Communication.

[The editors do not hold themselves responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents.]

To the Editor of The Tech:

The following is a reprint, verbatim et literatim, of an editorial which appeared in The American Architect and Building News, in Sept., 1881:—

"The Architectural Department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will open its next academic year under a new organization, which, while retaining the main features of its former curriculum unchanged, is intended to enlarge its scope materially, and provides some important additional facilities for instruction. The work which until now has devolved on one professor will hereafter be divided, Mr. T. M. Clark, representing the general interests of the school as professor in charge, while Mr. W. P. P. Longfellow will act as Adjunct Professor of Architectural Design, aided in his department by Assistant Professor Léting. Mr. F. E. Kidder, S. B., will give instruction in a new department, to be known as the Architectural Laboratory, where the properties of materials will be studied by means of actual tests, and the theory of construction illustrated by practical exercises and experiments. The habit of free-hand sketching, which has always received much attention at the Institute, is to be still farther encouraged, and provision has been made for special instruction by some of the best architectural draughtsmen in Boston, in pencil sketching, pen-and-ink rendering, and perhaps in water-color drawing, of an advanced character. Through the good offices of the Boston Society of Architects, whose friendly interest has always been of much service to the school, the regular course of study in ornament and the arts allied to architecture will take the form of familiar lectures, delivered before the students by members of the society, and others. In this course for the ensuing year, Mr. Henry Van Brunt has consented to treat on the Theory of Ornament; Mr. Charles A. Cummings will give a series of lectures upon Interior Design; Mr. Arthur Rotch upon Decorative Painting; Mr. Longfellow on Stained Glass and Mosaic; and other gentlemen will consider certain related topics. In addition to the regular branches pursued at the school, the students will continue to enjoy the advantages which a close and friendly relation between the authorities of the Institute and those of the Museum of Fine Arts has hitherto afforded them, and which increases from year to year."

A following editorial then proceeds to some wise remarks concerning the excellence of the novelty of the "Architectural Laboratory."

How grateful, is one's first thought on reading this, ought the architects to be to their Alma Mater for her affectionate care and disinterested generosity! How, every day of their lives, ought they to congratulate themselves on the easy places in which their lines have fallen! But to the architect himself there is, in the article which is quoted above, a subtle source of amusement, — of amusement tainted by the bitterness of regret that the bright picture of what might have been his, is, through no fault of his own, entirely beyond his yearning reach. With what unconscious wisdom built the writer of that editorial! What depth of scorching sarcasm smoulders beneath that innocent covering of words! Wise advertising that. No doubt rich harvests of unsuspecting, because uninitiated, students were gathering from beneath that sickle. A tempting bait did that wise hook hold out to hungry fish.

Perhaps, however, for a few short hours these things did have existence; perhaps the fruits of that casting did enjoy, for "one transcendent moment," what they longed for. Happy they! But the bait was so small, after all, that the first nibble made way with it; and the new generations that come after have, to be sure, the questionable advantage of seeing the hook in all its blood-curdling nakedness, but for their dinner, though very hungry and thirsty, like some other people, have to put up with the scraps that are left floating about in the water, — very good scraps in their way, and very nutritious, but not enough for a full meal. The Alma Mater does truly make an excellent St. Paul.

An Architect.