

THE TENEYCK PRIZE ESSAY.

Full Text of Arthur Huntington Gleason's "Notre Dame of Paris."

[Reprinted from April Lit.]

The World's Exposition at Paris will sum up the achievement of our modern life. There the nations gather—each to present its tale of plenty, scientific, industrial and artistic. But perhaps some visitor, wearying of the huddled wealth, will turn aside to stand to gaze before a heavy building, facing west. It is Notre Dame, the Cathedral of Paris—perfect expression of the twelfth century. So near the vastness of the modern exhibit, it seems meagre. But we can vainly hope to vie with the wonder of that building. It is the voice of all the varied life of the Middle Age.

But the Notre Dame that is nobly representative of its day and generation is only a memory. For a mob destroyed it, and a fool restored. A tinkered ruin is a ghastly sight, and the Cathedral as it stands to-day is disfigured and disgraced. Let us see it as it faced the dying sun for the two centuries of its youth, sincere, the record of a race. It can tell us much of the people and the time, for a work of art is autobiography not the less that it be wrought in stone.

It is the great glory of architecture that to no imperial genius belongs the credit of the finished work. The poem is thrown off at white heat by the lonely rhapsodist. The cathedral was built as the coral reef is built. It was a splendid piece of anonymous work, the slow accretion of hundreds of laborers, independent and equal, with all the years of the future thrown open to them. They elaborated the veriest trifle and toiled over each detail, for work to them was joyous. All Paris built. Indeed, there can be no true architecture unless the nation labors. The seven lean centuries that have followed those years of superb production prove that noble

structures may not be made by a few hired specialists.

The Cathedral of Paris is an embodiment of the building spirit of the times. It is no isolated wonder, the record of a forced enthusiasm. But, just as pure religion and undefiled is this, that a man live out daily the high aspirations of his Sabbath mood, so the constructive style of the Cathedral was one with that of shop and home. Paris was filled with the pointed arch. The saints that walk in long procession over the portals of Notre Dame graced each household of the land. Every meanest alley had a "Gothic profile."

The builders and sculptors of the Middle Age labored in sincerity. The artist did not choose his subject indifferently from pagan literature or Holy Writ. His theme lay heavy on his conscience. He put his heart's blood into the work, which might prove crude, but never tame. Hell was a very real thing to him, and the terror of it must be transmitted to the beholder. The sinner is cowed into repentance by chimères and grinning gargoyles. And the effect of these weird bits of sculpture was tremendous. The quaint old Latin record tells us of men moved to tears by these sermons in stone.

But not all the sculpture threatened. Much of it was beautiful and winning. Lovingly the artist dealt with the legends of saint and martyr, and the Testaments—Old and New. His splendid earnestness, which rendered all his works meet for reproof and instruction, never permitted him to carve a face empty of expression. He did not strive for correct features, but rather to have each countenance show forth an inner emotion. Those hundreds of statues that people Notre Dame lack the calm, cold distance of the Greek type. The expression is that of tenseness, strength or struggle, for the artist realized that the common people balked at an abstraction and craved the warmth of a personality. He sought to give them what would make an instant appeal to their eye, and so to their conscience. But he never stooped to humor his audience. His stern creatures of symbolic meaning—those animals of the Patmos vision—

have in them all the horror of old night and waste places. He did into stone his heart's dream and strongest belief.

No single building sums up our life to-day, but the Cathedral of Paris was like a theatre where tragedy and comedy and all the dramas of changing existence were played in swift succession. It was here that the common people were welcomed as worshippers. For them were given Miracle Plays and the Feast of Fools. "They read their Bible on its walls." All history was carved



MASON TROWBRIDGE of Yale Debating Team.

out on high. And so they came to love the gloomy church, because it stood for all in life that raised them from their low estate.

Nor was it of less import to the great. The pageantry of official life makes here its choice display. Kings are baptized, crowned, married and buried under its gabled roof. All large endeavors must use it as a platform from which to move the world. Its walls echo to the eloquence of Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, as he preaches the Third Crusade. It was here that knights stood guard over their virgin arms until the morning broke. After tedious wars, hither the princes come to fulfill their vows and celebrate their victories. In splendid armor, seated high on his panoplied steed, Philip of Valois rides down the long-drawn aisle and on till he reaches the altar—there to give thanks to the Lord God of battles.

And what shall we say of the art that rendered one building so supreme and forced all other arts to play menial to its needs? Such architecture as consecrated Notre Dame must ever be a nation's crown of glory. Thebes of old was reared by melody. And surely no man who gazes on the Cathedral's twin towers of aspiration but deems them singing as they soar.

SPARRING AT YALE.

A Plea to Encourage It—False Notions—Its Value.

To the Editor of YALE ALUMNI WEEKLY:

Sir: Cannot something be done to awaken an interest in sparring at Yale? The game is too good a one to be spurned because of the disgraceful public exhibitions seen of late years under the Horton Law. In these contests—when they have not been fakes—the chief aim seems to have been to gain a "knock-out" and not to cherish and cultivate the art of self-defense. The true boxer is not the man who takes a drubbing in hope that he may ultimately knock his opponent out, but the man who, while protecting himself well, makes his opponent beware of him. One might as well claim as the type of a fencer the backwords man of "Rob of the Bowl," instead of a *Marignac*, a *Pini* or a *Roux*. For thirty-five years I have boxed, and in all that time I have never seen among gentlemen a serious injury or an unseemly act. Hard blows—lots of them—have been struck, but they were taken, if unparried, as a part of the game.

There is no sport equal to boxing for developing the chest and body generally and which will pay so good a dividend in improved physique to a faithful lover. While strength plays a part in the game, it is the skill and generalship which counts most. And this very skill is within the reach of many a man in the University, whose only participation in rowing, baseball or football is as a spectator. Of course all cannot be adepts, but with good instructors and a faithful grounding in the principles of the art, any one can give a good account of himself. Instead of a dozen sparrers, there ought to be at least two hundred at Yale. Then an open meeting would be a delight.

All antagonistic sports ought to receive a wholesome encouragement at Yale; fencing, wrestling, quarter-staff and boxing. All outdoor athletics would be the better for the encouragement of these sports, which can be followed indoors during our long winters, affording as they do in a generous rivalry a relief from the perfunctory character of ordinary indoor gymnastics. The Faculty, I am informed, do not encourage the public practice of the sport, because of fatalities which have occurred and the brutalities which disgraced the Horton Law sparring. The regulations in weight of gloves can prevent the former and all brutality could be banished by the healthy tone governing Yale athletics.

CESTUS.

Troy, N. Y., April 27.

"Weren't there a crowd of girls at that reception?"
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—*Harvard Lampoon*.

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