

# "CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER" COMPETITION FOR A CITY HOUSE.

THIS competition, announced in our December number, has resulted in the sending in of nine sets of designs, among which are three of decided merit. It will be remembered that the house was to cost not more than \$4,000, and was to be for a young architect having a family of three children and an income of about \$2,500. The lot was only 30 ft. wide and on the south side of the street, and the matter of direct sunlight to as many rooms as possible was to be a factor in the merit of the designs. The Architectural Guild appointed Messrs. Darling, Norman Dick and Burke a Committee to decide upon the respective merits of the designs.

The first place is given to "Soleil," (Mr. Arthur Wells). The plan has been admirably worked out, indicating most painstaking effort and careful attention to every detail necessary for the working of the domestic machinery with the least degree of friction and annoyance—a point which would unfailingly commend itself to the housewife. The placing of the axis of the drawing room north and south is rather unique for a house on a narrow lot, and was a bold move to secure two or three hours of sunshine in a north room. The dining room is admirably lighted and would make a very cheerful room. The kitchen, though a trifle small, is well arranged for the placing of stove table, and for cross ventilation by means of the windows, a very important point where the stove has to be used in both summer, and winter. The arrangement of side entrance, stairs and pantries could scarcely be improved upon. The planning of the first floor is also excellent, especially the relation of the bath room to the family bed room, enabling it to be used as a dressing room. The situation of the sitting room and studio would reduce the bedroom accommodation too much when the size of the family is taken into consideration, but the disposition would be excellent with a smaller family. Most mothers would not be content to banish all the children to the attic.

The author has, however, anticipated this by the suggestion, that the studio could be placed in the attic and one of the first floor rooms utilized as a bed room. The basement is well laid out. While several windows are placed in the side walls, no room is dependant on them for its lighting, and yet they are useful for ventilation and give a certain amount of light. The planning as a whole is compact and simple, and indicates the hand of one who has either had much experience, or has given close and analytical study to the problem.

The elevations are a little immature and indicate some uncertainty in regard to detail, and yet are conceived in a broad and artistic spirit, their very reserve being a point in favor of a design intended for an architect's own house. The rendering is fair, though somewhat timid; far better this, however, than to overdo it in a more ambitious attempt. The owner would probably have a hard time in getting his plans passed in the Commissioners' office in a city like Toronto. So much wooden construction and tile-hung work on the first floor would send the officials into a fit.

"Au Revoir," (Mr. E. Wilby), is given second place. If his planning had been equal to his elevations, he would have run "Soleil" very close for first place. The plan is an excellent one, based to some extent on local lines, but sufficiently progressive to indicate considerable experience and study. The location of the study would not be at all conducive to the quiet and peace which an architect would require if engaged in serious work at his home. The author does not suggest any other place, but with so commodious a house a room upstairs could easily be spared for the purpose, allowing the ground floor room to be used as a family sitting room, although it is not well enough lighted for either purpose. The parlor would be an entirely useless room, except the few rays which might be borrowed from the study for an hour or two in the morning. The serving pantry is rather publicly placed, but gains in accommodation by its position. The back stairs starting out of it without means of shutting off sounds and smells at either top or bottom is a decided defect. Doors should be placed in both positions if immunity from these is to be properly secured. The kitchen has a plethora of windows, three being given it, while advantage is not taken of a good opportunity to secure cross ventilation. The bed rooms are well disposed, with good closet accommodation, except the children's room, which of all rooms requires ample provision.

The front is a good piece of work, like "Soleil," broad and artistic in spirit and exhibiting more maturity in power of design, while the rendering is crisp and sparkling, indicative of much facility and practice with the pen. The double gable with its two sets of couplet windows is very effective, but we doubt its suitability to our climate even though the valleys be reduced to a minimum as suggested by the author. The prize for the best perspective is awarded to "Au Revoir," "Soleil" not sending one, and that by "His Aspirant" being the only other worthy of praise or comment.

The third position is given to "His Aspirant," (Mr. Murray White). A plan containing many points of merit, and which, but for one or two unfortunate slips, due evidently to want of sufficient study, would have made a good run for second place.

The parlor, two children's rooms and also the nursery, which is placed in the attic, would get no direct sunlight. If the positions of nursery and spare room had been reversed, and a south

dormer inserted, this defect would have been of less account. The position of the child's room is faulty in that it cannot be reached from the hall. The rearrangement of the two front rooms would have made this possible. The position of doors into serving pantry would expose the kitchen. If the sink had been placed in the west wall, the doors could have been better placed. The author steals light on the west side from his neighbor, who, if of a crusty disposition, would probably erect a high and ugly boarding in front of the staircase windows by way of revenge. The external treatment is dignified and scholarly, and would be considered a creditable piece of design in any office. The rendering is not so crisp as that of No. 2, and is somewhat inclined to stiffness, the detail being brought with almost geometrical accuracy; the lights, however, are well managed, and the accessories of trees and foreground are a decided help to the perspective.

The Committee were agreeably impressed with the general excellence of all three of the above designs, and have to congratulate the authors and the Toronto Sketch Club upon the distinct advance visible in the work of its members. They feel safe in saying that if these designs were executed side by side they would present an artistic and admirable trio of houses—houses sober in design and devoid of anything approaching the unrefined, clap-trap, rocky sort of design, which may be the fashion to-day and discarded to-morrow by a fickle public.

"Nox" is placed fourth with a very good plan indeed, generally similar in its layout to that of "Soleil" but not so well arranged. The hall is too pretentious for a house of this class, and its spaciousness is obtained at the expense of the dining room. The latter would be gloomy, the windows, which are only in the south side, being shaded by the projection of the upper storey, some 5 ft. A window near the north end would be a great improvement, lighting that end of the table and enabling a person sitting at the fire to read with some degree of comfort. The drawing room is well placed, and the position of windows would secure a glint of the western sun during three or four months of the year. The servants' room on first floor breaks badly into the library, and would be much better placed in attic being too small to be of much use. The exterior is better in conception than in its rendering. Like "Soleil" it is timid, and the detail indicates immaturity, but the attempt at breadth of treatment and the absence of fussiness indicates that the author is upon the right track. He needs practice in drawing, and especially in regard to his tree-work.

"Ambition" comes fifth in position. The amount of work which he has put upon his drawings while indicating a laudable industry, is almost painful to behold. If the decision rested in the hands of a jury of "citizens," upon whom a multiplication of lines and excessive elaboration would produce a "stunning" effect, this effort might have had some chance for a prize, but with a jury of architects this very fussiness was its own condemnation.

The plan, as a plan, is of good ordinary type, but the question of adaption to the site has apparently been ignored. The dining room is lighted solely by a bay at its eastern and narrow end, and this bay extends to within a few inches of the boundary line, leaving a space of not more than 3/4 feet between it and the wall of the adjoining house. The same fault applies to the bed room above. The only rooms receiving appreciable benefit from the direct rays of the sun are the kitchen and the servants' bed room above it. The draughtsmanship is neat to a fault, and the rendering of perspective better than the design. The author needs to study the methods of good draughtsmen and to study English house design and the more sober efforts of educated men in the eastern states in lieu of designs from cheap American publications which are designed to catch the eye of the jig-saw carpenter. The rest of the designs are scarcely worthy of classification, but may be mentioned in order, as follows: "Grotto," "B," "Hellas Libronium," and "Horse Shoe." All of these designs indicate that their authors have engaged in no serious architectural study, and have not been in the habit of seeing good work or good publications of any kind. The impression conveyed to the jury by their efforts was that the authors were either the veriest beginners, or that they had mistaken their calling.

The jury do not desire to discourage any aspirant to architectural fame, but at the same time consider it a kindness to intimate that ultimate success may be hoped for only by those who are willing to engage in earnest and devoted study, combined with a certain talent and aptitude for the work.

## MONTREAL.

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The annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers took place this year in the Society's new rooms in Montreal. There was shown to be a falling off in the membership. Mr. H. P. Vantelle's paper on bridge construction was awarded the President's medal. The officers elected for the current year are: Sir Casimir Gzowski, president; J. Kennedy, E. P. Hannaford and J. F. Lynch, vice-presidents; H. Wallis, treasurer; H. T. Bovey, secretary; F. Chndwick, librarian; council—Percival St. George, F. R. S. Brown, W. T. Jennings, H. N. Rutan, K. W. Blackwell, F. N. Gibson, E. A. Hoare, Joseph Hobson, Sir J. Trutch, T. Moore, P. A. Patterson, W. D. Anderson, J. D. Barnett, C. E. W. Dodwell, H. A. Donkin. The annual business meeting was followed by the usual banquet at the Windsor Hotel.

The firm of Nelson & Clift, architects, has been dissolved.

Mr. John James Browne, architect, has been appointed a Commissioner of the Superior Court.