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THE NEW PATH.

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Society for the Advancement of
TRUTH IN ART.

No. 5.]

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are,
and the things that shall be hereafter."

[Sept., 1863.]

THE PERSPECTIVE OF NATURE.

Introductory.

MANY pens are already at work in the endeavor to conduce to the enrichment and elucidation of Art and Science; and, in venturing myself to add a few words on this subject, I do so solely from a desire to aid the removal and suppression of some peculiarities, but too prevalent, in the present mode of writing on Art. My chief object at the present time is, to direct attention to early artistic education; and, by unfolding my views and mode of conception, to suggest that help which seems most needed.

Every true artist will agree with me, that the fundamental, and consequently most important, step in artistic education is the training of the eye into harmony with the development of the mind. It is an old story, yet always new, that the labor of thinking is indispensable in the life of all classes of men; and with regard to artistic studies, which are intimately related to observation and reflection, it is surely most necessary that, from the commencement, mind and eye should be educated together. Indeed it is this precise education which so completely distinguishes and elevates every genuine artist. This every-day world he regards from an entirely different point of view, recognizing in nature a multitude of charms, and discovering in her inexhaustible treasures of a purer knowledge, which from others are for-

ever hidden. It is his constant habit of uniting seeing with thinking which endows him with the power of understanding aright, where an undisciplined eye perceives nothing save hieroglyphics.

Now, in suggesting the means of procuring such an education, first I would state, that I entirely agree with those of my fellow-artists, who condemn the practice of constant mechanical copying, and endeavor rather to lead the students entrusted to their care, as early as possible, to the only original source and productive fountain—*Nature.*

Drawing from the object itself, instead of from copies, necessarily compels the student to think, and in a short time imparts to him a power of perception utterly unattainable by any other method. The student's attention should also at once be directed to the fact that, prior to any attempt to delineate, and in order to give anything like an adequate representation of the object placed before him, it is absolutely imperative, closely to observe and to examine every object *as a whole*, that is, in its general appearance, and therefore necessarily, at the same time, to observe also all those parts of which this appearance is composed. This examination must be sufficiently prolonged, to allow the mind a fair opportunity of seeing and retaining accurate impres-

sions of both form and color. By a discipline, as here described, every line, every touch, becomes replete with character, and tells its own story, whereas every other method is not only inferior, but, in point of fact, pernicious in influence, and conduces to a style of drawing which, being altogether deficient in character, is therefore utterly worthless. However, in this drawing from nature, some preparatory study is clearly needful, which should advance and keep pace with it; for when the seed, which the teacher sows, does not fall into well-prepared soil, and is not quickened by the aid of rain and sunshine, the prospect of an abundant harvest is more than doubtful.

Now this preparatory study—*the science of seeing*—commonly called *perspective*, is the only true guide that will ensure real competency to represent faithfully the varieties of appearances presented by natural objects, in accordance with their retrogression from the eye. The image of every object in nature upon which the eye can rest is exquisitely impressed in form and color, upon that most delicate membrane, the retina, according to the unchangeable laws of the *perspective of nature*. In truth, this latter is the magic key that opens to the student the entrance to the mysteries of his art, and the supposition that any artist can dispense with it, will speedily prove itself a fatal error. The student who attempts to draw from nature without being guided by perspective, will often find himself in fault; and much retarded by the expenditure of precious time: fearful ever of falling into fresh error, he will not so expeditiously and certainly attain the faculty of reproducing nature on the canvass with truth and feeling, as he might have done, had he only had the right guidance from the beginning.

Perspective—the science of seeing—must, as already told, *be taught in progressive connection with the close observation of nature*; and, in that case, I have no hesitation in saying, that the acquisition of a knowledge of it will be found in nowise a difficult matter. The instructor should also possess a taste and knowledge sufficient to enable him to avoid everything strictly mathematical, and to reduce the whole to simple principles, in which case the student cannot fail, at length, to arrive at the conclusion, that what is current under the name “*Perspective*,” is, in fact nothing but a most requisite accessory in art—namely, *the power of seeing accurately*.

Nevertheless, no one can be more fully aware than I, of the number of scruples and difficulties to be overcome, ere pupils can be incited to the study of perspective, especially when taught in that irrational manner so generally adopted. Too many mathematical subtleties are apt to alarm beginners, and fill them with a natural aversion, which deters them from penetrating through the shell to the sound and healthy kernel.

With the avowed object of naturalizing perspective, numbers of books have been written, and are continually appearing, though the result, I feel sure is entirely different from that intended. For example, how repelling it is to the beginner, and perfectly ridiculous to the artist, if he sees that simply to draw a chair, box, etc., etc., he has to penetrate such an alarming intricate web of lines, before he can, and then only with difficulty, observe the required object itself. Moreover some of the laws of the so-called perspective, given in the majority of books, are entirely opposed to those laws, which the only true *perspective of nature* dictates. But more of this in its proper place. No critique, I feel

sure, can be too point-blank, in order to combat effectually this thoughtless fashion of needlessly perplexing the learner. Another impediment, increasing the difficulties of inciting some pupils to study perspective, is the damaging circumstances, that even leading writers on art have treated it with such comparative indifference; although, of course, they are themselves fully aware of its true importance in a fundamental point of view, and only solicitous that learners should avoid giving it undue weight, in a way that would be derogatory to other studies. It is this comparative indifference on the subject, indulged in by some writers, which has given rise to the absurd—and, for the idle, welcome—notion, that perspective is without any substantial value whatever. No real artist will be at all likely to misapprehend the true significance of this apparent slight cast upon perspective by some writers, or be in the smallest degree disconcerted thereby; but, unfortunately, the multitude, amongst whom might be named especially those who possess a singular dexterity in devouring voluptuously the contents of a multiplicity of books, but familiarize themselves only with the crust; this multitude, I say, is only too apt to follow blindly, the writers of the most notoriety; and no sooner is anything asserted by them, than the multitude, parrot-like, chatters it glibly forth, all the while lacking the requisite powers

of scrutiny, yet possessing a singular proneness for talking, plausibly and speciously, of subjects it does not understand.

Lastly, in concluding these remarks, I take it for granted no real artist will accuse me of depreciating other studies out of regard for perspective. Knowing well that undue prominence given to one branch of study would most surely prove an obstruction to the student, aware of the saying, that

“Where fashion throws her chain,
True art can ne'er remain;”

nevertheless, I recommend the study of perspective, founded on the intimate observation of nature, from the first, as an absolutely necessary, sure and faithful guide for every student of art. It must be taught and practised early, otherwise the eye falls into a loose and imperfect habit of study. In such a case it is then only with the greatest difficulty—if at all—that the student can rectify such unprofitable and pernicious groundwork. But even to—so called—artists, who have neglected perspective in former years, I would earnestly recommend the culture of perspective simultaneously with their other studies. I admonish them to reflect that, seeing the last step has been only a retreat, the return to a former position will become a real advance. The foundation of all real improvement, is the recognition of an evil.

M. LE VENGEUR D'ARCY.

“How bountiful is Nature! he shall find
Who seeks not; and to him who hath not asked
Large measure shall be dealt.

Wordsworth.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND WHAT CAN BE DONE.

I.

THOUGH we Americans can not point to our antiquities, and must needs go to the Aborigines of the country for tradition, we yet have a history—and that history including the record of art, such as it is, and the record of art including the record of Architecture, we may still find in it something instructive. To that end we propose to state what has been accomplished in America towards giving us proper and suitable houses to live in, stores to trade in, churches to worship in, and public buildings wherein to perform the various offices of state, law, education, charity, popular convention and amusement. We will for the present confine ourselves to the inquiry, how far such buildings have served our uses and necessities, and how far they have conduced to our moral health, pleasure and instruction.

At a future time we will endeavor to show how much more is yet to be done before we can realize a perfect Architecture, how much *can* be done with the means at our disposal, and what are the duties of architects under the circumstances.

To a person true to our faith little can be said upon the first part of our subject that will be either instructive or entertaining. We shall however deem it in our line of duty to record whatever of condemnation or praise we have to bestow upon works of the past and present, and, knowing the position we now hold, can the better be able to steer our future course.—We will see that not only the architect, but every person whose labor or money contributes to the erection of a building, has a duty to perform, not only to posterity, but to the cause of universal *truth*. We will see more clearly that we have yet to revive that which is lost and dead, but which we hope will rise again with increased glory. We who claim to be the revivalists have no mean task before us. We shall find that we have started on a laborious journey, beset on all sides by old-time prejudice and obstinate ignorance; that we must wage, as we pro-

ceed, most uncompromising war against all deception and untruth wherever we find it, and be guided on our way by the truths of nature and Nature's laws. Let us hope that, while carefully examining what we see about us, we may yet find some light in the midst of the prevailing gloom; and, if such should be our fortunate lot, we will reap confidence, and have cause to hope that the outer darkness will be penetrable, and that our lamps will spread lustre wherever they go, gathering and diffusing light as they march along, until they are confounded with the brilliancy to which they have given birth. Then, and then only, when the world is filled with the light of the knowledge of truth, their kindly offices will be no longer needed.

We certainly have cause for congratulation, that our forefathers who first ventured upon these shores were unaccompanied by the architects of their time. The result was that they introduced the most natural and constructive system of architecture that has ever *prevailed* in this country; and which, like all the good styles that had preceded it, was everywhere adopted with equal uniformity. But shortly settlements became villages—the house carpenter came over, and soon the honest substantial log cabins were demolished, and the cottage was substituted. White-washed boards assumed their sway, and the lichen-grown bark, the turf chimney and the thatched roof were seen no more. Villages became cities, and then the architects, trained in the most debased period of architecture, came over. Henceforth the temples of Greece and Rome were everywhere re-produced in wood and plaster, until at last the whole country was inundated with Parthenons and Erectheums. The court-houses became temples, and every respectable gentleman of means was obliged to dwell in a sanctuary of heathen divinities.

The nation became independent, public treasuries were overflowing, and National and State Capitols, City Halls,

Custom Houses, and Post Offices, commensurate with the wealth of the nation, were wanted. Then was a perfect feast-time and high carnival for the architects, for what they had before built in wood and plaster, could now be done in stone or marble. They really thought that they could now equal if not eclipse Greece and Rome. (The deluded creatures did not know what was the real essence, soul and beauty of the classic architecture. They might lavish money by millions, they might cover ground by acres but they could not, nor can we build another Parthenon.) Hence arose all the public buildings at Washington, all the state capitols, and numerous other public buildings, all re-productions of classic temples, but without the classic sculpture. Occasionally could be seen some daring innovation in the shape of Renaissance. Our City Hall is an example.

Our churches, meanwhile, were all more or less copied from St. Paul's at London, and Sir Christopher Wren was looked up to as the greatest master of architecture. Giotto was not known either in Europe or America. The churches were even contemptible as copies, however bad the originals. St. Paul's and St. John's are the best buildings of this class that we have in this city.

It is, however, but justice to the builders of the first half of the century (and by builders we include architects,) to say that much of the classical work in public buildings was accurately copied and substantially built, and the Exchange and Custom House in New York will stand for centuries, lasting monuments to the energy and perseverance of our constructors. Perhaps no building in either Athens or Rome was ever built so massive and enduring as either of them. The old Custom House, (now the Sub-Treasury) is an exact copy of the Parthenon in the detail and proportions of its North and South fronts, the sculpture only being omitted; and is larger than the original. But think not, reader, that it is another Parthenon. You may look in vain for the sculpture that graced the original, or anything like it, and will only find some clumsy lions' heads to repay your labor. The building is described in a few words. They

have built a colossal frame and left out the picture.

The class of public buildings just named, upon which so much useless praise has been bestowed, has held complete sway during the present century, so that until lately, to mention the word "Gothic" was a signal for universal popular derision, and the architect who would dare to utter such a heretical word was doomed to utter ruin. It is needless to mention the prejudice which even now so generally prevails in favor of this mongrel of Roman and Renaissance Architecture, or as its adulators call it "pure classic," "Italian," and other meaningless names.

Its application immediately extended from public buildings to domestic ones, so that now we meet everywhere, scraps of classic detail in plaster, wood and stone, and it is well known that the Fifth avenue palaces of our so-called "Merchant Princes," are nothing but a jumble of Roman and Renaissance, only tintured in their gaudy interior decorations with the most trashy of all styles, the modern French Renaissance. This style of building is the fashion of the day, and against it we mean to wage a most relentless warfare. We shall lose no opportunity to oppose its further progress, and proclaim against its false and deceptive construction, and vulgar and meaningless ornamentation. It is needless to point to examples—we have them everywhere about us. A building was lately erected in this city by a wealthy glue and iron merchant, and devoted to "Science and Art." It is a splendid advertisement of iron beams, and a monument of architectural folly. Brick, iron, brown stone, Caen stone and terra cotta enter into its construction. Ostensibly built regardless of expense, Caen stone was used for carving, and painted brown where brown stone was too expensive, and terra cotta arches were used, where there would be a saving on Caen stone. Stone platforms in stairways are pieced out with cement, and stairways lead to nowhere. All the external lintels, without exception are broken, the Caen stone decays, the paint wears off and displays the deliberate attempt at deception, and the baked clay is crumbling to pieces where it will not stand pressure, or is

yielding to the natural action of the elements. If "science and art" be taught inside we can readily appreciate the exceeding caution that the teachers must exercise to divert the attention of the pupils, lest they should regard the building as an example of scientific construction or artistic design.

Let us pause here, and retrace our steps for about a century, to do homage to a class of builders who made the first step in sensible construction and picturesque arrangement, after the log-cabin period, but whose merits have been little appreciated. We mean the constructors of the Dutch farm houses, and those buildings that are modifications of the system of building introduced by the Dutch settlers in the vicinity of New York and on the banks of the Hudson. Many will perhaps recollect to have seen some of the old houses in this city, with stepped gable-ends to the streets. Several are still standing in the city of Albany, but are rapidly giving way to the march of business, speculation, and "improvement." You perhaps have seen pictures of "Sunny Side," where our historian has perpetuated the architecture of our ancestors in substantial brick and mortar, as faithfully as his pen has recorded their heroic deeds.

Of the city buildings of the Dutch stepped gables were the most prominent structural features, thoroughly adapted to the material employed, and while most economic and durable, giving a pleasing variety to the sky lines, which is much more desirable in the narrow streets of a city than elsewhere. But it was in the country farm houses that the builders of this time displayed a taste for picturesque effect, while building so substantially that their works can be seen and studied in abundance within an hour's journey from New York. They exist on Long Island, throughout the northern part of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and on the banks of the Hudson as far up as Troy. The most noticeable, perhaps, is the old Hasbrook house at Newburgh, well known as having been Washington's headquarters during the last year of the war for Independence. There are more to be seen in New Jersey than elsewhere, and there they consist most-

ly of a first story of red sand-stone, and a second story which is the same as an attic, with the roof coming down to the attic floor in front and rear, and sweeping out in a curved line to a projection of four feet or more. The gables are generally filled in with framework and clapboarded or shingled. Some are built of stone, and trimmed with brick; others are of brick trimmed with stone, and others again are built of dark-red sand-stone, with quoins and trimmings of a lighter colored stone. They almost invariably have dormer windows.

We have seen one very large house of this kind, in which pressed brick and two kinds of dressed stone, as well as timber construction were used. There is a barn within the limits of the city of Brooklyn, some sixty feet square, which is of stone to a height of ten feet all around, then has a curved, Mansard roof (of better construction than any French roof we have ever seen), which then is surmounted by a hipped roof of pyramidal form; this, in turn, is truncated at the top, and covered with a regular gable roof, with windows in the gable ends and a weather vane on each gable. It may perhaps be difficult for the reader to put this description together and make a house with a roof on it, that will be pleasing to look at; but we assure him that the effect is not only picturesque but very noble. Notwithstanding the technical divisions, the barn has one roof only, though divided into different parts, and that for constructive and economic reasons only. We dislike that economy in building which would sacrifice utility, as we hate meanness in everything, and it is totally at variance with our notion of *sacrifice*; but this economy was different from what we generally understand it to be—and this was why they were economic. The soil of Long Island is sand strewn with trap boulders, no rock being found. A farmer was formerly obliged to build with such boulders as he could find on his farm. Our friend wanted to have a stone barn—so he built his wall ten feet high and his material was exhausted. His wall was not high enough, for a hay mow, but it was high enough for cow and horse stables. He put a floor, then, on his barn at this height, and made a hay

mow by building a frame on the wall. This must be shingled, and yet the wall below was thicker than the framework and must be protected from the wearing of water, so he built the frame on the inside edge of the wall and gave the shingled covering a gentle curve outward. He thus got his hay mow and unknowingly built a Mansard roof. But he yet had a square of some sixty feet to cover, and the most natural way was to put a pyramid over it. This he did, but must have ventilation; so he cut off the pyramid near the top, put a gable roof over the opening, and thereby had places for windows. He might have put dormer windows on, but he knew better; his barn was built for utility, and must be water-tight, and he adopted the most secure method to attain that end. Even the best of us might have used the dormer, but in doing so would not have been true to our principles. We presume that the plain honest farmer that built this barn had not a ghost of a thought of making what we call an architectural structure out of it, but he was bound to make a substantial and convenient one, and he succeeded in all three. Thus we see that when we build constructively, substantially, rightly, we cannot help but produce a satisfactory effect; but when we sacrifice good construction to what is called "picturesque effect" and then try to add ornament, we shall surely fail; we ought to fail.

It is sad to see that, with such models of common sense building before their eyes, our rural population live content in their "Italian Villas," "Embattled" sham fortresses, and carpenters' gothic "Model Cottages," and see nothing in the honest old dutch farm-house but an eye-sore, only to be endured until some of the "enterprising men" come along, tear it down, and build a "model cottage" in its stead. A farmer who lived in one of the finest houses in New Jersey once asked the writer what he would advise him to do to ornament it, and expressed the greatest astonishment that an architect should advise him to let it alone. These houses have frequently been remodeled by men of the "enterprising" stamp, but we will not burden the reader with an account of their deeds.

The Dutch houses were built with-

out the assistance of architects, and they were better for that reason; for, though there were but few at that time, all professing and practicing architects of that period, as well as most of those of later times, considered the only proper field for practice to be the reproduction of classic or Renaissance, in whatsoever material might be handy, whether brick, stucco or wood. They saw nothing wrong in building hollow brick cylinders and calling them Doric columns, and thought it equally as good to the eye whether the lintel be one block of stone, or a construction of timber lintels and brick arches boxed in with wooden panel work, the usual method, in church building, of imitating the Greek temples. They would cover the simplest farm house with box pilasters and cornices, and put a wooden pediment over every window.

It was reserved to the last decade, however, to inaugurate the greatest architectural monstrosities—we mean cast-iron fronts. Of these we need say but little, as they have been observed by every one that walks our business streets. It was of course claimed for them that one could have the most elaborate building for nearly the same expense that a plain one would come to, and for much less than the same design would cost in stone or marble. Cast iron of course became the rage with the mercantile community, and all kinds of Corinthian, Doric and Renaissance became elaborated in thin shells of cast iron. The ornamentation was carried to the greatest extreme ever known, on account principally of the easy re-production of numerous parts from one pattern. Yet during this time while iron buildings have been in favor, no single attempt has yet been made to adapt the construction and ornamentation of such buildings to the material used, unless we may except some shot towers, and some buildings in which iron has been only partially used. And all this has been done in spite of, and in presence of the New York Crystal Palace, which was the best constructed and best ornamented iron building that has ever been put up in this country. We have great reason to mourn the loss of such a building, for it came very near to the

perfection of constructive iron work. In this connection we may fairly say that the practice of deception and imitation, shamming and lying, in the construction of buildings has in our time been brought well nigh to an art. In many instances we are so used to the imitation that we know not what the reality is, and it takes keen perception even in an architect of the true faith to detect many things which are false. The instances of this are so numerous as to become the rule, while truth and reality are the exceptions. This whole subject has been so thoroughly sifted not only by Mr. Ruskin in his *Lamp of Truth*, *Edinburgh Lectures*, and many other works, but by George Gilbert Scott in his recent work, that we recommend an earnest perusal of both, to all who are interested in good architecture.

It is necessary that we should go back a short time, and search for whatever we may have of Gothic Architecture. We will note how it came to us in its worst development and inflicted on an innocent American public the blunders and deformities of the various kinds of corrupt Gothic known as "Flamboyant," "Perpendicular," "Tudor," "Elizabethan," "Castellated," &c., and how, gradually, but to a small extent, a feeling for the Gothic of earlier times has begun to be developed and put in practice, though merely as an imitation of old work, and not at all conceived in the same spirit.

It was about forty years ago that the first buildings which at all assimilated to the Gothic, were erected in New York. If we recollect aright, they were the Church of the Messiah on Broadway near Waverly Place, and St. Thomas' Church on the corner of Houston St. They are both too familiar to need description. The former stands as it was built; the latter was burned and the entire interior destroyed. It has, however, been rebuilt and but a portion of the exterior walls remain; much that is seen being restoration very nearly in the style of the old church. Shortly afterward the Church of the Ascension was built. None of these give the characteristics of any particular period, but are probably copies of churches built about the same time in England.

At length Trinity was rebuilt about twenty years ago, and as it now stands is familiar to all. It is an example of the best features of the worst Gothic Architecture that has ever existed. It gives us all the good things in Perpendicular work, and leaves out many of the bad ones. Its spire is faultless in proportion, and the workmanship and detail perhaps as good as in any work in that style that has ever been done. For as the "Perpendicular" work of the fifteenth century was almost or entirely spiritless as compared with the early Gothic, it will be seen that it is not difficult to make as good buildings out of it now as then. Trinity is to New York what the New Palace of Westminster is to London. Yet its interior rejoices in sham groins and stucco abominations, and its imitations of stone color are all the worse for being deceptive.

Trinity church being so large, costly and prominent, of course settled the question of Church Architecture for a time, just as the Palace of Westminster did in England. All new churches belonging to the Episcopal denomination must be "Gothic," and it was immediately established as *the* Church Architecture. For a considerable period, therefore, Trinity furnished ideas enough to build all the Episcopal churches, and was reproduced, like the classic, in marble, stone, brick, plaster and wood; in the latter material particularly all the country churches were built, with pointed windows, spires, crockets &c., (which were originally designed to be of stone,) executed in timber and boards. The other denominations, however, still continued building their heathen temples. But at last *they* began to see that there were better things, even in the "Perpendicular" and later styles, than they had been accustomed to use. The ice being once broken it was found that the Gothic was not exclusively Episcopal, and that it fitted all sects alike. It was hence very generally adopted for Church work and occasionally for parsonages.

But like all new things which are used from no motive to do *right*, but only for the sake of variety, and to tickle the fancy for a time, the "Perpendicular" soon became monotonous, and Trinity ceased to furnish what it

had for several years given to New York, and what St. Paul's had long since furnished for London—that is, brains for its architects. The style was not dropped however, from any sense of its inappropriateness, or any desire to do better things. But our architects began to think, that they had “done” Trinity enough and that it was now time to do something original. Originality became the substitute for beauty, and anything was acceptable so long as it was not monstrous. So they dashed into the boundless field of invention, and our Church Architecture branched off into every grotesque variety of form.

Henceforth a church would be (as the fancy struck the designer) Flamboyant, Decorated, Tudor, Early English, or Norman; and that which seemed to be the favorite was what they wrongfully called Romanesque, being a jumble of all the round arch styles. None of them were copied with any accuracy, hence we have no good types in any of these styles to point to. The German Gothic, which has since been used to a limited extent is the work of but one of the many architects of our time. Of the other styles that have been used the instances are but few, and need not be placed in a general classification, but will be mentioned individually.

Of the Flamboyant perhaps Grace Church is the most prominent, but the Church of the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn is a better example. Both of them are bad copies of the Gothic of a corrupt period, not even possessing the little spirit of the original; rejoicing in endless attempts at deception, and false construction generally, the worst being the everlasting attempt to imitate groined vaults.

There are too few specimens of anything bearing a resemblance to Decorated Work, to be worth mention, but so many have been called by this name, that the mere mention of some few will be sufficient to satisfy any one that understands the true principles of construction and decoration that culminated in the style known as Early Decorated Gothic, of the absurd failures that have been made. We have only to call attention to the South Dutch Church, corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-first St., and Grover and

Baker's Sewing-machine store on Broadway. We take great pleasure in mentioning one exception, the Martyr's Monument in Trinity churchyard, which though open to criticism in some of its details, is one of the best things yet done. The untimely death of its designer, the late Frank Wills, will long be mourned by all who take an interest in the revival and development of good architecture.

The “Early English” reproductions will be passed over for the present.

Of the buildings claimed to be “Norman” we would be ashamed to mention one among the many libels upon one of the best styles that we now have the privilege to study.

But what they call “Romanesque” has been done up in so many fantastic forms, that we can hardly find words to express our derisive contempt for it. The popular idea is that every building with the round arch, that is not Classic or Italian, must be Romanesque—and so our architects have generally considered it. Hence they have built churches and other buildings in every possible material, and all imaginable shapes and arrangement, with details more Gothic than otherwise, and for want of a name called them “Romanesque.” Look at the Church of the Puritans, two churches at the corner of Twenty-second Street and 4th Av., St. Stephens in 28th Street and the German Catholic Church in Third St. These are but a few of the multitude that might be named, but will serve our purpose the better as being more generally known.

There are numerous buildings in New York which, though not recognizable as being offshoots of any known style, are yet creditable so far as they are attempts to break loose from the Classic and Renaissance dominion. Efforts in the right direction claim honorable mention, so with pleasure we give them what praise they deserve. There is the store corner of Broadway and Pearl St., built by Bowen & McNamee, and since disfigured by alterations. With it may be mentioned the Astor Library, excepting the interior of the new part, the Trinity Building and a house built of New Jersey stone on Columbia Street, Brooklyn, one block north of the Wall Street ferry.

Of the "Early English" we have had few reproductions. Under this name is comprised nearly all of the best Abbey and Cathedral architecture of England, which, with the works of France and Italy of the same period, we, as an association, believe to be most worthy of study. The best efforts have been expressed in some isolated country churches, of which there are very fine specimens at Rye, New York, and Greenwich, Connecticut. We might mention others with the risk of being poorly understood, among which might be St. James' Episcopal Church, Chicago. One of the best in this city is that of St. John the Baptist, on the corner of Lexington Avenue and Thirty-fifth Street. The Madison Square Presbyterian Church will also illustrate some of the features of the early Gothic, as well as the Whitney Chapel and the new entrance at Greenwood Cemetery. Of Trinity Chapel, the most thoroughly Gothic building in New York, in the true early English manner, we will speak further on.

Of the German Gothic, above mentioned, a word may be timely. Four buildings, lately erected, have been the subject of considerable interest and comment in the architectural world, and have attracted such general notice, that we deem them worthy of extended comment. They are the Continental Bank, the American Exchange Bank, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the new Produce Exchange.

It is well known that their designer stands upon the platform of and asserts his faith in absolutely faithful and constructive building; and his work is mainly right, though if we had time to speak more in detail we could readily point out positive exceptions to the principle, in all the above-mentioned buildings. Moreover, these structures are known to be studies from the best German Gothic in arrangement, proportion and detail; and are consequently liable to be set down as specimens of the work that we are trying to accomplish. It is necessary, therefore, that we should state wherein they are discordant with our principles, while doing homage to the large proportion of good that they contain.

It will be seen by the observer that these buildings, though built at an

enormous cost and almost without regard to expense, contain a small amount of foliated decoration in proportion to the amount of ornament employed. And in this the work carries out and exemplifies the professions of the designer. Here we see thousands expended for interlacing mouldings and hundreds for carving; carving subordinate, moulding and proportion predominant; capitals ultra-conventional, yet well undercut. The mind is bewildered with intricacy of moulding, bead and fillet, but the eye is not pleased by faithful images of Nature's forms, for they are not to be found. We are filled with admiration of the designer's fertile invention, but we see no expression of his love for that which is better, greater, more beautiful and lovely than human hands can do, or human mind can conceive.

So many good things can be said about these buildings that we fear justice cannot be done in the limits of this article. One thing we cannot avoid mentioning, and that is that the American Exchange Bank comes nearer to the perfection of fire-proof building (the great desideratum of this city) than any other building in New York. For though there are others in which the first piece of combustible material cannot be found, there is no other so complete in appointments, comforts and conveniences, that is equally fire-proof. The spectacle of a room in the business streets of New York, in which not only the side walls, but both floor and roof are of stone, is indeed a gratifying sight.

The Brooklyn Academy of Music is open to severe criticism of its stump tracteries, as well as its interior fittings of woodwork, and much might be said bearing on its color decorations. The last sentence will apply with equal justice to the Produce Exchange. The new Tabernacle Church, by the same architect, and the Presbyterian Church at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Nineteenth Street, are good specimens of the Early Gothic in the German manner; the entrance doorway of the former being admirable in many respects, but the very elaboration of its cusps and mouldings makes us regret, all the more, the almost entire absence of Sculpture, which if conceived in the right spirit might

have made it the admiration of generations yet to come. The interior, however, disappoints all our expectations, for added to the want of fitness in plan for a Protestant place of worship, is the fact that the auditorium is covered with a false system of groin-

ing, which only falls short of the worst abominations of that kind, by being painted a plain neutral color, and not being blocked off in imitation of stone.

W.

To be continued.

A D V A N C E .

PROGRESS often commences by going back. If one has got away from the right path into a marsh or impassable slough, it is necessary for him to retrace his steps to the path from which he strayed, before he can go on. When in our studies or pursuits we find that we are at a standstill, that all our efforts at advance are vain, and we only get still deeper in the mire, then it is time for us to go back to the point we started from, and see if some other way will not lead us better.

It is so in Art and Literature. Men went on in a wrong and devious way, and had therefore to go back again. For just as sculpture and painting and architecture, by imitation of men and their works, became formal and conventional, so did poetry, and the drama, and romance and music. Men seeing great works of earnest, nature-loving artists, studied them and not nature, and what were beauties they made defects, and defects, faults. Life and warmth became deadness and coldness, spirit was swallowed up in form. Laws were invented where there should be no laws but those of nature and truth. Painting must have its balance of light and shade, and its correct grouping of objects; poetry its antithesis and turn; and music its scientific rules, until beauty of form seemed alone desired, and the spirit which once roused the emotions and feelings was lost.

This corruption was slow and gradual, and by no means simultaneous in all branches of art. Great painters existed when great architects were no more, and true poets wrote after both were gone. But sooner or later the rust eat in.

It seems to have been reserved for this age to free the world from these chains of false rules and forms. This cen-

tury so great with progress of all sorts, political, moral and scientific, is also the time when art makes its struggle for advance. The last generation saw the strife between the Classic and Romantic schools in literature, and this witness that same strife in Art. For the Classic is that imitative, conventional, formal school, "formed on the best models," while the Romantic is the real, original, true school which has no model but nature.

The work which Coleridge and Southey, Wordsworth and Keats began in England, with their poems, and their studies of nature, and of early writers, which Goethe and Schiller continued in Germany, and Victor Hugo in France, is nearly over. The world has agreed to ignore the formal style, whether in poetry, romance, or the drama, and desires only those writings which truly represent life and nature.

The struggle in music is only beginning. Wagner, Liszt and Berlioz are now putting forward to a few attentive ears their "Music of the Future," but not many regard them, as they show what real and true things music yet can offer. But the day is not far off when it will be the Music of the Present.

The battle in Art is now almost at its height in Europe, and is just commenced in this country. It is this struggle in which we are taking our feeble part, hoping to do our little share in showing the world truths which some day it will hardly imagine it ever disbelieved. For progress is inevitable, even though it does begin with a step back, and the formalists of painting must take that step, if they will not be treated as were the formalists in Literature.

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“NATURE never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.”

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