course of time, by constant use throughout the world, it was forgotten that they were a contraction of Greek words, and they became mere symbols, which conveyed one and the same meaning to Christians of every nation and language.

The Sacred Ciphers were so pleasing to the subtle minds of the Oriental Christians that they are seldom absent from Byzantine ecclesiastical ornamental sculpture, mosaics, illuminations, embroidery and metal work; moreover, they led to the monogramatizing of many secular names, such as those of the Emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora, carved upon the capitals of the great columns of the nave of the church of Sancta Sophia at Constantinople.

This custom of using secular monograms, as well as the Sacred Ciphers, in architectural decorations passed from the East to the West, and became a common usage at an early date all over Europe. The one best known of these Western secular ciphers is that of Charlemagne.

To-day the use of the Sacred Ciphers is very much in vogue in all the various departments of ecclesiastical art, but too often they are wrongly used, and all because many architects, designers and decorators are deeply ignorant of the first principles of ecclesiology, hence do not fear to walk "where angels fear to tread."

**SERMONS IN SUN DRIED BRICKS. FROM THE OLD SPANISH MISSIONS. BY HARVEY ELLIS.**

When the earnest and God-fearing missionaries from Spain came among the Indians, in what was then Mexico, the least expected result of their embassy was that their building of the places of worship known as the "Missions" would in the far future make a lasting impression on modern architecture and give a simple, straightforward solution of an architectural problem not any too easy.

These Fathers, while remembering the intricate embroideries of the Plateresque...
style and no doubt willing to perpetuate it in the new country, were impeded by the lack of skilled labor, the inability to procure materials, and the lack of trained architects; and no doubt largely due to the latter fact, were able to produce architecture. With the sun-dried bricks, the aid of peon labor and the absolute fulfilment of the requirements, they produced buildings that for positive frankness of expression of purpose, have never been equaled in the history of the building crafts. The exact adaptation of these works to the climatic conditions and the functions involved make them classics equally with the Parthenon and its Roman successor, the Pantheon.

This statement, while seeming a trifle audacious and in conflict with accepted traditions, is thought to be, nevertheless, susceptible of demonstration. It is deemed by every writer on the subject of architecture, from Vitruvius to Fergusson, that the art, as an art, consists primarily in accommodating the requirements; and in addition to this, in the discreet and tasteful disposition of the structural materials.

Having this in mind, the dignity of these compositions, the majestic simplicity and the breadth of simple wall surface should be a source of inspiration to the designer of monumental structures.

There is no doubt that the restrictions imposed by the materials employed are the salvation of these buildings, as in one or two instances where there has been an effort, without success, to decorate these buildings externally, the failure has been so lamentable that there is much cause for gratification that skilled workmen were scarce in Old Mexico. The long, beautiful arcades and cloisters of these Missions have all the simplicity and impressiveness of the Roman aqueduct. A conspicuous example of this is to be found in the Mission of La Purisima Conception, which, with its crude workmanship and sun-dried brick, covered with white-wash, is, or should be, a veritable sermon to the men who are disfiguring our cities with more or less successfully warmed-over projects from the publications of the "Intime Club," which is presumed to express the aims, aspirations and works of the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

While in a tentative way efforts have
been made to design with the same spirit that informs these structures, owing to over-sophistication, the success achieved has only been estimated. In some instances, particularly in the neighborhood of Los Angeles, residences and other structures have been built that possess much of the gracious charm of the old works.

The solution of the problem of domestic architecture based upon, but in no sense in servile imitation of, the old Spanish type, is to be found in the extremely personal and interesting creations of some of the younger architects of Chicago, who are really giving honest and purposeful expression of art as applied to domestic engineering. It is curious in this instance to note how the spirit of the Renascence, as expressed by these Fathers of the missions, and combined with the curiously Gothic trend of imagination, has produced the splendid and appropriate art of Louis Sullivan, who since these Mission Fathers, seems to be one of the few men in the United States, at all events, who have comprehended the meaning of the word architecture, or in other words, who have forgotten the schools and become architects of equal ability with the good Franciscan Father Junipero Serra, the moving spirit in the designing and construction of the missions.

The Spanish clerical architects brought with them from their fatherland the traditions of a building art suited to the climatic conditions and the face of their adopted country. Therefore, their works, although strongly reminiscent, arose strong and vital. Even to-day they have lost nothing of their force, and are worthy of the study of our young architects.