

Journal of The American Institute of
ARCHITECTS



RUSSELL STURGIS

April, 1949

Guest Editorial by Horace W. Peaslee

Forty-five Years as the Wife of an Architect

Micro-filming of Working Drawings

Advanced to Fellowship in 1949

History and the New Architecture

Architecture, Tradition and Change

Citation with Medal to Frank Lloyd Wright

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With the aim of amplifying, as through
a microphone, the voice
of the profession

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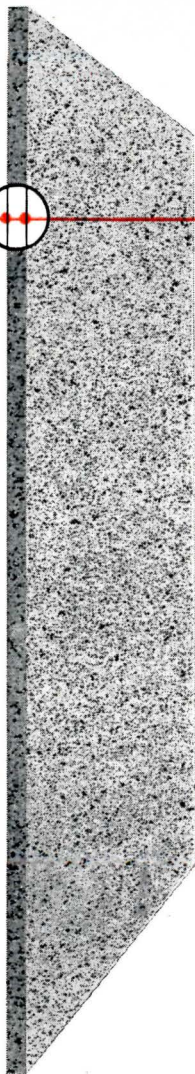
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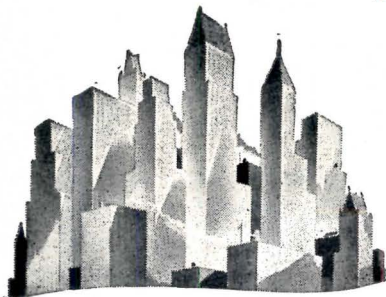


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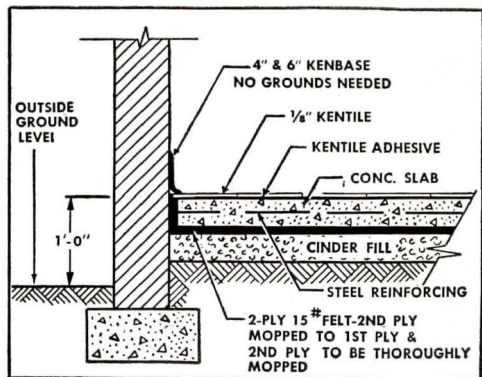
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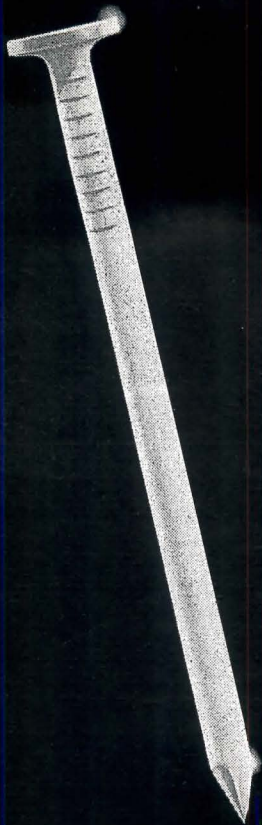
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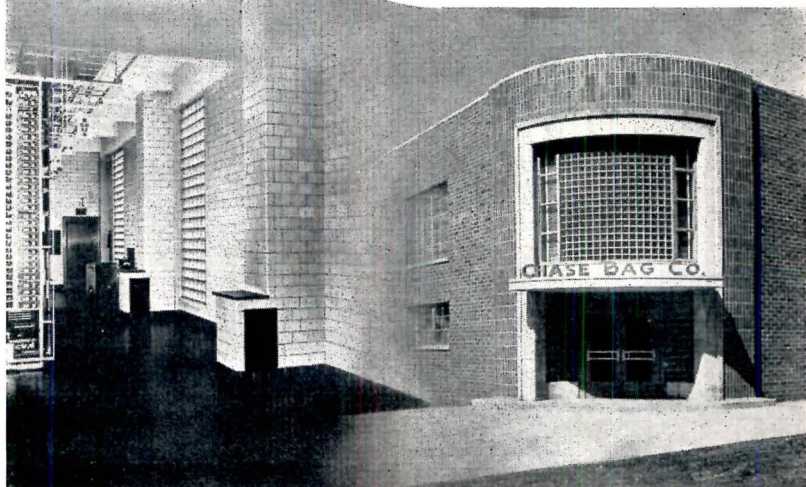
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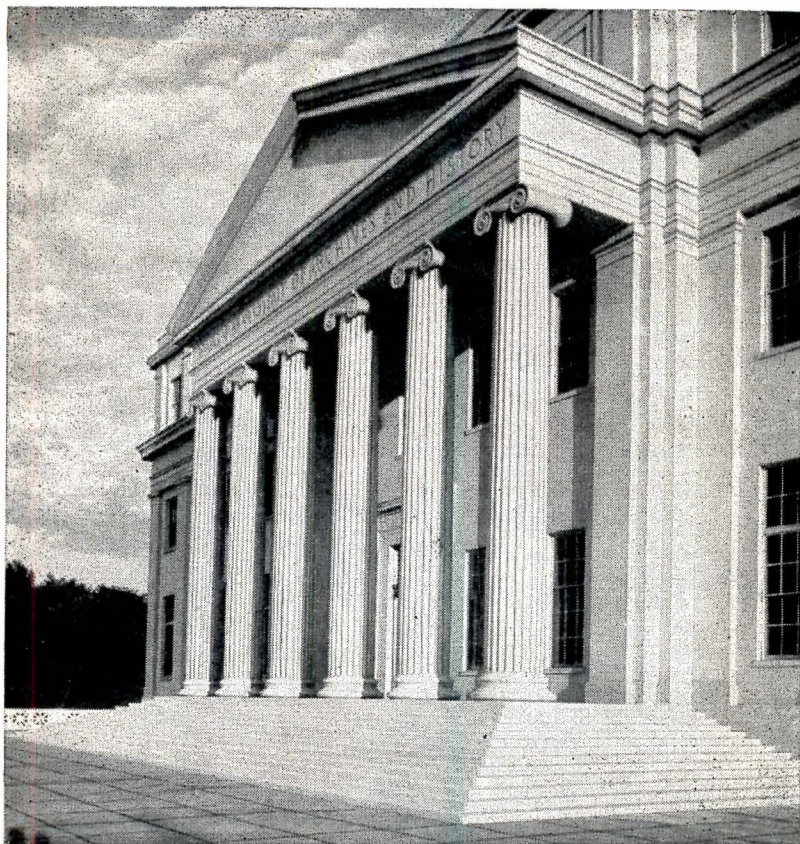




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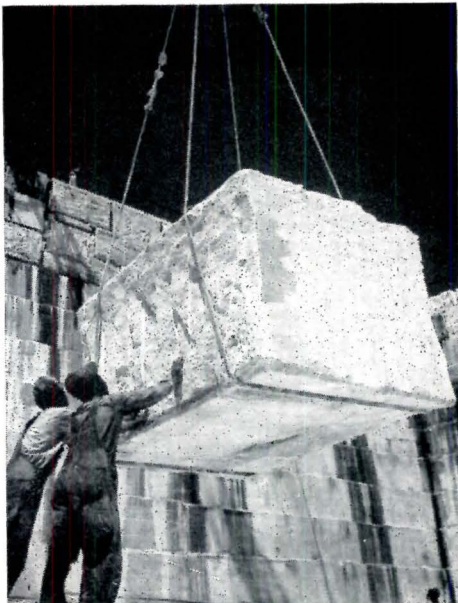
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For this ninth in our series of Guest Editorials, a man who is vice-chairman of the Joint Committee on the National Capital, vice-chairman of the Committee of One Hundred of the Federal City, and who was for ten years chairman of The Institute's Committee on the National Capital, has a pertinent message for the membership. This month's Guest Editor is—

Horace W. Peaslee, F.A.I.A.

THE TITLE of this editorial is "The Last Straw." It was chosen over two runners-up: "The lyfe so short, the craft so long to lerne," and "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party." In reverse order, the last-named title was considered not merely because it's the customary warming-up exercise for the writing of editorials but because this really is an S.O.S. The middle caption reflects the incompleteness of the things we have been trying *so long* to accomplish. The title selected springs spontaneously upon receipt of the editor's midnight special delivery calling for filler-in material on the morrow.

As a matter of fact, all these quotes bear on the subject in hand. This "party," for example, which we are invited to aid, is the second of its kind in a hundred and fifty years, and a real affair. It

differs from the first one in that this time we are rather late-comers, whereas the first one has come down in the annals of history as the party that the architects took over. That was the Centennial of the Federal City, when our professional forebears really went to town to bring orderly development out of topsy-turvy growth. Forgotten are the parades and receptions of the occasion. Forgotten also may be the architecture of that day, but those architects were big enough, and patriotic enough, to give so generously to the nation that their work will long be remembered. These are public relations that mean something; and such public relations are not poor relations.

There are those who carp at the revival of the L'Enfant Plan and the current cost of underpassing circles, overlooking the street

widenings made possible by that plan without huge condemnation costs; but let him hurl the first stone whose esquisse for any city plan can stand the gaff of a century and a half. That's the time-stone we have now reached, the Sesquicentennial of our National Capital, and the situation we are facing challenges the architects of this day and generation to make their contribution—to be remembered in their turn, when the Bicentennial rolls around.

Why is Paul Revere riding again? Well, there's a crisis and, as Uncle Henry says in his cheerful foreword to the year's Necrology, it's later than you think. To summarize the situation, our 1900 crusade gained the so-called "Plan of 1901" for the capital and, eventually, the Commission of Fine Arts to safeguard it. That job was done so successfully that twenty-five years elapsed before it was realized that this 1901 Plan was exactly what it was captioned—"The Park System of the District of Columbia"—with incidental public building development, and with no pretense of covering city planning as such. At the quarter-century point, The Institute joined forces with the

American Civic Association and other cooperating groups to obtain the establishment of a Planning Commission, a two-stage accomplishment with various concessions to agency "rights" which weakened the effectiveness of the planning set-up. The Commission has tried to plan and has results of consequence to demonstrate the possibilities of such an agency, but its component elements have been able to plan independently, and to proceed with the execution of uncoordinated projects. Even Frederic Delano, with all his backlog of experience on the Chicago Plan and the Port of New York Authority, plus his White House backing, couldn't obtain real teamwork. When he could no longer carry the burden, President Roosevelt referred the problem to the Budget Bureau for a solution. That agency made a thorough study and produced a report which could well serve as a textbook of planning procedures as well as the base for recommended corrective legislation. All of which sounds very encouraging until one consults the calendar and finds that the reference was made seven long years ago, seven lean years of appropriations always inadequate, of curtailed staff, and of results dis-

proportionate to the effort. When we realize that cities of comparable size but of less importance have had two- or three-hundred-thousand-dollar planning budgets, it is rather disgraceful that our chief city, on display to the world, hasn't had enough funds for a decade and a half to publish its planning analyses, while counter planning has been available in expensive brochures. It is apprehended that another able chairman, an Honorary Member of The Institute for the past twenty years, has about reached the end of his endurance. The chairmen are not the only ones who have struggled against such discouraging odds. Milton Medary and William Adams Delano gave years of service for the privilege of serving, and now Frederick Bigger and William Wurster are starting their terms. It's not fair to such men to let their planning efforts be stopped by dead-ends, and it's time that the profession which they represent should back them up by going after the fundamental difficulties. There are certain specific things that can be done, and it just so happens that there's an opportune time at hand.

At this time of writing, pre-Convention, there are indications

that, by the time we get back from our trip to another national capital, a revised Budget Bureau Bill for the reorganization of the Planning Commission will be before Congress. In its final form, it is expected that *agency participation* will be extended to include the Architect of the Capitol and the Federal Works Agency; that *jurisdiction* will be broadened to the Metropolitan area and to the region, by inclusion of representatives of Maryland and Virginia; that *authority* will be strengthened by the requirement that all undertakings must be submitted for consideration before any commitments are made; and, finally, that *independence* will be assured by Federal appropriation rather than by local District dole.

If the chapters of The Institute, and the State Associations, will take pains to inform themselves about this legislation and will take the trouble to make known to their Senators and Representatives their interest in, and their support of, this legislation, they may have the satisfaction of achieving something as notable as The Institute's Centennial accomplishment. And this time, instead of working at cross purposes, they may have the oppor-

tunity to work with the Sesquicentennial Commission, and with their allied professions, to enlist nationwide interest in, and support for, the adequate development of the Federal City.

The Institute established an enviable record in 1900, but the problems of yesterday are simple compared with those we face today. Here we have national requirements handicapped by municipal limitations; a world center handicapped by inadequate national provisions; a metropolitan

area handicapped by divided jurisdictions; centralization handicapped by the need to decentralize for safety's sake. We may not be able to do all the things we ought to do; but we can at least avoid doing some of the things we ought not to do. The one thing we cannot afford to do is not to plan intelligently. And it's up to the planners—all the planners, not just the architects—to back this reorganization measure as their full measure of contribution to the Sesquicentennial.

Forty-Five Years as the Wife of an Architect

By Margaret S. B. Zantzinger

Excerpts from a talk before the Christmas Party of the Philadelphia Chapter, A.I.A., December 8, 1948.

I WAS rather troubled when, as we were coming in, one of your very active members said to me: "It will be very interesting, Mrs. Zantzinger, to hear what an architect's wife has to say about architecture." "Well," I said, "that is just one thing that I am *not* going to talk about."

I really would not dare to address this group on the subject of architecture, in spite of the fact that I have been married to an architect for 45 years, and have

talked and *dreamed* architecture throughout that time. So my little talk is to be entirely about what a woman derives from being the wife of an architect, and of experiences—some happy, some not so happy.

To be the young wife of a young architect is not all "beer and skittles" (I don't know exactly what "skittles" are, but I do know what beer is). In the first place, there are the disappointments. A young wife is awfully disappointed

(and jealous too!) of the other architect who gets the job she thinks her husband should have had. Then there are moments of loneliness. When I was a young wife, my husband was conducting the T-Square Club Atelier two nights a week. I thought little or nothing of *that!* Then he had to go to New York regularly for the judgments of the B.A.I.D., where he served on the juries, and those were lonely evenings.

Another thing which definitely was not "beer and skittles" for a young wife was that, in those days, the only way that a young architect could get into the big money was through competitions; and of course, we went into competitions. I remember one in particular that Zant went into with our dear friend, Paul Cret. That one was for the Capitol at Lincoln, Nebraska. I went into town one day to see the finished drawings, and decided that there was simply no chance for anyone else to win *that* time. On the strength of that, I went down town and bought myself a \$25 hat! In those days a \$25 hat was some hat! You all know what happened. Bertram Goodhue won the competition, and I—well, I had the hat, unpaid for but beautiful. It sat right on

the head, instead of on the back of the head as hats do nowadays, and I thought it was pretty nifty. One day, I was walking down the street, wearing the hat, and thinking that I looked like a million dollars, when, just in front of Wanamaker's, an awful looking individual with a *very* short haircut and a very *pallid* face came up to me, stuck his face close to mine and said—"Was you in the pen?"

That was all my hat did for me! So, after this experience, I would say to all architects' wives, "Don't begin to spend your husband's fee until the contract is signed!"

Now, I have said that being an architect's wife is not all "beer and skittles," but I must say we had an awful lot of interesting experiences together—among them, the A.I.A. conventions of the old days. These were conventions that *were* conventions! They were interesting to me principally because all the work and discussions of the various committees were not behind closed doors. Committee problems were brought out on the floor of the convention for discussion. It was all very interesting, if sometimes a trifle confusing.

After the meetings, we would all assemble in Peacock Alley of the old Hotel Willard, in Washington, which was then considered the quintessence of modernism and luxury. We had cocktails there—the men, of course, in their tuxedos, and the wives in their best bibs and tuckers. We would dine together, and meet afterwards, again in Peacock Alley, and talk until bedtime, if we did not go on to some party.

One of the great conventions in Washington was the one when Henry Bacon was awarded the Gold Medal of The Institute. The ceremony of the award was the most spectacular ever given. It was staged on the greatest axis in the world, that of the National Capital. A small barge had been designed to be drawn up the Reflecting Pool from the east end to the Lincoln Memorial, and on the boat, lighted with spotlights, was Mr. Bacon. Members wearing the most beautifully colored capes, dragged the boat by means of ropes from both sides. The capes were yellow, orange, green, red and blue. When they reached the furthest end, Mr. Bacon was escorted from the boat. He was ushered up the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, followed by the members in their

gay capes, all under floodlights. He was presented by Chief Justice William Howard Taft to President Harding, who presented him with the Gold Medal of The American Institute of Architects. President Harding may not have been too good a President, but he was decorative to look at on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. It was indeed a wonderful spectacle.

Another convention in Washington, one which amused me, was the one at which Leopold Stokowski was awarded the Medal of The Allied Arts. I did not go down to the business meeting, but I did go down on the train with Mr. and Mrs. Stokowski. When we got to Union Station, Mr. Stokowski said a few words to his wife and rushed off, leaving her with a red-cap to "shag the bags." One thing I noticed was that Leopold's hair (it was golden then) was definitely *not* curly. But when he arrived in the beautiful room of the Chamber of Commerce, his golden hair was just as curly as could be! He had been—you ladies know where!

Another great convention of The A.I.A. was the one in New York; probably the largest ever held; and, at that time, the Gold Medal was to be presented to the

distinguished English architect, Sir Edward Lutyens.

At the Metropolitan Museum, another pageant had been arranged—again, I think, by Howard Greenley, Donn Barber and Kenneth Murchison. The great main door of the Museum was closed, and a platform erected in the large hall. The members, again arrayed in their colored capes, over full dress, filed down the main staircase and circulated among the guests. In due course, the Medal was presented to Sir Edward, who sailed at midnight on the *Beren-garia*. History relates that when he woke up in his stateroom, he thought he was still on his way to America. The Hospitality Committee had been completely efficient.

There is one thing that I would like to say seriously tonight, as the wife of an architect. If I were a young man starting to take up the profession of architecture, I would say to my wife, or to the girl I was planning to marry, "Let us learn another language besides our own," and let them both do it well. I say this because I note a decided tendency to isolationism of The A.I.A. It may be caused by the fact that we are so young, so full of over-confidence, that we do

not realize the value of the contacts with the European architects—maybe from not understanding or speaking any language other than our own. We don't attend the International Congresses; and from my experience as a wife, I know that those who have not done so have missed a lot of pleasure and benefit.

Zant and I have been to two together. The first was in Rome in 1935, when Mussolini was at the height of his career and about to embark upon the Ethiopian campaign. There was also an International Congress of Archeologists there at the same time, and Rome put on a wonderful show. We were all invited to a reception at the Campodolio one evening by the Governor of Rome. The men were instructed to wear all their decorations and full dress, and the women to wear their jewels and finest clothes. People were there from all over the world.

As we walked up the steps of the Campodolio, we found soldiers of the Bersaglieri in their gay uniforms, standing on both sides of the staircase, holding their guns at "present arms." The lackeys inside the Museum wore black buckled shoes, white silk stockings, white short breeches, blue coats and

powdered wigs. In the large halls filled with sculpture, it was a gorgeous party—with the music, champagne, food, and the people, made a wonderful spectacle. I had, for me, an amazing experience. As Zant and I were dressing for the party in our hotel just across the street from the Villa Borghese, with its wonderful pines against the sunset sky, I said that the scene would be complete if we could hear the Philadelphia Orchestra playing Respighi's "Pines of Rome." At the reception, I was presented to Signora Respighi. She asked me if I would like to meet the Maestro. I said I would love it. Evidently, Zant had repeated my remark at the hotel to someone. So one afternoon, when the architects were taken to meet Mussolini, I was invited to go to tea, together with the Arthur Browns from San Francisco, Chester Aldrich, then Head of the American Academy in Rome, and his sister, at the Respighi Villa on the Monte Mario. He showed us the pine woods on his place, "El Pini," where he had composed "The Pines of Rome" and where the record had been made of a nightingale singing, which is included in the music. After a delicious tea, we all went to the Villa of Piacentini (one of

Mussolini's favorite architects) for cocktails.

Another Congress that we went to was the one in Paris in 1937. More Americans did go to that, as it was the year of the Great Exposition, and I suspect that they went more to have a mighty good time than to attend the Congress, as few ever turned up at the meetings. Maybe it was because they didn't know the language. That is one reason why I have said that it is desirable for an architect to know a second language. There is inspiration in such contacts.

At this Congress we had another great experience. A beautiful party was arranged for members and their families at Versailles. We were met there by the chief architect of the Domaine of Versailles and the Trianons, who welcomed us and gave a brief talk. We all were then led forward by a group of soldiers carrying flaming torches, through the gardens, and saw the lovely fountains playing, with lights flooding them from all sides. There were people from all over the world, speaking every kind of language. After some splendid fireworks on the main axis of the gardens, we were taken to the Orangerie for a supper, where

tables were set along its whole length. It would take too long to describe the scene, but one striking thing was that at the foot of the steps, inside, there was lined up on both sides, a group of Spahis, mounted on their beautiful little Arabian horses. The uniforms of the Spahis, with their black boots, wide red trousers, blue jackets, long white capes, and turbans, were beautiful. The officers, standing in front of the horses, raised their swords high, and we all walked under them. It was another beautiful experience that I would not have had if I were not an architect's wife.

To celebrate our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, Zant and I took a trip to North Africa. Our object was to see the great Roman ruins recently excavated by the French Government. We traveled through the desert and saw beautiful and thrilling things. It was really adventurous, and we had a wonderful time. One thing which stands out as one of the most exciting things that I ever could have done happened in Tunis. We met, through a friend, the French archeologist-engineer in charge of the excavations at Dougga. He and his wife were most civil and friendly to us both. The night before we

left, and had already packed for the early boat, he and she came to the hotel and said that they had been asked to invite us to a high-class Arab wedding. They drove us up into the Arab Walled City through narrow winding streets to the house of the bride.

The door was opened to us by the biggest "character" I have ever seen. He was arrayed in a red satin garment and a white turban. He was very, very dark,—a typical Arab. He ushered us along a long, narrow hallway, faced and floored with old Moorish tiles, with beautiful rugs just like something out of *The Arabian Nights*. Then we came to a door leading to the courtyard. Arab houses are built, as you know, on the Roman plan, around a square courtyard. There we were seated on funeral chairs facing a stage. On the stage was a male orchestra—flutes, violins, harps, etc. Surprised to see men musicians, I inquired as to how that was permitted. I was informed that they were all blinded! They were awful looking old spooks, but still they had to be blinded to be able to play in a harem. We saw all the sisters, cousins and aunts, besides the mother and maybe step-mothers of the bride. They all

wore stunning brocades of many colors, and had jewels way up their arms, around their necks and on every finger, and even on their toes. The sisters and cousins seemed modern, some with bobbed hair, some dyed red. *They* were slim. The older people—if you think that you have ever seen a fat woman, forget it! According to their idea, our women are poor, skinny creatures, for the Arab beauties are huge. They all wore enormously wide bloomers coming to just below the waist, and bolero jackets to just above their waists. Between the two were rolls of fat—"spare tires"—around their so-called waists.

We listened to the music, being served by the young girls with gallons of Turkish coffee. As the content of the cups was half grounds, we didn't have to drink too much, which was fortunate, as it would have been rude to refuse any. We were later taken upstairs to a supper, which was

very good. Water was the beverage, as Mohammedans drink only water. Later, we met the bride, who was quite beautiful. I asked her if it were true that she had never seen the groom. She said that she had "peeped at him through the lattice."

A Mohammedan wedding lasts three days. At the end of the celebration, I was told, the bridegroom takes his wife to his house. I say "house" instead of "harem" because today the Arabs usually have only one wife. I was also told that if the bridegroom doesn't like the wife, finds her ugly or ill-tempered, at the end of one month she is returned to her father, and the father repays the husband all the expense which the bride has caused him. Maybe some of our husbands here might like the idea.

In my belief, there is no life a woman can have that has more excitement, inspiration and *happiness* than that of the wife of an architect.

Calendar

April 2: Second Annual Symposium of the Engineers' Council of Houston (of which the South Texas Chapter, A.I.A. is a member), Rice Hotel, Houston, Tex.

Theme: "Conservation of Our Natural Resources." Reservations may be made through Mr. Dean F. Saurenman, P. O. Box 3048, Houston 1, Texas.

APRIL, 1949

April 11-15: Institute for Hospital Engineers, sponsored by American Hospital Association and The Hospital Association of Pennsylvania, Buck Hill Falls Inn, Buck Hill Falls, Pa.

May 9-15: Exposition of Architecture (dedicated to American countries), Barcelona, Spain.

May 13-14: Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Society of Architects of The A.I.A., Hershey Hotel, Hershey, Pa.

On the program will be a symposium on hospitals.

May 19-21: Southern Hospital Conference for a discussion of hospital design and administrative hospital problems, to be held at

Buena Vista Hotel, Biloxi, Miss.

June 19-24: 3rd Annual Store Modernization Show, sponsored by the Store Modernization Institute, Grand Central Palace, New York, N. Y.

June 29-July 2: The annual conference of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Nottingham, England.

November 4-5: The West Virginia Chapter, A.I.A., meeting at The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, W. Va. Members of the Middle Atlantic District chapters and neighbors are invited. For reservations write George C. O'Brien, The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

Are we in danger of selling our birthright
for a mess of subsidiary accompaniments?

Architecture is the Art of Building Beautifully

By John V. Van Pelt, F.A.I.A.

THE DEATH of Royal Cortissoz on the seventeenth of October 1948, was a severe loss to the world of art. His apprenticeship began in the offices of McKim, Mead & White, when he was fourteen; but he left after six years in that atmosphere and eventually became the foremost of our art critics. Of himself he said, "My belief: That a work of art should embody an idea, that it should be beautiful, and that it should show sound craftsmanship."

In conjunction with this I am arrested by a phrase in Leopold Arnaud's discerning article "History and Architecture" (October, 1949 JOURNAL)—"for Architecture is the art of building beautifully."

It is true that the dictionary defines architecture as "The science and art of designing and constructing buildings or other structures," but under Art we find, "esthetic or fine arts, the arts of beauty."

Arguments—except those of the

rolling-pin type—are generally founded on failure to agree on a definition. To a large section of humanity architecture means a division of the fine arts, to another it appears to mean structural engineering. Perhaps it is inevitable that such should be the case.

Unquestionably there are men, women too, that are not emotionally sensitive to or perceptive of beauty. It is not reasonable to criticize an individual with clear hearing, for failure to enjoy a Beethoven Symphony, if he is tone deaf; if he is so constituted that his brain cannot register the sequence of notes in a simple melody.

A person whose eyes or hearing are obscured by disease does not know what the sights and sounds of the world are like. If he regains the use of those senses he is astounded by the difference between what he thought was real and what really is real. Similarly, one whose organism is congenitally defective or has never developed and therefore remains insensitive to beauty, is quite unaware of the response by a normal individual, to beauty's appeal.

It should be borne in mind that the great majority of human beings do respond to beauty in greater

or less degrees individually and do not develop properly without it.

Once more we must consider a definition. What do we mean by beauty? I think some people limit it to what is pleasing to the eye or ear, an intensification of what is pretty. Not so our umpire, the dictionary. There we find, "That quality of objects that gratifies the esthetic nature; . . ."; and under 'beautiful,' a beautiful landscape, a beautiful poem."

Satisfaction of the esthetic nature opens up a wide horizon. What is dramatic, what is tragic, may be beautiful; it is often not pretty at all. The realm of beauty finds its apotheosis in the emotionally moving, in esthetic rapture.

It may be somewhat difficult to differentiate between the emotions of religious fervor and the enthrallment of beauty. Certainly, the former has been genetic of the latter, in painting, music, sculpture and architecture.

I feel sure that both Royal Cortissoz and Leopold Arnaud were fully cognizant of this interpretation of the word "beauty" and this is what each meant by it.

It is with Arnaud's statement, "Architecture is the art of building beautifully," that the agreement of

the great mass of humanity will be found—in the present as well as the past. It is here a curious paradox presents itself. During the last twenty years or so architects have been, and are still to be, found who assert architecture is not an art dedicated primarily to the creation of something beautiful. They think architecture is structural engineering or, on the other hand, a system of material betterment. To illustrate my point, I am going to quote from some of the past issues of the A.I.A. JOURNAL. If I referred to some other architectural publications the ideas formulated would be even more drastic.

In "The Contemporary Architect and His Education" (July, 1947) Ralph Walker says ". . . Corbusier has made a clear, ringing statement of what he believes contemporary architecture should be, and with easy flow of seeming reason he has created a striking philosophy, which to any mind, however, leaves out all record of human emotions.

"He apparently believes that if the technological solution is sound, all human relations will fall into line and find automatic perfection." Farther on he adds, "For architecture is not alone rational

—it touches deep wells of emotion."

In Seymour Stillman's prize-winning essay "Comparing Wright and Le Corbusier" (April, 1948) is the following: "Le Corbusier has been smitten by the machine and geometry. He loves the order and smoothness of a clock or automobile. Technology and science must be followed in a city pattern; then, the city would employ materials of our age and become efficient."

William W. Wurster (January, 1948) is quite definite in his attitude, though he tries to temper it at the end: "I would hold that architecture is a *social art* before it is a fine art. It is a social art because it is for people—it keeps out the rain and the cold; it stands steady to the elements."

Well! The structural engineer's building, the real estate promoter's "cottage," the jerry-builder's little boxes "keep out the rain and the cold" and "stand steady to the elements." They are not always architecture.

Dean Wurster continues: "To be successful in its full sense it must do it beautifully and when it does it is *fine art*."

It seems to me Dean Wurster is trying to run with both the hare

and the hounds. For thousands of years architecture has been bequeathed to us as a fine art. Why not be frank and call the first sections of Dean Wurster's "architecture" by their several real names: 1, *Structural design*—The engineer designs our factories, our bridges, our dams, a large proportion of our business buildings; 2, *Contracting*—The country contractor has once more become the designer of small houses, as he was in Colonial times; we may not like it but it is true; 3, *Town planning*—The town planner lays out our cities, or wants to (unfortunately he is often more of a real-estate promoter and civil engineer than an architect); 4, *Hospital Design*—The hospital consultant with a structural engineer (who may be an architect by courtesy only) may build our hospitals. So what is left of the "social art" that need not be beautiful? Surely, we do not want our churches, schools, theaters, public buildings and tombstones to be ugly.

To clarify what I have been trying to define, I should introduce an excerpt from a perceptive address to the Cleveland Chapter, A.I.A., by Henry S. Churchill (February, 1948): "The great city

planning achievements of the past, which we find admirable because they are so gratifying to us emotionally, are the work of architects. These men were no less practical than we are, no less concerned with getting things done. Their opportunities were no greater than ours. Although we have come through a century of materialism during which our cities have degenerated, a century during which architecture has been neglected as an art, yet this same century has seen the development of scientific miracles which foreshadow a new world. What this new world will be like will in large measure be determined by the human, spiritual and artistic values in which we clothe it."

Beauty stimulates the esthetic emotions. Faulty, impractical, factitious, false elements in the attempted solution of any problem act as a psychological block to the enjoyment of the result. Thus is Beauty maimed. Moreover, the elimination of what is satisfying, satisfying because of its evident usefulness, such as a cornice that would protect a wall from defacement or relieve stark nakedness; even the elimination of what has proved good custom; these may detract from the total impact of

what might be beautiful to the observer.

A few years ago, during the "cycle" succeeding the earlier World War, a reaction from meaningless artifacts erupted. All ornamentation of structures was ostracised. Our legacy is a flood of stark, harsh buildings with

badly composed lines and masses, blots on the foreground of vision.

The painful result was intensified by repetitious clichés: "functional," "space planning," "social art." I suggest that we adopt, not a new, but a very old, more idealized cliché, and turn it into a slogan: "Architecture is the art of building beautifully."

Modern science and modern business have several tricks by which the architectural office procedure might profit: for instance—

Micro-filming of Working Drawings

By J. W. Dawson

OF ELLERBE AND COMPANY, ARCHITECTS, MINNEAPOLIS

OUR OFFICE has had some experience over the past two years with the micro-filming of working drawings. The micro-filming has been done principally in connection with the working drawings of the Mayo Clinic, the physical plant of which consists principally of two buildings, one constructed in 1914 and the other in 1928. These two buildings have been subject to almost continuous remodeling since they were built—similar to the remodeling that goes on in a commercial office building to fit the needs of new tenants. There is now in our office an ac-

cumulation of something over two thousand drawings for the two buildings. The older drawings are becoming seriously worn as the result of much handling. The micro-filming was undertaken to reduce the wear on the old drawings, incident to much handling, and also to provide a record in the event of loss of the original drawings by fire or other calamity.

In practice we have found that in most cases the information that is needed can be obtained by reading the micro-film. In the event a drawing is needed, the correct drawing can be identified by read-

ing the micro-film and the proper drawing can be removed from the file without handling many other drawings.

We have not considered it advisable to destroy the original drawing and keep only the micro-film as a record. It is possible to enlarge the micro-film photographically back to its original size. We have not had occasion to try this process and do not know whether it would be practicable to reproduce the original working drawings by this means.

We believe the principal advantages of micro-film lie in its use as a reference medium, as an index to a large volume of drawings, and in the safeguard against loss of the original drawings. The reduction in volume is very great. A drawer full of drawings can be

photographed on a small roll of 35-millimeter film. The original drawings can be removed from active files and kept in dead storage either in the office or a store-room outside the office. Obviously, the micro-film should not be stored in the same file room with the drawings. In our case, we happen to have inherited a fireproof storage vault that was already in the space we occupy, and our micro-films are kept therein.

If anyone is interested in having his drawings micro-filmed, we would suggest that he have one or two sheets micro-filmed as a sample and view the results in a viewer at his dealer's sales room. Such a demonstration would be worth more than any amount of description.



Honors

LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE, head of Illinois Institute of Technology's Department of Architecture, has been elected an Honorary Corresponding member of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

LOUIS SKIDMORE, F.A.I.A. of New York, was presented with the New York Chapter's Medal of Honor on the occasion of the Chapter's Eightieth Anniversary Dinner on March 4.



Citation with The Gold Medal to Frank Lloyd Wright

Prometheus brought fire from Olympus and endured the wrath of Zeus for his daring; but his torch lit other fires and men lived more fully by their warmth.

To see the beacon fires he has kindled is the greatest reward for one who has stolen fire from the gods.

Frank Lloyd Wright has moved men's minds.

People all over the world believe in the inherent beauty of architecture which grows from need, from the soil, from the nature of materials. He was and is a titanic force in making them so believe.

Frank Lloyd Wright has built buildings.

Structure, in his hands, has thrown off stylistic fetters and taken its proper place as the dominant guiding force in the solution of man's creative physical problems.

Frank Lloyd Wright has kindled men's hearts.

An eager generation of architects stands today as his living monument. By precept and example he has imparted to them the courage to live an architectural ideal. They are reaching leadership in our profession, themselves dedicated to creating order and beauty, not as imitators, but as servants of truth.

It is for that courage, that flame, that high-hearted hope, that contribution to the advancement of architectural thought that this Gold Medal, the highest award of The American Institute of Architects, is presented to Frank Lloyd Wright.

Advanced to Fellowship in 1949

WITH APPROPRIATE CEREMONY on the occasion of the Annual Dinner, Eighty-first Convention, meeting in Houston, Texas, announcement was made of the elevation to Fellowship of twenty-eight members of The Institute who have achieved eminence in their profession. The names of these members and the individual citations from the Jury of Fellows follow:

GEORGE HARWELL BOND

Atlanta, Ga.

Admitted to The Institute in 1925, has been advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects. By assuming an active and responsible part in civic and state affairs related to the practice of architecture, he has reflected credit to his profession.

BIRDSALL PARMENAS BRISCOE

Houston, Tex.

Admitted to The Institute in 1921. The work of this sensitive and creative designer reflected good taste, elegance and suitability for the locale when such qualities were rare in the architecture of his comparatively undeveloped community. His practice, since its be-

ginning, has been maintained with such devotion to the highest ideals of his profession that he has had a profound influence upon the practice of architects throughout his territory. For achievement in design and for service to his profession, he is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

HAROLD BUSH-BROWN

Atlanta, Ga.

Admitted to The Institute in 1926, has been advanced to Fellowship in recognition of twenty-two years effectively devoted to architectural education which has notably raised the standards of design in an entire region.

ARTHUR FEITEL

New Orleans, La.

Admitted to The Institute in 1925. As Art Director and President of the Board of Administrators of the Isaac Delgado Museum of Art; as member of the New Orleans Art Commission and the Louisiana Art Commission, and as chairman of numerous committees, for many years he has fought for civic improvements. In community and state affairs, he has liberally

GEORGE
HARWELL
BOND
Atlanta,
Ga.



BIRDSALL
PARMENAS
BRISCOE
Houston,
Tex.



HAROLD BUSH-BROWN
Atlanta, Ga.



MATTHEW W. DEL GAUDIO
New York, N. Y.



ARTHUR FEITEL
New Orleans, La.

ALFRED
CHARLES
FINN
Houston,
Tex.



KENNETH
FRANZHEIM
Houston,
Tex.



HARRY
HAKE
Cincinnati,
Ohio



WALLACE
KIRKMAN
HARRISON
New York,
N. Y.



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EARL T. HEITSCHMIDT
Los Angeles, Calif.



DANIEL PAUL HIGGINS
New York, N. Y.



WALTER WILLIAMS HOOK
Charlotte, N. C.

BURNHAM
HOYT
Denver,
Colo.



JAMES
WILLIAM
KIDENEY
Buffalo,
N. Y.



JERROLD
LOEBL
Chicago,
Ill.



MILTON
BOWLES
MCGINTY
Houston,
Tex.



ANGUS VAUGHN McIVER
Great Falls, Mont.



HARRY L. MEAD
Grand Rapids, Mich.



JOHN C. BROWN MOORE
New York, N. Y.

FREDERIC
LINDLEY
MORGAN
Louisville,
Ky.



NATHANIEL
ALEXANDER
OWINGS
Chicago,
Ill.



*Journal
The ALA*

LOUIS
SKIDMORE
New York,
N. Y.



JOHN
LLEWELLYN
SKINNER
Miami,
Fla.



HAROLD REEVE SLEEPER
New York, N. Y.



GLENN STANTON
Portland, Ore.

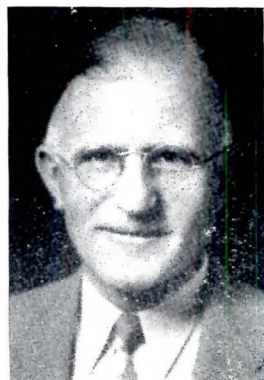


HENRY JOHNSTON TOOMBS
Atlanta, Ga.

WILLIAM
WARD
WATKIN
Houston,
Tex.



JOSEPH
LEWIS
WEINBERG
Cleveland,
Ohio



and intelligently contributed of his training and has reflected credit to his profession by benefiting the society of which he is so vital a part. In recognition of his leadership in civic affairs and achievements in public service, he is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

MATTHEW W. DEL GAUDIO
New York, N. Y.

Admitted to The Institute in 1937, is advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects for his devotion and service to all architects. His goal was a united profession. To such an end he gave of himself without stint. No individual labored more arduously for unification.

ALFRED CHARLES FINN
Houston, Tex.

Admitted to The Institute in 1920. Throughout a long, successful career as a practising architect, he has found time to work diligently for his profession, notably through service on the School Board on two occasions for a considerable number of years. Faithful to the public and to his fellow practitioners, he has raised the standard of service on all school buildings in his community. An exceptional accomplishment is the

design of the group of buildings comprising the U. S. Naval Hospital at Houston. For achievement in service to The Institute and in design, he is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

KENNETH FRANZHEIM
Houston, Tex.

Admitted to The Institute in 1930. He has been advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects for his great skill in initiating and directing, through a large organization, a number of important and excellent solutions in the design problems of a great variety of structures. He has maintained in these designs high architectural standards, particularly well represented in the Foley Store in Houston.

WALLACE KIRKMAN HARRISON
New York, N. Y.

Admitted to The Institute in 1927. Over a wide range in many fields of architectural design he has shown originality, restraint and discrimination of great merit. As coordinator of architect groups he has the happy faculty of inspiring enthusiastic cooperation and of obtaining fine achievement. He is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

HARRY HAKE
Cincinnati, O.

Admitted to The Institute in 1899. In a long and honorable career he has brought to the design of his many office and commercial buildings a notable sense of scale, of plan, of materials and of artistic distinction. By his generous interest in the young student he has opened the door of opportunity to many a beginner in the profession. He is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

WALTER WILLIAMS HOOK
Charlotte, N. C.

Admitted to The Institute in 1930, has been advanced to Fellowship for his contributions in the field of legislation affecting the building codes, registration laws and zoning ordinances, and for his successful efforts for the advancement of the ideals and purposes of The Institute.

EARL THEODORE HEITSCHMIDT
Los Angeles, Calif.

Admitted to The Institute in 1934. He has been advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects for his leadership in the architectural profession and his public service. He and his organization have been responsible

for a great number of important buildings, a credit to their designers. His self-sacrificing devotion to his activities through the business and political organizations with which he has been affiliated has been of the greatest benefit to all construction activities in his community.

BURNHAM HOYT
Denver, Colo.

Admitted to The Institute in 1922. An artist, sensitive to balance, form and color he has revealed in his architectural conceptions unerring judgment in the skilful welding of building to site. It may be truly said, whatever he touches he ornaments. He is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

DANIEL PAUL HIGGINS
New York, N. Y.

Admitted to The Institute in 1931. He has been advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects for his great service to the profession and to the public. His devotion to architectural, metropolitan and national problems has covered many years. His service in many important capacities has been of great influence in the improvement of architec-

tural practice and construction policies. He guided the school problem of New York City toward structures of individuality and usefulness. His leadership and organizational ability have done much for the profession, the construction industry, and the great metropolitan area of New York.

JAMES WILLIAM KIDENEY

Buffalo, N. Y.

Admitted to The Institute in 1935, is advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects for his services to the profession and the public. Consistently, without waiver or lag, and with the same untiring zeal he so notably contributed to unification, his leadership has resulted in improved public relations with the profession.

JERROLD LOEBL

Chicago, Ill.

Admitted to The Institute in 1935. He has been advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects for his contributions in design, particularly in city planning, and for his achievements in public service and to The Institute. He has made unusual contributions to logical and progressive planning in commercial, scholastic, apartment house, resi-

dential and community design. He has given much time to the problems of the community, particularly in housing, and has been exceedingly influential in the affairs of The Institute.

HARRY L. MEAD

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Admitted to The Institute in 1924. For his unsparing and patient devotion to the betterment of the status of the architect in his region, for his years of activity in the cause of registration, for his unflagging zeal to preserve his Chapter during its critical years, for the integrity of his own professional conduct, he is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

JOHN CROSBY BROWN MOORE

New York, N. Y.

Admitted to The Institute in 1929. His work is in no sense imitative of what is known as the "Modern Style," and yet it is in no sense archeological. It is distinguished by the freshness of the forms used and their appropriateness to the function performed. The buildings at Goucher College are brilliant evidence of a sure and imaginative competence in design. For his notable contribution to the advancement of the profession of architecture by his

achievements in design, he is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

MILTON BOWLES MCGINTY
Houston, Tex.

Admitted to The Institute in 1935, his contributions to the profession and the public are manifold and conspicuous. As Chapter officer, Regional Director, Instructor in Architecture, and public servant, his leadership and good taste have been a source of inspiration to students and architects. He is advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects.

ANGUS VAUGHN McIVER
Great Falls, Mont.

Admitted to The Institute in 1920. Receiving his architectural training in the East, he returned to his home state. There he kept alive the high traditions of The Institute. For services to his Chapter and his notable contribution to the profession as Mountain States Regional Director, he is advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects.

FREDERIC LINDLEY MORGAN
Louisville, Ky.

Admitted to The Institute in 1921. Able delineator, he has

jealously fostered and ably developed the traditional residential design of his native state, animating and vitalizing it with his own peculiar fine discrimination. He is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

NATHANIEL ALEXANDER OWINGS
Chicago, Ill.

Admitted to The Institute in 1938. He has been advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects for his achievements in architectural design and in public service. He has shown an excellent grasp of the great opportunities inherent in the architectural problems involved in the design of large structures. He has indicated great ability in creating and maintaining a progressive quality in design reflecting the best principles of contemporary thought. His public service, particularly as Chairman of the Chicago Plan Commission, has, through his gift of leadership and his great energy, given a real impetus to civic planning.

LOUIS SKIDMORE
New York, N. Y.

Admitted to The Institute in 1934. He has been advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects for his excep-

tional achievements in design. He has initiated and created, through and with his great organization, a standard of progressive, logical and intelligent design in commercial, industrial, exhibition, factory and other types of building which is a continuing inspiration to the public and to the architectural profession.

JOHN LLEWELLYN SKINNER

Miami, Fla.

Admitted to The Institute in 1923. Has been advanced to Fellowship for achievement in architectural education, for domestic design characterized by both wit and charm, and for his generous and cheerful service to The Institute.

HENRY JOHNSTON TOOMBS

Atlanta, Ga.

Admitted to The Institute in 1929, has been advanced to Fellowship for excellence in design. He has added new distinction to contemporary commercial works in his fresh and vigorous treatment of Rich's Department Store.

HAROLD REEVE SLEEPER

New York, N. Y.

Admitted to The Institute in 1931. To the exposition of construction he has brought an enthusiastic, meticulous and inclusive

proficiency which makes his books on detail and specifications a veritable sine qua non of every office, his non-technical writings of high educational value to the public. He is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

GLENN STANTON

Portland, Ore.

Admitted to The Institute in 1926, is advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects for his singular and conspicuous service to his Chapter, The Institute, and the public affairs of his state. His relations to his fellows and the public are guided by the same sense of fitness as are evidenced in his structures.

JOSEPH LEWIS WEINBERG

Cleveland, O.

Admitted to The Institute in 1921. By the excellence of his achievement in planning multiple-family apartment buildings, he has shown wisdom and foresight that have established a standard and exemplar both for new development projects and for rehabilitation. He is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

WILLIAM WARD WATKIN

Houston, Tex.

Admitted to The Institute in

1913. Head of the Department of Architecture of the Rice Institute since its opening thirty-seven years ago, he has rendered extraordinary service as an educator and made notable contributions in his writings. His department has been so intelligently organized and conducted by him, and his devotion to architectural design has been so stimulating to his students that

they have achieved high positions in the profession. He has maintained an active practice and designed many buildings of excellent quality. Because he has made notable contributions to the advancement of the profession of architecture by achievements in educational service and in literature, he is advanced to Fellowship in The Institute.

History and the New Architecture

By Charles D. Maginnis, F.A.I.A.

Excerpts from an address to the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings in Washington, D. C., November 4, 1948, with the French Ambassador a guest.

MR. PRESIDENT, Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen: I come to such occasions as this with an increasing diffidence, as I have a horror of the controversies which now afflict every artistic interest. For the moment architecture has ceased to be intelligible in its own terms, so that the architect is being summoned to the platform only to add to the general clamor. Is it not a depressing circumstance that human beings out of the same mold should be constitutionally incapable of coming to an agreement about the most obvious matters? Out of this unfortunate per-

versity we have to tolerate so much literature about art, so much literature about music, and so much literature about—literature. The message of the artist is not permitted to wing its own way, to find its own fortune. Critics and commentators crowd in upon its address with their contentious theories as to what it is all about. Books about Art, when they are not serving history, are mostly the vehicle for that interminable friction of opinion that has made Art an inscrutable and vexatious interest, titillating to the elect and intimidating to the humble-minded.

APRIL, 1949

You cannot give your admiration to the product of an artist, ancient or modern, without encountering a corresponding current of critical disparagement. It would be folly, therefore, to attach too much importance to the opinions of architects about architecture. Mine is but another voice.

I cannot hope to escape your doubts of my intellectual honesty since at the end of my career I am reasonably interested to defend myself against the invalidation of my own accomplishment.

It used to be that an architect could enter proudly into a company of the historically minded with the assurance that ever since the beginning of time his art had been the cherished instrument of history, the infallible witness of civilization. It is now ready to surrender this high prerogative. Through the ages, moreover, it held the primacy of the Fine Arts. Henceforth, this pretentious estate is to be dismissed as an aristocratic pomposity. It is to be a fine art no longer. In a most dramatic volte-face the new architecture has elected to surrender these proud functions in the very passion of its functionalism. This is not a crisis that carries any additional threat to world peace, but may furnish enough ex-

citement for the atmosphere of dinner!

Obviously the world which is in the making is going to be an uncomfortable place for the conservative. The surge of revolutionary thought that is bearing it towards us is already beating against the foundations of many cherished institutions. Ideas we had thought venerable are being exposed to daring and impudent challenge. We are not expected to question the relevance of the impending dispensation which has behind it the irresistible authority of science. We are left only to ponder on its political and social implications. The cynical philosophers who have been for long disparaging our present world now confidently acclaim the emerging one in the persuasion that progress is inevitably forward. Most of us are alarmed at the release of stupendous forces that have the capacity to lay our earth in ruins, while we are invited at the same time to put our trust in their intrinsic geniality. In the face of this grave perplexity, we need faith that as man's spirit finds its ultimate disciplines, his wisdom will eventually overtake his mechanisms.

Our artistic predicament recalls to the memory of many the industrial revolution which provoked the magnificent fury of Ruskin, who was to live long enough to see the actual invasion of his landscape by the hated steam-engine. To Ruskin, who saw the implications of the event, this was the final blasphemy. Art had made compromise with machinery. Out of this came the formidable drama which is now unfolding.

It would be interesting if history revealed something of the psychology which marked those corresponding moments in the past when one system of architecture superseded another. One would conclude from the dry record of the books that there were no bloody noses and no hurt feelings but it is hard to believe it. I have no difficulty in imagining the impatient contempt of the Gothic fellows for the defenders of the lingering Romanesque ponderosities. "Archeology," as long ago as that, must have been a blistering epithet! But argument about such matters then, as now, was a waste of words. Time eventually settled the rationalities.

Looking backward at the variety of influences that affected the architecture of the last generations,

we need go no further than Greece. When we are interested in the measure of ourselves, it is usually the Greek accomplishment that disturbs our self-complacency. The tribute that the modern world has paid to the art of Greece is the homage to a perfection which was ignored for ten centuries. When its revelation came to the modern world, it was everywhere hailed with intellectual enthusiasm and the revival of its architecture, not in America alone, was inevitable in the reminiscent temper of the time. The crowning excellence of Greek design was that it manifested its primitive system of structure in an exquisite simplicity which came of the most subtle exercise of imagination. Some one, interested in our modern validation, has said that, had the Greeks known steel, they would have left their marble in the quarry. It is possible, but then we would not have known the Greeks, which would have been a pity!

As things are shaping, what account I wonder shall we be able to give of ourselves to the generations? We are reasonably anxious as to the course of the rebellious movement. Washington is already

a favorite target for the shafts of the new philosophers, and no American community is so provoking or perhaps so vulnerable. The academic principle which in other cities is only casually asserted, has here been carried by Government into an organic and commanding integrity, which has gradually come to be accepted by the whole country as emblematic of the national dignity.

This developing interest, which for years has so deeply concerned the artistic organizations of America and has enlisted so many capabilities of the first order, is now in jeopardy. Yet it would be altogether unfortunate if an anti-classical bias, however intellectually respectable, were permitted to intrude at this juncture so as to prevail over elementary principles of order and harmony. It cannot be ignored that the competence of this protesting order to create a corresponding symbolism is yet far short of demonstration.

There can be no delusions, however, about the earnestness of the challenge. All the architectural schools of America have capitulated and their graduates, equipped only with the techniques of modernism, must presently become a formidable and possibly an irresist-

ible influence. Nevertheless, I look for resistance to the imposition of an architecture so limited in its visual satisfactions as to promise a terrifying transformation of the national scene. Its advocates differ considerably in the translation of the thesis. The extremists of them are Puritans who decline to make the sinful compromise with beauty. It is with these only that I take issue. I have no quarrel with the others. Much accomplishment in the modern temper I admire intensely. Reticence and simplicity are not qualities over which the traditionalist disputes. Indeed in our present circumstances there never was a time when less persuasion was needed to bring these particular virtues to popularity.

My entire grievance with the modern postulate could be disposed of in a single word. It proclaims that architecture is the expression of function. I hold instead that it is the felicitous expression of function, and as such must involve the principles of beauty and creative imagination.

As to the characteristic media of the modern envelope, it is curious to recall that in former history man, when he builded, went to Nature for the sticks and stones. But

she is now expected to retire into her geological virginity, for the modernist has chosen henceforward to identify his philosophy with steel and concrete and the synthetics of factories. Ferro-concrete has been acclaimed as the magical instrument by which we are to express the genius of the new age. Whether it has all the adequacy of this considerable idea is not yet established, and one wonders if it has been successful only in expressing the genius of ferro-concrete!

A medium of interesting capabilities, we have been too occupied by its acrobatic properties to detect its limitations. Not the least of these is that it makes for a universal monotony which obliterates national individuality, and nationalism still seems to be an urgent and embarrassing principle. We might be concerned too about its impermanence, but the advocates of the new architecture are strangely indifferent to its survival. If it serve its time it is enough, and posterity must be satisfied with other symbols of our consequence. The complete acceptance of its idiom leaves us no bridge with the past and no link with the future.

May it not then be too positively held that articulated masonry is

one of the archeologies? Need we forget that our inherited beauty was wrought in bricks and stones and that the world has still a plenty of both?

Those of us who are persuaded that the past is not to be easily dismissed are none the less content that it rest henceforth more lightly on our generation. We have lived perhaps longer than we need have under the full burden of it. We had become so accustomed to the veneration of antiquity that our emotions could often be excited by our histrionic illusions of it.

My plea for the validity of masonry is not that it may encourage nostalgic dispositions, but that it may serve the modern spirit in the admirable ways of, let us say, the architecture of Scandinavia. In Sweden I, too, could count myself a modernist. There one observes an architecture of moderation and sanity, true to its time but with no disloyalty to tradition.

With all our realism, ours is the most sentimental of nations, and we would not be long content with an anatomical architecture. The scientific system that is being proposed to us has yet to rise above the topicalities. Its content is thin, its temper too immediate, fitting only for the things that end

tomorrow. Simplicity might well have been its largest gift but it is presented to us not as a gracious excellence, but as a harsh and defiant emptiness.



Why should we shake off the tyranny of history only to take on the tyranny of the passing hour? We glorify steel but for all its genius it leaves no interesting ruins and even the poet of realism is not apt to sing long over a scrap heap.

Architecture should have the gift to express our ideals no less than our realistic habit. We need a language for our dreams, for those flights of the spirit that are the signs of our eternal striving.

Someone has said, "What is utility but an end that can be seen

by the shortsighted? All the great ends lie further."

Through the long centuries man fashioned the memorials of his intellectual and spiritual life in an architecture of poignant eloquence. What he built was the measure of his aspiration, for only in building could he find the worthy and enduring symbols. We are to look no more upon the vision of that accomplishment, and make submission of our minds and our hearts to the stark hospitalities of science. The idea is too violent.

Relinquish if we must the veneration of European souvenirs, but let us never forget that in that wistfulness there was always acknowledgment of principles which today are as valid as they ever were to an architecture of nobility.

Architecture, Tradition and Change

By Turpin C. Bannister, Ph.D.

HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

An article prompted by hearing the foregoing address by
Mr. Maginnis

ARCHITECTS, like all conscientious men of creative action, are motivated by a compelling desire to raise their art to ever higher levels of technical excellence. Thus, even though the basic

factors of demand, resources and environment may remain constant, architecture is still a dynamic activity and architectural change is an ever-continuing phenomenon.

Since it is human to yearn for

may be inferred that noble buildings are "memorials of (man's) intellectual and spiritual life," "the measure of his aspirations," and "worthy and enduring symbols." Architecture has been "the cherished instrument of history, the infallible witness of civilization." He asks, "What account shall we be able to give of ourselves to the (future) generations?", and finds that "The competence of this protesting (modern) order to create a corresponding symbolism is yet far short of demonstration."

If *nobility* is more than a gratuitous slogan bestowed by modern unadjusted romantics, its implications must be particularized and evaluated if we are to strive for it today. We cannot admit it to be synonymous with *aristocratic*, nor to be the prerequisite of a single style, for it would then be continually vitiated by the fact of social and architectural change. We must likewise avoid the Ruskinian fallacy of equating it with *moral*ity. Ultimately, to be of use to the designer, any quality like *nobility* must be stated in terms of the psychological effect which the building has upon the observer. The difficulties of determining such subjective data, and of deriving

principles the application of which will ensure equivalent reactions in future beholders, presuppose a development in experimental esthetics which unfortunately has not yet been carried out.

Nobility, therefore, remains a vague, subjective term, albeit at the same time safe and resounding. Perhaps we might venture to give it an empirical meaning, such as that noble buildings stimulate within the observer an emotional tone that enhances the stability of his ego. This would imply that he would feel the building to have a humane, friendly, gracious, intelligible character, in contradistinction to one that seems hostile, chaotic, and frustrating. Within these limits, varieties of character, ranging from gay to sombre, serene to dynamic, intimate to powerful, are quite possible. By exploiting inherent elements of the building and by the selection of an "appropriate" character, the designer could presumably ensure that his building will communicate an emotional esthetic effect of optimum significance. In the sense that man's aspirations to relate himself harmonious to the immutable universe around him are noble, an architecture defined in these terms could also be called noble.

One advantage of such a definition is that as a principle it allows change in its specific applications. Each generation of clients and architects must evolve their own interpretation of nobility. This evolution is occasionally the result of conscious effort, but more often it is the product of intuition accepted from a multitude of trials as an *ex post facto* zeitgeist.

Mr. Maginnis surveys the field of architecture and seems to discover humaneness and graciousness only in so-called traditional designs. He extolls their reticence and simplicity, but modern simplicity is only "a harsh, defiant emptiness." He stresses his preference for masonry as the ideal medium for construction, and is dismayed by the "impermanent" "anatomical architecture" of modern steel and concrete. Surely the necessity of perpetual repair required by Gothic skeletons could likewise be strictured. And surely the concrete frames of Hiroshima withstood successfully a test of epoch-making intensity. As a matter of fact, masonry, to the delight and fortune of masons, is anything but forsaken by contemporary architects.

Mr. Maginnis charges that mod-

ern architects have defaulted their esthetic responsibilities and consider architecture as a fine art to be "an aristocratic pomposity." He finds that they "decline to make any sinful compromise with beauty" and consequently that their productions are "so limited in visual satisfactions." His only exception is a general reference to Sweden, presumably the half-traditional work of Ostberg and Tengbom. No doubt works of superior quality are as rare today as in times past. The proposition that they are more infrequent would require laborious statistical research to prove. But it would be amazing if even an unreconstructed but sensitive traditionalist would not find some significant esthetic power in the great hydroelectric plants of the Tennessee Valley, in the crystalline prisms of the Illinois Institute of Technology, and the magic of the Johnson Wax Company's office building, to name but a few. Surely these are as "felicitous expressions of function," as Washington's Triangle, the Supreme Court Building, or the Nebraska Capitol.

It is perhaps significant that it is so difficult to cite a contemporary American ecclesiastical de-

sign surcharged with a power equal to the secular examples just mentioned. European contemporaries prove such an assignment can be accomplished with reverence and emotion. One wishes that the nineteenth century had not indoctrinated our congregations with such nostalgic fervor. It is even conceivable that a more virile approach to the architectural problem might have helped to forestall the present anti-religious temper of the times.

Willingness to face the problems of one's own day need not deny one an appreciation, respect and admiration for one's professional predecessors. Anthemius' and Isidoros' Hagia Sophia, Robert de Luzarch's Amiens, and a host of other masterpieces challenge us, not to revive detail or technique, but to emulate the vision and courage of those who conceived and materialized them. Perhaps from close study of these fabrics we can derive a few cogent principles valid for our own practice, but such principles must deal with fundamentals, and not with superficialities. Above all we should beware of reading into the past what we wish to find there. If we desire

to formulate our own doctrines we should have the courage of our convictions and forego the construction of quasi-precedents.

With all its imperfections and procrastinations, most of us are thankful to be citizens of a democratic society. The problems, values and ideals of a democratic architecture are obviously vastly different from those of other systems, past and present. In new types of buildings to be developed, in the satisfaction of unprecedented demands for more and better buildings, in the stretching of limited resources, all this without the abandonment of esthetic accomplishment, American architects will inevitably build valid, though different monuments to their civilization. Dynamic peoples of the past did not aim at "interesting ruins." That is an accident that must take care of itself. In such a faith, we cannot escape "the tyranny of the hour" any more than our predecessors did, but if we are sufficiently capable and bold we can shape that tyranny to our purpose. Tradition has its legitimate uses but a millstone around our necks is not one of them.





Architects Read and Write

Letters from readers—discussion, argumentative, corrective, even vituperative.



“ARCHITECTURE—A PROFESSION OR A BUSINESS?”

BY GEORGE COOPER RUDOLPH, New York, N. Y.

YES, I wish to disagree with Mr. Stanton's opinion of what architectural practice is today.

Before elaborating on the subject, I wish to make a suggestion regarding your editorial presentation. Just as in the jackets of new books a brief synopsis of the author's career is given, I believe that a similar outline should be given after the man's name at the start of this article in the *JOURNAL*. In that way one could better judge whether his view could *ever* fit yours.

For instance, how could you ever compare the practice of architecture by F. L. Wright in the desert with the practice of George Rudolph in New York or Mr. Stanton in I don't know where. Mr. Wright, I assume, has no overhead to speak of, but he does not have the problems of proximity to aged mother, friends for children, public school, friends for wife, and other problems of the young married man.

What are Mr. Stanton's circumstances that permit him to be so free of worldly cares?

I am going to present my own book jacket background briefly, but it is not possible to write the book yet—let us hope it is not a tragedy

entitled, “The Architect Who Wasn't.”

George Cooper Rudolph, born 1912, in Philadelphia, comes from a background of business and art. His father was an athlete and banker, his mother a designer, and his older brother an artist. Young George, interested in art, had promise as an executive and decided to be an architect, “the leader of all the craftsmen.” At the University of Pennsylvania he won a fellowship and traveling scholarship. Worked in several architects' offices during the depression, making up to \$40 a week. Started doing renderings on the side to save some money.

Went to New York in 1937 to work on World's Fair designs for Walter Teague. This was very interesting work and paid a good living wage. Still doing renderings on the side to save money. Got married and had a son. 1941-44—no progress. 1944-1949—architectural practice in New York. Nominal living and working require the following items: office capital—\$5,000 to \$7,000; home capital—\$10,000, office overhead (staff of 4)—\$1800 per month, home overhead (wife and 2 children)—\$550 per month, \$100 per

month for \$50,000 life insurance, \$100 per year for country club (contacts). Total expenses before "making money"—\$2550 per month.

That is not much for a well-known man perhaps, in his fifties, but the young men do not have a chance.

Rudolph now has a magazine-illustration-and-advertising-consultation service which pays the bills. He practises architecture as a hobby—charging what the traffic will bear. Some day he hopes to retire from business and get back to architecture as a profession.

The moral of the story will be that the practice of architecture

should not be taken *seriously*. *A man should be allowed to practise architecture as a hobby while at the same time he supports a family.* The greatest need for income to a man is between the ages of 30 to 45, and that is when the architect is just starting to make a reputation.

Perhaps the answer is not to encourage a potential architect until he is 45 and financially independent. He at least will not be subjected to delusions of a professional life while supporting the more fundamental urges. Then when he is financially stable and artistically mature, he can make his hobby his profession.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

By WILLIAM ADAMS DELANO, F.A.I.A., New York

IN the February issue of the **JOURNAL**, you published an article by Mr. Henry F. Stanton, entitled "Architecture—A Profession or a Business?", with which I so heartily agree that I must add a word of commendation. No amount of propaganda can take the place of good performance. Let us stand by our guns; let us practise

architecture as an art; and let us begin in the schools by giving the aspiring architect a broader and better education. In too many of the schools, the students are telling the teachers—not the teacher the students—how architecture should be taught. To have good fruit, one must cultivate the garden: weeds grow far faster than fruit.

Books & Bulletins

STRENGTH OF HOUSES: Application of Engineering Principles to Structural Design. U. S. Department of Commerce,

National Bureau of Standards. 132 pp. 10½" x 8". D. C.: 1948: U. S. Government Printing Office. \$1.50.

APRIL, 1949

Bringing engineering science to bear on the dwelling, which has been designed by ear for lo! these many years.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE INSTITUTE ON HOSPITAL PLANNING. American Hospital Association. 247 pp. 10 7/8" x 8 1/2". Chicago: 1947: American Hospital Association.

Recording the comprehensive series of lectures on the occasion of the American Hospital Association's Institute on Hospital Planning held in Chicago in December 1947.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY IN URBAN PLANNING AND RESEARCH. By Melville C. Branch, Jr. 150 pp. 11" x 8 1/2". Cambridge: 1948: Harvard University Press. \$3.

Number XIV in the series of Harvard City Planning Studies. A timely and valuable contribution to this new science.

HOMES. Selected by the Editors of *Progressive Architecture*. 190 pp. 11 1/2" x 9". New York: 1947: Reinhold Publishing Corporation. \$5.

Bringing together between covers some representative houses of today that have appeared in the pages of *Progressive Architecture*.

BRITAIN'S HERITAGE: A record of the National Trust. Edited by James Lees-Milne. 132 pp. 8 3/4" x 5 3/4". New York: 1948: B. T. Batsford Ltd. \$3.75

With our own National Council for Historical Sites and Buildings in the process of being born, this record of England's National Trust, in its second edition, is particularly welcome.

A GUIDE TO BRITAIN'S HISTORIC BUILDINGS Preserved by the National Trust. By James Lee-Milne. 182 pp. 5" x 7 1/2". New York: 1948: B. T. Batsford Ltd. \$2.25.

The author is permanent secretary to the Building Committee of the National Trust. He tells of the history of each of the more than 100 buildings and points out their chief features, as well as giving locations, opening times, admission fees, etc.

CONCERNING TOWN PLANNING. By Le Corbusier. 127 pp. 5 1/2" x 8 1/2". New Haven: 1948: Yale University Press. \$2.75.

Clive Entwistle's translation of the French "Propos d'Urbanisme," in which the author replies, with a book, to the inquiry: "Do you disown the school of thought that is typified by the doctrines of a machine for living in?"

SHOPS AND STORES. By Morris Ketchum, Jr. 308 pp. 9" x 12". New York: 1948: Reinhold Publishing Corp. \$10.

Whether the profession recognizes specialization officially or not, it is apparent to all architects that some of our number know a lot more about certain types of build-

ings than does the average practitioner. One of this number is Morris Ketchum, Jr., of New York, and his book will certainly help some of the rest of us to make up our deficiencies.

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING, Vol. I. By Earl B. Phelps. 644 pp. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". New York: 1948: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. \$7.50.

Stressing health aspects, rather than engineering, of environmental sanitation. Part One deals with the Air Contact, Part Two with the Water Contact. Prof. Phelps, a recognized pioneer investigator, is Professor of Sanitary Science at the University of Florida.

SMALL HOUSE CARPENTRY. By Lee Frankl. 100 pp. 9" x 11". New York: 1948: Prentice-Hall Inc. \$2.95.

A training course for apprentices in framing, sheathing and insulation of the "Industry Engineered House."

MAINTENANCE MEN LOOK AT HOUSING DESIGN. National Association of Housing Officials. NAHO Publication No. N261: Chicago: 1948. \$1.

SANTA BARBARA ADOBES. By Clarence Cullimore. 219 pp. 7" x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Santa Barbara: 1948: Santa Barbara Book Publishing Co. \$4.90.

Nostalgic reminders, with the author's own pen-and-ink sketches, of the days when Indian, Spanish

and Mexican influences shaped the buildings erected with the soil under foot.

DECORATIVE ART, 1943-1948. The Studio Year Book. 128 pp. 9" x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". New York: 1948; The Studio Publications Inc. \$7.50.

The Studio Year Book, appearing again for the first post-war edition, beautifully done as always, and as always truly reflective of current work, not only in England but on the continent and here in the U. S. A.

INTRODUCTION TO REGENCY ARCHITECTURE. By Paul Reilly. 96 pp. 7" x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". New York: 1948: Pellegrini & Cudahy, Inc. \$2.50.

An analysis of what the author calls "a period of adventure and experiment in new materials and new designs"—1800-40 in England.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE OLD SOUTH. By Henry Chandlee Forman. 190 pp. 8" x 10". Cambridge: 1948: Harvard University Press. \$10.

Dr. Forman, as professor and department head of art and archeology at Agnes Scott College, and as former editor of the Historic American Buildings Survey, knows whereof he writes. It is his premise that the American architecture of the Southern Colonies—and Bermuda—in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries belonged unquestionably to the English medieval period.

The Editor's Asides

IN THE Southern California Chapter, A.I.A., the younger generation is taking over the reins of management. Of the officers recently elected, none was able to put the letters A.I.A. after his name as recently as ten years ago, and only one of the directors can boast that length of membership. Ability, willingness to work, and real interest in the welfare of the profession are soon recognized, not only in California but in most of The Institute's chapters.

LONDON's *Architectural Review* is weary—as aren't we all?—of the fact that critics talk about music, the stage, books, but not about buildings. The *Review* editors admit that you cannot incubate critics overnight, but they are going to start a nursery for them, under the department title of "Canon." The first instalment is not too encouraging. Perhaps such esoteric musings may interest architects, but if the man in the street is to be stopped to listen, Canon will have to weed out its vocabulary. Phrases like "Swedish architecture's escapist tendencies," or "The elements cooperate through individual qualities to

satisfy functional needs in an economic way"—these will not even make him hesitate. Over on this side of the Ocean our critics have reason to be gunshy of our libel laws. If the open season for architectural critics is ever terminated, in the interest of preserving the species, we should not lack for critical expression.

FOR THOSE WHO THOUGHT there was no answer to Henry Stanton's clarion call to ethics (February JOURNAL), the letter on another page by George Cooper Rudolph may be of interest. Henry Stanton's viewpoint is paralleled by the Guest Editorial by George Bain Cummings, F.A.I.A. (March JOURNAL), and we hear rumors of further discussion to come. It is from free and intelligent expression of individual viewpoints that we should ultimately reach a common ground of agreement. Meanwhile a seat on The Institute's Judiciary Committee continues to be a hot spot.

I HEAR THAT Tulane University's School of Architecture has received, through the gift of Sylvester W. Labrot, Jr., of New

Orleans, the books and original drawings collected during his whole lifetime by James Gallier. Gallier, it will be recalled, was an eminent New Orleans architect of the mid-nineteenth century. The collection includes drawings of nearly 90 per cent of the work Gallier did in New Orleans and elsewhere during his lifetime. He designed, in New Orleans, the City Hall, the Boston Club, the old St. Charles Hotel, the old Christ Church Cathedral on Canal Street, Henderson House, Bellgrove House and numerous other structures. The collection will be housed in the permanent library of Tulane's School of Architecture where it will be available for use by research scholars and interested visitors.

TULANE'S ARCHITECTURAL SCHOOL continues to develop the thesis that education can properly and beneficially be furthered by close application to local community problems. In the JOURNAL for November, 1948 Prof. Charles Colbert described last year's experiment. This year twenty-three senior students have just begun a research and planning project for a New Orleans school. Three possible schemes will be in-

vestigated: *a*) modifying a present structure; *b*) razing the present structure and building a new one on the same site; and *c*) selecting a new site and planning a long-range school program for it. The project will end with a report to the school board and an exhibition for the public.

WHAT PROMISES TO BE a valuable aid to architectural education is a work now under way by the Joint Committee of The Institute and The Producers' Council. As visual aids in teaching, sets of 2" x 2" lantern slides are being prepared to illustrate various phases of building construction. Prof. D. Kenneth Sargent, of Syracuse, has prepared an outline covering thirty-one classifications, each to be covered by a set of 12 to 18 slides. Working with Prof. Sargent on the project are Tyler S. Rogers of Owens-Corning Fiberglas and William W. Watkin of Rice Institute—all three being men who get things done. A subject, for example, would show types, dimensioning and installation of wood windows and doors in frame and masonry walls. Possible supplementary visual aids might be motion pictures showing the successive steps in such installations.

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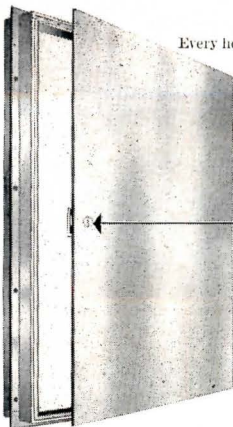
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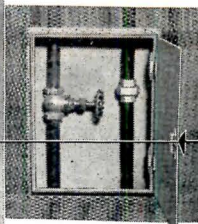
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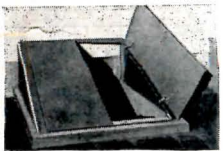
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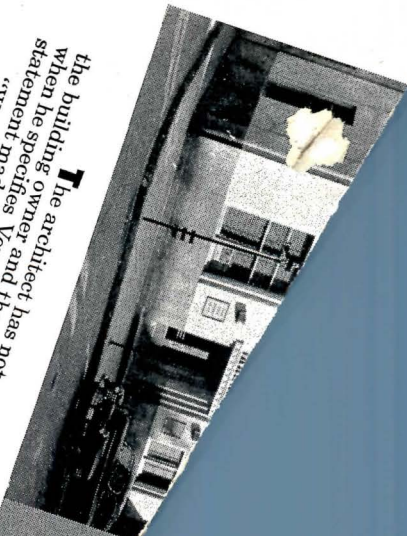
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