

The Aesthetic Aspect of Concrete Construction.

In a paper on the Aesthetic Aspect of Concrete Construction Mr C. F. A. Voysey read before the Concrete Institute, London, recently a great deal of emphasis was placed on the necessity which faces the architectural profession of discarding traditional ideas and attempting those new expressions which must come from the new material which is being put to use. Mr Voysey points out at the outset that the conservative instinct in some of us tends

train, the motor-car, that they are made in the form of the thing which they are destined to replace.

As the evolution of things is quite evident to us all, we may look forward with confidence to the time when concrete construction will have a character of its own and will cease to be made to look like anything that it is not.

We shall all agree that the finest examples of building throughout the wide world have been the



THE Y.M.C.A. HUT AT ROTORUA, WHICH WAS RECENTLY OPENED FOR THE USE OF SOLDIERS. The Hut, erected by the Y.M.C.A. on Pokeroa Hill, Rotorua, contains a billiard-room, with three tables, a lounge, a reading-room, a dark-room for photography, and a kitchen.

to strengthen our prejudices. A fondness for hand-work and the qualities of familiar building materials make one shy of the mystical concoctions that are more or less mingled with brains. Concrete seems to be one such that depends on conscience.

Mr Voysey reviews the objection to concrete, listing chief among them the great difficulty experienced in making alteration to buildings, the sound conducting quality of the material, and lastly, the opportunity which it gives to the imitative instinct in man, which with this material has found great scope for expression. Buildings are made to look like stone or brick, even at times like half-timber work. Even this last named objection to use of the material is found to be a natural one, in view of the fact that we usually find when any new invention first appears, as for instance, the railway

result of the consideration and understanding of the requirements and conditions obtaining at the time of their creation, and the moral, intellectual, and spiritual character of the people of their time and place. It follows, as the best work grows out of requirements and conditions, that the character of concrete construction must be evolved. As the conditions for concrete are quite different from those for stone, brick, or timber, the mode if its expression must be different. Doors and windows are requirements, but the form they take must depend on conditions. Those conditions are chemical, natural and functional. The ingredients of which concrete is made have their distinctive qualities.

Bad workmen find fault with their tools, and as concrete is in a sense one of our tools, we must not quarrel with it, though doubtless some will