

# ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

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Before launching into this subject it is well to consider just what the term architect should imply. The Committee on Education of the American Institute of Architects produced this definition, which covers the ground comprehensively:

"An architect we defined as one ranking in the class of men of culture, learning and refinement, differentiated from the others of his class solely by his function as a creator of pure beauty, as an exponent through material forms of the best secular, intellectual and religious civilization of his time, and as an organizer and director of manifold and varied industries and activities."

What are the favorable conditions and methods which will develop the student until he can reasonably be considered an architect? Many colleges in all parts of the world are at work solving this problem, some apparently achieving greater success than others. The most active influence at work to-day is that which emanates from the parent of modern schools, the Ecole des Beaux Arts of Paris; consequently I wish to dwell somewhat in detail on the principles and results of this training.

## ECOLE DES BEAUX ARTS.

The Ecole des Beaux Arts is a government school, conducted on the most noble of principles. There are no fees for tuition, and its doors are open to any one, the only condition of entrance being that one shall pass an examination, the vacancies being filled by those who do so most creditably. Students usually prepare for entrance by studying in a preparatory atelier. The subjects for admission include a small problem in architectural design, consequently students with no aptitude for the profession rarely get into the school. There are no fees paid for tuition, and a student may enter when he is sixteen and continue to be a member until he is thirty years of age. Unless a student does successfully one program in design in a year he ceases to be a member of the school. These excellent regulations make it possible for a man to support himself by working in an office, his position as a student in the Ecole being maintained by devoting a few months of the year to the problems in design. A course is given which covers the mathematical and constructional phases of education and which, above all things, aims to thoroughly educate the student in the artistic side of architecture. Planning and design are the subjects to which most importance is attached. The process followed develops the creative and imaginative powers and produces men who are able to logically study problems of great magnitude as well as those of a simple nature.

The school may be said to be separated into minor schools, for the design and planning is carried out in ateliers, which, with one exception, are outside of the school group of buildings. These ateliers are under the supervision and direction of a "Patron," who visits them

at least twice a week and gives to each student criticism on the problem upon which he is working, and the warmest ties of affection bind these men to the teacher and patron. In all cases the patrons are architects of the highest standing, several being members of the Institute of France. The fact that they are practising architects is of great importance, as they bring to their work not only the book learning and theory of a professor, but minds which have matured by practical experience with the very class of work which they are teaching. It would be as reasonable for a man to study painting under an artist who never painted, as to study architecture under a man who never had a building erected from his designs and under his supervision. The programs in design are given out at intervals to the students who report at the school. They are placed "en loge," as they call it, that is to say, they are separated from one another and are obliged to make a rough study within a limited time. This rough study, drawn in elevation, plan and section, is of the simplest indication and represents what the student considers as the most suitable solution of the problem. The study is traced and the original given to the guardian in charge. In the atelier the student develops his conception and is obliged in a broad sense not to depart therefrom. When the finished drawings are exhibited the original sketch is attached, and if he has seriously altered his conception his drawings are not eligible for an award. What would be the results if this principle was not followed? The students would proceed to examine examples of similar problems and the result would be the production of an archaeological solution. The weak student would to a great extent be influenced by those who are strong, and copying would be the result. The esquisse principle justifies itself on the following grounds: First of all the student uses his own powers and exercises his imagination, skill and judgment, producing a conception of more or less excellence. Secondly, he has a basis upon which to work, he is forced to become a thinker and is at once concerned with the principles of design, and in the development of his idea within the broad limitations of his own imposition, is occupied with a problem that develops those powers which must become proficient before he can be considered an architect. In the atelier he receives the criticism and direction of the patron as well as the friendship and advice of older students. During the first year he must do "Nouveau Service," which means that in addition to his studies he must stretch paper, grind ink, run messages, and so forth. This is a very workable system—even a genius should know how to stretch paper.

In considering the advantages of atelier life, there must be taken into account the comradeship which exists and the inspiration received from observing the work of the older men. The new student is not only concerned with his own problems, but takes the keenest interest in those of the older men. When the time approaches for delivering drawings at the school, he makes himself use-

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