

It has been decided to buy each year a certain number of works on architecture, which will be the property of the Quebec section.

The following officers were elected :

President.—Mr. Joseph Venne, Montreal.

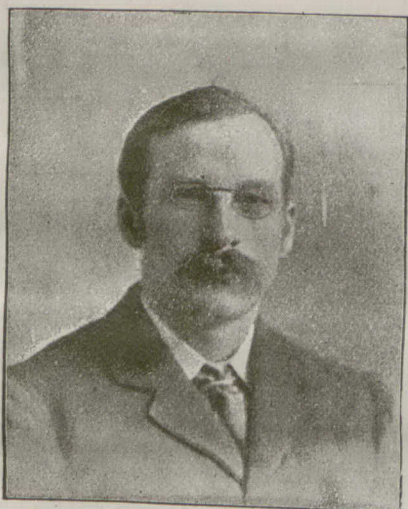
First Vice-President—W. E. Doran, Montreal.

Second Vice-President—R. P. Lemay, Quebec.

Secretary—Prof. S. H. Capper, Montreal.

Treasurer—Mr. J. S. Archibald, Montreal.

Councillors—Mr. C. E. Tanguay, Quebec ; A. Raza,



PROF. S. H. CAPPER, Secretary.

A. C. Hutchison, A. A. Cox, D. R. Brown, S. Lesage, Montreal.

DESIGN AS AN ELEMENT OF PRACTICE.*

BY PROFESSOR LAIRD, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

Good old Sir John Evelyn, in presenting to the world his "Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the Modern" delivers himself of these thoughts in addressing the reader :

"Before I do altogether resign this *Book* to thy Judgment, I advertise thee, that 'twas not my design in compiling it to teach any man." *** "I expect that men should presently say of me.***That I teach nothing particular and extraordinary here ; that the *Books* from whence I have gather'd all that I say being common and much ampler than mine, there was no need to have scummed them thus superficially over; That it had been better to have search'd and produc'd something which the World had not yet seen.***But we shall not appeal to such Arbiters as these.***" "Poor Men that they are, to believe that in fantastically Designing some one kind of particular *Cornice* or like Member, they are presently the *Inventors* of a new order.***As for those others to whom Nature has been more propitious, who are indu'd with a clearer Imagination, they very well perceive that the true and essential Beauty of *Architecture* consists not simply in the minute separation of every Member *apart*; but does rather principally result from the *Symmetry* and *Oeconomy* of the *whole* which is the Union and Concourse of them all together, producing as it were a visible Harmony and Content."

Evelyn's ardent contention that the works of the ancients were worthy of the most reverent study and even literal reproduction, and his lofty contempt for those who ignored them and sought unrestrained novelty, showed that the conflict between progress and precedent was in full force on the eve of the great fire of London. And the splendid work that followed that event offers full evidence, not that precedent triumphed, but that the architectural impulse of a people grows with noble vigor into a splendid fruition when planted in a soil of unrest and aspiration, of vital interest in new problems and reverent study of old achievements.

Let me adopt this author's defence as my own. Far be it from my intention to teach or to offer from the book of experience any new thing, for its precepts have been well scanned and its lessons well learned by my audience. Yet even Evelyn's imagined critics would have conceded that the best

known truths take a new force when reaffirmed, and I shall therefore venture to ask your attention to some of the more evident principles of our professional work in the hope that they may be acceptably reiterated and profitably discussed.

That Truth is the basis of all that is good in Art is but another way of affirming the breadth of principle upon which our own art is based, for the best architecture has always been an exponent of truth. And the best architecture has always expressed as its highest purpose the aim to build nobly: with the extreme of pleasure to the eye and the mind, with the utmost of stability and with the fullest adaptation of means to the end. All great buildings realize these conditions and are noble because of this fact. The same impulse and motive inspired them, whether the mind that produced them was that of priest or painter, sculptor or scholar, the impulse to build what should be more than mere building, to enrich and decorate in a way that should mean more than ornament alone, to surpass the simple utilitarian demands of the undertaking; in other words to fuse these elements into a thing greater than their sum, nobler than their aggregate; the highest aspiration of man's creative power—a perfect building!

In no two periods of Architectural history have the conditions been identical under which architects have worked and until modern times, indeed, the authors of buildings have not been known as architects in the sense in which we use that term. But in all ages and under whatever conditions, great architecture has been in evidence, and it should and can be no less so in this age.

Our situation as architects is unlike any that has preceded our time. We are devoted intensely and exclusively to Architecture as an occupation. We are consciously a class, standing before the world a group of men with a definite purpose and judged by high standards which we have ourselves proclaimed. The commercial and industrial development which has distinguished this age has brought into full flower the organizing of human effort and, with it, the systematizing and subdividing of human labor. Distinctions are sharply drawn between its various lines, and specialization has been forced into all fields. The architect has thus evolved as a necessary factor in modern life, emerging from those ranks which in the past were variously made up either of the scholar who indulged in Architecture as an elegant pastime, the painter or sculptor who regarded it as an allied province; the engineer, the art craftsman and the studious artisan. Any of these and all have been architects at one time or another but today the architect is none of them. He must combine the offices of artist, constructor and man of business. The range of his responsibilities covers aesthetics, engineering and finance. His obligation to his client, whatever the actual magnitude of his commission, is usually one of greater pecuniary importance than that client entrusts to any other professional man. Upon the soundness of his judgment depends the security of life of multitudes who use his buildings. Of him is required artistic performance of the highest order in the greatest of the fine arts, whose product is always on view, and universal and continuous in its influence. He is successful in his professional career only as he meets the exacting demands of these dissimilar functions, either of which might be regarded as a distinct vocation. It might well be questioned if any human being—much less every member of an entire class—could meet such demands by finding in his person the required mental and temperamental qualities. Unquestionably No! But that architects do successfully meet them is proven in numberless cases, where the requisite mind and temperament are associated in congenial companionship and effective co-operation.

The conditions which have so enlarged and complicated the practice of architecture have also rendered success possible. The commonplace that "we are the heirs of all the ages" is nowhere so true as in our own profession. The lessons and resources of history lie at our fingers' ends and all Europe at our doors. Scientific spirit and industrial development have unearthed and classified one and brought the other. Highly organized systems of technical education are available for our preparation for life work, and to aid in that work the services of specialists of every description abound on every hand. The age is that of the card index with everything in stock, duly labeled, ready at hand for immediate and effective use.

But in all this marvel of development and organization, of the multiplication of resources and the simplifying of labor, one everlasting truth shines with undimmed brilliance. There must be a

* Paper read at the annual meeting of the Ontario Association of Architects, Toronto, January, 1902.