

since the boast of all our modern education is that it does the same thing, it is certainly curious to find that there is a deterioration in the quality of clerical services rendered. The business college assuredly turns out a certain number of high grade experts; but it has been affirmed by those who appear to know best that the average graduate is not unlikely to be found lacking just where the clerk who has had no training but experience will also be discovered at fault. The inference is that there are defects in the primary educational training. And these defects are entirely on the side of deficient accuracy, of a want of respect for the perfect treatment of small, familiar things; defects, in short, that it is more especially the province of language-study to do away with.

However this may be, whether the theory and practice of our primary instruction need to be revised, or whether we should gain, as a Harvard professor of psychology not long ago suggested, by employing women less exclusively as teachers of the large mass of our youth (the bent of men being confessedly toward greater technical thoroughness, other things being equal), the point raised by the case of the Armenian candidate in Boston represents a side of the subject worth considering. In view of the proportion of the foreign element that is always with us, it is no slight matter whether we have foreign teachers for some of these foreign children or not. The question must be determined by the larger one as to whether the best way to teach is to draw the mind of the pupil quite out of its accustomed groove, directing it forcibly toward the new object set before it for acquirement, or to take possession of his attention by a process of interpenetration, and to lead him, by way of thoughts and mental habits already familiar to him, to the fresh field of knowledge. That the latter method represents the ideal of teaching will probably be conceded in the majority of cases. The curriculum of more than one college concedes it inferentially when it gives over the instruction in this or that foreign language to an American for the freshman and sophomore classes, consigning the advanced classes meanwhile to foreigners to whom the languages are native. The American will probably interest more surely the more immature minds under his tuition, because being personally in touch with his

students, as one is in touch when one belongs to the same race and has behind him the same inherited associations, he can induct them into the spirit and literature of a new language by an enthusiasm of his own, none of the terms or modes of which will seem to them strange or strained. To lay the hand on foreign teachers ideally fitted for the work of teaching our language to the children of our new citizens may not be easy. That will also mean giving them some faint initial intuitions of the better ideals of our civilization. But the native teacher qualified to do the same thing is obviously not found every day, either.

It seems likely, in any event, that the claim of better results obtained by employing this native teacher in all instances is at least premature.

THERE are three or four centuries that stand out from the rank and file for their signal services to general progress. They are the Periklesian Age; the first century A.D., with the Messianic revolution, and the growth of the Roman Empire; the sixteenth century with its complete renaissance from the winter of the Middle Age, its art, science, and exploration. Surely the nineteenth is a worthy fourth, though the time has not yet come when "the last century" applied to it has lost its unfamiliar sound. We are hardly conscious yet that it is passing into history, fading out of the reach or desire of the satirists and pessimists into the rosy haze where the next century will see it as the "good old days," a period of strange dignity and an aristocratic lack of sordidness, a time when great inventors, philosophers, and statesmen wrought with no mean eye for gain.

We have not yet the right perspective for studying our contemporaries; we cannot be blind to the fantastic appearance of scientists whom we have believed to be hardly more than superficial and notoriety-loving squabblers, of philosophers we have thought unscrupulous sophists, of politicians we have condemned and questioned, when we think of them with the toga of classicism over their frockcoats and the laurel twined round their silk hats. But we may as well reconcile ourselves to this time-change that all things suffer or profit by. It will be curious to find the subjects of the tawdry newspaper stuff of our day rechronicled with all history's

pomp and circumstance—and most of the circumstance wrong. But we must not forget that the eighteenth century, which is to us so formal, so elegant even in its most superficial phases, was once held to be just such a bitter, earnest, dishonest, and informal struggle-for-life as that on which we have so recently put up the shutters. In the eyes of the eighteenth-centuryans the gentle and refined Elia was a stuttering lapidary of *mots*; the angelic Mozart was a little virtuoso who was always in debt; the very fathers of our country were a pack of jealous picayunes, who bickered while the army starved; and yellow-journalism was present in spirit hounding Washington to a frenzy with its scandals. But distance has given these things a distinction they did not wear to their own times, any more than the unreverenced “demagogue” of to-day looks the patriot the future will paint him.

Already in the century itself the change began. Perhaps Lincoln is the most remarkable example of the tendency. Two score or so of years past he was sneered at as a backwoods politician, and almost as much distrusted by many of his own party as he was abhorred by the South. Time has cleared the air until now we see him as the few of his own early day saw him, one of the very noblest and most lovable of the world's great men, a figure of sweetness and strength, of mirth and solemnity, of infinite homeliness.

Out of the men we patronize or condemn or regard with a feeble, reluctant admiration, the future is going to choose its stars for the constellation of the nineteenth century. It

is hard to imagine just now what ones are to be chosen. In politics it is all but impossible. The painter who is admired with such qualification of ridicule will be counted a genius of sobriety, tempered with occasional graceful eccentricity. The humorist we have laughed at uproariously and irreverently will be gathered to his peers, Aristophanes, Lucian, Horace, Rabelais, Sterne, Artemus & Co., Ltd. The actor who has occupied our press chiefly for his overweening conceit will stand out as one of the most brilliant of the sons of Roscius. The crotchety and cranky musician whom his best friends could hardly tolerate will be given over to posterity as a soul on the Pisgah-slopes of music.

And so it will be with many of our familiars. They have a quaint look seen through pink spectacles, and one feels an involuntary shrug of condescension toward the posterity that is going to take these queer people so seriously. But we must remember that the personages to whom we give our own homage were once only persons to their fellows. No man is a hero to his valet, but we should be more than the supercilious valets of our great men. It is easy to turn cynic and condemn all the big spirits of our time for their foibles. It is better to pay the major attention to their actual achievements and waive their inevitable shortcomings. It were best of all to try to take the point of view of posterity, and value to the full the rare and enviable privilege we have had in playing audience to the splendid actors on the contemporary stage. The drama is named “Evolution”; the curtain has fallen on one of its strongest acts. *Plaudite!*

# THE FIELD OF ART

## HOW TO BEAUTIFY THE CITY

THE city is a congregation of houses: it is necessary to say houses because the word buildings is needed for a wider significance. The house is the unit—house of worship, house of business, house of residence; those are its modifications and there are no others than those. If, then, it be our wish to make the city a beautiful thing in its general capacity—in a large sense, as of a great work of the combined ability of many men during many years—it would seem reasonable to consider more curiously the separate units, and to ask whether the most simple and most obvious way of ordering a city be not that each of its inhabitants set “his own house in order.”

It does not appear that a combination of ugly masses will ever produce a beautiful whole. It has not yet been noted by those who have travelled the world over in search of beautiful things that there was ever a city charming in spite of the dulness or vulgarity of its component parts. Let us think for a moment how they impress the traveller, these cities of the world. There was occasion very recently to consider the eighteenth-century lay-out of King Stanislas's good town of Nancy, to note the deliberate forethought with which it was planned and the careful way in which the buildings, with their subordinate colonnades and their connecting archways, had been combined by wise if not inspired designers into a whole more beautiful by far than any one of the buildings can be thought to be, taken by itself. In that style of the latest aftergrowth of the Renaissance, and in this instance more especially, the whole is more than any of its parts; though that is not an axiomatic truth in matters of fine art. But then the parts also are very good. The memorial arches and gateways are extremely well designed; the palaces of the royal residence and of the administration are grave and dignified and without solecism; the minor buildings defer in a handsome way to those greater masses and help rather than hinder their separate splendor; the colonnades and

porticoes and “vistas” are so combined that nothing suffers by the neighborhood of anything else. It is a remarkable piece of combined designing. Yes, but it is also a combination of remarkable separate designs. It is well to take first this one town, this famous piece of deliberately wrought-up architectural display in order that the utmost may be stated, in the first place, for that side of the question which is just now attracting so much notice. We are not likely to surpass, in modified Washington or opened-up London or revolutionized Florence, or in any new quarter of New York, the dignity of Nancy. We shall build on a larger scale and combine things more amply, by far, and our distances across square and park will be measured by yards instead of feet, but the bigger you make them the less will you find it easy to surpass the self-contained repose of the town that was built to order during the thirty years before the annexation of Lorraine to the kingdom of France. Moreover, it is on the cards that without a very shrewd bit of beautiful design given to two-story pavilions (*à un étage*) and buildings without any “étage” at all because they have only a ground floor—to these as well as the larger and to the far more sumptuous buildings, any such display of combined excellence would be possible. A ministry “of all the talents,” or a theatrical company of the highest class in the way of mutual and interchanging merit must still be made up of admirable units—or else experience goes for nothing! The stream will not rise higher than its source: and its source is in the value of the individual artist, the individual thinker, the individual work of art.

## II

As to other cities of the world: what have they to say to one who enjoys their presence or their memory? The charm of Siena is in its cathedral, crowning the constantly rising hill, to which culmination you attain by the narrowest and crookedest streets; the charm is in the cathedral and in the little palazzi and the minor churches, with an open loggia here