

Mr. Archibald criticised the designs. After the criticism a number of lantern slides of recent and contemporary work was exhibited and remarked on by the meeting generally. The slides illustrated, amongst other buildings, Parliament Houses, London, England; the Law Courts; the British Museum; St. George's Hall and Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; and a number of the works of John Belcher, R. Norman Shaw, T. Colcutt and others.

On the 25th October Mr. Alexander Wright spoke on the Renaissance Architecture of Italy, taking W. J. Anderson's History of the Subject as the basis of his remarks. The speaker summarized the contents of the book, illustrating each point from an independent standpoint and bringing into relief the author's special excellence in the criticism of architectural design. This was further impressed by the exhibition of a large number of slides of the most important buildings of the period treated of; Mr. Anderson's views being referred to in each case. At the close of the address some general discussion took place and a vote of thanks was accorded to the lecturer.

PROF. NOBBS ON DECORATIVE HERALDRY.

The club met, on the evening of the 8th of November, to listen to a discourse on Decorative Heraldry by Prof. Nobbs of McGill University. The Professor first gave a broad view of the subject, pointing out that heraldry holds a high place in Architectural decoration by reason of its lending significance, and thus giving life to ornament. Proportion rather than ornament is no doubt the first and great essential of all architectural design, in spite of what Mr. Ruskin has almost persuaded us to believe, but nevertheless ornament without significance is worse than useless. The two great sentiments expressed by decorative arts are, first, religious veneration, and second the mark of ownership by a person or a community. The latter is the sphere of decorative Heraldry.

The lecturer proceeded to point out how natural heraldry, as exemplified in the totem worship of savage tribes and in the composite symbolic figures of early civilizations, formed the basis of that scientific heraldry which reached its growth in the fourteenth century. The reason for this was the growth of a social system, with the family as a starting point, and of the ordered gradation of authority known as the feudal system.

The subject matter of heraldry is always closely associated with dress. The familiar term 'coat of arms' applied to the group of shield, helmet and helmet crest implies this. The bend or diagonal band adorning many shields may have been derived and in particular cases certainly did originate in the fact of a man wearing a brilliantly coloured sword belt at the time of his performing the act for which he received the right to bear arms, and the fess or horizontal stripe across the middle of a shield may be taken similarly to represent a sash. What more frequently happened in later times, however, was that the bearings of the shield were transferred to the dress of the holder. Thus, in the fourteenth century, the idea of heraldry permeated all ornament and was developed with keen appreciation and artistic skill. A long period of deterioration in the quality of heraldic designing set in at the time when the shield and helmet began to be disused as defensive armour, and, though the science persisted, the artistic life went out of it. The revival of

good heraldry at the present day was not at all due to persons proud of their right to bear arms but simply to the better decorative designers of the Victorian era, who saw the ornamental possibilities and the high artistic value of heraldry properly regulated.

As regards the present day ideas of how a coat of arms should be designed for architectural or any other decorative purpose, several mistaken notions are very widely spread which might be avoided by keeping in view the fact that there is a certain number of rules of good usage which should not be transgressed, yet within these there is considerable room for elasticity in the matter of design. The first of these common mistakes is to suppose that the coat of arms once drawn, the exact form and proportion of every part is inflexibly fixed. The shield for instance is never limited to any particular shape, with the single reservation that a gentleman's arms are usually portrayed on something with a real or fanciful resemblance to a shield whilst the arms which a lady bears in her own right are represented on a lozenge or diamond shaped background. A second common error is to suppose that the cross hatched or dotted backgrounds, which were really introduced by engravers as a means of indicating the color which they could not render otherwise, are some essential part of a coat of arms. They are on the contrary an ugly invention, and should be avoided in all good heraldry. A third mistake is to suppose that a crest is something that can be used apart. It is not a crest at all unless it is upon the helmet, and the helmet ought to appear only over the shield bearing the arms themselves. Fourthly it is common to suppose that the right to bear arms is inherent in persons bearing certain family names. If people do not know that they have the right to bear certain arms they should make enquiries of the heraldic authorities and not appropriate what belongs to others.

Coming to the question of designing coats of arms, Prof. Noble emphasized the point that the written description, or blazon as it is called, is the first essential thing to have. Examples of the same coat of arms vary according to the decorative requirements of the case, but in no case must the design contradict or fail to comply with the blazon.

Heraldic practice in regard to ordinary divisions of the shield, charges, augmentations of honour, marks of cadence, and marshalling was explained and illustrated by numerous diagrams in colour specially prepared for the occasion. Amongst other things the composition of the union jack was analysed. Helmets and their historical and decorative varieties were discussed, and, finally, a number of lantern slides were exhibited showing the application of heraldry in stone, wood, iron, stained glass, etc., and with this the lecturer brought his remarks to a close.

The lot purchased by the Toronto Builders Exchange, on the N. W. corner of Bay and Adelaide streets, Toronto, with the intention of erecting an office building on it, is to be sold again. An essential part of the scheme was to have been a bank which would undertake part of the cost of the building. But a canvass for stockholders was not sufficiently successful to warrant proceeding with the scheme and it has been abandoned. But some individual members of the Exchange, believing the lot in itself to be a good investment, have formed a syndicate to hold the lot for sale. The house now standing upon the lot is a survival of the earliest days of Toronto, when ploughshares were commoner than planes, and the most modern improvement was the substitution of horses for oxen.