

42.1

Biography, "Competitions VII (pp 163-175)"

WARE MC14

One topic of general professional interest he made peculiarly his own, the vexed matter of the proper conduct of competitions. As he himself once said, writing as early as 1888, "I certainly am getting to understand the business [of expert adviser] pretty well, better than anybody, I guess, nobody else being in it." In the early years of his active practice, he of course came into contact with the iniquities and injustices of the competitive practices then in vogue, and at once set about seeking the means and method by which the desirable reform might be wrought. Then, even more than now, the matter was the subject of continual discussion both interamicos and before the professional societies of the day; and in all these discussions he took an active part, both with tongue and pen, doing much committee-work and writing many tracts, pamphlets and papers, on the subject, thereby winning the reputation with his fellows of a man who had really studied the question and deserved to have his views ^{respectfully} ~~reputably~~ considered.

Later on, the fact that he was the professor in charge of the only established School of Architecture in the country added weight to his value in the eyes of practising architects, and to a far greater degree in those of the promoters of competition, who easily accorded to his advice an official value which practising architects as readily conceded; and his reputation and influence with the latter increased ^{in proportion} ~~just~~ as those who had been his one-time pupils took their places in the ranks of active practitioners. A competition in which it was known that Prof. Ware was in any way to be con-

cerned was ^{felt} ~~sure~~ to be an affair honestly and properly conducted, and so worth while to spend one's time over. Moreover, in the lapse of time it had become the generally adopted rule that a competent "assessor", as the official was known in English practise^c, an "expert adviser" as he is now generally called in our own, should be employed in preparing the programme and advising--and to some extent controlling-- the promoters of the affair, the owners of the prospective buildings.

More and more often he was called on to fill the place of expert adviser, and so came to occupy a position that was almost unique, and it was great good ~~fortune~~ for everyone that his previous considerable experience enabled him so satisfactorily to fill it. The enormous increase of the sums that promoters were prepared to invest in their buildings involved the fact that a considerable item in the way of profit and loss was concerned in the proper deciding of the competition. For their part, also, because of the actual larger amount of the architects' commission on the proposed work, each competitor felt he would be the more grievously wronged by an improper ~~decisi~~ decision. The general public, too, had its interest in the affair, because of the greater permanence of the proposed building, because of the improvements that had been made in materials and methods of construction. The rôle of the Expert adviser had become a very important one, and it was ^{Professor Ware's} his good fortune during the ~~nineties~~ to fill this position in a series of unusually important competitions, amongst which may be enumerated those for the New York City Hall; the New York Public Library; the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, N.Y.; the Lady Chapel in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, N.Y.; the County Court-house, Baltimore, Md.; the State-house at Olympia, Washington, and several others. Throughout a considerable period he had ⁿ an important competition on his hands almost every two months.

For a considerable time the main thesis of his argument had been that the true object of a competitor^{ion} was not so much to secure the actual design as it was to pick out the right designer, to whom the work could safely be entrusted. At the same time, and particularly from 1890 onward, he introduced various ameliorating methods, all tending to diminish the wasteful outlay of time, energy and actual cost on the part of the competitors, while at the same time there was maintained for the promoters all really useful benefits. To serve these ends, he gradually brought about the elimination of the extravagantly costly water-color or pen-and-ink perspectives -- the one drawing the promoters felt they could wholly understand and appreciate -- and the substitution for it of a skeleton perspective, in outline and unshaded, taken at 45° and from a stated station-point; the reduction of the scale of drawing and of the number of drawings; even in some cases he called, in the interest of economy, for drawings rendered in pencil only. As a final refinement, he required all designs to be submitted in the form of mounted photographs of modest size so that they might be more easily handled and compared, about a table, by the judges than could be in the case of large drawings hung upon the walls of one of several rooms.

Comes now one of the most gratifying incidents of his career, the same taking shape at Pittsburgh during the annual Covention there of the American Institute of Architects, ⁱⁿ 1899, a meeting over which his quondam partner Henry Van Brunt chanced that year to rule as President. This meeting was the first to be held under the newly adopted system of Delegate-representation, and unusual care had been taken to make the meeting a success; the programme was carefully considered, well balanced and full. On the second day, the ^a reading of stated papers was taken up and ^{no} persecuted with great success, as the topics were both varied and interesting, and the session proceeded to the

evident satisfaction of the delegates and others present, who looked around and fairly beamed on one another, as who should say; "This is the real thing. At last we are listening to worthy contributions to architectural thought", and they continued to beam blissfully until certain inner pangs reminded them that the luncheon-hour was approaching. Shortly before the programme's stated hour for this necessary function, the President looked at his watch, then at the programme, and evidently seemed puzzled what to do. Finally he called for the next paper, and Prof. Ware stepped forward and began to read: the audience glanced at their programmes and groaned in spirit when they read that the topic was "Competitions", and settled themselves to endure with patience the same tedious old discussion of ailments they were satisfied never could be cured. But the reading had not continued very many minutes before the audience began to come to life, not only to sit up, but actually to lean forward in their seats, manifesting a desire to lose no single word. This was not what had been expected, this was something new, the subject was approached from a new standpoint, the views presented were based on recent experiments with important competitions more or less known as to their conditions by everyone present. It should be of the greatest value to learn what conclusions had been reached, what recommendations would be made. The audience listened contentedly enough, and the reader's words flowed on. But the Committee of Arrangements became uneasy, then agitated, and at last alarmed. The afternoon programme, which covered most interesting excursions to Pittsburgh's great industries, could not be disarranged since railroad time-tables were involved; but the delegates and others must be fed, and they evidently would not go in search of food to the adjoining room before this interesting paper should come to an end, and from the way in which the reader held his manuscript no one could guess whether the end would come in five minutes or in half an hour. The Committee of Arrangements were, however, men of resource, and they at once procured an extra force of waiters

quietly and had the luncheon served to the too-interested listeners, who were now more than content seeing that their mental and alimentary needs were being satisfied at the same time; and though a half hour more elapsed before the paper reached its end, they were fully content with the situation, and a most unusual situation it was, too. It may well be doubted whether any other speaker ever achieved so emphatic a succes d'estime personnelle. At the banquet the same evening, when called on to speak, he appeared in unusually good form, full of reminiscence and wise and witty sayings, the beau ideal of the speech of the old master to his one-time pupils; for time had so far fled that he was sure to find in any audience a considerable number of his former pupils. In spite of his light-hearted vivacity there was apparent a sort of under current both tender and wistful, as though he were becoming conscious of advancing years, and doubted whether he might ever be present at another similar gathering. It is doubtful whether at this day, nearly twenty years after its delivery, it would be worth while to reprint here this valuable but lengthy treatise.*

*It was published in the American Architects for December 3, 1899.

The arguments then advanced and the ^{are} procedures then advocated ~~on~~ no longer novelties; for, to a very large degree, both have been accepted and become embodied amongst the common places of standard practice. But there is no question as to the abstract value of his conclusions.

As to these, Herr Max Junghandel, architect and author of the well known work on Spanish architecture, "Die Baukunst Spaniens", wrote to him as follows:-

"I beg to thank you sincerely for your kind letter. Your nephew, whom because of the similarity of names I believed to be the author of the excellent essay on Competitions, has indeed greatly obliged me by referring to you my request in respect to its translation into German. I am thoroughly

15/68

convinced of its being the most valuable contribution in any language to this important subject. x x x x x x It fully vindicated^s my stand in regard to the conception, conduct and result of the California University Competition. It was indeed, as you say, cruel and ~~heart~~^{heart-}rending to see good men wasting energy, time, and money in chasing after a phantom "pro majorem P^hoebis gloriam." * x x x x x x x x It is to your credit to have expounded in so

*A play on the given name of Mrs. Phebe Hearst.

masterly a manner the value of competitions and the dangers of their abuse. Every upright man who is interested in the welfare of the profession must side with you, and it surely will have a good effect that the American Institute of Architects fully endorsed your views and propositions. I will do my level best to bring them before the German profession, because, as you rightly remarked, it is the same story everywhere, perhaps even more in the old countries."

Professor Mars

X

Although ~~he~~ afterwards conducted many more competitions, the Pittsburgh meeting may be held to ^{mark} ~~make~~ the high-tide of his active connection with competitions, the evils of which he had ^{done} ~~alone~~ so much to ameliorate.

What may be considered as the crowning of his career as expert adviser came in 1907, when he was invited to represent America on the international board of jurors selected to decide the competition for the Carnegie Peace Palace at the Hague, one of the most elaborate competitions ever devised, and yet one that resulted no more satisfactorily to most observers -- not to mention the competitors themselves -- than many a competition decided by jurors far less distinguished than those who acted at the Hague. As to what actually occurred there he wrote as follows to the present editor.

S.S. Arabic, May 25, 1906.

[To W. R. W.]

"The competition kept me busy six hours a day for near a fortnight, cutting down my second fortnight in England to a week and allowing only two days to the rest of Holland. These I spent at Amsterdam, in the rain, and Har^a~~x~~lem. I never undertook anything with less heart than this expedition, and only went because it seemed foolish not to go, though I had no expectation of doing anything more than sitting in a corner and nodding acquiescence, and was a little shy of six strangers, all talking foreign tongues. But things came better than I thought. The men were all very civil and friendly; and when, at last, I found occasion to put in my oar, listened to my remonstrances and suggestions with respect and consideration. Thus, though nothing was done as I thought it should be, I had the satisfaction of preventing what would have been calamities. In this I had the countenance and support of the Chairman, Mr. Van Kanebeek, who was much disturbed at the attitude of the Jury, and, when it was all over, thanked me cordially for my interventions. He is one of the nicest men I ever came across, an ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and one of the ^{presiding} ~~friendly~~ officers of the Hague ^{Conference} ~~Companies~~ eight or ten years ago. As I had been in correspondence ^{with him} in a familiar way, I called at his ^{house} ~~home~~ on my arrival to make my bow, finding him alone in his library of an evening. As he speaks English perfectly well-- as also French and German, -- there was no hitch in talking, and he put me at once at my ease. As he soon found that I was free from professional ^{prepossessions} which somewhat preoccupied the minds of the others, and obviously biassed their judgment, he was rather inclined to take me into his confidence, and, when the sessions were over, to talk over the situation on the way back to my hotel. Moreover, at the dinner-party he gave ^{house} ~~us~~ at his own ~~home~~, to meet the members of his Committee^s, -- all Stars & Garters, -- he had me sit at his right-hand, with the Germans, Mr. Van Ilme, on the other side. This quite ^e ~~s~~et me up.

"The Committees had been ^{advised in)} ~~around~~ getting up the programmes, by ^{Mr.} Cuyppers, one
 of the jury, the dean of the Dutch committees, a man ^{now} ~~was~~ eighty years old. Though
 both Mr. ^{von} Ahne and ^{Mr.} Colcutt, wrote at once, when they received it, protesting against
 some of its provisions, he advised the Committee to make no changes, ^{As it set not}
 limit to the number, size, or ^{styles} ~~stages~~ of the drawings, the *result was deplorable.*
 Of the 216 sets sent in, no two stood on the same footing, and fair comparison was
 impossible. Altogether they covered the walls of 17 rooms, besides a ~~longer~~ *dozen*
 screen ^{s/} and half-a-dozen tables. Some covered all ~~but~~ four walls of a room sixteen
 feet square. Among the whole number there were not half-a-dozen which in size,
^{cost} ~~out~~ and general character were at all suitable, and not a single one that anybody
 would think for a moment of taking, even as a basis for further procedure, without
 such changes as would almost destroy its identity.

"The Jury finally reported accordingly that as the Committee had promised
 to buy the six best, we were obliged to name the six least objectionable, and what
 was really done was to select the six which ^{best} ~~were~~ illustrated the three types of
 plans which the competition had evolved:--those in which (1) the Arbitration
 Courts and the Library ^{were} ~~was~~ housed in what were virtually separate buildings, and
 those in which they were in the same building, and lighted ^{either}
 (2) by internal courts, or (3) by external courts. In ^{our} ~~an~~ report this was ^{emphasised} ~~explained~~
 and all the elevations condemned.

"This was a pointless result, but as the Committee had reserved all rights
 and owned the six prize winners, ^{designs in fee simple} ~~the work was not entirely~~
 lost. At Mr. ^{we} ~~van~~ Beebeek's request ^{a paper of} ~~he~~ added to the Report ^{in proper} ~~in proper~~ suggestions, as
 to the next steps to be taken by the Committee. Though I had been ^{outvoted} ~~at~~
 many points in the ^{selection} ~~relation~~ of the Prize-winners, only one of my own list finding a
 place among them, and that not my first choice, I was ^{able} ~~also~~ to eliminate from this
 supplementary paper a tome of dictation which seemed to me very improper, and
 which I am sure would have been very offensive to the Committee. The Jury were
 much disposed to hold that though the Committee had expressly reserved to them-

selves entire freedom of action and could put the ^{erection} building of the building into anybody's hands they thought ^{best} that, they were under a moral obligation to give it to one of the prize-winners, either outright or as the result of a competition among the six. They urged that they were bound to consider the proprieties and expectations of the ^{pro/} profession, and to urge the Committee to conform to them.

This seemed to me the height of disloyalty. Acting as members of the Jury they were not at liberty to consider any interests but those of the enterprise itself. They had no right to take advantage of their position to further the ^{supposed or} winners, as the ^{real} interests of the ^{profession} companies at large. But they were very nice about it, and I finally had my way.

" M. Van Kanebeek ^{me/} said that if I had any curiosity to know how the Committee came ^{to} to send for me, it might please me to know that it was at Mr. Carnegie's request. Perhaps it was this that disposed him to discuss the general situation with me so fully. It was certainly ^{work} this that led him to ask a confidential interview. after the ^{week} was over and ^{Carnegie} and say that he would be much obliged if I would go ~~out~~ and see Mr. When I got home, and report just what had been done. I could judge then whether he wanted to know all the details or not. This would relieve him from the necessity of writing at ^{length} ~~large~~ and from uncertainty ^{to} whether to write a long ^{letter or a} ~~talk etc~~ short one.

So he has given me a line of introduction to Mr. Carnegie, whom I do not know, accrediting me as Special Envoy. Mr. Hill, the American Minister ^{to} in Holland, whom I went to see before coming away at Mr. Van Kanebeek's instance, and who has been in Mr. Carnegie's confidence in this whole matter, says he is sure he will want to know all the particulars.

The winners are all to have an exhibition at the Hague in June, and by that time the Reports in four languages, will, I expect, be made public. The Committee will print some sort of Catalogues for this Exhibition, and will I believe ultimately make some out of Memorial publication. They asked me to say nothing that would get into the papers. So all this is for your personal enlightenment. I have photograph of some of the plans, which I can also show you.

Yours always and hoping to hear from you in Milton

~~on Sunday or Monday.~~

W. R. Ware.

~~Having Malcolm along has been a great pleasure.~~

P.S. " I have forgotten to say that four of the six prizes fell to *invited* competitors, - two Frenchmen, from Paris and Lille, two Germans, from Berlin and Vienna, The New York one, No. 5, was the best of the six, the only one with any show of reasonableness. I was annoyed to find my conferees putting at the head of the list the three most pretentious and ~~improbable~~, *impossible designs of the whole show.*

Mr. Colcutt and I protested in vain. All we could do was to get a statement into the Report that these awards were made by a 'bare majority vote'. This meant four to ~~three~~ *three* and one of these was "

the worst kind of [↑] But the plans had good points and the Report, as I have said, explicitly ~~disdained~~ *disclaimed* any liking for the ~~Directions~~ *elevations*. The New York *scheme was* the only one of the six with a suitable exterior. The remaining two I could find little ^{merits} ~~points~~ in of any sort, though the plans embodied some serviceable suggestions. "

~~Saturday evening.~~

If these three designs placed first one was 'Art Nouveau',

Beaux-Arts fireworks.

There was one corollary of his connection as expert adviser with these important competitions that gave him the utmost pleasure. Most of them occurred when he was somewhat advanced in years, when his own older friends and contemporaries were passing on to their reward, or had become sluggish with years and inclined to restrict themselves each to his particular orbit, which more and more rarely intersected his own. The consequence was that more and more he was forced for intellectual companionship to depend upon the somewhat immature minds of the pupils about him. He was as fond of them as of you^{re}, but he began to feel a satiety for that particular kind of mental pabulum; he understood the deadening effect of having always to talk de haut en bas, and rather longed to enjoy again friction with more fully developed minds. These competitions gave him in a very interesting form just the stimulant he needed, for they brought him for a short time into close contact with a considerable number of men of rather a new type in different and widely separated parts of the country. Amongst these building-committees he found many cultivated and agreeable men that it was a pleasure to meet. Knowing the United States as he did, he was ^{not} most surprised that, oftentimes, the most cultivated and intelligent of these committee-men pretended to be nothing more nor other than plain men of business. Further, contact with them speedily convinced him that the average business man is not necessarily the bigoted and narrow-minded man he is often described to be, in spite of his loudly asserted veneration for "practical" methods and contempt for theories. It particularly pleased him to find, when there arose differences of opinion between him and the committee, that in the main these men intended to be, and were willing to be, entirely fair in their dealings with the architects whom they ^{had} invited to compete for the prize they offered. He discovered that the average business man was not as obtuse and self-centred as is commonly supposed, that, once the logic of the

situation was clearly laid before him, he was willing to abandon his "practical" views and adopt those that were more logically equitable, even to the foregoing of the elaborate and costly colored perspective drawing which his soul hankered for -- the one thing he felt sure he could really comprehend and appraise.