

kind, would the label be removed or what course would be taken? He thought the proposition quite impracticable. The motion said the mark was to be conferred for general excellence. Would that necessitate an enquiry from the mistress of the house as to whether the bath room plumbing or the fixed washtubs were satisfactory, or whether the back stairs were of sufficient width and so on? All these things, and hundreds of others, entered into the general excellence of a house, and made it impracticable to decide the question. The thing was impracticable, and outside of all that, who was going to take the time to attend to it? Here was a committee that had been appointed to look into the matter, and they had not had time to meet about it, and the mover of the resolution was so busily engaged that he had not even time to come here and support his own motion.

Mr. Gordon said that although he had moved the resolution he had not yet spoken to it. He thought that all the remarks had been somewhat premature. One of their members had given a certain amount of thought to this subject, and had looked at it in various lights, and had thought it feasible to find some way in which our best buildings might be recognized, and so serve to aid in developing a better architectural taste on the part of the public. Without at all committing themselves to the scheme, he thought it would be quite proper to allow this gentleman and the committee associated with him to look still further into it, and bring in a report which would give more light. Then it would be possible to intelligently discuss the main proposition, whether the principle was right. He thought the committee should be appointed, and if they were he hoped they would do a little better than they did last year, when there was no meeting.

Mr. W. R. Gregg suggested as a better way of educating the public taste, a large public meeting, at which views of the best buildings in the city might be given, with an explanation by a lecturer of the points of merit and demerit, with free scope for criticism.

Mr. Darling moved in amendment to the resolution that the committee be dissolved for good. The committee had never met, and the convener could not find the time to come down and put his motion to the vote.

Mr. Gordon said that was not a motion, that was simply voting it down.

The motion was then put, and lost.

The Convention then adjourned from 1 o'clock until half past 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION.

When the Convention was called after luncheon two papers were read by Mr. H. B. Gordon and Mr. J. Gemmell, on color in its relation to architecture.

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE CHOICE OF DIFFERENT COLORED BUILDING MATERIAL.

Building material must necessarily first be chosen for its structural fitness. This may be more or less modified by its adaptability to surfacing or ornamentation. But these two considerations should in their turn be modified by the suitability of the color of the material for the proposed building. For instance, an ornamental doorway of light colored sandstone may be quite correct from a structural view point, and its adaptability to ornamentation no one will dispute, but the desirability of its presence in the sombre solidity of a brown stone front is decidedly open to question. The structural fitness of a heavy projecting copper cornice may be accepted by many, and its easy adaptability to ornamentation is quite plain, but its presence as the crowning member of a light colored front is intolerable.

If as much thought was given to the color of the materials as to their form, there is no question but that our architecture would be more satisfactory.

While not presuming to formulate and express any laws for the guidance of choice in building materials, some suggestions have occurred to me, the statement of which may provoke fruitful discussion.

1. As to a general scheme of color for a building and its relative intensity in the various parts: The colors of building material, if there is any variation in tone, should be darker at the base of a building and lighter as they ascend. There is a structural suggestiveness in this. Dark colored materials (other things being equal) are usually stronger and denser than light colored ones. Hence, the darkest (which suggests the strongest) should be placed in the lower or supporting portions of a structure. Thus a most satisfactory combination is secured by making the lower part of a building dark brown stone, the body of it dark red brick, and the roof a lighter colored tile.

Perhaps the most unsatisfactory combination in general use is a foundation of light colored stone, a body of red brick, and a roof of dark slate. The roof problem is one of the most difficult ques-

tions of color in the ordinary cheap class of buildings. The cost of tiling is almost prohibitive for such structures, while the raw crudeness of a new shingle roof is offensive. The use of some light colored shingle stain is suggested as an expedient in cheap work, and the adoption of light colored green slate where the matter of cost is not so important.

2. Concerning the color of the body of work in relation to that of trimmings or ornamentation: As the body represents the more solid and structural portions of the work, it should generally be darker than the trimmings. This suggestion applies to nearly all the questions of broad surfaces with adjacent ornamentation. The object of plain wall surfaces being to give the needed repose and dignity to any composition, it naturally follows that the darker colored materials in the construction are the most satisfactory to use in this relation. Ornamentation, on the other hand, calling for the effect of light and shade, as in moulding and carving, should be in the lighter colored materials, as only in such can the best effects of sunshine and shadow be secured. In illustration of this, one has only to consider the tame and inadequate effect of a plain, smooth dressed, light stone wall, especially if the color be quite uniform and the joints disguised. If, however, the surfaces be rough rock face (which is Nature's ornamentation), the effect of light and shadow gives an entirely different impression.

On the other hand, one has but to consider the inadequate results from fine mouldings and elaborate carving in dark colored stone, and contrast it with the beautiful light and shadow effects produced by the same class of work in light colored material.

3. My third suggestion is one which is so simple as to be self-evident, viz., that the character of the design should dictate the color scheme of the materials.

Designs that rely on the disposition of the masses and not particularly on the quality of the detail are naturally suggestive of dark colored materials.

Designs, on the other hand, that are elaborate and emphasize detail are most effectively rendered in light colored materials. For instance, how much less satisfactory the general impression of the main buildings of the Chicago Exposition would have been if they had been executed in dark colored materials.

Breadth and solidity, with heavy members and correspondingly coarse scale of detail, are most effective when executed in the darker materials. Fineness and elegance of detail and general lightness of design is most effectively expressed in the lighter colored materials.

Milan Cathedral, with its multitude of pinnacles and flying buttresses, would not be a "dream of beauty" if the white marble was changed to a brown sandstone.

The fourth suggestion is that the general character and use of a building should in a great measure determine the amount of variety in color of material.

Buildings of a monumental character, and especially those that are intended to express solidity and permanence, should not have a great deal of variety in their color. Municipal buildings, banks, universities, and structures for similar uses should not be marked by materials of strong contrasting color. Many of us have perhaps regretted that designs otherwise stately and dignified have been marred by chequer board variations of different colored stone. Our only consolation is that the gentle hand of Time, aided by city smoke, will temper the colors and make the contrast less obtrusive. What is true in respect to monumental buildings also applies along different lines to ecclesiastical ones. Here the idea of harmony is most essential, while the avoidance of a gloomy effect is also necessary. Hence the use of light colored stone is most pleasing for churches, as it gives the necessary impression of unity and permanence, coupled with the suggestion of light and hope.

When domestic architecture is undertaken, the possible field of color in material is much enlarged. Here cheerfulness of effect is more important than dignity of expression. Probably the only limit, other than the general suggestions laid down in this paper, is the avoiding of fussiness and vulgarity.

And this leads to a 5th suggestion: The character of the surroundings must greatly influence the choice of color in building material. It will, I think, be readily granted that a house surrounded by trees and grass gives a much wider latitude in the choice of color in building materials and their use in contrasting positions, than one surrounded by other buildings. The harmonizing and softening effect of green surroundings in nature is familiar to all.

It appears to me that much more satisfactory results might be accomplished by architects if they made a study of the surroundings of their proposed buildings before deciding upon the color of the materials.

My next point I present with some diffidence, viz., that the style of Architecture adopted is to some extent a determining influence in the limit of color contrasts.

Pure classic Architecture, which depends so much upon the relative proportions of each part for its successful impression, must necessarily be limited in its variety of color. Any very strong contrasts of tone would distract the eye from the harmony of the parts.

Renaissance in its different variations affords the possibilities of greater scope in color, especially in the different storeys of the facade. Even here, however, care must be exercised to use the contrasts of color in the curtain wall, rather than in the classic framework of the design.

Gothic admits of a wide range of color in material, provided that the main lines of the design are not confused by sharp divisions of contrasting colors.

The less formal styles of Architecture, such as the Queen Ann, probably give the greatest permissible range of color in building