

Sculpture and Painting being copying arts, are devoted to the task of reproducing those things in nature with which we are all well acquainted. The study of the expressions of the emotions seen in the human face and the study of the human form, are forced upon us daily. No one can avoid it; and if the sculptor or painter err in moulding or depicting these, his failure can be detected at once. Not only do those who have given these arts no previous consideration feel at once whether the work conveys pleasure or not, but they are able to see why it either succeeds or fails. They know the proportions of the human body, as also those of animals, and they can at a glance discover if the head is too large or does not sit rightly on the shoulders, if the body is too long, or the legs too short to be considered a good figure; and if any passion is shown, they can tell at once if the expression correctly represents it. And again, in landscapes, the truth or falsity to nature while not so clearly seen are nevertheless apparent to those who have cultivated the faculty of observation. Thus in Sculpture and Painting the actual faults are apparent to all. Into the higher paths of genius we cannot follow the masters unless we have studied hard to appreciate the subtleties of their work. But, in the case of average works, the opinion of the majority would, in most cases, be the correct one. It is very different with Architecture; here, there is no standard generally known to which its productions can be referred. It imitates nature only in a subtle way, so subtle, indeed, that many, even among those who practice the art, are unacquainted with it; many there are who do simply what has been done before, without ever giving thought to the reasons for their actions. Such a manner of working cannot produce art. And the lack of knowledge of the principles upon which the art is based, withholds from anyone the power to estimate its productions truly. It is impossible for any but those who have given deep study to the art to tell how much of a work belongs to the artist and how much to his art; that is, how much of it is the expression of his own thoughts and feelings and how much is copied from existing examples. Those works which show tasteful, original treatment or clever adaptation of existing forms, merit full praise. But those built in accordance with any given style, those which exactly reproduce the forms seen in works which were erected by other peoples, in a different age, under different conditions of climate, material, position, and all for a different purpose, must show a very scholarly rendering of these forms, if they are to convey any pleasure to persons having acquaintance with them; and how are we to recognise a scholarly rendering unless we ourselves be scholars? "Art properly so called, is no recreation; it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no handiwork for drawing-room tables, no relief of the ennui of boudoirs; it must be understood and undertaken seriously, or not at all. To advance it, men's lives must be given, and to receive it, their hearts." Works of art are produced by an incalculable group of faculties, reminiscences, preferences, emotions and instincts, in the constitution

of the artist; and it requires an equally complex set of faculties in the observer to appreciate to the full the value of his work.

[Mr. Hurst Seager's series of interesting articles will be continued in subsequent issues. -Ed.]

Architectural Competitions

From a paper read by Mr. H. Mandeno at the monthly meeting of the Otago Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects on July 19, 1916.

Architectural competitions apparently date back a very long way, and I am indebted very largely to Mr. H. V. Lanhester for the following short history:—

Although no authentic cases of Architectural Competitions can be traced to early Greece there is little doubt that they existed. It is inconceivable that a nation that made such a feature of competition and where the spirit of emulation was so pronounced, should not have had architectural competitions. It seems unlikely that a people who have left us so much that is noble and beautiful in art could have so perfected their architecture by any other means than by competition. We all know that public competitions were held in connection with literature, rhetoric, sculpture and stage production, while the old Olympic Games are a bye-word in all the civilised nations of the world. I have read too of the beautiful Choric monument at Athens that commemorated the victory of a chorus trained by Lysicrates in a dramatic contest. Then too the four facades of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus were decorated by four different sculptors so that the public might compare their work.

Early in the fourteenth century Competitions were held under the auspices of the Confraternities and members of the Guild were accepted as qualified to adjudicate. At Siena Cathedral a council of monks with masters of the Guild met to consult on the placing of the columns and also to choose between two designs of columns by Francesco Talenti and Orcagna. When each candidate elected two masters as arbiters, as might have been expected, these two could not agree and an umpire had to be called in. Later on, about the year 1400, A.D. a competition was held for the dome of the Cathedral at Florence. Vasari gives the following account:—

Fresh from the close study of many ancient Roman domes, Brunelleschi had determined upon the constructional principles he should adopt in the event of his services being retained for the work. But, although he had made a model, he was afraid to exhibit it, "knowing," to quote Vasari's words, "the imperfect intelligence of the assessors, the envy of the competitors, and the instability of the citizens who favoured now one competitor, now another, as each chanced to please them." The attempts to explain his ideas without exhibiting either plans or models in illustration of his proposals led to his being regarded as a fool and a babbler, and he was more than once dismissed, and on one occasion forcibly ejected from the public meeting at which he was vainly endeavouring to elucidate his proposal. This threat caused Brunelleschi to say in after years that he dared not,