

of Architects already give sufficient credentials to whoever desires them; but the American Institute, though more in evidence than formerly, is not known or recognized by the public to a corresponding extent as is the title of M.D., and leaves many able men out of its ranks, and occasionally excites antagonism. It is one thing to base one's pretensions upon known attainments, and another to base them upon membership with a body which must necessarily be fallible, and which is only lately donning the purple. Besides which, holding up the American Institute as a shibboleth does not lop off the dead wood of the profession, and the insistence upon attainment before practice does.

There is still another objection which will be made, that is, that the registration of architects is an autocratic and high-handed proceeding. This is based upon exactly the same error which considers that the best government is one where universal suffrage is allowed. A democracy of any kind averages things down before it begins to elevate. But while a democracy may be the best government, there is no need of a democracy in the profession of architecture. A profession, by its very name, implies the assumption of knowledge. My contention is that this assumption should be made a fact and that the only method of making it a fact is, by only allowing by law such men to be called architects as have shown reasons for being so called; in fact, to the legal registration of architects, and the institution of penalties for illegal use of the name. This will accomplish two ends: first, it will protect the public against charlatans; second, it will elevate the character of architects throughout the country. To my mind this is much more important than whether perspectives should be sent in competitions, or whether one style or another of architecture is the best to be found.

Our worst enemies are always to be found in our own ranks; the purpose should be to make them as harmless as possible. In the present condition of affairs the architect is called upon more and more frequently in matters of importance, but he has up to this time acted, been asked to act solely upon the basis of his personal reputation. How much more powerful would be such action if it could be the unanimous action of a body of men, that is, in matters of laying out of public improvements, of conceptions of large public undertakings! But the architect will always be crippled in the undertaking of reforms until the standing of his profession is fixed and acknowledged. By the requirements for registration a standard will at least be attempted.

Necessarily that standard will at first be low. The first thing which has to be recognized is, that all persons calling themselves architects at present must be allowed to retain that title. A law of this kind cannot be made retroactive.

Second, the laws will be State laws, as are those of physicians; and, as was recently forced upon the notice of the physicians of Massachusetts, all the quacks will emigrate to the State having the weakest law. That was what occasioned the recent registration of physicians in Massachusetts.

Next, graduates of architectural schools must be admitted, as no discrimination can be made between schools, although it would be well to supplement school training with office experience. So far proposed action may be indicated definitely.

But what is to be done with the large body of draughtsmen who do not go to the schools, and with the considerable number of people who attempt architecture with neither school nor office training of any account? It is not wise to accept the recommendation of architects in whose offices the draughtsmen have been. Manifest personal qualifications are necessary. To determine these, examinations will be required. At once the two different tendencies of architectural students are to be acknowledged—the one towards art, the other towards construction and mathematics. Examinations should be made in both, and honors should be given in both. If no honors are received, especially in design, the applicant should be debarred. And just here comes the question of assumption of titles conferred as an invitation of attainment. The result of examinations in construction, mathematics, strength of materials, etc., can readily be determined; that of the examinations in artistic ability requires much more consideration.

It has already been said that an architect is primarily an artist, and will be ultimately judged as an artist, therefore he should be tested as an artist. It may be urged that his faculties

may develop late. This is not usual with so-called artistic temperament, but in such a case he can try again. The examination for testing the capacity of design of an applicant cannot necessarily be more severe than school problems. It need not be as exacting in the matter of rendering, but it should test capabilities of handling plans, masses, and details, and it should also test creative skill.

By whom should such examinations be made? By a board of architects, not local, but from all over the country, appointed by the art commission of the city or State, if it possesses one, otherwise by the officers of the nearest Chapter of the Institute of American Architects. The art commission is suggested first, as it is a body representing the public more than do the Chapter of the Institute, and is constituted usually of men in recognized high positions.

Finally, in regard to the ethics of the profession. The Institute has not yet an established code of ethics, except that it does not tolerate thieves. When it produces a code, after its adoption it should be voted upon by the architects of the country, and as much of it as is approved by their vote should be made mandatory and a law, and those violating this law should be debarred from the exercise of their profession.

If there are any strong objections to be made to the suggestions here made, I have yet to hear them. If carried out they will go far to produce the following results:—

They will clear the profession of much undesirable material.

They will remove all vagueness in the minds of the public as to its purpose and the ability of its members.

They will tend to eliminate bad architecture and stimulate good architecture.

Once this has been done, the members of the architectural profession will be consulted in regard to the designing of all important buildings, as the physicians are in regard to public health. Confidence in the ability of its members once given, and the architects of America, who will then be worthy of the name as a body, as well as individually, can do more to make this country famous for its art than can any other body of men. We are establishing scholarships, schools, and prizes of architecture; let us make evident the purpose for which these are established by giving the men so honored worthy competitors in their practice. Only to-day, in talking this over with a lawyer, I remarked: "You lawyers went through this long ago. What do you find is the result?" His answer was this: "It never keeps out anyone who ought to be in; the only trouble with the legal restriction is, that it still lets a number in who ought to be out."—C. Howard Walker in the *Architectural Review*.

PRESERVING WOOD BY LIME.

SOMEONE who has been experimenting on the preservation of wood by the use of lime, gives the result as follows:—"I have for many years been in the habit of preparing home-grown timber of the inferior sort of fir, Scotch spruce and silver, by steeping it in a tank, or a hole dug in clay or peat, which was fairly water-tight, in a saturated solution of lime. Its effect on the sap-wood is to so harden it and fill up its pores that it perfectly resists the attack of the little wood-boring beetle, and makes it, in fact, equally as durable as the made wood. I had a mill which was lofted with Scotch fir prepared in this way in 1850, and it is in perfect preservation. The timber is packed as closely as it will lie in the tank, water is let in, and unslaked lime is thrown on the top and well stirred about. There is no danger that the solution will not find its way to everything in the tank. I leave the wood in the solution for two or three months, by which time an inch board will be fully permeated by it. Joists and beams would, of course, take a longer time for saturation; but in practice we find that the protection afforded by two or three months' steeping is sufficient, if the scantlings are cut to the sizes at which they are to be used."

As the summer season is well nigh over, the meetings of the Toronto Master Plumbers' Association will be shortly resumed.

The death is announced of Mr. David Mitchell, only son of Rev. David Mitchell, formerly a Presbyterian minister in Toronto, lately of Jersey City. The young man was only 22 years of age, and was employed in an architect's office in New York. His death was the result of an accident.