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COMPETITIONS—THE VICISSITUDES OF ARCHITECTURE.

DOCTOR, did I ever tell you what I know about medicine?"

"No," responded the Doctor, dryly, taking a sip of claret, and opening his eyes in my direction as much as to say, 'I wonder what you know about medicine.'

You see, the Doctor and I had contracted a sort of acquaintance, not to say friendship, while I was building St. Mary's, and he, next to the Rector, figured as the strongest and most influential member of the Building Committee.

After our morning inspection of the works, he often invited me to his frugal lunch, which included a glass of wine and a cigar.

On these occasions the Doctor gave me his reminiscences of the English cathedrals, nearly all of which he had visited in flighty summer trips to Europe, and quoted Ruskin and Ferguson when our architectural discussions seemed to need reference to authority on his part.

The Doctor enjoyed quite a reputation as a critic of architectural art, also as an expert mechanic, because he spent many of his leisure hours in a workshop attached to his house, where he was known to perfect a machine for stamping pill boxes out of sheet metal on a Japanese principle of two elliptic cups of slight eccentricity fitted over each other. The Doctor often told me when I praised his mechanical ingenuity, that when he was made a physician he feared a good mechanic was spoiled.

And so I liked the Doctor's claret and cigars, and for that matter also the Doctor himself, for he was a kindly old gentleman who loved St. Mary's, architecture and mechanics, and who never hated anyone or anything.

I give up all claim to popular sympathy, but many of my professional brethren doubtless know what a terrible thorn in the side of the architect is a man of the Doctor's description; and then you see I cannot fight him any more than I could a woman or a child. And if I try it by gentle logic or scientific or artistic reasoning, it is of no earthly use, for the Doctor does not know when he is down in an argument, and no man of courage can kick a fellow when he is down whether he knows it or not.

So I made up my mind I would tell him some day what I knew of medicine, and when I saw him open his eyes wide, I plunged into it at once.

"To begin with, Doctor, I inherit medical knowledge from my grandfather, who was a physician, and so were my uncles for that matter. It's in the blood, you see, on my mother's side. We must grant that there is something in heredity and environment and early training. Darwin does as much–"

"Fiddlesticks," said the Doctor, "you may inherit from your grandfather mental and physical vigor or defects, but not medical knowledge; and let me tell you that if you

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did, you would be worse off than if he had been a shoemaker, for you would inherit the medical errors of the times. I venture to say your grandfather bled, cupped and leeched his patients copiously, and suffocated persons suffering from fever in closed rooms. If your mind is in any sense affected by this sort of heredity, it must be disinfected before it can be said to be receptive of true knowledge. It sometimes occurs that the ancestors of eminent men in various walks of life were of the same profession and more or less distinguished; but as a rule great men develop spontaneously without a grain of heredity to show for themselves. So, you want to show me what you know about medicine begin with yourself, and don't talk about your ancestors."

"Well, Doctor, my parents being poor they boarded a number of medical students, and I may say that I was brought up in an atmosphere of anatomy."

"Good," said the Doctor; "you doubtless played with the bones; but will you tell me what you know of the *os tibia*, and what is its condition in a child and in a grown person."

"Well, Doctor, I must confess that it has slipped from my mind, if I ever knew it; but then think of he practical experience I gathered as one of a large family of children, who all went through the measles, and the whooping cough, broke their arms and ribs walking on picket fences and swinging on gates, and of the large family of children I have brought up myself, to say nothing of my personal sufferings with dyspepsia and rheumatism. Why, I have tried experimentally on my own person most medicines to he found in the 'Materia Medica.' And then I have read much on the Humors of Hipparchus and the Methodism of Gallen, to say nothing of the practice of Sangrado, of modern Water Cures, of the Faith, and Walking Cures. I have visited many of the celebrated baths, and have swallowed many waters from Saratoga to Carlsbad. I should think you might admit that I know something of medicine without doing violence to your professional pride."

"My clear fellow," said the Doctor, your conceit is not incompatible with common honesty. It may be explained as the result of profound ignorance. For forty years I have devoted myself to the study and practice of medicine. Forty years ago I graduated with honors, and then I spent five years in Vienna and Berlin at clinical lectures. Since that time I have had a large and lucrative practice, and acquired, as you know, a respectable reputation, not only with laymen, but also among my professional brethren, During these forty years I have devoted much of my time to reading. I will not boast of native genius, but I may say that I conscientiously applied myself to the study of medicine. And what is the result? I am now convinced, and have been so convinced for the last ten Years, that to study medicine with success a man should devote himself to some specialty in order to keep abreast with modern progress, and if possible add something to its acquisitions. How can you talk of what you know of medicine, you who have spent your life in studying architecture, and never had the time to acquire even a smattering of anything else. I might as well talk of what I know of architecture."

"That is just what you *do* talk about. That is just the point I desired to bring you to by my impudent assertion of what I know of medicine. Please accept it as a complement, a profound trust in your sense of justice, a thorough conviction of your love of fair play, and my utter despair to make you understand the case by any other method. I trust you will forgive me when you realize the enormity of the case. You talk to me of Ruskin and Ferguson, why the Humors of Hipparchus are exact science compared with the speculations of Ruskin on construction, and the ravings of Ferguson on the subject of beauty. If you will he good enough to consider that the anatomy of architecture involves the whole range of mathematics in its application to statical mechanics, that as physiology comprehends a philosophic, historical and ideal conception of the functions of monuments, that its technic in structural combinations and decorative expression demands a laborious

training, to be acquired only by hard work and self-denial of many years, and that to compose buildings means a mastery of organisms, which have no model in nature, but must be scientifically and artistically developed on natural laws and not collected, as laymen always suppose, from the surface of existing monuments which almost never express an answer to the problem before the architect. You will admit at once that the suggestions of laymen in architecture are not unlike those of the dear old ladies who are found around the sick bed. And yet the doctor may listen to them and ignore them when he writes the prescription, while the architect is asked to submit his design to the judgment of just such a court and jury."

The Doctor was evidently ruffled. He looked straight at his wine glass for a minute or two and puffed great volumes of smoke from his cigar; then he raised his head, and looked it me in a dazed sort of way, and then gradually melted into a smile.

"Why! you applied to me what we doctors call a heroic remedy; but when I come to think of it, I have no right to be offended, because I am cured. But pray tell me how you architects got into this slough of despond?"

"Architectural and lay human weakness," said I. "To begin with, there is the weakness of the young architect. I wish I could describe to you the mental porosity and effervescence of the immature architectural brain, its illogical gyrations around in axis which is purely a mathematical line and has no foundation in fact, its gymnastics and attitudes, its gaseous inflations and its pyrotechnic explosions. But then it would be of no practical use, the whole thing is so visionary you would not believe it. But I can try it from your standpoint. What is the process by which the young physician gets into practice? He works among the poor. A child filled with green apples is a godsend to him. He gets up nights to visit the woman suffering from compound hysterics and strong drink, and he hopes for the hod-carrier who may fall from the third story and break his head and legs, not from malice to the hod-carrier, nor for the money it will bring him, but purely from a desire to show to the world that he can heal the sick and mend the broken of limb. Now this young doctor has spent years in the study of medicine, he has walked the hospitals, and he knows that he can render services to society as a physician. But to be employed it is necessary that society shall know what he can do; in fact, he must have a reputation.

"It is not so with the young architect. He is not content to hang out his sign and wait for clients—humble clients at first, and others more important afterwards, for very good reasons. In the first place his announcement to the world that he will henceforth do the work of an architect does not imply that he knows how to do it. There is no law which compels him to pass through a prescribed course of studies before he presents himself for professional employment, as is the case with the young physician. In the next place, both he and his client imagine that his merits may be determined from his designs, his drawings, sketches, etc., which is a radical error."

"You mean to say," the Doctor here interrupted, "that a layman cannot tell the nature and architectural merit of a building from a design of it?"

"No more than they can the merit of a physician from his prescriptions. A physician's prescription is an empirical formula intended to alleviate abnormal physical conditions indicated by a scientific diagnosis. The prescription being written in characters incomprehensible to the layman, he is content, in his avowed ignorance, to abstain from an attempt to inquire into the rationale of the diagnosis. An architectural design is a scientific, logical, deduction from certain fundamental facts unfortunately presented in a more or less artistic form. This form conveys an idea to the uneducated as well as to the intelligent mind of varying artistic merit. The more obtuse the observer the better he will like it. To critically place it at its true value requires analytical acumen of the highest order. Hence it is that men select their physicians, lawyers, engineers, etc., by consulting the opinion of experts as

to their professional merit, or, what is equivalent to this, by their reputation, but they think they can judge of the merits of an architect by their likes and dislikes of his drawings.

"There are architects who have a fair technical training, know something of æsthetics, have passed through an academic course of architecture at some respectable institution, have seen as well as read of the monuments of the world and have in addition to this some practice under the guidance of an architect of reputation. Their number, however, is small; I should say not more than three per cent of the architectural population of the country."

"What of the other ninety-seven per cent?" asks the Doctor.

"To answer this question let me observe briefly that all knowledge begins with a cursory observation of the appearance of things. Take astronomy for instance. Antiquity contemplated the stars as aggregations resembling animate and inanimate forms. The question was not what Is the magnitude, distance, motion, constituent matter of these stars; but what is the physiognomy of the starry heavens. Alchemy attempted to produce a metal that should look like gold, From Aristotle to Lavater endless volumes have been written to show how physical and mental conditions of men may be determined by their external appearance.

"Architecture to the ninety-seven per cent is at this day only the more or less critical examination of the appearance and feature of monuments. Mr. Shandy's account of Slawkenbergeus, if mythical, is nevertheless allegorically applicable to modern popular notions on architecture; it is very much a study of noses.

"Let me tell you a story of my young friend, John, as an object-lesson of architectural human weakness. John visits me at my office from time to time, to get my advice, as he says, to follow his own, as I know.

"'What is it this morning, John, you are radiant?'

"'I don't mind telling you. The National Discount Bank is going to build a seventeen-story fire-proof building.'

"'Well, John, have yen been employed as the architect?'

"'Why, no, it is to be a competition?'

"'Then I presume you have been invited to compete and are to be paid for your sketches?'

"'Nothing of the kind. Really, I cannot make you out.'

"'Well, John, let me explain. You know that in most competitions members of the committee are bent upon employing architects in whom they have a personal interest. The only possible guarantee I can have on entering the lists in a competition is in the fact that I am invited to compete, which shows that someone on the committee desires that I should ultimately be employed as the architect of the building, and in order to make sure that the invitation is not in empty compliment, I insist upon being paid for my sketches.'

"'There I differ with you entirely. I prefer that no one should he paid for his sketches, it keeps out the strongest men in the profession and makes my chances of success all the better. What is more,' continues John, slyly, 'suppose there is a committee of five, there certainly is not more than one in the five who cares for architecture *per se*, the other four are bent upon employing their friends. This one man may be in favor of paying for sketches, but he is overruled by the other four who agree with me that architects of reputation must be kept out at all hazards. Hence it is that you are but rarely invited to compete, and lose your opportunities.'

"'I presume you have secured an invitation from one of the five?'

"'Not as yet, but I expect to do so. I have made a formal application in writing to the committee as a whole, requesting permission to submit plans, specifications and estimates of costs of the proposed building for the consideration of the committee. My letter contains references to respectable parties which will not be disregarded, more especially as such a permission involves no expense. In addition to this, I have called upon four out of the five to request their

personal patronage in the matter. I have told each of them that I rely upon his acknowledged influence with the committee, and his superior judgment in matters of building to bring out the intrinsic merits of my design, which without his help would probably not be properly understood, and I asked each of them for his personal views of what the building ought to be architecturally, constructively and economically. I told them that without being in possession of these personal views I should not attempt to enter the competition at all. One of the four said that the committee would probably issue a programme of requirements to all the architects, and that lie &d not intend to anticipate this by giving his private views. The other three, however, were greatly pleased with my suggestions, and two of them invited me to dinner to talk the matter over at leisure.'

"'You are in clover, John,' I said; you will probably be proposed by three of the committee, and find yourself in a majority at the start.'

"'So I thought at first, but I since found out that one of the gentlemen who invited me to dinner has a nephew just returned from the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He intends him to be employed as the architect of the building. I did not know this when I dined with him. He seemed frank in his conversation; but interspersed it with perplexing questions such as: Which of the five orders will you select for your design? What is the relative cost of granite and terra cotta? How far would you go in the matter of ventilation in an office building? What are the proper proportions of a room? Do you deem it essential that all carving shall be done after the building is up? What is the relative cost per cubic foot of brickwork here and in Paris? How do you like the American factor of safety? I Subsequently discovered that these questions tended to elicit proof that I did not know much of architecture in general and of architecture as practiced in Paris in particular. The gentleman who did not invite me to dinner saw me at his office, where he showered upon me his views without giving me all opportunity to put in a word edgewise. These views related mainly to heating, lighting, ventilation and general economy of construction. He said he did not care much about architecture as long as the building was sufficiently showey to command tenants,'

"'Well, John, it seems to me now that your chances of success are pretty slim. What is the use of going into a competition without pay when you have no friends on the committee?'

"'True, but you make no allowance for the merits of my design. I propose to carry the day on the bottom rock of merit.'

"'But I thought you told me that four of the gentlemen of the committee did not know or care about architecture in the abstract.'

"'Yes, that Is so; but I intend to outstrip every other plan proposed, and make my design an education to the committee, an object-lesson in architecture. I have some ideas, and that is just what I intend to talk to you about. What do you think of the Temple of Jupiter Stator?'

"'Shades of Phidias, John, you do not propose, l hope, to build a temple forty feet wide and two hundred and twenty feet high and fill it on the inside with offices.'

"'Not quite so bad as that. I propose a temple at the top, to contain the three uppermost stories, as the crowning glory of the building.'

"'And what will you do with the fourteen stories below the temple?'

"'That is what I called to consult you upon. What do you say?'

"'I can suggest nothing better than a dead wall of cyclopean masonry.'

"'Well, I am so glad, that is just what struck me at once. If I could build such a wall on Broadway, a cyclopean wall forty feet wide and one hundred and seventy feet high my fortune, would he made. Just think of the excitement of the press when the wall reaches a hundred feet in height, built of huge stones of from ten to forty feet in length and from two to eight feet in height, say quarry-faced stonework twenty feet high and then a polished course of granite, with

bas-reliefs of the War the Rebellion (Sheridan's ride through the Shenandoah Valley), then again a bulk of rough quarry stone of more or less heights, and another hand course of polished stone. Think of the trucks with six to twelve horses unloading single stones in front of the building, of the immense cranes, tackle, gear and steam engines raising this gigantic material to its place on the wall; think of the crowds of people watching the progress of the work from the street and opposite windows and roofs; think of the papers that would be read before learned societies on the probable use of such a structure, of the inquiries by foreign associations of architects; think of the order for new buildings that would flow into my office; and mind you it is all so perfectly practicable. I should light the rooms with minute incandescent lamps spread in ornamental groups over the walls and ceilings. I should pump air of any required temperature into the offices, air permeated with the essence of new-mown hay, of the seaweed or the mountain fir. I should supply each tenant with just the season he prefers—spring, summer or autumn: he shall be at the shores of the sea today, or at the top of the mountain tomorrow, or, if he likes tropical heat, with the dry atmosphere of Egypt, flavored with just a suggestion of the essential oil of the lotus, all he will have to do is to touch a button and the janitor would change his atmosphere in a few minutes. I ask you would not offices of this description be in demand and bring high rents? Why, the occupants would he overwhelmed with clients just from motives of curiosity to see how the thing works. If I could talk to that committee for an hour or two twice a week during the next month I am sure I could convince them of the brilliancy of my scheme. As it is, they are doubtless prepossessed in favor of windows, a common prejudice which has so far prevented a true revival of antique architecture. Schinkel, the greatest of modern Greeks, had to succumb to the window mania, and so must I no doubt and the question still remains unanswered: How am I to treat the fourteen stories below my temple of Jupiter?'

"'If you set yourself the problem of balancing a full-fledged temple one hundred and seventy feet above the sidewalk of Broadway and cannot use a cyclopean wall, I can suggest nothing, that will answer the purpose.'

"I have been thinking that a great arch might do it. The arch is expressive of strength. What do you think of an arch with voussoirs ten or twelve feet high?'

"'That would do well enough if you had room for abutments to sustain the lateral pressure indicated by such an arch. There is not room enough in forty feet for an arch such as you have in mind, and also for its abutments, considering we height. You would find upon due calculation that your arch will be ridiculously small.'

"'Of course you know,' said John, 'that the end piers are tied together at every story with iron beams, and there is practically no lateral pressure; besides, the arch is supported vertically by the piers between windows at short intervals.'

"'In that case, John, you need no arch at all, but if you present to the public a great arch, as you say, with an expression of great strength, then the public is entitled to proper and sufficient abutments, or else you are not pursuing architecture as a fine art.'

"'We cannot have everything in this world; I shall have to stick to the arch and abandon the abutments. I thought you might help me out of this dilemma, but now I see that I shall have to shift for myself. Wait till you see my drawings, I think you will admit that I have done my best under the circumstances, and no man can do more.'

"And with this John left in a huff, and I saw nothing of him until after the competition had been decided. He came into the office in great state of excitement, dashed his hat upon the floor, and dropped into a chair. I knew at once that his sanguine expectations regarding the Discount Bank competition had not been realized, a blow which involved disappointment in various directions, and a pecuniary loss which poor John could not well afford.

"'I would not mind being beaten by a better man, but this is too bad,' he bursted out after a while, with tears in his eyes.

"'Tell me all about it, John,' I suggested, in order to divert his mind.

He straightened up a bit and told me this story:

"'You know when I saw you last I was full of the idea of a cyclopean wall, and, as an alternative, of the great arch. The great arch and the temple I concluded must be the winning card; but the cyclopean wall had such a hold on my mind that I would have been willing to barter a year of my life for its success. So I made up my mind to present a plan for either scheme. Of course, you know what it means to prepare two sets of plans in a quarter inch scale within the prescribed time. Then there was the matter of perspectives of the exterior. The programme was silent on the subject of scale, point of view, picturesque treatment, coloring, etc. It was important that my perspectives should be the largest presented and highly colored. I engaged the services of an eminent colorist to do the coloring at the rate of one hundred and twenty dollars apiece ($150 is the current price). Then there was the work of preparing specifications and detailed estimates, consultations with contractors and experts in steamheating, ventilating, plumbing, electric lighting, manufacturers of elevators, etc. it is not necessary to detail to you the immense work involved in preparing completed plans and specifications for a building of the magnitude of the Discount Bank in the short space of six weeks as you are familiar with the subject. I commenced with four draughtsmen; at the end of a fortnight I had six, and we talked seriously of working overtime in order to get through with the perspectives to give the colorist an opportunity to do his work with leisure sufficient to do it well. While buoyed up with hope of success a man can do much work in a short space of time, and so I did in the hours between eight A. M. and six P. M., spending the rest of my waking hours in thinking how the effect of the drawings may be enhanced here and there and the cost of construction decreased everywhere, for this was not merely a question of who could produce the best design to answer a given purpose; but also, who could execute it cheaper than anyone else. The matter of ventilation being seemingly uppermost in the minds of the committee, for they talked about it constantly, I made this my special study and worked upon it nights after all others had retired; and I do think I developed it to a degree heretofore unparalleled in business buildings. I devised two great fans, sixteen feet in diameter, to be placed one in front and the other near the rear of the building to supply fresh air to each of the separate offices; air heated in winter and cooled in summer so that the inmates could regulate its temperature by simply touching a button which, by all electric contrivance governed the ingress of air by means of ingeniously-constructed valves, A system of this magnitude is necessarily costly; and I spent many nights in simplifying the apparatus and reducing the cost to twenty-five thousand dollars, a sum so small when you consider the work accomplished and its great importance in the minds of the committee that I felt sure of success on this ground alone. At times, however, I got very blue, thinking of the many possibilities outside of the merit of my design which might operate against me, and one morning, after I had been working on my plans for nearly a month I awoke in a cold perspiration from a horrible dream. You see I intended to ask permission to explain my plans personally before a final decision; and at stray moments I rehearsed in my mind what I would say on that occasion. I was so full of the subject I expected to command the attention and interest of the committee for hours and finally elicit unanimous applause. So I dreamt that I was standing before a green baize-covered table in the directors' room of the Discount Bank, the members of the committee on either side and the chairman at the head, and I, of course, at the foot of the table; my drawings pinned up on the wall behind me. Now, the directors' table, which I had seen many times, was large enough to accommodate twenty-three directors comfortably, besides the

president and cashier who acts as secretary. It is about twenty-four feet long. In my dream, however, the table seemed one hundred feet long with the committee sitting away off at the other end of it; the nearest member being no less than ninety-six feet away from me. This discouraged me ever so much; but while they were consulting at the other end in low tones I endeavored to collect my thoughts, and when the chairman said that the committee was ready to hear my explanations, and have me answer some questions, I proceeded at once with a well-studied description of the Erechteum, touched lightly upon the invasion by Xerxes, the defense at Thermopylæ, the subsequent federation of the Greek states, the vast contributions accumulated under Pericles, the building of the outer harbor, the artistic triumphs of Phidias, etc., when I was interrupted by one of the members of the committee by the statement that a directors' meeting within half an hour necessitated that I should confine myself to the subject of my plans, and that I should be as brief as possible as the committee would probably want to ask me a few questions. Upon this I plunged into a description of my plans, and dwelled at some length upon my system of ventilation, which seemed to interest the committee somewhat, until interrupted by the question "what this matter of ventilation would cost." I answered, "not more than $25,000. "This seemed satisfactory; but one question being asked it opened a flood-gate of them, and I was not permitted to say another word regarding my plans, and the interview rapidly tended to a conversation between the members of the committee, of which I now and then heard a word, or a sentence such as "Ridiculous." "Phidias is not one of the competitors, is he?" "There seems very little business about him." "Humbug, etc.," and then I was gently pushed aside by the cashier of the bank who said the directors' meeting was opened, and I occupied his place. The janitor. rushed in with a couple of chairs upon his shoulders, and tore a great hole in one of my perspectives, and the president of the bank jumped upon the table, stamped his foot three times, and called out in a loud voice "the board is in session; clear out, all architects;" and I awoke with a shiver.

"'Whether this horrible dream was owing to overwork, want of sleep, or a late supper, I cannot say, but I do know that it left me in a dreadful nervous condition. Arrived at the office, I found everything dragging; nothing finished, and the men tired and discouraged. Instead of trying to get matters into shape in the office I felt that I could do nothing definite until I had made the rounds of the committee, to learn something of the prevailing state of mind. When I now look back upon this visit it seems to me that they questioned me extensively as to what I was doing, and told me little of what they were thinking about; but a clerk of the chairman, a schoolmate of mine, who noticed my nervous state, told me that nothing would succeed in the competition but the plainest sort of a building, a plain wall with as many and as large windows as are needed to light up the offices, This information upset all my plans and I reluctantly came to the conclusion to prepare a third design, retaining the idea of the temple for the upper stories, but supporting the temple with a plain wall pierced with the necessary openings. If the openings were not made too large, I felt that the æsthetic result must be reasonably fair and pleasing to the committee, probably interior only to the cyclopean wall. I engaged three more draughtsmen, you were good enough to lend me one of yours (many thanks); he was a high-priced man and worked very leisurely, certainly with much repose (no snap), but in the end his work was perfect, and also abundant as he never had to do any of it over again. A new set of estimates had to be prepared for the third design. This was essentially my work, and I can assure you I worked hard. I should not like to live over again those last two weeks prior to handing in the plans, which I did punctually at the one appointed; but I can only say that the moment the drawings were out of the office I fell into a heap in my office chair and finally rushed home and went to bed.

"'I heard nothing from the committee for a week, when I received a short note from the secretary stating that no meeting would be had in less than a month from date, and that I might expect further notice of a hearing to be granted to architects prior to a decision. At the end of a month I was notified to appear for a hearing at three P. M. of a certain day, and when I arrived at the office of the chairman I met one of the competitors coming out of his private room, and three others waiting outside. Evidently the process of giving a hearing to the competing architects was to be dispatched at one session of the committee. Called in by the secretary of the committee I found the members in close conversation, evidently interesting to themselves, as they did not notice my advent. I looked around the room where I saw the various perspectives pinned up against the walls (no ground plans or other geometrical drawing). One of the perspectives struck me as hideously bad. It represented a Corinthian temple two stories high and on the top of this fifteen stories of plain box with windows distributed indiscriminately over the surface without regard to construction. In the corner of the room next to me stood a megalethoscope on a tressel. I had just time to peep into it when I saw a representation of that same ugly perspective on the wall, a temple with the great ugly box on top of it. The temple was evidently meant to represent the banking rooms, for in front of it on the sidewalk, there was painted a crowd of gentlemen, clerks and bank messengers in the act of rushing in and out of the building. The bank messengers carried heavy satchels; the bank clerks' portfolios and large pocket-books, and the gentlemen jostled everyone in their hurry. At the curbstone a number of drays were backed up, from which specie and ingots of silver were in the process of being discharged. The ingots were loaded upon an elevator intended to run down to the basement. An apple-stand and a few policemen completed the picture. I saw all this in a very few moments, and when I looked towards the committee they were still engaged at the other end of the room in examining something which stood on the floor. This gave me plenty of time to rehearse a resolution not to say one word upon architecture or art in general, but to confine myself to matters practical, such as the arrangement of the offices, of the access to them, of light and ventilation, heating, etc. I repeated once more my speech, which commenced somewhat in this way:

"'As men of business, eminently practical gentlemen of the committee, I will not detain you by a dissertation on the æsthetic motives which generated my designs, but will at once proceed to practical results attained, which you will permit me to speak of as matters of interest to you, rather than as achievements of mine.'

"'I was saved all trouble of saying a single word of all this, for suddenly the chairman turned round and members took their seats at the table which disclosed to my view a plaster model of precisely the same thing I saw in the megalethoscope.

"'The chairman at once addressed me as follows: Ah! Mr. X, we are very glad to see you here; we have looked with interest at your drawings. Admirable! We all like them! Great industry and enterprise. You need not say one word on the subject; we know it all; and I express the conviction of the members of the committee when I say we appreciate your efforts. Our secretary had prepared a synopsis of your specifications, description and estimates, and I may say without conceit we are perfectly familiar with them. We especially value your remarks upon ventilation So pertinent, "without oxygen, you say, we cannot exist.- But let me ask you. Are you aware that a system of ventilation has been invented, inexpensive, simple, a series of flues with a gas-burner or two at the bottom of each which produce a draught of fresh air into the respective rooms?'

"'No,' I said, 'I am not.'

"'I presume,' proceeded the chairman, 'you do not read the papers, and are not familiar with the progress of science?'

"'Pardon, I am aware that such a notion exists: but I am not aware that It answers tile purpose.

"'And why not, pray?'

"'Because the number of cubic feet of air to he moved through a given space represents a mechanical force, the equivalent of which in units of heat cannot be produced by less than twelve hundred times the number of burners contemplated by the invention you speak of.'

"'Who says so?'

"'I have gone through the Computation on the theoretical principle of the correlation of forces and this is my result. Practically, the number of burners required are greater by reason of inevitable losses by friction, radiation, etc.; but if these losses by the ingenuity of man were reduced to nil then my calculation would be correct.'

"' And pray who guarantees the principle of the correlation of forces?'

"'Such men as Joule and Meyer.'

"'Are they in the ventilating business? I never heard of the firm.'

"They are in no business whatever. Mr. Meyer, a German scientist in the fore part of this century, deduced the value of the unit of heat in terms of mechanical work mathematically; and Mr. Joule, an English scientist, demonstrated it by a well-known experiment soon afterwards.'

"'You say, Mr. X, that Mr. Joule lived in England and Mr. Meyer in Germany in the fore part of this century?'

Yes.'

"'We now count the year of our Lord 1894. What did those gentlemen know of the requirements and construction of business buildings in this country and at the present day?' He expected

no answer, but continued: 'I am glad to have seen you again. I can only say your drawings are most beautiful. (To the Secretary.) Call in Mr. Y.'

"'I have since learned from my friend, the clerk, that Z, the author of the design of the plaster model, has been employed as the architect of the new bank. His paper on ventilation contained the statement that the use of steam engines and fans is obsolete, arid their work is now done by a few gas jets. This statement lie supported with a guarantee of the inventor, who therein agrees to return half the cost of the apparatus if within six months from the time it is put in the building it fails to answer the purpose. The total cost not to exceed fifteen hundred dollars.'

"Now, Doctor, I am done. I am heartily sorry for John. He is a poor man of business, illogical, visionary, sanguine and idiotic at times, not thorough in construction and æsthetics, but as architects go far superior morally and Intellectually to men like Z, for instance. This unfortunate competition has cost him all his little savings, and has materially impaired his health and spirits."

The committee was doubtless pleased with the pictorial illustration of the business rush in front of their future bank, impressed upon their minds repeatedly by the plaster model and the wonders of the megalethoscope.

This pleasure led them to like the perspective, hence the architectural design it represented; they admired the businesslike facility with which Z condemned an obsolete method of ventilation. They took it for granted that it was obsolete because he said so, and because lie promptly supported his assertion with a guarantee from a known business house. They liked Z as an artist, and as a business man, and it is not surprising that they intrusted him with the charge of their new building, and men like John had to go to the wall. The next time we meet, Doctor, I should like to have a talk with you on the human weakness of building committees and the vicissitudes of architecture arising from the same.

Leopold Eidlitz