

42 Correspondence, MIT, 1865-1866.

WARE MC14

My dear Mr. Thurber. You have once or twice made the suggestion that the Institute of Technology is likely presently to take up the problem of Architectural Education, and that you hope to avail of the experience Mr Van Buren and I have had of late with our pupils in the solution of it. In thinking the matter over it has occurred to me that I may perhaps best serve your present purpose by answering the questions you raised somewhat more exactly than I could do at the moment. I will not apologise for going into the matter somewhat at length as I take it for granted that in taking up so complicated and difficult a problem you are glad to receive suggestions, and are most pleased when they run most into detail.

Let me say in the first place that next to a School of Mining a school of Architecture seems to me just the thing for you to take up. It is eminently adapted to the wants of the community and to the resources of the School. There is not now in the country any

adequate instructions in Construction and in Design none whatever, while the demand for skilled draughtsmen and competent architects is rapidly increasing in every part of the country. To meet this want would require a comparatively slight extension of your programme, the requisite teaching in physics, chemistry, Mathematics, Descriptive Geometry, mechanical and free-hand drawing and the elements of design being already as I understand in contemplation, and it would from the moment of its establishment afford a practical end which these would subserve and give to each of these studies the definite direction and immediate purpose which is essential to their successful pursuit. Perhaps no one branch of study would serve to organize so many others.

The extension of the programme to meet the special wants of the student of architecture would involve ~~the~~ instruction in architectural composition and design, which is of course the main thing, to which all the rest is but auxiliary; of the methods to

be followed in these classes I will say a word bye and bye. But in the region between these studies and the merely general and elementary courses already established there is an extensive region necessary to be gone over by the student, but which is at present almost unexplored and in which a great deal of labour must be spent before a road can be established though it ^{is made} practicable for your classes. They should be furnished with information, in the shape of Lectures, upon the history of Architecture, the principles of constructive design, the theory of architectural ornamentation and of the laws of proportion, of harmony, and of geometrical & naturalistic decoration, all these upon the side of the Fine Arts, and upon the other side instruction ought to be given by lectures, laboriously prepared, upon the various mechanic arts employed in building, so as to impart a theoretical knowledge of their principles and processes, and practical & useful information in regard to estimating and surveying work,

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and the organisation and superintendence of workmen, the keeping of accounts and regulation of payments, the drawing up of specifications and contracts, and the customs which regulate the intercourse of architects with their clients and with the mechanics they employ and the laws upon which they ultimately rest. The more strictly scientific subjects of lighting, heating, ventilation, and acoustics would of course have to be included.

This looks like a formidable list and perhaps I was wrong in calling such an extension of your programme slight, though much of such a course would not be exclusively architectural but would use and bye some also for the students of industrial design and of engineering. But it is not so formidable as it looks either in regard to the time it would require or the number of instructors it would employ. On many of these topics only a few lectures would be re-

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quired, and many of the courses need
to be given successively by the same
instructor. Certain topics would re-
quire to be treated by experts and
the Institute would have to call
in from time to time the aid of
the best men the community of-
fers to speak with authority and
inspiration upon the speciality to
which their lives are given. But
very many of these topics, even those
most difficult to discuss, are sus-
ceptible of perfectly satisfactory
treatment by means of what I
may call a merely literary me-
thod. The geometrical theory of pro-
portions, for example, is a subject
upon which a great deal has been
said by able men and which con-
stantly comes up for discussion
without any conclusion being
reached. It is too important to
be passed over in silence, while

only one man in ten thousand could
be expected to have anything to say
on the subject worth hearing. But
any intelligent person by collecting
and collating what has been said
on this subject, discovering the points
of agreement and of contradiction among
his authors, would be able at the
conclusion of his studies to form a
more intelligent opinion on the gen-
eral question than is probably in
existence, and to convey to your
classes a greater amount of use-
ful information ^{upon it} ~~than~~ than ever was
imparted, and the same may be
said of most of the other topics I
have enumerated. Literature is
full of fragmentary discussions
of great value, but they are as
much out of use as if they had
never been printed, and it is in
the power of the Institute by the
use of this merely literary proce-
dure not only to compensate
itself for the absence of men of

original genius, in those walks
where men of genius are not readi-
ly to be found, but to do a great
and much needed service by
bringing into use these hidden trea-
sures of thought & criticism. In
regard to the "practical" lectures
the same work is to be done, but for
a somewhat different reason. There
are excellent treatises on most of
these subjects, but they are foreign
and need to be partly much re-written
for our use. They encumber our
shelves but are of comparatively
little service. They are excellent
models but the work needs to be
done over again. I have underta-
ken to give our own young men
a series of lectures of this sort and
have been astonished to find how
little aid I got from books, and
how difficult and laborious was
the process of getting it from the

mechanics. The American treatises are very imperfect, and upon many points, especially of professional practice, there is great diversity of opinion. The Institute could not do a greater service than by ^{to} collecting opinions and authorities, and by organizing discussion so something to fix professional usage.

If the school were organized to impart this discipline and this information and the work were well & efficiently done its pupils would be welcomed in every part of the country and its beneficial influence would be felt on the profession wherever they penetrated. The profession is at present in a very inchoate and amorphous condition, very much needing some such influence in order to make the most of the learning & ability which are at all times employed in it, and enable it to achieve results proportionate to them. At present building is in the hands of the mechanics, few of whom are

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first rate, of contractors and superin-
tendents who are mechanics with
talents for affairs and many of
whom take the name of Architect,
of architects proper few of whom have
an adequate training in the higher
branches of their calling while they
are of course vastly inferior to the
others in a knowledge of the lower
branches, and lastly of architects'
assistants and draughtsmen. It
is upon these last that the whole
system turns, and in any commu-
nity the character of the work done
depends in a great degree upon their
attainments and qualifications. The
"practical" architect of course relies upon
them for his designs, and the educated
architect is hardly less dependent
upon them. Any prosperous architect
must leave nine drawings out of ten
to be made entirely by his subordi-
nates under supervision of course
more or less minute. If they
are ignorant the work suffers. Even

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the best we have require an amount of
overseeing which prevents the architect
from giving to his own proper work, to
that elaboration and perfecting of his
design which no one else can do for
him, the time and attention, the un-
cumbered leisure and mind at ease,
in which his anxious and delicate task
should be performed. And it is not only
or chiefly in the office that the archi-
tect suffers for want of competent aid.
He needs subordinates competent to
superintend the execution of his work,
sufficient of mechanics to tell good work
from bad, and sufficient of draughtsmen
to understand and explain drawings.
Such ^{an} assistant ~~is~~ known in England
as Clerk of the Works. His office is to
give a mechanical superintendence
to the work, spending his time chiefly
upon it, and making sure that every
brick and every stick is the right
thing in the right place. He is paid
by the proprietor but is in the employ
of the architect and reports personally

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to him; viewing him also of a considera-
ble part of the strictly architectural
superintendence. The want of such
a coadjutor has done more than any
thing else to bring professional archi-
tects into disrepute in this country and
to throw the work that should be entrusted
to them into the hands of "practical"
men, people naturally enough caring
more to have their houses well built
than to have them well designed. It
has of late been attempted to ~~remedy~~ ^{and}
the difficulties of either alternative by
giving buildings in charge of contrac-
tors and employing architects merely
as draughtsmen + clerks to make
out the drawings and papers they
require. This system affords the em-
ployer a guarantee of value, and
has obvious advantages over the
old system, but it is very injuri-
ous to the prospects of the profes-
sion not only in subordinating the
architect to the contractor and di-

suming the dignity and the involve-
 ments of his calling, but in en-
 couraging the idea that knowledge
 of the practical details of building is
 unnecessary, ^{to him} the English system ~~is~~
 has ~~much better~~ ^{all the merits and} ~~more~~ of none of the
 objects of this one, and though its
 adoption has hitherto been delayed
 on account of its supposed expense
 → and convinced by what I hear from
 architects, mechanics, and their em-
 ployers, that it would now be not-
 comed as the best solution of evils
 felt by them all, if properly trained
 clerks of works could be found.

In regard then to the immediate
 result and practical purpose to be
 held in view in organizing such
 a school as you propose it seems
 to me to be not only especially con-
 sistent to the general scope of the
 Institute but also best calculated
 to meet the most pressing wants
 of the community, in the present

condition of things for you to lay out
a course of law eminently practical
character giving diplomas or certifi-
cates at different stages of progress
to 3^d class 2^d class and 1st class
draughtsmen, ranking these last
as assistants or as clerks of works
~~no~~ ~~there~~ according as they distinguish
themselves in one way or another. Draught-
men already at work would probably
avail themselves of partial courses
and by and by submit themselves
for examination as they found that
your diplomas had a value in
the market. Every care should of
course be taken to give them repu-
tation, by making the instruction suf-
ficient and the examinations severe
both upon pupils & teachers. No de-
gree should be given without a satis-
factory appearance in all branches
and no higher diploma should be a-
warded until the lower had been won.

→ believe that competent assist-
ants and clerks of works, and trust-

worthy draughtsmen, furnished with properly graduated diplomas of established reputation would find their services in great demand, and that a school which should establish a name for turning out men who knew thoroughly what they claimed to know, men who would not require daily instruction in the rudiments of their calling would do more than any other possible agency to raise the character of our architecture. The best of them would in time supplant the architects and would be a great improvement upon the present generation if they carried into the practice of their profession the habits of thought and study they had learned in the school. It would be for the Institute to determine whether having gone so far it would go a step farther and itself complete the work, ~~by~~ retaining the best men under its care and adding an artistic and professional ^{education} ~~training~~ to their practical training graduate architects complete, and issue diplomas accordingly.

The course of study for the professional architect should in this case include those previously described, and though entrance into the architectural class should not perhaps be restricted to those who had passed through these, there should be some examination for admission and the diploma of architect should not be awarded except to those already in possession of the others.

And I think it is important that from the beginning a high tone should be maintained recognizing at the start the highest possibilities of ultimate attainment, and giving at each stage of progress the aesthetic and artistic training suited to it. I would make it a liberal culture as far as it went in every case, and would not cut any one off from future progress by withholding the beginnings of the best things however humble his abilities or modest his aspirations. I would enable him who stopped at the lower landings at least to appre-

ciate the bright above him, and to understand the supremacy of those who attained them.

As to the methods of instruction to be pursued I have of course nothing to say so far as relates to the studies common to other branches of ~~study~~ and already included in the plan of the Institute. Whatever methods are best for other purposes will suffice for this. And in regard to the special courses of lectures of which I have spoken above, I do not know that I have anything further to say, unless it is that the taking of notes and frequent examinations of them and from them should of course be a part of the lecture system. More so much is to be done in the collecting of information it would of course be profitable to the whole class and stimulating to each member of it to put them upon the search, making them contribute the result of their reading or of their conversation with mechanics and

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experts to the common stock. I have practiced this method with my own pupils with very satisfactory results. It is desirable also to have arrangements made to give the class at an early stage of their studies a sort of apprenticeship in the building trades partly perhaps by setting them to work upon buildings actually in progress, as journeymen, partly by work in a laboratory prepared for their use, in which also modelling in clay and plaster and carving in wood and stone should be practiced. The evils of a too sedentary and studious a habit of life might thus in a great degree be counteracted and the pupils would get a practical knowledge of the characteristics of good work even though their own work was bad.

There should of course be an architectural department in the museum with models and casts

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illustrating both construction and design, and no pains should be spared to collect drawings and photographs. In the absence too of any collection of architectural books in the country, a comprehensive library would be a necessary auxiliary.

There only remains to be considered the teaching of architectural composition and design, which is of course as I said at the beginning the principal object of study, to which all the rest is merely accessory. There may be good building without it but there can be no good architecture unless it is in some way taught and well taught. How this instruction is to be given is the main question and upon the answer given to it in the practice of the Institute depends the nature and extent of the influence it is to exercise upon the future of architecture in this country.

The question is really twofold: what shall be taught, and how

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shall the instruction be given -

It is easy to answer the first part of the question in general terms. The thing to be taught is the theory and practice of architectural design. But architectural design has a history, the past is full of monuments illustrative of its principles. These principles are unchanged, though all the changes of the past, they have an independent existence and an abstract value, today, and it is by their light ~~that~~ not by following the precedents of bygone ages that we must hope to find for the new and strange problems of the future the simple, truthful and characteristic solution they demand. So true any scheme of instruction that can contemplate at once both aspects of the subject and do justice to each? What course of study can satisfy the legitimate demand of the student for such a knowledge of the past as shall fortify him with

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all the experience of the race and at the same time leave him ^{free from} prejudice and pro-dantry and the prestige of authority to apply these principles simply and frankly to the work of the future and present.

I have in mind a scheme of instruction which I have for some time entertained and which though still in a crude and elementary form is the best suggestion I have to make towards the solution of the problem. It is only a suggestion, for though I have taken some pains to submit it to intelligent criticism and profit by the remarks of my friends, I have not had ^{that} opportunity to obtain the opinion of persons of experience in schools of art, without which the best devised system must remain full of absurdities - I accordingly submit what I have to say with diffidence, but it is the best I have to offer.

It seems to me not impossible to meet or rather get round the difficulty, the difficulty of discriminating

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nicely return memory and invention,
pedantic learning and wholesome
knowledge, the forbidden work of copy-
ing and the legitimate and indispen-
sable work of imitation, by keeping
the two things as far apart as may be
to start with, and not letting students
enter the region where the difficulty
and conflict are felt until they are
somewhat robust and mature through
practice and experience. I would pro-
pose to carry on together an a priori
and an a posteriori course of study,
alternating, so to speak, the subjective
and the objective, the deductive and in-
ductive, the synthetic and analytical
methods, Nature with historic art, the
Future and the past. I would have
a course of Design founded on several
principles, the laws of Harmony
and Proportion, the study of natural
forms and their conventional adapta-
tion to design, ~~the of color and~~
~~forms~~, of the Contrast and gradation
of color and form, the expression

and composition of abstract lines. This should be the aesthetic training and the useful should accompany it, the class being set to design barns, sheds, cottages, country-houses, railroad stations, markets, etc. etc. where they would keep strictly to the requirements of convenience and have no temptation to indulge in the styles of the past, relying for effect only upon outlines, masses, light and shadow, or such other means of ornament and aesthetic expression as their other a priori studies may suggest. I think that by keeping to a small scale and not paying more attention to details than the state of progress warrants, something might be done to encourage a habit of simplicity and frankness in the treatment of architectural problems, a habit of working up from the requirements of the problem to the ensemble and thence

to the detail, and not vice versa, which if it could obtain would put new character and expression into our building, and could not fail to produce ~~the~~ ^{only} originality of style that is possible or desirable.

Such a course is I know open to the reproach of attempting to reconstruct civilization out of abstract ideas and of trying to make students learn to design buildings out of the depths of their own consciousness. It is not impossible that serious objections are to be urged against it on theoretical or practical grounds. It should of course be subjected to every test before being put in practice. I can only say that I have not ^{yet} encountered any objections to which I have not been able to find an answer satisfactory to my own mind. These ^{instructive} studies I would alternate with other studies purely acquisitive, the inductive and synthetical method should give place to the inductive and

analytical, taking up a purely historical course, and discussing one by one in their order of development all the great Styles of the past. They should be studied as a part of the age which produced them as well as being an illustration of architectural principles, and whatever assistance literature and scholarship and aesthetic and philosophical criticism can ~~bring~~ ^{give} it in understanding the age and discriminating the thought and feeling really at work in its architecture should be afforded the student. At least he should be encouraged to inquire not only what they did but why and the proper means of answering the question pointed out and set within his reach. Meanwhile I would have all their work, drawing, sketching, water-colors, modelling, carving, whatever might be in hand, directed to the same channel, and if for instance Egypt were in turn, I would have nothing but Egyptian work, so that

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they might if possible breathe in the sentiment of that civilisation and sympathize with its artistic manifestation. And while sketches and memoranda were accumulating (and throughout the whole course the constant employment of sketchbooks and note books used to be a matter of course)

→ would have some good examples of the style well drawn out, such as sent perhaps taking a different building, and when the materials were pretty well in hand → would have all make a design upon a subject assigned, a restoration, or perhaps a simple original building, not a modern building in the ancient style, that is mere masquerading, but an ancient building, such as they might have built if they had chosen. And now the study of lines and moldings and masses and sky-lines, and ^{geometrical design} ~~masses~~ and the conventionalization of nature would all come into this historical chapter

as matters not of experiment but of experience.

The effect of these studies would of course be felt when the students returned to the other course. They would not be able to look with unprejudiced eyes and their reasoning would show a bias. All nature would wear an Egyptian face, at any rate the ^{most} obvious ~~was~~ ~~their~~ ~~of~~ ~~that~~ ~~was~~ treatment of natural forms and the most expressive turn of abstract lines, would seem new to be the Egyptian. Very well. No harm is done if they are adopted as natural ^{intentionally} ~~and~~ borrowed, and against this borrowing or stealing or using the admirable remains of other eyes \rightarrow think the subjects of this discipline would have two safeguards. ^{In the first place} Their habitual attitude would be hostile to it, the contrary principle of working altogether in the present in modern work being made a fundamental principle, and ^(secondly) the natural and inevitable impulse to copy would find a legitimate channel in the prescribed tasks of restoration and these

would spend its force. After studying the remains of any style one cannot but desire, in proportion as he is possessed of its spirit to manipulate for himself the elements of which it is composed. If he has no good use to put them to he will put them to a bad one just as in the enthusiasm which followed Stuart and Revett's researches all Christendom blossomed out with Ionic Banks, Doric mints and Custom Houses, and we have to this day little pine Parthenons all over New England. Even now our country carpenters, who retain the traditions of fifty years ago, will put work a hyperbolic moulding upon the gutter of a barn, and carry it up the gable after the manner of the Athenians. But the exercises in restoration, or antique design, knife testing and fixing the student's knowledge of it, affords a legitimate outlet for this enthusiasm and there only remains the spirit of the old time, giving life, not the dead

form. The student may imitate, he cannot help doing so, but he will not copy.

It seems to me that by the time he gets out of his cottages and barns to markets and warehouses every thing in the historical styles he has meanwhile been studying that is living and true, really germane to his own life, that is to say really good for this nineteenth century, will have grown plastic in his hand, these old seeds will take root in his mind if there is in it any richness of earth and ~~with~~ intertwining the ancient ² with the modern the instinctive and natural tendencies of his fancy will rather be strengthened than stifled, so that his public buildings, when he comes to them may show a mind at once full and free, and a method learned without being pedantic, eclectic without patchwork, simple and original without meagreness or caprice.

To say that such a result requires on the part of the pupil talents of no common order is true, indeed only the man of genius could

carry such a system to its final ^{point} success. But this is only saying that the problem of Architecture is one which it requires the highest order of mental power to solve, which nobody would deny. What I would claim for such a system of instruction is not only that the best minds might be subjected to it without injury, a thing that can be said of but few of the methods of instruction now in vogue in any department of learning, and that their best and most sensitive capacities would be by it fostered and generously developed, but that it would afford a wholesome and manly school for the development of any mind of whatever kind and degree of power, turning into activity every germ of originality - Mr Emerson says everybody is a genius if he could only be found out - and giving to every variety of other talent a fair field

for its exercise. That it would require a high order of ability to administer such a scheme with perfect success is also true, but a good system is one which while it admits of the development of the rarest ability in carrying it on, does not demand for its satisfactory working much more than common intelligence and honest fidelity. I suppose this is as true in education as in Government.

The remaining question, how all this instruction shall be given, depends for its answer upon the appliances the Institute can bring to bear upon it, and upon the condition of the profession in this community. A great deal of teaching would have to be given within the walls of the school either by the regular corps of instructors or by persons invited from time to time to give special courses on special subjects. History and Antiquities admit and indeed require that whatever special learning there is in the community shall be availed of. The Institute would also prescribe

the work to be done month by month, give out the problems to be solved or programmes to be fulfilled, fix the times and conditions of examinations and appoint the examiners. The principle that instructors should not sit in judgement upon the work of their own pupils should be strictly adhered to, as it is abroad. It would probably be found perfectly practicable to strain competent juries among amateurs and architects not in any way connected with the school. Whether it is best for the pupils to do their work in the school, under the supervision and instruction of the professors, or whether they had best put themselves under the instruction of the different architects in the towns and come to the school only for lectures and examination, and to receive the programmes of the work they are to do is a question of administration which has been variously answered in the schools of art abroad and may be left for future decision. The latter method is that of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and many of the architects

in Paris have Ateliers expressly devoted to their pupils who pursue under their direction the studies prescribed by the schools or qualify themselves for admission into it. A friend of mine now in the atelier of M. André thus describes to me the details of the system:—

“Once a month we assemble in the loges of the School and there find programmes which are to be “rendered” in a month six weeks or two months, according to their difficulty. At the end of the day we leave in the school an esquisse or sketch of our idea of the way in which the requirements should be met, giving plan section and elevation in the simplest form possible, merely indicating the motif. Indeed it is quite an art to know how to indicate an esquisse in such a manner as to fulfill the requirements of the programme and yet leave most ground for changes in studying it out. You leave the original sketch in the hands of an officer of the school and carry home with you a copy or tracing. When the Projet is handed in the Esquisses are compared

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with the Remous and those who have changed too much are put Hors de concours. The other projets are judged and receive mentions, half-mentions, and in the First class medals of different degrees. In the Second class they only give medals to projets of construction of superior merit. The Esquisses carried off is shown to the Patron who directs your studies upon it, indicates the changes and tells you from day to day his opinion of what you are doing.

"Halfway between the Esquisses & the Remous come the Esquisses-Esquisses so called because they are all done in one day, completely rendered. You are allowed twelve hours to do them in and they must be completed, coloured and washed in ink by nine o'clock. They are capital exercises and I would give one once a fortnight if I had pupils. The programmes of course must be short and the scale demanded be rather small. I will send you some programmes of both kinds. [These I have received.] The system of the school is concours. Concours for Architecture, concours for con-

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struction, perspective, mathematics, descriptive Geometry. "On pass from the 2^d class to the first by means of concours, and in fact Emulation is the watch-word. * * *. all the work, except the sketches, is done in the atelier. There are courses of lectures, to which no one ever goes, but the real work is done at the atelier."

This example shows how the whole body of architects in the city may be made to cooperate in the work of the Institute without embarrassing it by any official connection.

The methods pursued in the Kensington schools in London are I believe entirely different, the pupils receiving their instruction from the professors in the school and doing all their work within its walls. The changes made in administration of the Ecole des Beaux Arts by the decree of Nov 13 1863, the so-called comp d'etat, contemplated an approach to the English system, so far at least as to establish a certain number of ateliers

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within the school. I do not know the reasons for the change. I only know that this is common with the other provisions of the decree as been the subject of lively controversy in Paris, and given rise to a war of pamphlets which contain a good ^{many} ~~deal~~ of useful suggestions in regard to the conduct of schools of art. Of the administration of the English schools I have found it difficult to learn anything in detail, either in regard to that at ^{now} Kensington or those established ~~by~~ the patronage of the Royal Institute of British Architects and the architectural association. I have within a day or two however come across the programme proposed by the Institute for test examinations to be voluntarily undertaken by draughtsmen and architects who may desire to establish their claim to public confidence. The range of studies is conformable to the course I have sketched above, and I was gratified to find that the Institute recognized the importance of giving draughtsmen as well as architects a superior culture.

I think I have said enough to show you how important and necessary and at the same time how difficult and delicate a task the Institute is undertaking when it attempts to establish an Architectural School. The only way in which it can be done well is to start right, and to start right it is necessary to have a thoroughly elaborated and well digested scheme to start with. The best considered scheme of course can have but a speculative value until tested by experience or tested perfected by the judgment of the experienced. The study of and comparison of ^{the} systems already in successful operation cannot however be advantageously conducted without consultation with those who have conducted them or those who have come under their influence, and ~~the~~ a knowledge of the criticism to which they are subjected, much of which it is difficult to find in print. It is hardly necessary for me to say, what however is too important a consid-

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eration to be omitted entirely, that in the absolute absence of experience and precedent in this country and the existence on the other side of the water of examples so exactly to your purpose as the institutions I have named, not to mention the German and Italian schools, it is the first thing to be done is to use every available means of studying them so as to perfect your own methods by the light of their experience. No expenditure of time or means would be superfluous that was found indispensable to this work, and certainly by the revenues of the Department are as legitimately devoted to building it up as to carrying it on, and to the accumulating of information as to the collecting of materials. Much of this work may of course be done by means of books and letters, for the literature of the subject is very extensive, and letter-writing is a valuable auxiliary, but of course personal observation of

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the working of these institutions and intercourse with men, is worth every thing else.

Let me say in conclusion that I do not think the curriculum I have indicated would be found in practice so formidable as perhaps it appears, and that I have no doubt it could be satisfactorily ^{gone through} ~~substantiated~~ in a reasonable number of years. A detailed statement of any system would seem impracticably elaborate. You would be able to do at least what is done abroad and found to be sufficient.

I have protracted this letter beyond all limits, but for that I will not apologise. I will only add in regard to myself, since you have suggested that my cooperation may be of service to the Institute, that if it should adopt any such scheme of architectural instruction as I have sketched

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out, or any other in which I could cordially cooperate, and should think my personal services of value in carrying it out, the work would be one in many respects congenial to my tastes and so far as I thought myself qualified to engage in it I should be glad to do so. It is not impossible that in accordance with a long deferred hope I may presently give myself the advantage of a tour of study and observation in Europe, and if I could during one or two years of absence further your purposes by pursuing the course of inquiry I have sketched out it would jump with my own inclination. I should not consider myself competent to take any great part either in the organization of the school or its administration without the aid of a special preparation —

I am very truly yours

William R. Mann

36 Studio Building.

April 27, 1865.

A BOOK!

PROFESSOR
W. R. WARE'S
OUTLINE
DARK LINED



BY
CHARLES D. GAMBRILL

NO PROFESSOR EGAD!
BUT
A MEMBER OF THE
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

MIRABILE VIDETVR , QVOD NON RIDEAT HARVSPEX
QVVM HARVSPICEM VIDERIT.

Notes.

I had got as far, my dear Professor as the title page of a counterblast to your late brochure — a little monitor which I intend end to ram against the lofty sides of your stately frigate, when I was suddenly brought-to by a stray shot from one of your breech-loaders, in the following sentence:

— "the more common spectacle is that of
" ~~the~~ men liberally endowed by nature, gen-
" erously devoted to their work, struggling
" in vain against the obstacles which an
" imperfect culture has failed to remove;
" making, perhaps, a brilliant reputation for
" what they might do; more probably lam-
" quishing in obscurity, despondency and
" failure, passed in their own walks of
" of life, by their better trained inferiors,
" dying at last and leaving no sign"

I had enough conceit (if you please,) to apply the opening of this paragraph to myself — was sufficiently conscious of "the struggling in vain," to feel the full

force of the disadvantage of achieving
a reputation only for what I "might do"
— and was so staggered by the fate
prefigured for me in the pathetic close,
as not only to be convinced that I should
"die at last" — but to be mortified with
the reflection that my most brilliant
effort, alas! would be my "sign".

This stray shot, I say, went straight
through one of my ports, and filled
me with such dismay as almost im-
pelled me to the procuring of a petard,
and incontinently "hi' sting" myself therein.

You may therefore look upon what I
have to say as a Report after the action,
in which, after chronicling my own defeat,
and discomfiture, I shall honestly criticize
your gunnery, albeit limping from a pro-
sodic wound.

My Tent in Tenth St. and elsewhere,
March 1866.

The Contents,

Will be discovered on perusing the
following pages.

'Σὶὸμίε νό~~α~~ν^ασικάλ 'Σἄρσῃ."

Allow me to "avail of" the opportunity of admiring the coolness - Olympian in its serenity - with which you ignore our organization, which, among the "mere utilities" you speak of has already declared its belief that it "has altogether the advantage of private enterprise," and has even in its brief, embryonic and spasmodic existence, in some measure supplied the desiderata the want of which your first few pages so innocently deplore.

Shall I, too, commend the modesty with which you abstain from adding to your noble title the symbols of your membership in that organization, or must I condemn the omission as an insinuation of contempt? Perhaps I should applaud the dexterity with which you avoid a confession of its existence as too damaging an admission against your argument - in spite of

a slight allusion in your prefatory note which, of course, is never read.

A Circular, probably on your table by this time, if not long since consigned to the waste-paper basket, will remind you that I refer to the American Institute of Architects - an institution designed to prevent the "isolation of its members" - bringing them "in contact with each other" and not merely with their clients and their mechanics" - refuting your assertion that "architects never meet" - that while "engaged in the solution of the same problem they never compare results" or profit by each other's experience" - and, again, that "they are never brought together in their work or have leisure to attend to societies of mutual improvement." It in no way diminishes the unfairness of your preliminary sweeping assertions, as to the amount of co-operation in the profession, that it is afterwards modified by the statement that you are describing "the attitude of every architect in the city" - viz, Boston.

You give so strong an impression of your speaking of the craft at large that the localizing it subsequently in the city would escape the attention of any less keen-scented reader than a member of the A. I. A.

It is with the most melancholy surprise that the Institute and the foreign readers of your Outline receive your startling disclosures of the ignorance and degradation of the profession in the modern Athens — but they rejoice that, at the same time that they offer their condolences on your present distresses, they can also felicitate you on the prospect of a speedy relief held out by the golden promises of the School. We are indignant at the prevalence of such a pernicious practice as "the subordination of Architects to Builders", a custom which does not obtain in this city, or elsewhere, I presume, beyond the limits of the City.

The Circular, before mentioned, sent to you before the receipt of your outline, had anticipated your appeal for the co-operation for which you yearn — but the timely appearance of your elegant pamphlet, leads the Committee who signed the aforesaid, to hope that the proposed Monthly Journal will receive your most enthusiastic support, as one efficient means at least of compassing the end for which you and all of us so devoutly wish.

As to my private opinion of your scheme I must say that I am altogether opposed to it, in my present mood. While fully conscious of the future evils of our "imperfect culture", I am now fully alive to the present ills, not only of a temporary restriction to my laudable disposition, but of a chronic impecuniosity which sickles o'er my thoughts more than any purely "technological troubles".

Are you not doing our injury to the human race by placing such strong inducements before it to enter a pro-

many pupils. Let your efforts rather be directed to the instruction of the masses in the mysteries of the craft, so that they may learn what it is to touch with sacrilegious hands the pet conceits over which we have racked our brains, or those eloquent lines in the specifications which describe what the pencil cannot delineate. Let them be taught the proportions of the Five Orders, as the catechumens are taught the Ten Commandments - and let them afterwards be brought to our Architectural Bishop to be confirmed in the Principles of Design.

Then, when they have been brought to appreciate the value of the knowledge we have acquired, give full swing to your technological scheme, and they'll not be apt to trouble us more.

The main thing at present, moreover, is not for us to learn more, but to contrive methods to get paid for what we do know, or as you more elegantly express it, to prevent the disposition ^{to}

diminish the dignity and emoluments of our calling." I repeat, you are teaching too much - your system of training assistants would over-reach itself - for it would even produce a brood of young experts superior to the present practitioners - they would not be content to remain draughtsmen, but would at once run out their standards unblazoned - "Raphael Waveling, Technologist and Architect". Or perhaps the end you seek of benefiting the profession would be best attained by turning the tables, so that the members of the Institute of Architects would become the assistants of your graduates.

I have half a suspicion that all this scheme is only a conspiracy to revive the ancient and true order of Free Masons in opposition to the spurious fraternity now bearing and disgracing the name - and that you are ambitious of climbing to the Chair of the Grand Master over the shoulders

of your apprentices. But it will do.

The only way to evolve the ultimate ideal of our architects from the existing nebulous materials is by a change from an indefinite, incoherent heterogeneity, to a definite, coherent homogeneity, through successive paradoxes and heterodoxies till they doxologize together in one integral orthodoxy. This you will perceive is our amplification or evolution of Herbert Spencer's pet law — but wait — I am preparing a pendant to this sketch as a reply to that shallow thinker.

You have inquisitively concealed beneath your eloquent rhetoric a stupendous scheme for humbugging the very public you pretend to serve. Under pretence, I say, of instructing these pupils, you propose to make your victims, (by the system of pumping you so unflinchingly recommend) "suck the brains" of the mechanics, for the benefit of the lazy master

who shall meanwhile loiter in his atelier and give himself up to the indigestion of pamphlets! It is here, where the whole trick peeps out — the intention of "availing of" the stupidity of the young Technologists, — and it is in view of this that I exclaim, —
*Mirabile videtur, quod non videtur
hamsperae, quum hamspericem viderit.*

"It is not funny that the priests should laugh when they put their heads together."

I expect an avalanche of indignant scorn in reply to these hints, but after your long silence, a reply of some sort, amiable or otherwise, is equally necessary and will be equally welcome.

My dear Frank,

Your project is very admirable - but you have so completely covered the ground yourself that you leave nothing for me to suggest. I have not had time or opportunity to investigate the subject - but it seems to me that the plan you propose is everything that could be desired. I really felt quite conscience stricken on reading the passage I quoted in the note to the preceding number, and you will be a public benefactor by suggesting a means of preventing similar mutilations in others.

I don't pretend to criticize the details of your scheme as I am not sufficiently conversant with the practical means of imparting information, but Richardson makes some suggestions in regard to the examinations which I presume he

will communicate to you himself.

All the architects here are delighted with your project - but I will try to elicit something practically useful to you from a discussion in the Institute. We have regular and animated meetings now, and it is possible that the experience of some of the old fellows and the wants of the younger ones may suggest modifications or simplifications of your plan.

To me it seems perfect - and if you were in New York or I in Boston I would put myself under your tuition. One man expressed the fear to me that so much science would drown the artist - an absurdity I could easily refute by pointing to the author of the outline and to my partner - not to mention Leonardo da Vinci and masters of his time and stamp. Then there is Professor Rimmer, (of whom

I am a delighted pupil) every sketch he makes for us, is worth all the canvases in the studios of our brickees and brags and "icks".

I expect to look in upon you for a few minutes some day before the middle of April, on my way to examine some work of mine at the Quincy quarry - a ^{some} nuisance.

I am busier than I have been for a long while before, and in better spirits - I have adopted a rule not to tell what I am about till the thing is done and paid for, as it's damaging to one's reputation to be making drawings for unexecuted works.

I shall be more definite however when I hear from you - and letters have been too infrequent since you dismissed the Professor's notes.

All success and glory in your great undertaking, and my sincere congratulations to the school which has secured your services. Love to T. B. and Child.

Yours affectionately
Charles D. Brewster

[Faint, illegible handwriting on the left page, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]



