

DRAWING AT THE EIGHTEEN CLUB
EXHIBITION, TORONTO.

The distinguishing characteristic of this club's annual exhibition has always been the number of American drawings which the club, as a section of the Architectural League of America, has had the opportunity of presenting. On the present occasion, the circuit exhibition of the league not being due, the local drawings and photographs of work by members of the Club and other Canadian exhibitors were supplemented by some loans from American designers, of which the principal contributions and the conspicuous feature of the exhibition were Mr. Hornbostel's enormous drawings of the New York bridges over the East river. Of these we have been able to reproduce a small part of one drawing about five-eighths of the original size. The original drawing is 7 feet 2 inches in length and the portion here presented, is 1 foot 4 inches in height. It is not the largest of the drawings nor is it the most impressive; it is simply the most compassable for reproduction. Nor can the half-tone process be said to properly represent the delicacy of the original; it simply gives a fair representation of the character of the handling. The drawing is done with a soft and black lead pencil, and, apparently, upon tracing paper—that pure white tracing paper that gives such an attractive line. The work was evidently done with great freedom. Not that there is any mere generalization for the sake of the black and white effect; the most sketchy passages are still precise, representing something definite. But there is no sign of hesitation, no muddling; and, indeed, in looking round the large room that is filled by Mr. Hornbostel's drawings, it is evident that he must have worked rapidly or he might be drawing yet. The drawings are a feat for which one must seek a parallel among the facile draughtsmen of the Renaissance.

The justification for these drawings is, no doubt, a reasonable anxiety on the part of the municipal authorities as to the appearance of such enormous structures; impending over the city like creations of a dream, and dwarfing everything in sight. The portion represented in our illustration sheets is less than a quarter of the actual bridge, and there is an additional mile or more of approach at each end, which is still of great bulk and propped up above the tops of the buildings. There was good reason to doubt whether the city would not appear to be crushed under the weight. That is a point upon which the very slight geometrical drawing, which also appears in this exhibition and which would be enough for the purposes of the designer or constructor, throws no light. A view of the city with the bridge in place is the only thing to give assurance of the result, and fortunately Mr. Hornbostel had the graphic skill to represent the scene. The scale of the structure may be gathered also from the section of the anchorage pier of another bridge in the illustration sheets. The size of the hall contained within the pier, as measured by the figures, is striking.

The increasing scale of buildings since steel construction began to develop has often raised the question where the stopping point will be: these drawings suggest a doubt whether there is any stopping point. It is to its tall buildings that New York owes what picturesque interest it has. The bridges, when completed, will add to that interest in the same line. The

improvements to the City Hall Square, also drawn by Mr. Hornbostel—an extensive clearing surrounded by lofty buildings, where the City Hall, in the middle, looks like a cottage, and human figures have almost reached the vanishing point—appear now like the natural course of affairs. And if Prof. Despradelle's great design (see p. x.) for a municipal building, to cover sixteen of the New York blocks and rise 125 storeys in height, is ever executed, no doubt we shall regard it as the latest but not the last.

This building would make a remarkable drawing, and a picturesque treatment would show it best, for it would be beyond the limits of detailed representation as it would be of detailed perception.

But such drawing is not, properly speaking, architectural drawing, and it is a question how far it is a good kind of drawing for architects to do, except in a fragmentary way, to check their work and also to stimulate it. Drawings of effect, that is to say, are useful, to an architect, for enquiry and for suggestion, while the work is in progress. When it comes to assertion—such is the effect—the architect's work is done; and it wastes his time to do this kind of work, if he can get anyone else to do it. Architectural drawing is in fact a study not of beauty but of the facts that go to make it. It is scientific rather than artistic, and the drier the light in which the facts are represented the less chance there is of illusion.

Mr. Wilson Eyre's drawings are a treat, but imitators had better beware. The set of three drawings in one frame, from which our illustration of Mr. Eyre's work has been extracted, cannot be said to be unuseful, and there is a practicalness about the plan in the foreground which makes a great part of the interest of the drawing, particularly, by the way, in an exhibition singularly lacking in plans and much impaired in usefulness thereby; but the drawings have a decorative value that is pictorial and suggests the suspicion that they have the pictorial virtue of idealization; a quality which, if it carries the truth with it, does not carry the whole dull truth. With the flowery theme of gardens (with which all Mr. Eyre's drawings of this kind are concerned) his graphic methods are judicious, if not inevitable, and are certainly a delight to the beholder, but, where the beholder is a client and the subject is a house, he may reasonably ask if the house will look like that.

Our illustration of Messrs. Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson's church at Cobasset is reproduced chiefly on account of its interest as the realization of a well known drawing, which is probably in the collection of most of our readers. Part of the virtue of the design—the lodgement upon the rock—is there; but the missing belfry, which crowned the composition, got its value from the plainness of the rest which without it seems plain indeed. But it would not suit its rock so well if it were not. As it is, it looks as if it had grown there—a desirable characteristic for Gothic architecture in America.

There were 1,147 new dwellings erected in Montreal during the year, in spite of high wages and equally high prices of building material. That general rise in rents last spring was more encouraging to the landlords than other conditions were the reverse.