

COURSE IN DESIGN

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studies permit a clear comprehension of the relation of edifices and architectural evolution, and a penetration of the spirit of civilization and art. More often little problems repeated several times each term are given; as for example, "An Entrance to an Administration Building," "A small Museum," or "Some Special Dwelling House," etc., requiring a choice of appropriate elements, in order to use their initiative. So that in place of making drawings to a single scale almost arbitrary, as in the preceding year, they make in the first place a little ensemble, with the different means of representing plan, facade and section; then at times, the most important portion to a large scale. This last well-developed part is not presented barrenly on the drawing-board as the trade-mark of a haphazard production,



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but well-drawn and rendered in every detail, and arranged in a frontispiece in such a way as to inspire in the students ideas of structural decoration.

During the course of the different exercises or problems, the elementary principles of composition are given by individual criticism. The different processes of expression are presented and criticised. Students acquire a technique varied, broad and flexible, and at the same time a beginning of a method simple and ordered, permitting the intelligent approach of an architectural problem. It is only when that important and indispensable third year has been thoroughly followed that the student has the proper equipment to derive real profit from the fourth year course.

FOURTH YEAR—In the fourth year more liberty is given the students. They are no longer limited by Greek and Roman art and a few examples of the Renaissance. The Romanesque and Gothic epochs, the Renaissance of the different countries and the best examples of the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as of the intermediary epochs are opened to them.

"Composition" now becomes the key note of their efforts. They are made to understand that a "work of architecture" does not consist in the juxtaposition of examples taken servilely from European buildings or of their arrangement in mosaic, but that above all it is necessary to make a judicious and appropriate choice of the elements at their command, and to arrange them in an harmonious manner, that they may be members of the same family, and that they may convey a definite meaning.

They must understand that they are not to make a church, a library or a large shop, when the subject under consideration is a public bath, a casino or a private house.

They must understand that the first preoccupation of an architect is to establish with simplicity and logic a reasonable and practical disposition of his plan with the different services, as well as to express the destination and purpose of the edifices, taking into account surroundings, climate, and materials, and giving to the interior of the building, as well as to its facades, a decorative treatment at once homogeneous and appropriate. The customs and habits of the locality should be considered also, together with the aspirations of the people in whose midst the building is to be erected. With this aim in view the problem is presented with freedom of interpretation and a choice of inspiration which the character of the subject may suggest.

Problems of three and five weeks' duration alternate with short problems called "esquisse-esquisse" made in two days. These last consist in the development and intelligible presentation of a small subject without criticism from the instructor, except a few general remarks. Such an exercise develops decision and initiative obliging the student to formulate ideas with celerity and care.

But the chief exercise of the course is the problem of longer duration which is presented as follows:

On a certain date a program is delivered, A Club House, for example, with all the requirements for such a subject.

The student is given two afternoons to express in a succinct manner the principle of his composition without the help of the instructor. He then gives the instructor his original while keeping for himself a duplicate.

Preserving and respecting the principle of the sketch it is developed under the instructor's guidance by repeated criticisms and the exposition of the principles of composition permitting the student to give a precise form to his thought.

Upon the completion of the problem a general exhibition of all the drawings, —plans, facades, sections, and sometimes perspectives or details, takes place.

A judgment establishes the order of merit, followed by a general criticism before the entire class in the form of a resume which brings the exercise to a definite conclusion.

Such an exercise, the last week of which all students, third, fourth and fifth years, work practically together and aid each other in the most fraternal and admirable way, is beneficial to everybody; bringing to light the different points of view and developing the in-

dividuality. It is the typical and most important exercise at the Institute, as it is at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, from which methods are borrowed, and adapted to conditions of this country.

The second term of the fourth year is practically devoted to the thesis, the final point of the regular studies; that is to say, by a more profound study of a subject developed in all its parts, chosen by the students themselves, in which they examine exhaustively the different technical sides of the problem.

FIFTH YEAR—Beyond a question the diploma awarded at the end of the fourth year is of great significance. The knowledge of the young architect is precious, as the professional success of generations of students testifies. It is easy to see, however, that with such a program of study as that demonstrated above, a program imperiously imposed by the conditions of modern life, the time of preparation for the important and complex role to be filled by the architect is all too limited. The way is but half achieved. Scarcely five, or at most six months have been given to acquire and assimilate a knowledge which should become a beacon and not a burden, exacting a devotion of as many years as in the great centers of study in Europe.

So clearly recognized did this need become that a fifth year of study was established at the Institute, of which the results from its debut have been most satisfactory.

Although an appreciation from the professor in charge is somewhat delicate, yet things must be explained. Facts are facts. Theoretically and practically from the outset the fifth year has been a success. It has become an important factor with the students; it has raised the standard of architectural education in America, and it is regarded as a necessity by experts both at home and abroad.

The number and importance of the problems of the fourth year being of necessity inadequate, owing to limited time, the plan of work for the fifth year embraces the more profound study of the types of edifices and compositions which explain or resume the many and varied manifestations of a great people; as for example, a courthouse, a city hall, important residences, hospitals, churches, large assembly halls, theatres, a university, bathing establishments, establishments for the people, commemorative monuments, etc., etc. To which are added "esquisse-esquisses" of 12 and 24 hours "en loge," and special problems for the study of works in different materials, metal gates, doorways of wood, a church pulpit, the interior decoration of a public hall, of a private residence, to cite a few examples.

A larger place is given the plan, which is of capital importance; indeed the foundation in considering an architectural problem.

Much time is devoted to theoretical and practical study, together with a comparative study of the different classes of architectural compositions; as for example, compositions compact and dispersed, private and public, open-air compositions, edifices of administration, charity, education, and those of purely business utility; bridges, squares, public gardens, the layout of a town; plans comprising several buildings upon flat

sites, upon declivities, at the sea side, etc.

Numerous illustrations of edifices are presented together with an analytical revision and an archaeological resume of the great periods of art in the several orders, administrative, glorious, religious, and domestic. Such as Greece with its temples, Rome with its forum, baths and triumphal arches; the Byzantine, the Romanesque and the Gothic periods. The imposing manifestations of the Renaissance, the 17th and 18th centuries in France, not omitting the best examples of the 19th century, restorations of the antique, and the concours of the Grands Prix de Rome which so well resume many principles eloquently demonstrate the application of the lessons of the past to the manifestations of the present.

Students in this course are enabled to devote practically the whole time to architecture proper. Every problem is studied on all sides, practical and aesthetic, and is synthesized as a perfect and well-proportioned organism. Repeated studies are made until plans, facades, sections, and details harmonize, unite, and support each other, as the skin clothes the body leaving the form and structure beneath to be divined.

Resume.—Commencing with the classical grammar of architecture which defines so simply the architectural work, the past is studied in all its forms, historical, structural and aesthetic, and the lesson to be derived therefrom together with what is transmissible from one generation to another, is sought. Quality of draughtmanship and design is constantly developed in order that the architect may express his practical ideas in a complete and artistic manner.

The transformation of architecture and the styles under the influence of religious, philosophical, and social currents, are shown by repeated criticisms and lectures.

By varied problems, academic, semi-classic, romantic, mixed or modern, the creative and imaginative faculties of the student are awakened. A man is formed with an equipment which permits him to discuss intelligently, pencil or brush in hand, with all his collaborators; engineers, constructors, decorators, sculptors, etc.

By developing the education of the mind, the hand, the eye, and the heart, a well-informed man of the present as well as of the past is produced. A man having at command a means of expression which permits his approach to all the problems of modern needs, one who formulates his thought with clearness and who is abreast of his time and of his epoch; he is endowed with the precision of the engineer, the soundness of mind of the man of business, and the imagination of the artist. In other words a leader in the accomplishment of architectural work. The "Maitre de l'oeuvre," not a specialist. A man useful and indispensable to his country.

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