

is really an excellent little essay. Unfortunately it is marred by carelessness in its presentation. In several places words have had to be inserted in order to complete sentences; the punctuation has had to be amended; and typists' errors corrected. The last sentence in the penultimate paragraph is too long and involved. 'Bramante' should cultivate the virtue of restraint in writing as in his architectural work, and carefully avoid any approach to fine writing.

"The essay of 'Effort' shows painstaking work, and is worthy of commendation. It is carefully and straightforwardly written, but unfortunately 'Effort' has not kept within the bounds of the subject set. This essay is more a dissertation upon the principles of architectural design. 'Effort' should try again. The study of a small handbook upon the principles of literary composition would benefit him. --Yours, etc.,

"C. REGINALD FORD."

THE WINNING ESSAY.

"The Place of Traditional Styles in Modern Architecture."

By "BRAMANTE."

The usage of traditional styles in modern architecture has given rise to many controversies on the point, and the main argument against this practice appears to be that it tends to destroy originality in design, but one would do well to remember how the exponents of individuality in any one of the fine arts, after a brief, disappointing venture alone, inevitably returned much chastened in spirit to the beaten track. Historical precedent must necessarily occupy an important place in the education of the present day architect, for it brings into prominence the great architecture of the past, both for inspiration, and for purposes of interpreting it in terms of modern requirements; it develops his critical and reasoning faculties and also cultivates within him a taste for refinement and beauty; while proportion, the very essence of architecture, is only effectively learnt from the study of traditional styles, because in them proportion was purely the resultant of fitness.

Then the question arises: must all the dearly gained knowledge, knowledge born of experience, bequeathed to us by past craftsmen, be ignored? The idea is ridiculous, and would appear equally absurd if applied to modern engineering, because what engineer would attempt to design a mechanical contrivance without first enlisting the aid of the fruits of previous engineers' experience? It has been asked why an architect cannot express in his own natural way his ideas of building. Well, if his own natural way means his conception of things architectural after he has served an adequate studentship, then he indubitably does impart his own personal taste and bias into all his work, just as in the same way individual artists exhibit in

their handiwork traits peculiar to themselves. No thinking architect ever copies blindly the traditional styles, rather does he mould and adapt them to his special requirements with an eye to existing conditions, and in so doing, oftentimes achieves a distinct departure from the prototypes, a step not taken indiscriminately, but in full knowledge. One has but to study the works of both living and dead architects to see personal preference amply portrayed, classifying each man's work as a thing apart.

Architecture is therefore in no danger of becoming stereotyped by reason of reference to the past, the essential reason being that it is a living, pulsating art, whose styles or fashions are but mere accidents of environment and moment arising out of immediate necessity, and are in consequence ever changing to comply with the needs of the times. Tradition can certainly not be scoffed at, for after all even the most material amongst us has experienced at some time feelings of reverence and respect on entering a building intimately associated with the life of the people, and around which building, hallowed by time, tradition has grown. These feelings are conducive to higher and broader planes of thought, which must exercise a directly beneficial influence on subsequent work, and it is significant to note that the Greeks, who produced some of the finest architecture the world has ever seen, were so well aware of this keynote to great art, that they so constituted their religion and government as to foster and preserve for the benefit of the State higher emotions and aspirations among the people.

One writer on architecture says somewhere, "ideas touched by emotion underlie the expression of all that is truly great in Art," hence it should be the aim of all earnest architectural students to endeavour to discover the dominant force, the real essence of the spirit that imbued the long-dead masters, which lies behind the existing masterpieces of architecture. But there is a danger in merely accepting traditional styles and in ignoring this great motive force that gave them birth, for such an attitude would undoubtedly produce lifeless, monotonous works, works as laboured in tone as in design, and totally unworthy to be classed as art. However, architects are wisely allowing style to evolve of itself, building for utility and necessity, but utilising the acquired knowledge of previous works to guide them; they are in the way of producing a permanent architecture which will be built on the basis of eternity as was the glorious architecture of the Greeks. Also are they wisely scorning flights of originality, knowing full well that no man is equal to the tremendous task of changing the existing order of things, for the fundamental principles remain immutably constant, as unchanging as the very hills themselves.

All through the ages has the art of the sculptor, of the painter, and of the engineer been allied to that of the architect, and as all the former arts have advanced and are to-day, if anything, more