

Notes of a Winter Vacation.*

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OF all that was seen and learned in a trip going over three thousand miles and visiting twenty-five cities in six weeks of short winter days, it will be out of the question, in this paper, to speak of otherwise than by leaving out detail, simply sketching a few special and striking points.

An important thing to be remembered whenever one visits a strange place, is the advantage and wisdom of at once and without fail, calling upon a professional brother, and gaining from him hints and assistance in seeing the best of the locality. To those who have never attended a convention of the profession, it may be well to say; if possible, never let an opportunity for attending, pass unimproved.

Added to the pleasure and profit of meeting western architects at the St. Louis convention, was that of visiting eastern architects in their offices. In simple, social intercourse one often gains an idea that years of experience in the beaten track of private practice might not have developed.

Besides the mercantile, the public buildings and the new residences of St. Louis, the fair grounds, with their appliances, and particularly the grand stand, well repay visiting. Nor can an hour be more pleasantly spent than in going through the Missouri Glass Company's works if fortunate enough to see the formation of a bull's-eye.

Not far from Cincinnati, an entire city upon a well digested system and design, similar to that of Pullman near Chicago, is being built.

It was on the Cincinnati bluffs that a simple variation in locating a group of cottages was stumbled upon, which might easily be adopted in many places with desirable effect. A semicircular drive was described with a main street as a diameter. Half a dozen cottages were built facing this curve, and in the center was a miniature park, all of which gave a faint suggestion of the charming places in New England villages.

The grand scale upon which Washington City was laid out, with its broad streets and diagonal or radiating avenues and their spacious intersections, gives opportunity for the erection of large buildings where they can be seen from a distance, permitting satisfactory viewing.

The Johns Hopkins Hospital, at Baltimore, should be visited by all desirous of seeing good work of that kind.

It is a gratification to see galvanized iron supplanted by copper in cornices, turrets, bay-windows and dormer work, where, without paint a character and individuality, not otherwise obtained, is insured.

Pressed brick has to a great extent given place to common and fire-clay brick of standard and irregular sizes and varied colors, producing picturesque, and at the same time, good, artistic walls.

Effective designs are wrought with hard burned, dark toned arch brick, combined with lighter shades or softer brick. In fine pressed brick walls, substantial work is done by laying them with good sized, sensible mortar joints, the facing bounded with the backing by regulation courses of headers, without sacrificing straightforward, sound construction to fashion. Interior walls in libraries, schools and audience-rooms, stairways, halls, corridors are simply finished with common, pressed and glazed brick, make a finish varied and pleasing, combined with freedom from the tinder box bath and plaster work.

In many office buildings, vestibules, halls and corridors are wainscoted and trimmed with marble to the exclusion of all possible woodwork.

Wrought and cast iron, in simple but effective and artistic designs, is coming more and more into use. Audience-rooms are to be found where simple but special and carefully considered means have been adopted, securing comfortable and satisfactory heating and ventilation.

Particularly interesting is the new method of forming foundations without dimension stone, but with a gridiron work of steel rails and concrete which proves cheaper and far superior in many ways to the old method.

In Chicago, a novel procedure was the roofing-in of the whole building site for a mammoth business block. The excavation had been completed in the fall and all inclosed with walls of wood a few feet above the sidewalk and a flat pitch roof constructed. This permits the laying of the foundations and bringing the basement work up to the sidewalk line, all being carried on continuously and with comfort through the winter in spite of cold waves, blizzards and all inclement weather.

The art museums, with their lovely works, which nearly every large city possesses, furnish one with endless entertainment; but of these, and the many new features of exterior and interior finishing, furnishing and decoration, it will be impossible to speak in detail.

No better entertainment is to be found than a visit to the Japanese Village in New York, where, in a large room, are shown Japanese artisans at their work. Here are seen the cabinet maker, bronze worker, cloisonne manufacturer, coppersmith, silk worker, wood carver, painter, athletic feats, etc. It is a wonderfully interesting revelation of the secrets of Japanese art.

After looking over the architectural work of the sections visited, one point was particularly noticeable. Everywhere had there been a visible strife for the odd. Good construction, durability, propriety, consistency and common sense had been violated. This crazy-quilt work, with its unrest, has resulted in a reaction, and in some places can be seen a return to the simple and substantial, where study has been devoted to the refinement of concentrated ornamental detail located where well proportioned masses and honest construction form a proper background, and enhance its effect.

It is a decided relief to visit the quaint old houses of colonial times, the honesty and simplicity of which have a charm foreign to what the American public dubs "Queen Anne."

The West is able to claim superiority in many ways, while behind the East in others. Although eastern work is done, as a rule, with less haste, in a more thorough and substantial manner, with greater study and refinement, yet the western architect, disheartened with the many trials to his artistic feelings, will find similar examples and results exist in the East, and so can pick up crumbs of comfort.

* Paper read before the third semi-annual meeting of the Architectural Association, of Iowa, January 13, 1886.

To a candid and unbiased mind will also come the conviction that, not always is the artist of renown to be relied upon to produce only successful designs and execution.

It is like meeting an old friend to run across a building a perspective or elevation of which you remember having seen published in some journal.

To one passing his time in a prairie country, a trip through the mountains and hills, and over and along the streams of New England, furnishes a fascinating charm to the eye. He is amazed at the frequency of the mills and factories, driven by the power that tumbles so wildly over the rocks of these water courses.

These are a few of the host of noticeable, interesting and profitable features of a ramble, pleasant remembrances of which will lighten and inspire the labors of many coming weeks.

Some Recent Terra-Cotta Work.

CALIFORNIA shows a strong disposition to change from the unsubstantial, although not unpicturesque frame building of the past and imitate the East in the general adoption of brick and terra-cotta. It has been demonstrated that fine modeling clays can be procured in the state, and now, enterprise, in the shape of Chicago men, both with capital and practical experience, has taken hold of the work of producing this artistic material. The pioneers of this are the firm of Gladding McBean & Co., with head office at Sacramento and works at Lincoln. They have in charge of their modeling Mr. F. Marion Wells, the noted sculptor, and the work executed is said to equal in material and execution any terra-cotta work in the country. The largest terra-cotta contract yet attempted in California is now being executed by this company for the Pioneer Hall building at San Francisco by Architects Wright & Sanders. The sketches for the terra-cotta, which are entirely of a memorial nature, were made by Architect Wright, and are varied and exceedingly realistic. Major General Fremont appears in heroic size; an argonaut panel, depicting an immense sea bird finding a resting place after a long struggle with wind and wave, illustrative of the first pioneer, are among the most noted. Three panels will illustrate in high relief the passage of early emigrants overland. "The Parley" shows the meeting with hostile Indians; "The Camp," the rest at sunset, and "The Arrival," the joy of the travelers as they look from the last mountain wall over the foothills to the fertile plains beyond. Then in two panels, 2½ by 17 feet, is memorialized the, to Californians, famous Bearflag war, when General Fremont lead his handfull of troops against the Mexicans. The panels show the vigorous charge and the victory. Likewise strongly drawn and executed are two panels which all old "forty-niners" will look upon as memorials of their experiences. In one the gold digger, sitting by his fire with his frying-pan in his hand, cooking his evening meal, is overtaken by sleep, and for a moment dreams of home, the dream appearing in indistinct relief upon the background of the picture. The other panel, with equal strength, shows the home folks gathered around the supper table, reading a letter from the absent one. Numerous smaller panels in the way of heads of animals, fruits, flowers, etc., are being executed, and the building when finished will do much toward showing to residents of the Pacific coast the beauty and architectural adaptability of terra-cotta.

THE Northwestern Terra-Cotta Company send the following, and say: "We enclose herewith a list of buildings for which we are now manufacturing terra-cotta, and kindly ask you to give same a suitable place in your next issue. At the same time will inform you that the demand for our red and brown semi-glazed terra-cotta is such this year that we were obliged to buy the works on corner West Fifteenth and Laffin streets, and build two new kilns at our works on corner Clybourn and Wrightwood avenues, giving us in all fourteen kilns, and enabling us to supply our clients with usual promptness. The following is the list: I. Beidler's building, J. J. Flanders, architect; Phoenix Insurance Co's building, Burnham & Root, architects; Peter Schoenhofen Brewing Co's building, A. A. Cudell, architect; A. R. Meyer's residence, Kansas City, Mo., H. Probst, architect; G. B. Young's residence, St. Louis, Mo., Ramsey & Swasey, architects; Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Co's depot, Milwaukee, Wis., E. T. Mix & Co., architects; Public Library building, Dayton, O., Peters & Burns, architects; Insane Asylum, Toledo, O., E. O. Fallis & Co., architects; Central Safety Deposit Co's building, Burnham & Root, architects; Gustave Hottinger's residence, Lake View, Ill., J. H. Huber, architect; New Cass Hotel, Detroit, Mich.; A. A. Andresen's residence, Davenport, Ia., F. G. Clausen, architect; Raynold & Churchill's building, Burlington, Ia., C. A. Dunham, architect; Hendrick's School building, J. J. Flanders, architect; Chute's building, Minneapolis, Minn., G. M. Goodwin, architect; B. McLean's building, Kansas City, Mo., A. Van Brunt, architect; Hodgson & Son, Minneapolis, Minn., Hodgson & Son, architects; New High School building, Chicago, J. J. Flanders, architect; H. W. Hayes' building, Ann Arbor, Mich., Rudolph Benz, architect, Mobile, Ala.; Fairfield School building, Chicago, J. J. Flanders, architect; S. A. Crozer's block, H. B. Seeley, architect; Jno. Pauly's building, J. H. Huber, architect; E. A. Matthieson's building, F. Bauman, architect; Henry Reick's building, W. G. Barfield, architect.

We learned too late to notice the fact, in our last issue, that the New York Architectural Terra-Cotta Company had completed its new works at Ravenswood, Long Island City, and was now ready to take and execute orders for all shades and kinds of architectural terra-cotta. The new company was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, on the 23d day of January last, and began at once the erection of its works. On Saturday, April 24, the last brick was laid. In forty-six actual working days, a building, 177 x 130 feet, six stories in height, and containing more than a million of brick, had been erected, in spite of very inclement weather, and great difficulty in obtaining material. In addition to the building proper, there had been built four kilns, containing several hundred thousand brick, and capable of turning out one-half the capacity of the factory. Four more kilns have already been commenced, and will be