

*Is there a Possibility of a New Style of Architecture?*

his raw materials in masses, so as to produce agreeable effects of light and shade. But he must go much further than this, to produce anything worthy of being mentioned in comparison with the masterpieces of ancient or modern Architecture. There must be beauty of detail as well as of outline, and play of light and shade on surfaces as well as in contrasting masses. He would now have to go on to express the construction by suitable detail, and enrich it with appropriate ornament, so as to form a beautiful and harmonious whole. If, with the limitations we have assumed, he were able to accomplish this, he would thereby prove himself such a heaven-born genius as has never yet appeared in the world. All his ideas of outline of masses and play of light and shade and beauty of form would have been derived from a class of objects entirely different in shape, proportion, color and texture, from those with which he was now called upon to deal. He would be practically in the position of a student, say of electrical science, who had studied the theory of electricity but had never seen a dynamo or other electrical machine. Such a person would probably discover on taking his first model to the patent office that he had wasted his time in inventing again something that had been invented in the very infancy of the science. Our designer would be in the same position. So far as Architecture is concerned, he would be in the position of a child or a savage, and his best efforts would inevitably be crude or puerile.

Now let us suppose the same problem presented to an architect trained in the modern or eclectic school, the sole proviso being that his design should be beautiful, but absolutely devoid of style. Would it be possible for him to divest his mind of all his accumulated knowledge of the architectural forms and details and ideas of the old styles, as a slate is cleaned off with a damp sponge? Is it not more likely that from the very first steps in the arrangement of his plan he would be influenced by recollections of the old styles? He could not divest himself of the influence on his taste of those buildings which he had admired and studied. Try as he might, he would find recollections of basilica, or temple, or cathedral, or mosque, suggesting ideas as to the treatment of his raw materials, and insensibly he would find himself designing in some familiar style. He could not help himself, because style consists not merely in ornamentation, but also in structural form and disposition of mass. So the questions of style and external treatment have to be kept in mind even in the arrangement of the ground plan. The consideration of the nature of the various materials alone would bring him face to face with the question of style. Is the ruling motive to be the beam or the arch? This might not be determined by local circumstances, and so the one system might be as available