

Beauty in Simplicity

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BEAUTY in bridges as in other things is so much a matter of personal taste that it can hardly be fitted to any widely recognized yardstick. The most beautiful bridge selected by one group of critics may be unattractive or, at most, merely pleasing to many other persons. For this reason no final weight can attach to any one selection of the most beautiful steel bridges, such as the selection of three structures opened to traffic in 1931, as noted in our news pages. Yet one noteworthy inference may be drawn from the choice of the official jury. Taking the three structures as examples of good bridge architecture, it appears that simplicity is an important characteristic of such architecture. Decorative embellishment is notable for its absence. The Bayonne arch bridge, the Waldo-Hancock suspension bridge, and even more so the graceful little deck arch at West Stewartstown, impress the beholder with their structural honesty and simplicity. It is gratifying that this is so and that a competent jury recognized these qualities as true beauty, for, if bridge architecture for the most part has escaped the shifting tides of fancy that have periodically engulfed building architecture to its detriment, the result is mainly due to adherence to the tenets of simplicity. The design

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for water also may be found part of the reason for California's active support of the Boulder Dam project, for the dam will provide most of the power required to pump the water through 1,600 ft. of height in crossing the divide. The bold planning that was begun eight years ago is nearing practical realization. Last fall the \$220,000,000 bond issue was approved by the voters of the district, but only now the last obstacle is overcome by validation of the bonds by the state supreme court, and the work is ready to go forward. In measurable time Southern California will be carrying Colorado River water across the mountains.