

acknowledging the superiority of the technical education and design, there is evidently a desire to discover defects in the workmanship.

In the first place, a comparison between the building artificers of our country and the Continent is hardly possible. A difference as great as it well can be exists between the modes of living, thought, and feeling of the two countries. House-rent is cheaper than our own. The Paris artisan can live comfortably at a rent of £12 or £15 a year; the firing, charcoal being the fuel, is much cheaper; he obtains his meals at a café when out. Provisions are cheaper than they are here, and the workmen generally frugal and abstemious. Soup, meat, vegetables, and bread are partaken of at breakfast, which is at 11 o'clock, the cost being about 5d.; then, at 6 or 7, after work, they have their dinner, consisting of soup, fish, meat, vegetables, bread, cheese, and wine, the cost of which is about 1s. 3d. The French workman's home is different; it is often at the café, not from choice, but convenience. The children are sent out to nurse, as the wife goes out to work; he sleeps where he can, and does not consider it necessary to keep up a house like his English brother. Wages are paid fortnightly or every three weeks, and piecework is the general principle of payment, and is preferred by both employers and workmen. By this system the workman often earns more than by daywork.

We draw attention now to two or three principles which underlie the difference between French and English workmanship. First, the workman abroad has State protection; the Municipal Council contributes towards the Labour Exchange; trade disputes are settled by a court of experts, the *Prud'homme* established by the State. The English craftsman has no such aid, but is obliged to have recourse to trade unions, or to the ordinary legal tribunals, which are costly and inefficient. Secondly, the education abroad is technical and complete; the schools have workshops attached, pupils are admitted at 13, and have the run of the school for three years, one of which is spent in the shops, including a smiths' shop, engineers' shop, electrical engineers' shop, carpenters' and wood-turners' shop. The whole course is free, and the cost is defrayed by the Municipal Council. The English workman has nothing of the kind provided, except the new technical schools, which are few comparatively and expensive. Thirdly, the Parisian artisan is free to select his kind of labour; he has a personal interest in his work, which is encouraged by the system of payments, whereas in England the artificer is made a kind of tool in a vast organisation of labour, his work being divided into branches, and he is, therefore, set to do a portion of a fraction of a building which he perhaps never sees and has no interest in whatever. We have proof of these facts in the artisans' reports.

One of the things we hear is that work costs more in France than in England; the men work, we are told, in an "easy-going way." Then, the foreign workingman is his own master in many things; he is not dictated to as to modes of work; he can leave his labour for refreshment when he has a mind to do so, the time so occupied not being deducted if it is not more than a quarter of an hour. The men in Paris are paid almost the same wages for half the work executed. Now, we must not conclude that because the artisan's work is easier, and he takes longer about it, that the cost is greater, except in a very mercenary sense. It is true that, owing to grinding more work out of the workman, he pays the contractor better; but does his labour pay so well in the result? We question whether it does. The unanimous opinion

of all who have seen the work of boys in technical schools is that it is a credit to the nation. The whole question of work is resolved into one of *time*, and this is a vital element which the English master does not appear to have fully taken into his consideration. The contract system is in direct opposition; its principle is to get as much work done as possible in a little time, and this has been so ingrafted in the minds of our great producers and employers of labour, that other considerations are sacrificed. The principle with the foreign workman and his employer is to turn out a good job. Even in the school work, time on a job is not considered, so long as the pupil turns out his work creditably.

The important bearing of the question of time, or freedom of individual action on the work actually turned out, may be seen in comparing English with French joinery. Last week we described an internal door as made in France, which is different in several particulars from our own. The stiles and rails are of equal width, about 3 in. wide; instead of the solid English lock rail, a narrow panel is introduced, and upon the upper 3 in. rail of this is the lock. If any reader will take the trouble of drawing out a door to scale, he will find it not so bad as the English joiner would be inclined to think from prejudice and habit. In many respects it is a lighter door, the wide panels of the whole width of door can be left for decoration, the middle rail panel is pleasing if not quite as strong, for every solid lock rail has a double tenon and two mortises. We are so accustomed from habit and years of training to use muntins dividing the door into two panels, that any other form looks wrong; but, after all, it is a matter of design—a quality which the English artificer is not very strong upon. Our system of mouldings is unsatisfactory, but it is used to save time and labour. The machine-made moulding is quickly turned out and planted, but every architect and artistic joiner is aware of the beauty of the moulding worked out of the solid, as seen in Mediæval and 15th-century work in this country.

To "plough" or rebate the moulding for panels, and to groove the back of it to fit on the stiles and rails, is a laborious, but certainly more workmanlike, proceeding than to merely plant the moulding in. It takes more time, and thus, in the eyes of our builders who take contracts, is an objection. Other details, such as rebating the edges of a door to make it fit closer, tonguing the skirting to the floor, stair construction, the jointing of a segmental frame, indicate greater labour, not in every instance necessarily stronger, but displaying more art and skill. To turn to a more artistic trade, the carver in wood is more of a specialist abroad than he is here; a figure carver can obtain a high remuneration for his work by confining himself exclusively to it, and there is enough of one kind of carving to make it answer, whereas in London a carver turns his hand from figures to foliage. In the carving art we have only a few men who can compare favourably with the specialist in Paris, owing to there being so little carving done in London, and what there is of a very miscellaneous kind. We are now alluding to the ordinary class of carvers, not to our few well-known artists in wood. Again, the carvers abroad have exceptional advantages in the fine collections of the Louvre and Tuileries, the Musée de Cluny, and other museums. The work, too, is also done in a more leisurely way than our own—piecework is generally followed, which prevents the cramping influence inseparable from the daywork system, and for the simpler kinds of carving it pays the workman better. On the whole, the Parisian carver is in better circumstances, and his work more appreciated.