

SCIENCE

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AN ARCHITECTURAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR PHILADELPHIA.

THE attempt now being made in Philadelphia to found an Architectural Travelling Scholarship in connection with the University of Pennsylvania is a most interesting incident in architectural education. The value of travelling scholarships for study abroad has long been recognized in the older architectural schools of the country. Boston has two, and so has New York, in both of which cities they form not only the richest prizes for the student, but are the climax to the scheme of education. In Philadelphia rather a different tack has been taken. Though the Architectural School of the University of Pennsylvania is one of the youngest in the country, it has, within a few years, become so firmly established as to be able to make an appeal to the people of Philadelphia for the endowment of this most important enterprise.

The success of this movement will mean much more than the addition of one more attraction to the already rich list brought to the University through the energy and tact of the provost, Dr. William Pepper. Important as it is for the future of the architectural school, it is much more important in indicating a new and healthy growth of architectural appreciation in a city which has long been a by-word among architectural critics. However great may be the merits of some Philadelphia buildings, its architecture, as a whole, is much below the standard of other American cities. That the large amount necessary to found a Travelling Scholarship should be raised there, shows an increased appreciation of the æsthetic side of architecture, which the buildings of the city scarcely indicate. This movement, however, shows that at foundation the status of Philadelphia architecture has been greatly underestimated. It shows that, though Philadelphia architecture may not always be what it should be, the architectural ideas prevalent in that city are just what might be expected in any cultured community. It shows an interest in the art that will work wonders in determining the future architectural standing of the city.

And this is what the scholarship is hoped to accomplish, though in another way. Limited to draughtsmen of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, the year devoted to foreign study cannot but be highly beneficial to the city and State. The training in the architectural schools is wholly preliminary to professional work. Unlike the medical schools, they do not undertake to turn out finished graduates, ready for business, and prepared to design great monuments of art and genius. The architectural graduate, on leaving his school, is only prepared to begin his professional studies. Not only has his preliminary work been directed towards this point, but it has afforded him perhaps the only opportunity in his life to become acquainted with the relative merits and forms of every style of architecture. Every day architects are specializing their work more and more, and limiting their activity to some one particular style, or perhaps to some one phase of a style. The draughtsman in the office has, there-

fore, no opportunity to become acquainted with any style save that upon which his employer is engaged. His ideas centre in one direction; like the partly-educated man, his horizon is limited, and possibly in the most unfortunate manner.

It is here the value of the school training in the history of architecture comes in, for by this means the student is enabled to review the entire history of architecture under an intelligent and unprejudiced guide. He does not learn to design in every style,—at least he should not,—he does not learn the minutiae of every school, nor practise eclecticism, the most barbarous of all architectural sins. He is simply storing his mind with images of great and beautiful buildings, just as the student of literature—to make a somewhat unnecessary comparison—stores his mind with the beautiful thoughts and styles of the master poets. Now if to this is added a year of foreign study, in which the best architectural products of man can be studied in the monuments themselves, in which practical problems of great magnitude can be seen in their actual solution, in which the realities of architecture can be appreciated in a more real manner than is possible from photographs and descriptions, and the students see and study architecture in its monumental aspect, the benefits from such a course may be readily seen. There results a broadening of mind, and a keener appreciation of architectural art than can be had by other means. This is the value of architectural travelling scholarships, and this is why the movement by the University of Pennsylvania means so much for that city and the State.

It must not be inferred that study abroad will make dreamers of our architects, or instil foreign ideas in place of native conceptions. We may not build cathedrals or palaces or great monumental structures, but these edifices show how very great architecture can be, and illustrate methods and forms which can be studied in no other way. Refreshed from a study of foreign architecture, the American student is better able to grasp the conditions which surround the art at home. He has seen what architects in ages less rich in knowledge and mechanical appliances have accomplished, and though his own problems may be different, the example of former work spurs him on to better attempts. We hear a good deal about American art for Americans, and the futility of sending American artists to Paris to study. Fortunately, we hear less of this than formerly, and we shall hear less as the value of foreign study is appreciated. There is no cry for American architecture for America, but the value of foreign study to the architect is quite as valuable, quite as useful, quite as necessary, as it is to the painter or the sculptor. A year abroad is not for the purpose of learning how to copy foreign buildings, but to see and study architectural masterpieces. To borrow a previous illustration, the student of literature does not study Shakespeare with the hope or thought of imitating him, but of gaining some helpful insights into the masterpieces of literature. It is on this principle the architectural scholarships are founded. And it is on this the University of Pennsylvania makes its appeal for a Travelling Scholarship.

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