

The Quality of Fitness in Architecture.

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This Essay won our Fiftieth Prize Competition set by Mr. Basil Hooper, of Dunedin, whose Criticism appears on another page of this issue.

In analysing works of Architecture, with a view of distinguishing between the gold and the dross it is necessary to first place the whole subject under several broad headings. Thus one appreciates Architectural works from the standpoint of their beauty, usefulness, strength, repose and such-like qualities. To pass the test or standard, an Architectural creation

Dealing first with the functions of a building, it is not only necessary that the structure *be* actually suitable; it must also have the *appearance* of being so. For instance a wooden bank building, with a properly constructed strong-room, is quite a safe place in which to deposit valuables; but a bank with brick or stone exterior would appear to offer more security. Accord-



¹Auckland Students' Association.—Design by H. Hyland, (First Mention). Subject: "A Composition of the Greek Doric Order."

should possess amongst other qualities, that of fitness. The quality of fitness in Architecture may be best described as being "the right thing in the right place." To satisfy this requirement it is not sufficient for a building to be beautiful in form and design, and structurally sound. The design and construction of the work must also be in keeping with the purposes to which the building is to be placed; the decorative details must also be appropriate to the materials used; and the complete building be in harmony with its natural surroundings and local tradition. Briefly, to fulfil the quality of fitness a work of Architecture should be true to its purpose, materials of construction and locality.

ingly most of our bank buildings are designed with a heavy classical "motif"—not in the style of say a tea-kiosk.

A fine example of this sense of fitness was old Newgate Prison, expressing severity and justice in every great block of which it was built. Dance, the architect, might have designed, in the style of a Florentine palace, a building—quite strong enough to hold any number of criminals—but which for all its elegance, would not have satisfied the eye as to its fitness for the task. Restraint characterised the whole building; its simple mouldings, lack of ornament, severely designed openings and general sombre appearance—all combined to give one the impression of its fitness as a prison.