

Correspondence.

The Ugly in Architecture.

SALT LAKE CITY,
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Editor Deseret News:

Has not the idea often struck you that there is a large amount of ugliness in some of the architecture in this city, in a number of the buildings? I do not mean in the houses of what are termed the working classes, but in many of the more pretentious structures. The working classes generally, I am well enough aware, have had plenty to do to get any sort of a house of their own for their families to live in. It is not a small thing for a working man with a family, to save from his daily or weekly wages sufficient to buy him a lot, and then build him a house upon it, to shelter his family and make them comfortable. With him architecture, at least the beautiful in it, is almost out of the question. He manages, and extraordinary management it is, to get some rock here, some adobies there, some sand elsewhere, sometime by another "trade," and the hauling still further exercises his scheming faculties. Then there come the rock and the adobie laying, the rough lumber, the door and window frames, the doors and windows, the flooring, the shingles, the nails, the carpenter work. This is often as far as a poor working man, with wonderful striving and squeezing, and years of sharp and cunning contriving, and much trading and bartering in divers ways, can get for a time. Then he must rest to recover and recruit his finances and his energies. The lathing and plastering are necessarily deferred to a more convenient opportunity. After awhile, by another series of hard strivings and close contrivings and various anxiously effected tradings, the lathing and plastering and joiner-work are accomplished, and the house is tolerably finished. All this may be for one or two rooms. Then a bedroom addition is wanted, or a kitchen, or a sitting room, and similar hard work it is to accomplish it. In this state of things, architecture, beautiful, or elegant, or symmetrical, or magnificent, is not to be thought of, it does not enter into the calculations. The great question is, first how to obtain a decent shelter for the family, with certain necessities and some reasonable accommodations and conveniences, the limited available means considered.

Let us pass from these humble and hardly obtained houses to more imposing structures, where means are evidently ample, or at any rate sufficient for any reasonably desirable architectural display, and what do we see? Some things not particularly admirable. I do not mean to say that there are no creditable and handsome buildings in the city, not by any means. There are some which would be a credit to any city, and there are many good enough in all respects to adorn most country towns, or cities of populations similar in number to that of this city. But there are other structures, and among them important public buildings, which in some of their external features are anything but inviting.

Let us take four churches in this city and neither of them has much beauty externally. There may be some in certain of the details, but as a whole, each seems to be the embodiment of a large amount of unrelieved ugliness. Long, narrow, scrippy windows let in a modicum of daylight, that "dim religious light" which seems to be tacitly held to be appropriate to religious ceremonies and services, but which an intelligent sceptic would be likely to consider as indicating and in perfect keeping with the "dim religious light" spiritually connected with either of those religions represented by its respective house of worship.

One of these houses has one really excellent external feature, and that is, the slate roof, the neatest and most beautiful and satisfactory of all kinds of roofs. But otherwise there is such intense and chunky plainness in these buildings as to amount to revolting ugliness, an ugliness especially ugly in an edifice erected for exalted public purposes, professedly for the worship of the Lord of light and life and glory, the Author and Inspirer of all that is beautiful, magnificent and pleasing in nature and in art.

By the by, my soul rebels against

the too prevalent custom of considering gloom and ugliness as appropriate and indeed essential features of sacred architecture, the architecture devoted to religious services, to the worship of a perfect being. Can a perfect being delight in dullness, dreariness, uncouthness, ugliness, and desire to see those predominating features in a house built and dedicated expressly to his service? I cannot think so. I see no essentiality or appropriateness in those discouraging, depressing, repulsive features in a house of religious worship. I believe with the poet—

The sorrows of the mind
Be banished from this place,
Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less.

But the first glance at the external of any one of these four buildings mentioned, and of hundreds more of similar character in different parts of the country, and in other countries, would suggest, as far more appropriate to them and the inspirations likely to come from them, the following modification of those well known lines—

The pleasures of the mind
Be banished from this place,
Religion never was designed
To make our sorrows less.

It seems to me that buildings of that character are far more suitable to do penance in, that they are more appropriate, in general appearance, for prisons or penitentiaries, than houses of prayer and praise. My idea is that sacred or religious architecture, above and beyond all other kinds of architecture, should be of a character which would manifest light, beauty, intelligence, cheerfulness, buoyancy, magnificence, and grandeur, as pre-eminent characteristics; something to enliven, inspire, encourage, and elevate far above the mean and grovelling things of this mortal life, instead of depressing, discouraging, dispiriting, and continually indicating the darkness, gloom, and lifelessness of death and the grave. These light-inducing, life giving, pleasure-giving, delight-giving, ecstasy-inspiring qualities are those which should strikingly characterize buildings devoted to religious worship, so that the moment the eye fell upon them an irrepressible elevation of spirit, a sensible inspiration of intense gratification and delight would steal over the soul of the beholder, he would realize, instinctively, spontaneously, and irresistibly, something of that light, life, peace, comfort, joy, and gladness which are supposed to be characteristic and essential elements of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and he would be ready to exclaim, in the spirit of the apostle, "Life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel!" or with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" or with the Methodist, "Glory to God! Hallelujah! Bless the Lord!" or with the secular connoisseur, "How beautiful!"

That is the kind of sensation, it seems to me, which the architecture of a place of religious worship, externally or internally, ought to induce in the mind of the beholder, that he might receive inspirations to a higher and better, more beautiful and more perfect life, and that the House of God, the Temple of the Lord, might be ineradicably associated in his mind with all that is beautiful and noble and exalted, and be to him a place of worship and of delight in deed and in truth. This, I conceive, is something like the feeling which lighted up and warmed the bosom of the ancient Jews, in their best days, respecting the Temple at Jerusalem, and inspired them to unwavering devotion and wondrous deeds of heroism. The very sight of the Temple was an inspiration to a high and noble life.

As it is, in most, or many, religious buildings in these modern times, one might readily imagine that the architects of these sacred edifices studied uncouthness and ugliness as a science, pursued it as a fine art, and vied with each other in endeavoring to embody the greatest possible amount of ugliness in their professional creations.

Allow me to have a word in relation to another ugly feature connected with many religious edifices, a fitting accompaniment to the other uglinesses patent to the sight. I mean, the dreary tolling bell. Who that has an ear for the beautiful in sound would ever have dreamed of putting a bell over

the house of God, and with funereal bangs calling the people to worship! I grant there may be sweet melody to be admired in a good peal or chime of bells, as the poet says—

Those evening bells, those evening bells,
How many a tale their music tells.

But what music, what melody, what charm of any possible kind is there in the melancholy monotone of the solitary bell, that on St. Mark's church, for instance? I cannot perceive the least.

I am aware of the old tradition of the noise of the bells driving away the prince of evil spirits and his associates. But that tale will hardly do for this generation, though I must acknowledge that possibly the really dreary, dispiriting, hypochondriacal, obsequial sound of the solitary church-going bell may be sufficient to do it. At any rate, one would think it must have a driving away effect upon men and women, except they be very deaf, or insensible to the beauties or uglinesses of different sounds.

Now let us come down to secular buildings, and in them some ugliness forces itself upon our sight, even where we wish to find all beauty. There is a peculiar style of architecture that seems to have been a favorite in this city, and of which we have four well known specimens—the Court-house, the University building (Council-house), the Theatre, and the City Hall. The ruling features of these buildings, more or less, are a square, dumpy, hip-roofed structure, with the inevitable bare, bleak, long, ugly chimneys all around, braced by a coarse slab or spar resting upon the roof behind. Prominent and elegant architectural features those plain, naked chimneys are, certainly. If the buildings were turned topsy-turvy, they might serve as big stools, with the chimneys for legs, or as immense square porridge pots, with the chimneys for legs, and then these last named features would look more handsome than they do now. How I have admired those numerous and excessively plain and conspicuous chimneys, with the uncouth wooden props behind them, time after time! One cannot help admiring them, they are among the most salient and striking features of the whole architecture of either of those edifices, when the spectator stands at a convenient distance for taking a sight of the whole design of the building. Projecting clear out, as those chimneys most decidedly do, in their own unrelieved nakedness, against the bright blue sky, they must be regarded as wonderful architectural features to the artistic eye.

East of the mountains, and in Europe, in good and pretentious architecture, stacks of chimneys are handsomely designed, or made to constitute insignificant, or less observable and certainly not repulsive, features in the building. They are almost invariably designed and constructed with some regard to appropriateness, to symmetry. They are made architectural features and architecturally beautiful so far as they are seen. But here they are often given disproportionate and extraordinary prominence, thrust unduly and unnecessarily forward as chief objects, salient features, the first things which arrest the attention. These chimneys are bare, bleak, unsymmetrical, shapeless, unsightly, frightful, square chunks of brick and mortar, held in place by the inevitable spar of rough timber behind.

The City Hall, like some other buildings of somewhat similar style, is too low, too dumpy, too squat, and the hiproof is no improvement in this respect. If a symmetrical gable, nicely ornamented, had been brought out to the front, and the tower had risen from the top of that, this dumpyness would have been much relieved, the inevitable chimneys would have been thrown into the back ground and have had much less prominence, and a really beautiful facade might have been presented to the eye of the delighted beholder, as the most prominent feature of the whole structure. If each story had been made higher, the entire building might have been made still more beautiful in its external features.

Here let me refer to another peculiarity of the ordinary architecture in this city, though closely connected with one I have just been talking about. There seems to have been in the minds of the citizens a marvellous affection for

Mother Earth, no getting away from her. Hence the houses from the first have been not only low in story, but as a rule only one story high, necessitating, where a number of rooms are required, a much greater comparative expense. Even now, there exists with some people a very strong liking for one story dwellings and a corresponding dislike towards or prejudice against two or three story houses.

I can very well understand that where it is difficult for a man to build any house at all, it is not likely that he will build a two story house. It is also easily understood that getting up stairs is not a desirable exercise, and that rooms on one floor are much less trouble, and particularly less fatiguing to women, to get at than rooms on different stairs. The effects of powerful winds in these valleys may also have had some influence in causing the preference for one story houses. But in houses for large families the question of expense naturally goes in favor of two or three stories, and now, in the cities, the question of economy of ground surface also comes in, and both these considerations may be expected to weigh heavily against the one story idea in our more thickly populated cities and settlements.

In conclusion, let me hope that no architect, or builder, or owner of a building will be so thin-skinned as to take any offence at my strictures, as they are not written for the purpose of giving offence, but in an endeavor to say something that may tend to the public good and incite to a more thorough study and practice of the beautiful in the architecture of prominent buildings.

ZETA.

CRIMES, CASUALTIES, &c.

Resume of accounts, received by telegraph, of fires, deaths by accident and violence, and disasters at sea, in the month of August.

FIRES.

- 1 Two hundred dwellings and a hundred places of business burned at Muskegon City.
- A fire at Salem, Ind., destroyed property worth \$100,000.
- A fire at St. Thomas, Ont., did damage to the amount of \$50,000.
- 2 A fire at New Orleans; loss \$15,000.
- 4 \$50,000 damage by fire, at Manchester, Mich.
- Woollen mills and store room, at Louisville, Kentucky, burned; loss \$30,000.
- Brewery, at Laporte, Ind., burned; loss \$15,000.
- Woollen mill, at Dayville, Ct., burned; loss \$70,000.
- 5 Block burned at Salem, Ind.; loss \$40,000.
- Paper mill at Londville burned; loss \$30,000.
- Railroad stables burned at South Boston, Mass.; loss \$80,000.
- Fire at Paoli, Kansas; loss \$70,000.
- 6 Fire at Toronto, Canada; loss \$125,000.
- 8 Twenty small buildings burned in New Orleans; loss \$15,000.
- 9 Fire at Memphis, Tenn.; loss \$55,000.
- Fire at Montreal, Canada; loss \$250,000.
- 10 A rather extensive fire at Sandy, near this city; loss \$7,000 to \$9,000.
- Fire at Westfield, N. J., loss \$25,000.
- 11 A stable, one or two horses, several pigs, and some harness and agricultural implements, the property of Mr. G. Webb, destroyed by fire at Centerville, Davis Co., U. T.
- 12 Tobacco factory at Woodbury, Ky., burned; loss \$80,000.
- Paper mill burned at Versailles Station, near Ottawa; loss \$60,000.
- Oil works and refinery, at Pittsburgh, struck by lightning and burned; loss from \$80,000 to \$75,000.
- Fire at Montreal; loss \$30,000.
- 16 Fire in St. Louis; damage \$35,000.
- Fire at Canton, Mass.; loss \$100,000.
- Fire at Malad City, I. T.; damage \$200.
- 17 A shoe factory burned at Abington, Massachusetts; loss not stated.
- Fire at Barka, Michigan; loss \$50,000.
- Great destruction of property by bush fires in various localities in Canada.
- 18 Fire in Hester St., N. Y.; loss \$85,000.
- Agricultural implement manu-

factory burned at Schenectady, O.; loss \$40,000.

Fire at Shelby, Mo.; loss from \$50,000 to \$75,000.

Village of Washington, Ont., half-burned; also a big fire at Springfield, Ont.

19 Planing mills at Dresden, O., burned; loss \$40,000.

Serious damage by forest fires in Michigan.

Fire at Joliet, Ills.; loss \$120,000.

Fire on the levee, at Shreveport, La.; loss \$30,000.

20 Fire at Charlesborough, Pa.; loss \$20,000.

23 Distillery burned at St. Louis; loss \$40,000.

Thirty buildings burned at Buena Vista, Pa.; loss \$70,000.

24 Studebaker's wagon factory, at South Bend, Ind., burned; loss \$300,000.

25 Fire at Muscatine, Iowa, did damage to the amount of \$75,000.

Works of the Royal Mail steamship line, at Southampton Eng., burned.

Elevator burned at Buffalo, N. Y.; loss \$150,000.

Flouring mill burned at Charleston, Ind.; loss \$15,000.

26 Fire at New Orleans; loss \$30,000.

28 Fire at Wilmington, N. C.; loss \$120,000.

29 Fire at Newbury, one of the suburbs of Cleveland, O.; damage \$60,000.

30 Eureka Hair works, San Francisco, burned; loss \$20,000.

DEATHS BY VIOLENCE, etc.

August 1. Van Etten, a suspected forger, committed suicide in jail at Jersey City.

Ann Hardman, 15 years old, fatally burned, in the 4th Ward of Salt Lake City.

Five excursionists drowned in Teignmouth Bay, England.

Lord Gordon, suicided by shooting, at Headingly, Province of Manitoba.

Robert Mitchell and Andrew Thomas, colored, suffocated in a well at Nashville, Tenn.

Son of Mr. Raymond, of Plain City, Utah, received fatal injuries while driving a reaper and mower.

A Swedish man named Johnson, killed by Indians at Pine Grove Meadows, Wy. T.

Cuban General Benito killed in a skirmish with the Spaniards.

Caleb Smith shot dead by S. K. Elliot at Oak Bluffs, Mass.

2 Mr. John Gibson, of this city, fatally injured in Parley's ark, by being thrown from his wagon.

5 Forty-seven persons perished on board the steamer *Pat Rogers*, burned near Aurora.

6 Kate Hartwell, a courtesan, found dead, supposed to have been murdered, in an orchard in St. Louis.

7 Man killed on the towboat *Sam Roberts*, blown up in West Virginia shoals.

Two men killed in an election riot at Somerville, Tenn.

James Kilduff, a plasterer, killed in a trade quarrel, in Brooklyn.

Three persons lost on the *Henry Ames*, sunk near Waterproof, from St. Louis for New Orleans.

9 A. C. Burton, a colored candidate for the legislature, fatally shot at Bruken's Station, Tenn.

One life lost in a big fire at Montreal, Canada.

10 Charles Smith suicided with laudanum, at Alta, Little Cottonwood, U. T.

J. T. Bruner cut the throat of his step-son, J. L. Bresten, at Preston, Ia.

Eight or ten negroes killed in an election fight at Austin, Tenn.

11 Three men killed by a boiler explosion, at St. John's, Ills.

12 Three youths of East Boston, drowned while bathing.

13 Three persons killed in a railroad accident a few miles north of Richmond, Va.

Soren Larsen committed suicide at Mill Creek, a few miles south of S. L. City.

14 A man named John Crissman murdered near Sidney, Neb.

15 James Allen, Jr., a resident of the 20th Ward of S. L. City, killed by accident in Emigration Canyon.

A child named Lottie Sallett, died in awful agony, of hydrophobia, in Chicago.

16 Allen Craig found in the street, at Keene, N. H., with his throat cut.

At Tweed, Ont., Mrs. Moran was murdered by her brother-in-law.

Mike Murrell, tried, condemned and shot by "Judge Lynch" at Augusta, Georgia.

18 Gen. Darnell and Captain Coe killed in a shooting affray near Point Pleasant, Mo.

Dr. Fray and Deputy Sheriff