NEW LIFE IN AMERICAN HOME BUILDING SHOWN IN THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE EXHIBITION: BY CARLETON M. WINSLOW

The exhibition of the Architectural League this year was full of encouragement in many branches. As a bird’s-eye view of our national progress it emphasized some of the most hopeful signs in the modern trend, and showed a development in the architectural field that is significant in its relation to many of the big social problems of today. But perhaps the most delightful and encouraging part of it, to me, was the progress shown along the lines of home-building. It almost seemed as if at last the architect had forgotten the open book of photographs lying on his drawing-board, and was building from his own heart and mind. And when that happens we may well rejoice! There was much of that originality which comes not from a mere striving to be different, to produce some new effect, but from a genuine endeavor to get the most harmonious and sensible results possible from the material at hand. It showed that careful and intelligent thought which alone can mold to success the first impulse, the first spark of inspiration. It showed how much can be accomplished when judicious handling and knowledge of the art is combined with loving interest in the task.

Although many of the examples drew considerably upon the various styles and characteristics of a bygone period, there was a certain freedom of handling, a compelling touch of individual taste that infused new vitality into old forms and gave a new meaning to what might otherwise have been mere imitation. There was no blind adherence to a much-taught creed, but rather a careful selection and adaptation of past beauties to present conditions and environment,—a statement which is beginning to be more and more applicable to both our public and private architecture.

Among the most significant illustrations of domestic architecture which the exhibition afforded was the country home designed by Mr. Edward Shepard Hewitt, at Boonton, N. J. It is solidly built, with a fine, intentional simplicity about its lines that makes for comfort and beauty. The arrangement of the roof, broken so pleasantly by the dormer windows; the suggestive touches of trellis-work about the open-air sleeping room, with its long window-box of thick trailing and climbing plants; the inviting entrance porch; the ample, well-spaced windows, relieved of any danger of monotony by small square panes; the few dark shrubs breaking the ground line and seeming to help root the house more closely in the soil, and finally,
the happy carelessness—or rather thoughtfulness—that has left the foreground rough and broken with its natural bits of rock, instead of taming it into the formality of a well-trimmed lawn—all these, together with the pleasant shelter of the trees, combine to give the place that air of quiet charm and dignity that grows out of respect for what Nature in the first place has provided.

"KILLENWORTH," Trowbridge and Ackerman, architects, rather imposing in its size, though evidently a wealthy home, is beautifully free from ostentation. The uselessness of Newport finds no counterpart here; on the other hand, the very style of the building expresses intelligence and refinement. The use of English traditions in its construction is not akin to plagiarism, for no one can contradict our right to express ourselves in the old architectural language so long as we use it honestly, free from mannerisms which mean nothing, and singularities which ought to be no part of us. Besides, no other style lends itself more readily than this English form to an unsymmetrical plan.

A more delightful example than "Killenworth" could hardly be found of what mere windows can attain. In this building the windows are the very life and essence of the place, not just so many glass-filled openings in a wall. Their beautiful balance and relation, the pleasant way they grow out of the structure, capped by balconies, and emphasized by the protecting gables above, permeate the whole building with interest and invest it with reminiscent touches of romance.

Turning to Mr. Freedlander's sketches of bungalows at Manhattan Beach, one feels at once the appropriateness of the design. Long and low-roofed, suggestive of the spaciousness of ocean, sand and sky, they seem just the thing for a seashore home, and give one the impression at once of freedom, coziness and hospitality. The horizontal lines,—their most distinctive feature,—are gratefully relieved by the pergola pillars and the wide approach, while the well-placed chimneys save the whole from a too perfect geometric balance.

Very different in style, but no less charming in effect, is the photograph of the little octagonal building which makes up part of the James Speyer farm at Scarsboro, N. Y., by Alfred Hopkins. There is an air of quaint originality about the place that is particularly enticing. Very interesting, too, is the touch of exterior ornament, chiefly so, perhaps, for the reason that its use is not yet extensive, although it is beginning to be found here and there. It is easy to imagine how the subdued but varying tints of the inlaid tiles might relieve the flat tones of the wall, and without seeming mere unrelated
ornament, give to what would have been a blank surface a suggestion of unexpected color interest.

Very homelike against its wooded background is the suburban house of Charles Rustin designed by Mr. William A. Bates. There is a warmth and hospitality about it that the very simplicity seems to emphasize, while the deep shadows of the trees behind, repeated by those of the broad piazza, deepen the effect. The long shelving roof, the big chimneys, the interesting windows of the second story, are all in keeping; but the piazza is after all the chief feature of the house. Here were a man who wanted large verandas and an architect who knew how to design them and make them a part of the house. Generally porches, in their various forms, are about the most difficult feature with which an architect has to contend. Our climate and our people demand them, yet it is difficult not to make them look as if they had been dumped on the premises from a dray and pushed against the house. On the other hand, to cut a corner out of a building often interferes with the feeling of openness and airiness that the attached veranda gives. The Rustin house, however, combines all these elements and yet keeps the veranda an integral part of the dwelling.

A WATER-COLOR sketch of Mr. Tracy Dows’ house at Rhinebeck, New York, by Burch Burdette Long, Albro and Lindenberg, architects, is another interesting, vital design. This is one of the most charming Colonial homes seen at the League exhibition. In general the house makes one think of Washington’s mansion at Mount Vernon; there is the same sobriety, symmetry and character. True, the columns are round instead of square, and the roof is steeper and gabled instead of hipped; but both these things are improvements on the original—if original it was,—for the conjunction of the balustrade and hipped roof of the Mount Vernon house has never seemed successful. Of course, the arrangement of the wings in Mr. Dows’ house is quite different, but it has the same charm and the same character of utility. You feel in looking at the house that everything is as it should be,—the pillared and covered walks just the right length, the little houses at the sides just the right distance from the main house, isolated yet connected. There is not a superfluous thing about the whole place.

Comparison of this portico with the piazza of the Rustin house shows the good qualities of both. Each is perfectly adapted to its structure. While that of the Dows house is dignified and that of the Rustin house intimate, both are equally successful in expressing a feeling of hospitality. The Rustin house is helped by being raised
SIMPLE AND BEAUTIFUL DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE
AT LAWRENCE PARK, N. Y.

A COUNTRY HOUSE, MOST HARMONIOUS IN DESIGN
AND SCHEME OF CONSTRUCTION AT BOONTON,
N. J.
KILLENWORTH
Perspective from the North-East.

Troubridge & Ackerman, Architects.

SHOWING THE BEAUTY TO BE GAINED FROM A VERY SIMPLE DESIGN WELL CONSTRUCTED, WITH UNUSUAL ATTENTION GIVEN TO SHAPE, PLACING AND GROUPING OF WINDOWS.
MODERN COLONIAL HOUSE AT RHINEBECK, N. Y.; BEAUTIFULLY PROPORTIONED AND EMINENTLY SUITED TO ITS SURROUNDINGS.
TWO BUNGALOWS AT MANHATTAN BEACH, ESPECIALLY INTERESTING IN THEIR SUITABILITY TO LONG LOW STRETCHES OF GRAY COUNTRY.
on a terrace while the Dows house is kept from aloofness by having the floor level just above the ground.

The Dows house seems thoroughly American in the best sense of the word. There is a spirit of loyalty to the best of our traditions pervading it. Patriotism is, I should say, its keynote. The French architect, visiting New York, who was enthusiastic over a Georgian house in Washington Square, must have realized that it expressed this spirit of American character and was therefore good architecture. The Dows residence, while quite unlike the Washington Square house, breathes this same spirit.

On looking over this group of houses, there are certain characteristics common to all. Practically no fences are shown in the pictures, no spirit of exclusiveness or fear of intrusion is evident. None of these places would be improved by being fenced or walled off, appropriate and useful as fences and walls often are. The treatment of the roofs, too, shows simplicity and good proportion; no mannerism, no affectation anywhere. As to materials, plain shingles are used for the frame and stucco houses, graduated slate for the more costly and solid “Killenworth,” and glowing red tile for the little cottage by the sea.

**DOGWOOD BLOSSOMS IN WALL STREET**

I SAW a girl, when the first flush of May
Came to the fevered City unaware,
Bring a bright spray of dogwood blossoms where
The wildest tumult fills each desperate day.
Against her breast the starry flowers lay,
As if half frightened in the thoroughfare;
They were a whispered orison—a prayer,
High above all the noise, a nun might say.

Then through this cañon vista I beheld
An old, old lane, fragrant with breaths of Spring;
Lilac and hawthorn, cherry and peach compelled
My spirit, and the mad City’s murmuring
Died for an instant while I walked again
Where drifts of dogwood trembled in the rain.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.