

they are unrecognisable. The parish church at Minehead, in Somerset, became some years ago, not nearly, but quite unrecognisable. A remarkably quaint Dutch-like plastered interior with old pews and pulpit and many local features has been gathered to its fathers. Now it merely resembles the ordinary villa suburban church. The present writer imagined a mistaken memory, but was informed that the building is the same. This is going on in France, too. At Troyes, for instance, the cathedral has been scraped quite clean, and has been re-painted with black, and everything that gives tenderness and association has been taken away. You walk in, feel disappointed, and come out, and with a sinking heart you begin the round of the churches. But now all your feelings are pleasurable. The churches are records of the past and the homes of the people. Each century has added much and seems to have taken away nothing. Everything conspires to intensify the true feeling about architecture that it is rather a growth than a creation, and in natural growth there is never complete attainment, but only a more or less imperfect embodying of an impulse. The restored stereotypes and makes this plastic life a corpse. The inside of the cathedrals of Laon and Sens and Soissons have suffered similarly to that of Troyes. More or less in all these churches a mania for black pointing the joints of the masonry has spread over the walls and pillars a ghastly reticulation which makes it almost impossible to follow the important lines and forms of the construction; "you cannot see the building for its stones," or rather for the joints between them, which is the more serious blunder, as the mediæval masons undoubtedly whitewashed or plastered the whole surface and then painted patterns and pictures on the unbroken spaces.

SPOILATION BY GOVERNMENTS

The music-hall variety of renovation, and decoration of the crypt at Chartres makes one hope fervently that money may remain deficient for work in the Cathedral proper, which at present is rather repaired than restored though it is said harm has been done by taking the splendid coloured windows away to be re-leaded in Paris, much new glass having been inserted.

Cultivated Frenchmen greatly deplore these barbarities, but are much more helpless than English people, for it is principally the State which is the sinner. But here we have no government department of destructive restoration, and individual influence may do much by remonstrance and suggestion.

In Italy, again the government is more responsible than here. There is restoration of all sorts and dyes; sometimes admirable repair sometimes deplorable substitution of bad modern work for priceless old as the abominable Salvati mosaic restorations, or falsifications, in the vaults of St Mark's, Venice, and in Ravenna. Any one, says the *Women's Tribune*, who will make a careful study of the damaged sculptures taken from the front of the Cathedral at Sienna, which are now at the Cathedral museum, with the copies actually in the facade will have an excellent object-lesson of how modern copies lose all the grace and intention of the originals. We may see the same kind of difference in the west front at Salisbury. With a little careful study the eye will soon distinguish between the old statues and the new ones, not only because of the darker colour of the stone, but from the intrinsic excellence of the design and carving of the genuine work. If in this labour of love we feel isolated and powerless, we should do wisely if we turn for neutral aid to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings called familiarly "Anti-Scrape," founded by William Morris, the offices of which are at 20, Buckingham street, Strand.—J. L. in *Building and Architecture*.

Demolition.

After a fire one is struck by the efforts of the up-to-date New Zealander to clear away the standing ruins. These efforts, by employing every imaginable material, from ropes to dynamite, chiefly demonstrate that our builders, however up-to-date they may be as builders, are, as unbuiders, hopelessly behind the times.

In the United States that branch of the building trade has been raised to the level of an exact science. There the scientific unbuidler takes apart the structure with as much skill as was employed by the up-to-date builder in putting the same together. The country is full of "house-wrecking" companies whose operations are not by any means confined to clearing away after fires, but also include taking down houses that have grown too old for further use, or have proved unsuitable to the progress of their locality, or been condemned for various reasons under the sanitary laws now so wholesomely diastolic in the world of civilisation. They also find a great field after an International Exhibition, when piles of buildings covering acres of land are put into their

hands. House-wrecking companies have brought their work up to a high state of development in handling these problems. They have their agents and representatives on the scene when it is proposed to tear down any important buildings to make room for new ones. Some of the large house-wrecking companies are prepared to bid on the destruction of anything from a single small structure of four stories up to half a hundred or a whole city. When the fire swept Baltimore and San Francisco the house-wrecking companies were the first in the field. Not all had been destroyed by the fire. There was salvage in the heaps of ruins which the wreckers were quick to realize. From under the debris they secured material which subsequently went into the rebuilding of the burnt portions. The crumbling brick and stone walls and twisted and bent steel frames, and the shattered and broken timbers, were susceptible of rejuvenation scarcely conceivable to the uninitiated. The wreckers should be called restorers. They save the waste, and prepare it for further use. Bent and twisted gas and plumbing pipes are straightened, polished and repaired, so that they are nearly as good as new. Bricks and stones which have not been broken are cleaned and sold for second-hand building material. Twisted iron and steel work, metal ceilings which have not been melted by the fire and even the nails, are recovered from the ruins to do service over again.

The big wrecking organizations are systematic in their study of a prospective field. Any big feature like the building of a World's Fair or the destruction of a city by fire starts their whole office force to work. Within a few days after the outbreak of the

the city is built to be torn down, and the closer they can figure out the work the better it will be for them. At both the St. Louis and Chicago fairs the agents of the leading wrecking companies watched proceedings and took elaborate notes. The quality of the materials put into the different buildings were inspected, the method of construction studied, plans of architects and contractors copied, and maps of every line of piping laid underground taken. Hectograph drawings and specifications supplied the wreckers with such information as they needed. All available information was thus collected by agents during the building of the fairs, and when the gates were thrown open to the public the wreckers were ready to figure upon its demolition. The cost and character of the water pipes, wiring, drainage system, pumps, and engines were filed and indexed away, as well as the value of the buildings, fences, paving brick, tents, bridges and furniture. When the time came the companies were ready to put in their bids with a good chance of making money.

The financial results are interesting. These companies do not, of course, work for nothing. For example, after St. Louis sundry buildings that had cost £48,000 were sold to some of these companies for £700. On the other hand fourteen of the largest buildings of the same Fair were bought by one company for £90,000. The structures were taken apart carefully and the material sedulously prepared for further use. Windows, doors, locks, hinges, frames, sashes, mouldings, all of these were classified, cobbled up, numbered, and stored. Nails were carefully drawn, straightened and polished. Even the plaster was recooked, regenerated, and made fit



ANOTHER VIEW OF PYNE AND CO'S STORE, SHOWING WOOL AFTER EXAMINATION AND VALUATION BY PURCHASERS

San Francisco fire several of the large wrecking companies had their representatives on the field and before the excitement was over, or the flames entirely subdued the experts were ready to make cash bids for wrecking the buildings partly demolished. While others were fighting the fire or struggling to save their goods, the wreckers were plotting off the different blocks, drawing maps of the partly-destroyed buildings and figuring upon the possible amount of salvage. None but experts could secure reliable data for such work, but the contractors and engineers who had studied this particular field, could make pretty shrewd estimates of the value of the material left.

When the contracts were closed the large force of men put at work quickly pulled down the few standing buildings and the good material was cleaned, repolished and sold for the construction of smaller houses. The wrecking companies thus recovered from the ruins sufficient second-hand material to build a city of hundreds of houses. San Francisco to-day owes much to the wreckers, who thus systematically recovered the waste from the burnt heaps of ruins and supplied local builders immediately with thousands of tons of material. The amount of salvage they obtained will never be known, but it is not likely they performed their arduous task without pecuniary reward.

When a World's Fair is built the wrecking companies have their agents on the scene during the whole course of construction. In this case they know that

for use to the extent of 16,000 tons. Every truss and girder was lowered gently and the bolts drawn and sorted by sizes. On the whole one hundred million pounds of timber were recovered, millions of feet of iron and lead piping, tens of millions of nails and bolts, and tens of thousands of window frames and doors were made fit for useful domestic and public life.

It can easily be imagined that these companies have vast warehouses, where as many things in the building line can be bought as are to be seen at Whitely's in every other line of requirement. How catalogues are sent broadcast of everything as good as new filled with moving descriptions and set off with alluring prices, burning bargains into the eager brains of millions of buyers, these things are American history. As to the dangers of the craft of what may be termed reconstructive demolition they are obvious. Big things weighing tons have a knack of breaking away at unexpected times in unlooked-for places, great fires play havoc with the equilibrium of structures, time and the white ant destroy the balance even more than the material. What American ingenuity cannot dodge is faced by American pluck and the price of the balance is paid. This balance the American reduces to a minimum, and it is part of a great industry of his establishing.

What is going to happen to the materials of the Christchurch Fair?

Wandering minds make small wages.