

"Since the birth of time, throughout all ages and nations, has the craft of the smith been held in repute by the people."—Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

### BY THE WAY.

It is interesting to learn the precautions taken to conceal the identity of the competitors in the recent competition for plans for the proposed University of California at San Francisco. The designs, it will be remembered, were lodged in the Musée Royale des Beaux-Arts, in Antwerp. There they came into the hands of Belgian officials and employees. Photography has been employed to demonstrate to the competitors and others how the designs were kept concealed until the hour arrived when they were to be brought before the jury. The cases containing the drawings were covered with paper, securely tied and sealed with wax bearing an official stamp. The door of the room containing them was also effectually sealed. The next stage was to prepare the drawings for inspection. A photograph shows that no less than thirty men and boys were employed to make stretchers and to mount the plans. Every indication of a motto or other clue to authorship was carefully concealed. The plans were then covered with paper, tied and sealed. There was no likelihood of prepossessing in favour of any design, or of prejudice against it, when a design came before the jury. Each had to depend on the impression which was made when it was revealed. There was no confusion or liability to confound the design of two competitors.

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THE Municipal Council of Paris has decided to give prizes to the architects and constructors of the six handsomest houses that may be erected during 1899. The owners will be exempted from half of the increased assessment for improvement to the properties. Fifty-two sets of plans have been handed in for a similar competition held last year. This is an excellent method of awakening public interest in architecture, and effecting an improvement in the character of building designs. The associations of architects of Ontario and Quebec should try to induce the cities of Montreal and Toronto to copy the example of Paris in this direction. Failing that, they should consider whether they themselves could afford to offer prizes which would induce architects to enter a competition of this character. The appointment of experts to judge the designs and award the prizes might be left in the hands of some competent and independent authority. I am of the opinion that a competition of this character, properly organized and conducted,

would direct public attention to architecture and awaken a widespread interest in the subject such as would not result from public lectures or any of the other methods which have been suggested from time to time to time at the architects' conventions.

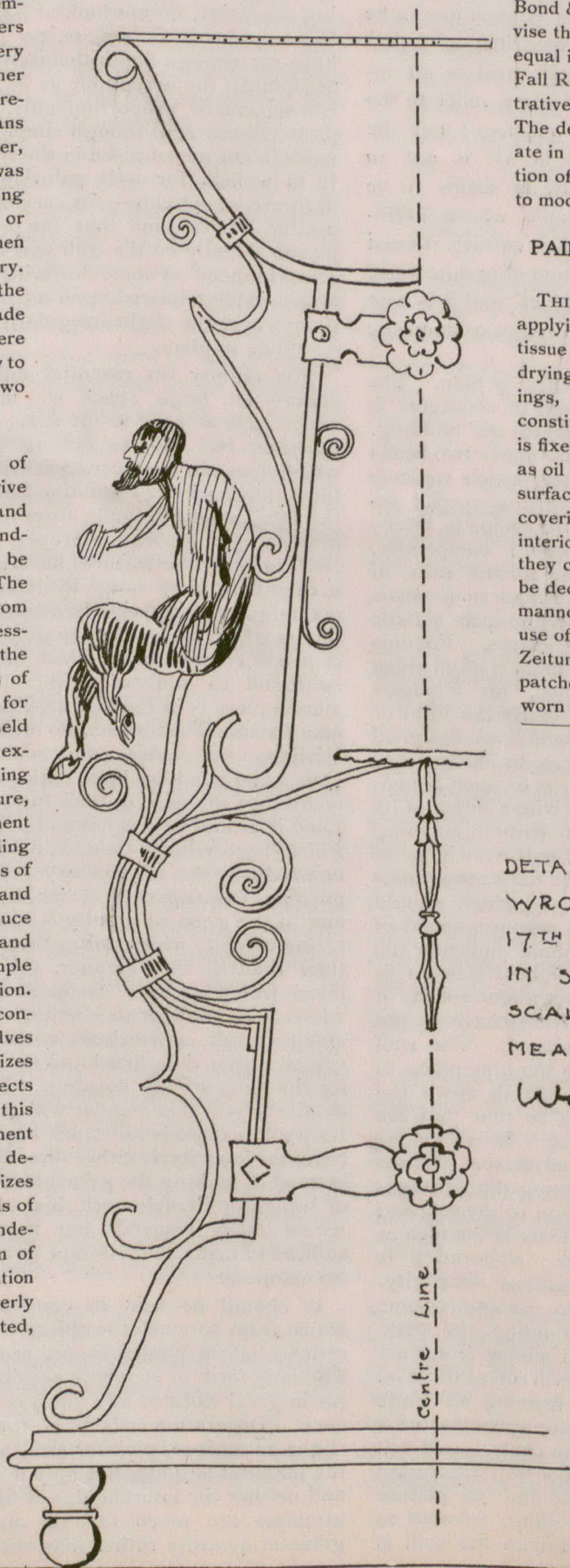
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In the construction and decoration of railway coaches and passenger steamers there has in the past been little demand for the services of Canadian architects. As a rule, in this class of work only the best materials are employed, and in many instances better results might have been attained if the disposition and treatment of them had been placed in the hands of skilled architects. This fact is being recognized by the Bertram Company, who have at present in hand the construction of the new steamer "City of Toronto." They have engaged the services of Messrs.

Bond & Smith, architects, to design and supervise the decorations of the new vessel which is to equal in character the steamers of the famous Fall River line. A series of relief panels illustrative of Canadian history will adorn the walls. The decoration of the saloon will also be elaborate in character. In like manner it is the intention of the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Co. to modernize all their steamers.

### PAINT SKIN COVERING FOR FLOORS, WALLS, ETC.

THIS covering is produced in Germany by applying oil paint or varnish paint on very thin tissue paper, reinforcing the first coat, after drying, by any desired number of further coatings, and decorating same so that the whole constitutes a strong, tough oil paint skin. This is fixed by means of an adhesive agent, such as oil or resin, putty or paste in sheets on the surfaces of the floor or wall. These paint skin coverings are an improvement on ordinary interior and decorative painting, inasmuch as they can be produced at a factory and can thus be decorated in a more tasteful and thorough manner than is possible in painting by the use of stencils and the like, says the "Farben Zeitung." Furthermore, the decorations can be patched and repainted by applying new sheets in worn out places.



DETAIL OF TRIPOD STAND,  
WROUGHT IRON. ITALIAN  
17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY,  
IN SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM  
SCALE— $\frac{1}{4}$  FULL SIZE  
MEASURED AND DRAWN BY  
William Rae.

Plastique Bordin, a paint to protect wood or iron against the action of acids, is said to be obtained by the melting together of resin with powdered charcoal, spermaceti and animal charcoal with admixture of linseed oil varnish and vaseline, the proportions varying and being adapted to the respective demands upon the elasticity of the coating. The preparation of the paint should take place shortly before application.