the architecture of to-day, from the fact that it can call in to its aid so many independent accessories in a comparatively developed condition, ought to be not only interesting but thorough. The questions involved in the consideration of the above are those with which we are brought every day in contact, and in addressing a meeting of gentlemen like the present I am speaking to those who from their position must necessarily have considerable intimacy and knowledge of the various points. In speaking of calling in the aid of these accessory arts, I do not mean that we are to hand over the designing or detailing of any special branch to others, but that we are to use their deftness and ability to carry out our ideas so far as they are consistent with the subject under consideration, and are to consult with regard to points about which, from their intimate knowledge and experience, they are able to give a sound opinion. I have found, and you must all have found, say with regard to cast iron, men who had worked all their lives in that material, but whose opinion on a piece of design for that very branch was simply not worth having, generally because they had not the capacity to think for themselves, or else had got so much into a groove that they accepted as right all that they had been accustomed to; and the same somewhat severe criticism applies with almost equal force to all the accessory arts. I might say that the same criticism applies in a great measure to modern architecture, for we do not find, even among ourselves, those with large practices and a considerable notoriety, many who never produce any piece of original design or ingenious adaptation, but who are content, from year's end to year's end, to reproduce, *ad nauseam*, what they have been taught.

In considering the accessory arts of architecture, I should wish to direct the attention of our profession to the advisability of invariably, when we can, employing the artists of our own country, yea, even of our own town, in the execution of our commissions, from a purely selfish point of view—that is, of course, always when such employment is not going to interfere with the quality of the work executed. The selfish point of view to which I refer is, that by so doing we raise around ourselves a body of men who, by practice, are able to do thoroughly the commissions they are entrusted with, and who, by being immediately available, do in a great measure strengthen our hands and expedite the work on which we happen for the time to be employed. I would not, of course, advocate the employment of a local artist as such, but in the case where a local artist will do the work as well as another, say, from a distance, I think the preference should always be given to the local man.

Of all the accessory arts of architecture, there is probably none which plays a more important part than that of sculpture. There has been no period of architecture which has not been indebted to this for substantial aid. From the very beginning of our art in the remote ages till the present day, sculptor work, both figure and ornamental, has played a most important part. There have been periods when it seemed to be the only consideration, and when architects seemed to revel in it, not as an assistance, but as the end to be gained. It is almost needless for me to tell you, gentlemen, that such periods were not happy in their results. But I think for the future that these times are not likely to come again, and the chances even are that we do not sufficiently use what, when judiciously used, lead to a very happy combination, and justifies by the results the fashion of the art. Great care should be taken in the way in which sculpture work, both figure and ornamental, ought to be applied. When only a limited amount may be applied, preference, I think, ought to be given to placing it near the eye, where it may be seen, for although the gods may see all around and high up, yet the enjoyment of a comparatively close inspection to a mortal is greater than the knowledge that high up there are works of art worthy of careful attention and inspection, the artistic value of which can be only guessed at from below. In the use of sculpture

work, only the very best possible ought to be accepted, as any carving of an inferior sort, instead of being an aid, is a decided hindrance to the effect of any building. Great care should be taken to employ the artists who are masters in the style of carving suitable for the building being decorated, for it is often found that one who is a very good artist in Classical or Renaissance carving does not understand in the least the spirit of Gothic or Romanesque carving, and *vice versa*.

It is now my intention to make a few remarks on the use of metal work. The effects to be gained from a judicious use of metal in architecture are particularly valuable, not only from the rich coloration which may be got, but from the difference in texture of different materials, which is as valuable in architecture as in painting. Who has not been forcibly impressed with the effect of a rich colored bronze, either in the round or the flat, against the cooler gray of stone or granite, or the sweet curves of a fine piece of wrought iron work in an elaborate gate, or adding interest and picturesqueness to some old street in the projecting signs and grotesque forms of a bracket supporting a lamp.

The play of imagination evident in some of the torch bearers, so common on the front of Italian buildings, or the door handles and escutcheons decorating the doorway of some French chateau, indicate a wealth of fancy, and furnish a source of inspiration which no art architect can afford to neglect. What a difference there is always to the art lover in the carefully considered adornments in metal which the real architect causes to be used at his buildings, and which he designs in harmony with the rest of the structure and in appropriateness to the materials used, and the stereotyped patterns culled from some enterprising manufacturer's catalogue, designed in forms glaringly inappropriate to the materials used, and utterly discordant with the general effect of the building.

The temptations to use what one finds ready to hand are undoubtedly great, and the considerations of cost and expedition are often put forward as an excuse, also the lack of interest and appreciation on the part of a client; but the cost of having things appropriate is not greater than that of having them discordant, and after all it is to ourselves that we ought to be true in matters of taste, for it is our taste which will be called in question, and we who will be judged and criticised, when the beauty and appropriateness of the buildings we erect are being discussed. Such considerations as the extra trouble are not really worth contemplating, and are such as no real architect will for a moment consider, as we may take it that his desire is to do the best he possibly can. Of course it is not absolutely necessary that every piece of metal work be specially designed, although it is best in most instances that it should be so. The pieces which may be used are those which have been properly designed for a special occasion, and which happen to be appropriate for the case in point. It is, however, for interior decoration of architecture that metal work is most valuable, and in this connection many metals which are not suitable for exterior work may be used.

You all must have seen how rich were the effects and how varied the forms of which bronze and brass are capable. The rich candelabra, the ingenious or quaint balustrade, the imaginative sconce, with its archaic forms and accidental light shadows and reflections, all add interest to the interiors of our houses. How happy, also, is the use of similar materials in different ways, such as the working in of hammered and cast work together, each process being designed with appropriate forms, and yet the effect of the whole being made more perfect from the assistance which it gains from both processes.

One great advantage to be gained from the use of the *repousse* work is, that in the practice of that art great room is left for the individuality of the workman to develop, that is, if he has the personal capacity in himself. From the nature of the work exact repetitions of any set form is as difficult as it is undesirable, and with each piece of work comes a problem, in the solution of which the mind is kept active, and the possibility of further development increased.

Perhaps the most fatal objection to our modern cast iron work is that it goes out of its own province, which is by no means a limited one, to reproduce designs which are only appropriate to wrought iron. The result of course is, that if the piece of cast iron is placed in a position where it must bear the brunt of ordinary traffic, the inappropriate scrolls are soon conspicuous by their absence, and the want of consideration on the part of the producer is patent to every passer by. Scroll work of almost every description is inappropriate to a cast material, but forms the basis of all hammered materials, which, from their fibrous nature, have strength in themselves to withstand any slight pressure which may be put upon them. It must be evident to all, that from the great thickness with which scrolls in ironwork are generally cast, and even then the frequency with which they are broken and mutilated, that this class of design for cast work is thoroughly inappropriate. It is strange, in spite of the many lessons we have received of this, that still the scroll forms the basis of most cast iron designs.

Great use can be made of cast iron, but it is much more

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