

ART AND CONCRETE.

One of the Most Handsome Buildings in Toronto is the Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression—Cement Plays an Important Part in its Construction.

There exists an erroneous idea that the entrance of concrete means the exit of art. To the man whose knowledge of cement and concrete is based upon hearsay cement is associated with sidewalks and huge square buildings only, both of which are more useful than ornamental. If told that vases, pedestals, wall panels, flower-boxes, altars, and fountains have been fashioned in cement it would be most probably news to him. Some very artistic work has been done with this material. The exterior of many vases which have been modelled in cement have possessed picturesque bas relief figures and scenes.

The claims of cement in its relation to art are becoming recognized rapidly. Not only is this noticeable in small ornamental work, but with large buildings. It is being proved by experience that an artistic building of cement construction is equally as satisfactory as one of cut stone. The Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression, which has recently been erected in Toronto, is a notable instance. The whole front is modelled in cement, after the famous temple at Athens, with four Corinthian pillars instead of eight forming the entrance, over which is inscribed the Greek words, "Kaaskat Aoon," which, translated, means, "The beautiful and the good." This is the only example of early Grecian architecture in Canada. The architect is Mr. W. R. Meade. The Canadian Art Stone Company, of Toronto, are the builders. Manufactured art stone is making rapid strides, especially in heavy construction, for which it is well adapted. Another example in Toronto of cement stone work is the handsome Press Bureau at the Exhibition grounds, a building which also was erected by the Canada Art Stone Co.

It has been argued that when cement or concrete is used to reproduce a classic design the originality cannot be retained. Mr. William Price, who last year read a paper before the Association of American Portland Cement Manufacturers, stated that in the case of classic orders or their modifications in the Renaissance, a frank succession of blocks and columns set upon plinths will be found, or directly on basement wall, cap, abacus, freize and cornice, all built up, stone upon stone, with major joints marked by mouldings, bands and ornament, a logical, built structure. But, he added, if an attempt was made to follow such a system of design in a plastic material, or even a material like wood, the results would be disastrous to true architecture. The design would become a matter of external form, not of the true expression of methods and materials used.

"Concrete," he continued, "is built with shovel and trowel, and its proper ornamentation should be either cast in moulds or such as can be run or fashioned on the work, with the addition of such color ornament as may be obtained by the use of terra cotta or other protecting material used as wall copings, roofs, pier caps, etc., and such other flat color ornamentation as may be produced

by the use of tiles, marble, glass or other material which is evidently applied to the surface. It is evident that this would and should make a wide departure from classic forms and accepted styles, that it means, in fact, a new architecture, although it will not be necessary to abandon all precedent. But in a material so plastic, the forms of openings and mouldings may be expected to vary much from those necessary to an architecture dependent on arches and lintels. There is more to be learned in the Spanish or Californian and Mexican varieties of Spanish than any other accepted type. Their plastered walls, tile roofs, and wall copings suggest concrete more than they do brick, and their domes and curved pediments are already suggestive of plastic rather than block construction."

But in the case of the Margaret Eaton School the use of cement has not necessitated a wide departure from the classic form or the accepted style. Neither has it meant a new architecture. It is an exact reproduction of the early Grecian Doric period. The process used in the erection of the front of the school is not new. In Germany, the home of cement stone, a great deal of similar construction has been carried on for more than a century. From a purely financial point of view, this form of construction possesses advantages over stone. In this particular instance, there was a saving made of some 40 per cent. by the utilization of cement.

Such has been the curious antipathy to cement, when the proposal is to use it artistically, that the manufacturer has invented special names for it. It has been called Artificial Stone, Pompeian Stone, and other similar names. It is time that such disguises were discarded. Cement and concrete, from the artistic point of view, can stand alone upon their merits. In the Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression we have an example of how the architect and cement manufacturer may combine and produce an excellent example of classic architecture. This structure is one of the most beautiful public buildings in the city of Toronto. And it is a triumph for cement.

CEMENT WANTED.

The city of Brandon, Man., invites tenders up to April 11th for the supply of from 6,000 to 8,000 barrels of Portland cement.

USEFUL POCKET BOOK.

The Stinson-Reeb Builders' Supply Co., of 188 William Street, Montreal, has issued a handsome vest pocket note book, which they will be pleased to furnish builders who may write for them.

The Manitoba Art Stone Company is being promoted in Winnipeg. A deed of incorporation will be obtained shortly, and the company will undertake the business of cement products. Both Toronto and Winnipeg capital is interested.