

stone is now easily obtained at a fair price; steel and iron are not as formerly almost prohibitive in cost: in every direction may be found greater facilities and lower prices, which, together with a demand for sounder methods created by the knowledge of what is being done in other places near at hand will quickly bring about better results.

But it is in her residential and suburban architecture that Victoria shows to best advantage, and it is a pleasant change to leave the business portion of the town and wander along the roads with their oak trees and wild roses, the bracken and the broom growing luxuriantly up to the very macadam. There are to be found many charmingly designed houses with a home-like, cosy air about them, that is really delightful; the close cropped bright green lawns, the well grown hollies, birches, poplars and spreading oaks, the laurels, box hedges, roses, and the wandering, rambling dark green ivy, all combine to create a resemblance to English houses so often claimed for many Victoria homes; as there is perhaps nothing so altogether enchanting as a certain type of English Country House, this is no small praise; better still, it is not altogether undeserved.

Victoria's gardens and the fine panoramic view of the Straights del Fuca and the Olympian Range are her great glories, and indeed neither the gardens nor the view are easily excelled anywhere; the pleasant equable climate too, makes it possible to enjoy both of these advantages to the fullest extent. Moreover the country round about, which is a capital mixture of cultivated and virgin land, is well intersected with roads; perhaps it is but natural that the Victorians should a little neglect the "City" for the outskirts, the attractions of the latter being duly considered.

Though many of the better houses are designed on English lines with red roofs well gabled, and upper stories and gable ends pannelled in a more or less happy imitation of half timber, there are also some very refined examples of American picturesque;—two houses on Rockland Avenue being perhaps the best; they are executed in shingles, are subdued in color and the lines are simple and dignified, relief being afforded by admirable fenestration; the porte cochere in one instance is piquancy itself.

There is a tendency to utilize the rough-cast and half timber effect without restraint and without breadth, a tendency which at times degenerates into positive meaninglessness; there are not a few instances where weather boards have been pannelled to represent half timbering by means of dark painted 1 x 6 framing planted on them; such poor subterfuges cannot be too strongly condemned for they are not even successful as shams; it may be frankly conceded that it is doubtful taste to imitate the old half timber construction by framing panels on rough lining and filling in the spaces with roughcast, still the effect is there when cleverly applied and with feeling, and viewed through the dark green foliage of the oaks is most pleasing.

Many houses have good square halls with brick fire-places which harmonize well with the dark brown tones of the pannelled cedar wainscots and beamed ceilings. Cedar is very freely used in the interior fittings and the plaster walls and ceilings (where not pannelled) are usually kalsomined—indeed both cedar and kalsomine are so much in evidence one is tempted to conclude that there really can be too much of a good thing, especially when it excludes other modes of decoration. Surely in these days of Norris & Dresser wall papers, Voysey, Sedding and Crane friezes, dados and ceilings, place might be found for one or another of the many charming color schemes and all our patterns that can be procured at an expense which is slight compared with the cost of the simplest panneling.

Here, as elsewhere, novelty is too frequently and evidently striven after with the usual results,—strained effects, exaggerations and lack of repose; why should so many gables, which as plain honest gables would be pleasing enough, suffer from violent irruptions of cut and fancy shingles, turnings, fretwork, brackets, finials overladen with detail, setting sun panels, and what not? All these could be discarded to the advantage of the client's pocket, to the infinite gain of the design (which is injuriously affected not enhanced by all this rubbish) and also to the architect himself, by impelling him to more truthful modes of expression, to say nothing of the poor but honest critic who is frequently driven to desperation by the endless repetition of these errors in elementary good taste.

Domestic building in British Columbia is universally executed in timber and that medium will long continue to be principally employed; it has been declared that there can be no such thing as a timber architecture in the higher sense, which may be more or less true, but whoever propounded that theory certainly never intended that it should be inferred that design in timber should be

confined to imitating the features of a nobler order. Timber buildings should bear their origin and construction on their faces in the unmistakable manner that stone and brick structures bear theirs'. When we have had to design in a distinctive manner for the material the above statement may be successfully challenged: at present we are in Jackdaw with-borrowed-feather-stage, the tendency on the part of the Jackdaw to moult, the moulting and the rather bedraggled fine plumes producing a truly lamentable result; doubtless the peacock's feathers are sometimes very cleverly applied, nevertheless Jack in his honest coat of sober hue, his pearly grey necktie, together with a sturdy form, strong bill and clear bright eye, is a picture, rustic if you please, but cheerful, self-contained and dignified enough, too.

We look to you, Mr. Editor, to support our plea for greater attention to breadth and simplicity of design, for long lines, wide gables, deep projections and consequently good grouping and fine contrasts of light and shade, plenty of good plain surface; help it to be understood that one carefully drawn moulding, one feelingly profiled turning is better ornament than the most ingenious agglomeration of ill designed detail, and some of the worst features of our timber architecture will become discredited.

MODERN SYSTEMS OF INTERIOR WIRING.*

By L. B. CHUBBUCK.

FORTUNATELY, in this climate the small amount of moisture in the atmosphere has practically no effect on inside wiring, though in foggy districts near the sea coast, and especially in England, a great deal of trouble is experienced from grounds caused by a film of moisture forming over the surface of the fittings. In regard to wires imbedded in plaster, the effect on the insulation is uncertain, depending on the composition of the plaster and the covering on the wire. In some cases the alkalies in the plaster soon break down all insulation on the wire, while there are many instances of specimens of wire testing well after being imbedded in plaster for many years.

To prevent any liability of leakage or chemical action on the wire, it is now supported throughout on porcelain knobs or cleats, and where passing through timber or plaster is surrounded by a porcelain tube. In Fig. 1 is shown a sketch of this method of

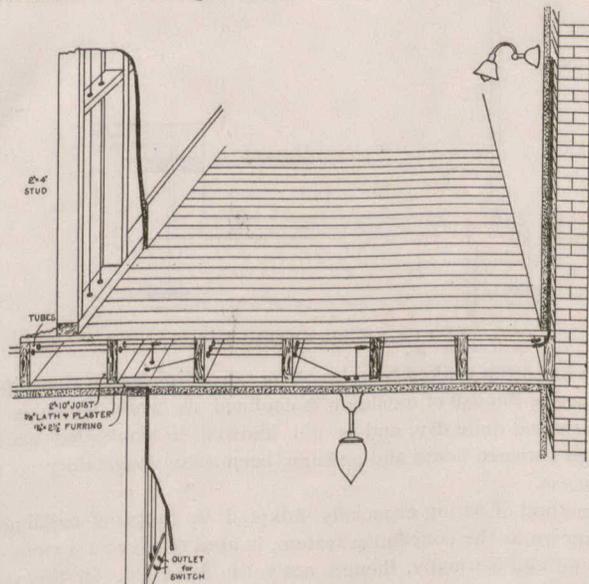


FIG. 1.—PORCELAIN TUBE WORK.

wiring as installed in the ordinary style of building. As may be seen from the figure, there is considerable open space in the partition walls, under floors, and in many cases on the outer brick walls, in which the wiring may be concealed. The joists, studding, etc., are bored to receive the porcelain tubes, and the wires run through these tubes, which are made in different sizes and lengths, depending on the size of the wire and the thickness of the timber they are to pass through. The wiring of the building is most readily done while the building is under construction and before the lathing and plastering is commenced. In finished buildings, where the wiring is to be concealed, the problem is more complicated, and to avoid breaking the plaster, a number of devices are used by different contractors. In passing down the partition walls the best work is done by using bits with shanks that can be lengthened to twelve feet or more, and boring through

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