

THE FEDERAL ARCHITECT



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JOHN J. McMAHON, ARCHITECT.

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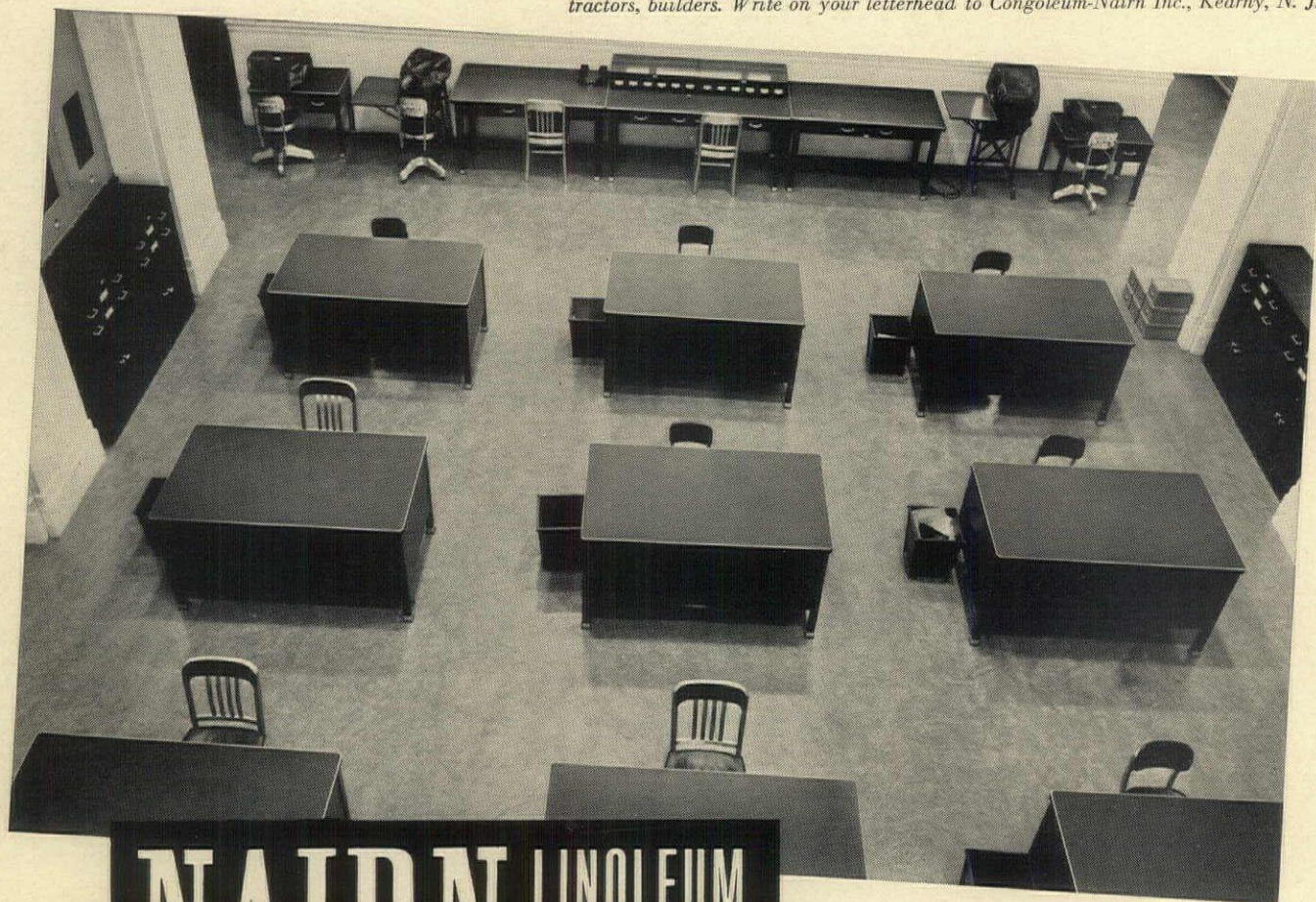
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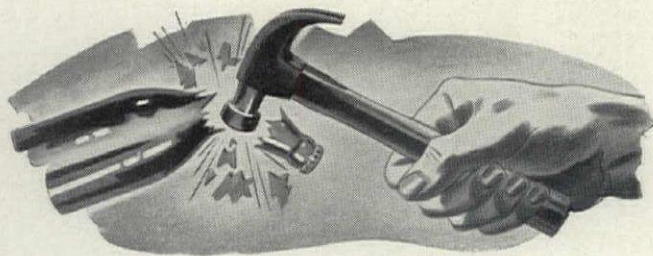
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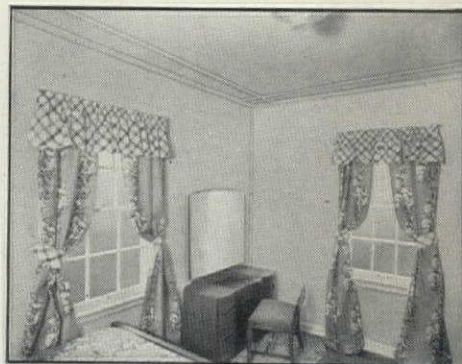
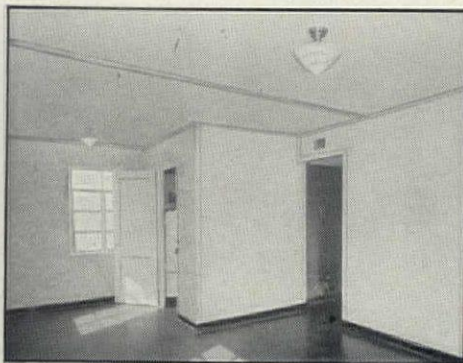
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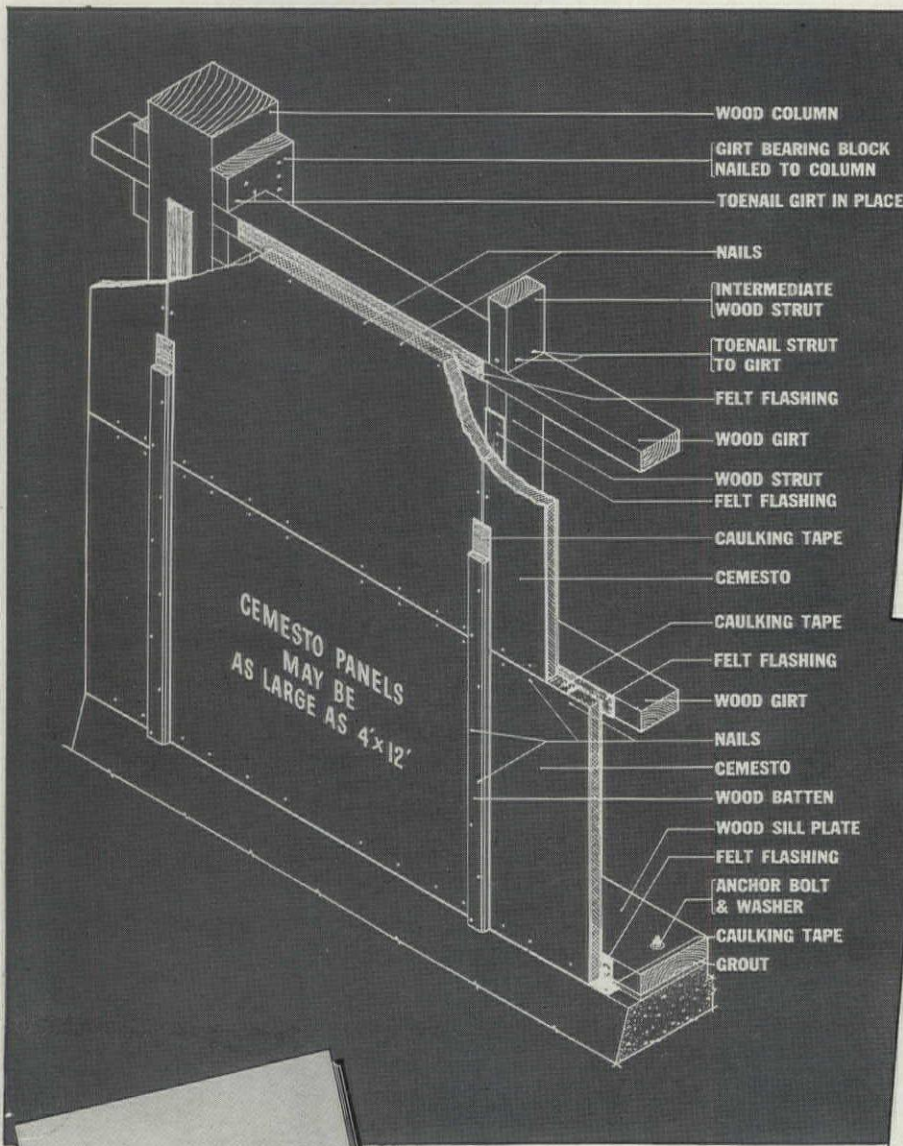
Upper View—Heimann's Tavern, Maniwoc, Wis.
Lower View—Linton Restaurant, Phila., Pa.—Architect, I. Demchick

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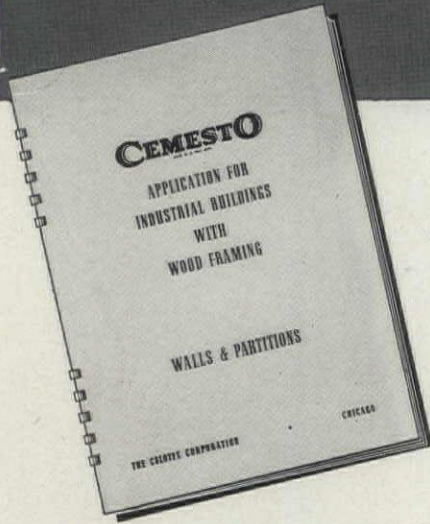


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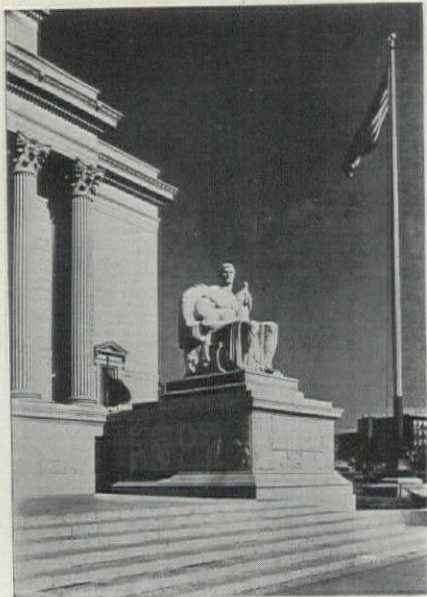
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EDWIN B. MORRIS, *Editor*

Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Editorials	8
Three Portraits of Architects	11
A Letter from Mr. William Adams Delano	19
The Pentagon Building*	20
Housing at Bristol, Pa.	22
Testamonial to F. A. Miller	25

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■ THIS period is a low ebb for architecture. Architecture has gone into a sleeping-beauty coma. Its fair face is there; its lovely form is there. But if it breathes it is not apparent. If its heart beats, it is a still throb.

The long arm of the War Production Board has withheld priorities for civilian construction, justly, in view of the emergency. The same long arm has restricted materials for government construction.

And so that great responsibility of the profession, the providing of beautiful forms from gracious materials, is for the time inoperative. The other great responsibility of the profession, the efficient and effective planning and arrangement of buildings and groups of buildings is reduced in volume, existing only in government work.

There now comes the question, how can the profession recover? It cannot recover without inspired personnel. It is an inspirational profession, depending for progress upon continuing manifestations of genius.

Can those architectural geniuses who have gone into the armed forces, who have joined the ranks of civilian Federal employees, who have devoted their talents to private endeavors unconnected with architecture—can they return after the emergency, don the East Windsor tie, the Michael Angelian halo, the purple smock and at once awake the sleeping beauty?

Or will the engineer be there first? Will the public listen to the engineer's testimony that the architect is no longer a planner but just a beauty-doctor, a knitter of a pretty shirt to cover inspired engineering structures?

There has been the public talk of recent months that engineering has increased in responsibility, what with new and complicated methods of structural support, with involved designs for air-conditioning, with fluores-

cent lights, high-speed elevators, controlled heating, telephones, dictaphones and the like. At the same time, the talk goes on, the architecture has decreased in responsibility, following the abolition of Corinthian columns, heavily modelled ornament, highly wrought metals: following the decision to make architecture the expression of structure and mechanical arrangements.

The engineers probably feel that, if architecture is merely the expression of their art, rather than an uplifted thing which their art is to support and implement, engineers might do their own expressing.

Perhaps they might hire men skilled in architecture to be draftsmen for them. But if the major part of the building is engineering, say they, and if the major part of architecture is the expressing of engineering, then architecture as architecture has ceased to be.

The engineers are entitled to this point of view. If they do not understand that architecture is a profession that aims to create a finished product of beauty and studied utility, they have to be excused for thinking that all any project need actually be is strongly built, well-heated, efficiently lighted, carefully piped; and there is perfection.

How are architects going to knock out that idea? How are they going to set up again the precious fact that this generation and the next do not stand on the street corner, and exclaim, as they look breathlessly at a building. "What factor of safety! What wet bulb readings! What foot-candles! What thermostats! What annunciator systems!"

If it is good architecture the public's breathlessness is due to a conviction of inner beauty which they do not wish to understand. It is the conviction that they are looking at something beautiful and heart-warming.

How are architects going to convince the world again that only they can design such works of genius.

■ **T**HE building design and construction offices of the government service used to be known as architectural offices. They are seldom referred to now as such. They are being catalogued, without thought, as: maintenance and repair agencies, supervision of construction agencies, agencies concerned with plumbing, steam-fitting, concrete-pouring, etc.

There is this growing, non-cultural viewpoint that a building when completed merely represents ability to stand alone, to give water or electricity at the turn of the wrist, to circulate steam in pipes; that it is just the triumph of the rubber-tired barrow and the Stillson wrench. The convinced sentiment of a generation ago, when it was believed a building successfully completed was a cultural achievement, setting up a symbol of our American civilization and design for living, that sentiment is seemingly gone.

In the government building-design offices one hears architects referred to laughingly. One sees them good-naturedly given a place where, with their long hair and their fanatical gleams of eye, their can work out their curious ideas. One sees top executives, peering wisely at slide rules, wondering what those curious architects think about. They wonder what the *looks* of a building has to do with it.

They know we are fighting a war. They know the fighting is to preserve a culture. They are aware, less clearly, that culture consists of *things*, not abstractions solely. The abstractions are manifest in mode of life, in definite privileges, in tangible matters such as books, music, and signs of culture. They only vaguely remember that the lasting sign of that culture is the buildings erected.

They forget that the miraculously experienced contractors' profession in this country is very largely capable, of its own power, to erect stable buildings, operatively equipped. They forget, these executives, that their guiding hand upon these contractors, while necessary, is not the final answer.

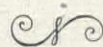
They forget that their engineering processes, skillfully checked though they are, are the painstaking following-through of formulae and rules. They forget, if they have known, that culture does not result from formulae and rules. They forget that

architecture, at its best and highest, is interpreting the mood and intellectual spirit of the country, of symbolizing in permanent structures, the cultural intents and achievements of their generation, so they can be pointed to always with the words: "This represents America."

They forget it is their responsibility, not merely to slide-rule, but to see that their architecture is at its best and highest. Not merely patronizingly to refer to it and to architects as necessary evils. For if architecture does not forever call attention of the man in the street to our culture and national achievements, what profession does?



■ **T**HERE are not many odd jobs for architects nowadays (unless you think just being an architect is an odd job, or at least slightly so). The other day we saw a sign in the S and W Cafeteria in Washington. This sign said "WANTED: BUS BOYS COLORED." It is possible that some of the erstwhile architectural renderers might respond to this curious request. But the all too apparent futility of it would doubtless discourage most of the architectural pigmenteurs.



■ **T**HE Washington Star of Oct. 7, 1942 carried the following, which concerns the editor of this magazine:

"Edwin B. Morris of the Public Buildings Administration, architect and novelist, is to retire from the Government at the end of this month, after nearly 35 years of service.

"'Eddie,' as he is affectionately known to hundreds of architects throughout the Federal service, has been prominent for years as an organizer, speaker, writer and leader in public work.

"Novels have come from his pen, almost at the rate of one each year, for many years—he has almost forgotten how many. At least one of them, 'The Narrow Street,' was produced as a movie. One of his novels he illustrated himself.

"As part of the George Washington bicentennial celebration in 1932, he collaborated with Col. Harrison Howell Dodge, superintendent of Mount Vernon, on a book dealing with the Washington mansion.

"In his Government capacity he is known for his part in completion of the Agricultural group in Washington. He was largely responsible for the design of the south building of the group, which in point of net floor space is the largest permanent Government building in Washington. He has designed many residences, commercial buildings and the Peace Cross at Bladensburg.

"His home on Grosvenor lane in the Bethesda district is unusual. On a large plot, he has designed and built for each of his children as they married, a new home, and the family now lives together in a 'little feudal village.'

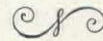
"Most prominent of Mr. Morris' public activities has been his work in founding and promoting the Association of Federal Architects, 'to build up the morale of these men and to raise the level of architectural accomplishment of the offices.' Mr. Morris, who was president of the association for a long time, now edits its architectural magazine, THE FEDERAL ARCHITECT.

"Connected with the Community Chest for many years, he has directed the campaign and collections in the Public Buildings Administration, and the recent drive for purchase of War bonds. He headed a movement which obtained contributions from over the country to erect a monument in Congressional Cemetery here to the historic architect, Robert Mills, designer of the Washington Monument, the Treasury Department Building and the old Patent Office.

"Mr. Morris has been with the Office of Supervising Architect since it was in the Treasury Depart-

ment, before being transferred to other agencies."

The editor will continue to carry on with the magazine. An editorial board is being formed to keep the magazine in close touch with the government architectural offices.



Definitions

A Coordinator is a man who brings organized chaos out of regimented confusion.

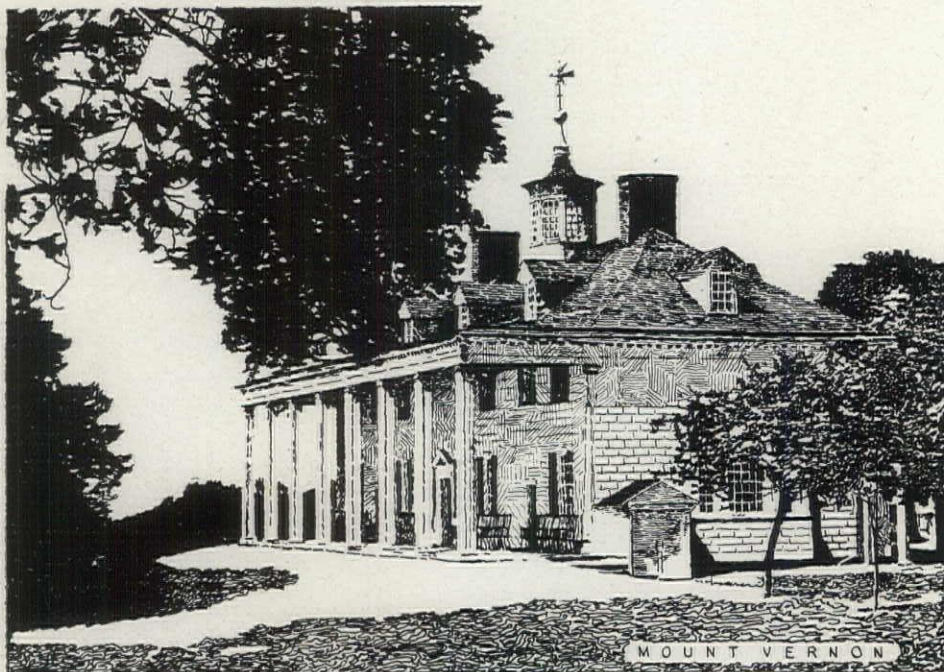
A Conference is a group of men, who, individually, can do nothing, but as a group can meet and decide that nothing can be done.

A Statistician is a man who draws a mathematically precise line from an unwarranted assumption to a foregone conclusion.

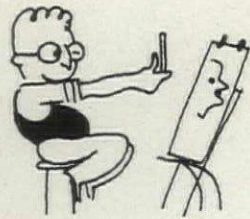
A Professor is a man whose job it is to tell students how to solve the problems of life which he himself has tried to avoid by becoming a professor.

An Efficiency Expert is a man who knows less about your business than you do and gets paid more for telling you how to run it than you could possibly make out of it even if you ran it right instead of the way he told you to.

A Consultant is an ordinary guy who is a long way from home.—Contributed by Kern Dodge, Link-Belt Director, Philadelphia.



Drawing by M. E. Ekstrand



This is a "fourth portrait," this time
of the architect-author.—Editor

Alfred Hensler

THREE PORTRAITS OF ARCHITECTS

by

PAUL P. CRÈT

The discovery of a professional colleague among the characters in a book or play at once arouses pleasureable anticipations. However, like many another pleasant prospect, it may be of short duration. The portrait may have little of architecture in it, and that little unconvincing and puerile, or the author may have chosen to create a villain and arbitrarily dubbed him an architect, though for all the proof presented, he might just as easily have been a veterinarian. Nevertheless, that first reaction on finding him was one of pleasure. Perhaps our vanity was flattered at the thought that our humdrum life could interest a successful author, or it might be a sly curiosity as to how good the portrait was likely to prove, or even—let's admit it—a love of "talking shop." Whatever the cause of our pleasure, our subsequent disappointment is generally due to the author's inadequate characterization.

The naturalistic school of writers of the XIXth Century aimed at truthful presentation or, as Flaubert put it, endeavored to describe a cabby or his horse in such a way as to differentiate them from all other horses or cabbies in that row. A professional man is quick to detect superficial observation, especially when applied to his chosen line. What may pass muster for the average reader is inadequate to the man of the trade.

To define an architect as forever carrying blueprints hither and yon, and as prone to omit from his plans the necessary staircase, may delight an indiscriminate audience, but furnishes little diversion for the architect. A novelist who had his best seller day in France fifty years ago, George Ohnet, selected for one

of his heroes a young and talented engineer of humble extraction, who in keeping with a stereotyped tradition, graduated at the head of his class in the Ecole Polytechnique. Having informed his readers once and for all of the hero's brilliant engineering abilities, M. Ohnet was free to disregard any further discussion or proof, and to devote himself in sentimental detail to his hero's romantic courtship and marriage. Were the reader an engineer, he might well feel cheated.

Physicians have fared better at the hands of writers, due, perhaps, to a less superficial acquaintance. The average citizen is only too certain to have had dealings with a doctor, and to remember more than platitudes about the genus. Then, too, many physicians have written autobiographies, as well as novels, with portraits of their fellow-medicos drawn from life, all furnishing abundant material with which to portray the Physician in literature.

Such is not true of the Architect, which may explain his comparatively rare appearance in fiction, and when he does appear he is apt to be as superficially sketched as the silhouettes we place in a rendering to give scale. If only worth-while portraits were selected, an anthology of the architect in literature would make a very slim volume indeed. We hasten to say that there is no question here of the prolific literature by architects for architects. We remember vividly from our atelier days in Paris a diptych painted on the wall; on one side, a comrade was drawn, in gay attire, his countenance a trifle idealized in conformity with the classic canons of beauty; on the other side, an uncharitable brush had emphasized the same fellow's less praiseworthy features.

Under the first picture was inscribed "So and so, as he thinks he is" and under the other, "So and so, as he really is."

Excluded also are all casual references, such as the old Roman one: "Should thy son be hard-headed, make of him a town-crier or an architect." Something more is expected of a portrait. It must show patient observation and it must not stray from that fair and temperate zone which lies between allegory and caricature. It is as examples of such realistic and diverting portraiture that we have selected the three which follow, and we have dared to use quotations freely, although fully conscious that our connecting links will inevitably suffer by comparison.

These three portraits have one trait in common: the accent is placed on the intellectual bent, not on physical appearance, and on three trends of thought among architects of our own generation rather than on three individuals.

Aldous Huxley has always been interested in Architecture; for him it is not merely a theme for rhetoric; he has a real feeling for and understanding of this most austere of the plastic arts. His essay "The Commemoration of Sir Christopher Wren" contains one of the finest pages ever written about an architect. A quotation from this essay may give us better understanding of his viewpoint: . . . "Wren was a good architect. But since it is important to know precisely what we are talking about, let us begin by asking ourselves what good architecture is. Descending with majesty from his private Sinai, Mr. Ruskin dictated to a whole generation of Englishmen the aesthetic Law. On monolithic tables that were the Stones of Venice he wrote the great truths that had been revealed to him. Here is one of them:

"It is to be generally observed that the proportions of buildings have nothing to do with the style or general merit of their architecture. An architect trained in the worst schools and utterly devoid of all meaning or purpose in his work, may yet have such a natural gift of massing and grouping as will render his structure effective when seen at a distance."

"Now it is to be generally observed, as he himself would say, that in all matters connected with art, Ruskin is to be interpreted as we interpret dreams—that is to say, as signifying precisely the opposite of what he says. Thus, when we find him saying that good ar-

chitecture has nothing to do with proportion or the judicious disposition of masses, and that the general effect counts for nothing at all, we may take it as more or less definitely proven that good architecture is, in fact, almost entirely a matter of proportion and massing, and that the general effect of the whole work counts for nearly everything. Interpreted according to this simple oneirocritical method, Ruskin's pontifical pronouncement may be taken as explaining briefly and clearly the secrets of good architecture. That is why I have chosen this quotation to be the text of my discourse on Wren. . . ."

"Antic Hay" was published in the early 1920's. The architect, Gumbriel Senior, who plays only an incidental part in the book, lives in London. . . . "In a tall, narrow shouldered and rachitic house in a little obscure square not far from Paddington . . . a prematurely old and decaying house in a decaying quarter. The square in which it stood was steadily coming down in the world. Mr. Gumbriel was almost the last survivor of the old inhabitants. . . . Social decadence had not affected the fourteen plane trees which adorned its little garden, and the gambols of the dirty children did not disturb the starlings who came, evening by evening in summertime, to roost in their branches. . . ."

Gumbriel is a classicist left somewhat stranded among the disorderly contemporary architectural cross-currents. In a world where to mention a regard for beauty seems almost incongruous or, at any rate, old-fashioned, where the architect is kept busy denying he is or should be an artist, he takes refuge in a make-believe world of plaster models, or ideal buildings and cities, destined never to come to fruition. On this particular Sunday evening he is pursuing with his son a conversation just interrupted by the departure of an old friend, Porteous, an expert on Latin poetry.

. . . "That's a good fellow," he said of his departed guest, "a splendid fellow."

"I always admire the monocle," said Gumbriel Junior irrelevantly. But his father turned the irrelevance into relevance.

"He couldn't have come through without it, I believe. It was a symbol, a proud flag. Poverty's squalid, not fine at all. The monocle made a kind of difference, you under-

stand. I'm always so enormously thankful I had a little money. I couldn't have stuck it without. It needs strength, more strength than I've got." He clutched his beard close under the chin and remained for a moment pensively silent. "The advantage of Porteous's line of business," he went on at last, reflectively, "is that it can be carried on by oneself, without collaboration. There's no need to appeal to any one outside oneself, or to have any dealings with other people at all, if one doesn't want to. That's so deplorable about architecture. There's no privacy, so to speak, always this horrible hostling with clients and builders and contractors and people, before one can get anything done. It's really revolting. I'm not good at people. Most of them I don't like at all, not at all," Mr. Gumbriil repeated with vehemence. "I don't deal with them very well, it isn't my business. My business is architecture. But I don't get a chance of practising it. Not properly."

Gumbriil Senior smiled rather sadly. "Still," he said, "I can do something. I have my talent, I have my imagination. They can't take those from me. Come and see what I've been doing lately."

He led the way out of the room and mounted, two steps at a time, towards a higher floor. He opened the door of what should have been, in a well-ordered house, the Best Bedroom, and slipped into the darkness.

"Don't rush in," he called back to his son, "for God's sake don't rush in. You'll smash something. Wait till I've turned on the light. It's so like these asinine electricians to have hidden the switch behind the door like this." Gumbriil Junior heard him fumbling in the darkness; there was suddenly light. He stepped in.

The only furniture in the room consisted of a couple of long trestle tables. On these, on the mantelpiece and all over the floor were scattered confusedly like the elements of a jumbled city, a vast collection of architectural models. There were cathedrals, there were town halls, universities, public libraries, there were three or four elegant little sky-scrapers, there were blocks of offices, huge warehouses, factories, and finally dozens of magnificent country mansions, complete with their terraced gardens, their noble flights of steps, their fountains and ornamental waters and grandly bridged canals, their little rococo pa-

vilions and garden houses.

"Aren't they beautiful?" Gumbriil Senior turned enthusiastically towards his son. His long grey hair floated wispily about his head, his spectacles flashed and behind them his eyes shone with emotion.

"Beautiful," Gumbriil Junior agreed.

"When you're really rich," said his father, "I'll build you one of these." And he pointed to a little village of Chatsworth clustering at one end of a long table, round the dome of a vaster and austerer St. Peter's. "Look at this one, for example." He picked his way nimbly across the room, seized the little electric reading lamp that stood between a railway station and a baptistery on the mantelpiece, and was back again in an instant, trailing behind him a long flex that, as it tautened out, switched one of the crowning pinnacles off the top of a skyscraper near the fireplace. "Look," he repeated, "look." He switched on the current, moving the lamp back and forth, up and down in front of the miniature palace. "See the beauty of the light and shade," he said. "There, underneath the great, ponderous cornice, isn't that fine? And look how splendidly the pilasters carry up the vertical lines. And then the solidity of it, the size, the immense, impending bleakness of it!" He threw up his arms, he turned his eyes upwards as though standing overwhelmed at the foot of some huge precipitous facade. The lights and shadows vacillated wildly through all the city of palaces and domes as he brandished the lamp in ecstasy above his head.

"And then," he had suddenly stooped down, he was peering and pointing once more into the details of his palace, "then there's the doorway—all florid and rich with carving. How magnificently and surprisingly it flowers out of the bare walls! Like the colossal writing of Darius, like the figures graven in the bald face of the precipice over Behistun—unexpected and beautiful and human, human in the surrounding emptiness."

Gumbriil Senior brushed back his hair and turned, smiling, to look at his son over the top of his spectacles.

"Very fine," Gumbriil Junior nodded to him. "But isn't the wall a little too blank? You seem to allow very few windows in this vast palazzo."

"True," his father replied, "very true." He sighed. "I'm afraid this design would hardly

do for England. It's meant for a place where there's some sun—where you do your best to keep the light out, instead of letting it in, as you have to do here. Windows are the curse of architecture in this country. Your walls have to be like sieves, all holes, it's heart-breaking. If you wanted me to build you this house, you'd have to live in Barbados or somewhere like that."

"There's nothing I should like better," said Gumbriel Junior.

"Another great advantage of sunny countries," Gumbriel Senior pursued, "is that one can really live like an aristocrat, in privacy, by oneself. No need to look out on the dirty world or to let the dirty world look in on you. Here's this great house, for example, looking out on the world through a few dark portholes and a single cavernous doorway. But look inside." He held his lamp above the courtyard that was at the heart of the palace. Gumbriel Junior leaned and looked, like his father. "All the life looks inwards—into a lovely courtyard, a more than Spanish patio. Look there at the treble tiers of arcades, the vaulted cloisters for your cool peripatetic meditations, the central Triton spouting white water into a marble pool, the mosaic work on the floor and flowering up the walls, brilliant against the white stucco. And there's the archway that leads out into the gardens. And now you must come and have a look at the garden front."

He walked round with his lamp to the other side of the table. There was suddenly a crash; the wire had twitched a cathedral from off the table. It lay on the floor in disastrous ruin as though shattered by some appalling cataclysm.

"Hell and death!" said Gumbriel Senior in an outburst of Elizabethan fury. He put down the lamp and ran to see how irreparable the disaster had been. "They're so horribly expensive, these models," he explained, as he bent over the ruins. Tenderly he picked up the pieces and replaced them on the table. "It might have been worse," he said at last, brushing the dust off his hands. "Though I'm afraid that dome will never be quite the same again." Picking up the lamp once more he held it high above his head and stood looking out, with a melancholy satisfaction, over his creations. "And to think," he said after a pause, "that I've been spending these last days designing model cottages for workmen at

Bletchley! I'm in luck to have got the job, of course, but really, that a civilized man should have to do jobs like that! It's too much. In the old days these creatures built their own hovels and very nice and suitable they were too. The architects busied themselves with architecture,—which is the expression of human dignity and greatness, which is man's protest, not his miserable acquiescence. You can't do much protesting in a model cottage at seven hundred pounds a time. A little, no doubt, you can protest a little, you can give your cottage decent proportions and avoid sordidness and vulgarity. But that's all, it's really a negative process. You can only begin to protest positively and actively when you abandon the petty human scale and build for giants—when you build for the spirit and the imagination of man, not for his little body. Model cottages indeed!"

Mr. Gumbriel snorted with indignation. "When I think of Alberti!" and he thought of Alberti—Alberti the noblest Roman of them all, the true and only Roman. "For the Romans themselves had lived their own actual lives, sordidly and extravagantly in the middle of a vulgar empire. Alberti and his followers in the Renaissance lived the ideal Roman life. They put Plutarch into their architecture. They took the detestable real Cato, the Brutus of history and made of them Roman heroes to walk as guides and models before them. Before Alberti there were no true Romans and with Piranesi's death the race began to wither towards extinction."

"And when I think of Brunelleschi!" Gumbriel Senior went on to remember with passion the architect who had suspended on eight thin flying ribs of marble the lightest of all domes and the loveliest.

Gumbriel Junior looked at his watch. "Half past two," he said. "Time to go to bed."

It may be argued that this is a type of architect on the way to biological extinction. In our time, other qualities or equipment are thought to be of more use to the species and we can only hope that, like the ancestors of the horse which had to grow elongated limbs and neck to fit new conditions of life, the architect may develop the requisite adjuncts. On what is or is not worthwhile, opinions may differ. Like scales in music, scales of values may be struck at any point at times putting in front what was previously in the middle or at the

end, while the scale itself remains unaffected. . . ." "The fact is, I suppose," Gumbriil Senior went on, smiling with a certain air of personal triumph, "the fact is that architecture is a more difficult and intellectual art than music. Music—that's just a faculty you're born with, as you might be born with a snub nose. But the sense of plastic beauty—though that's of course, also an inborn faculty—is something that has to be developed and intellectually ripened. It's an affair of the mind; experience and thought have to draw it out. There are infant prodigies in music; but there are no infant prodigies in architecture!" Gumbriil Senior chuckled with real satisfaction. "A man can be an excellent musician and a perfect imbecile. But a good architect must also be a man of sense, a man who knows how to think and to profit by experience. Now, as almost none of the people who pass along the streets in London, or any other city of the world, do know how to think or to profit by experience, it follows that they cannot appreciate architecture. The innate faculty is strong enough in them to make them dislike discord in music; but they haven't the wits to develop that other innate faculty—the sense of plastic beauty—which would enable them to see and disapprove of the same barbarism in architecture. . . ."

He may despair of his period:

. . . "The architect of the nineteenth century sinned in a diametrically opposite way—towards meanness and a negation of art. Senselessly preoccupied with details, they created the nightmare architecture of 'features.' The sham Gothic of early Victorian times yielded at the end of the century to the nauseous affectation of 'sham-peasantry.' Big houses were built with all the irregularity and more than the 'quaintness' of cottages; suburban villas took the form of machine-made imitations of the Tudor peasant's hut. To all intents and purposes architecture ceased to exist; Ruskin had triumphed. . . ."

He may even have foreseen than other gods would have their altars and brief candle, but he believes that his scale of values is immortal and, if dimmed, is bound to be rediscovered by the next generation. Huxley leaves Gumbriil poring over a model of London as Wren would have rebuilt it after the great fire: . . .

"Looking at him, his son could imagine that he saw before him the passionate and gesticulating silhouette of one of those old shepherds who stand at the base of Piranesi's ruins demonstrating obscurely the prodigious grandeur and the abjection of the human race. . . ."

Our second portrait is chosen from an abundant gallery, from "Men of Good Will" by Jules Romain. This work, still uncompleted after the publication of ten volumes, aims to picture French society from 1908 to our day. Like Huxley, Jules Romain is more concerned with the ideas moving his puppets than with the immaterial sequence of events which constitute their lives. Some appear for a few pages, just to record the current ideals of this or that class of society—laborers, intellectual workers, men of affairs, politicians, soldiers, artists or backguards. An architect figures in the third volume of the American translation. If Huxley's Gumbriil finds a haven in the past, Romain's Raoul Turpin is an exponent of the modernist movement in the Paris of 1900 to 1910. Where Gumbriil despaired of his time, Turpin is firmly convinced of his hold on the future.

Granted that a portrait is first of all an individual document, its chief quality must be its grasp on what is peculiar to the individual represented. Turpin may seem quite foreign to American readers. However, those of us who have known the Beaux-Arts of 1900, have met his prototype. Among typical traits is his desire to explain or justify matters of artistic choice by reference to supposedly general laws, and also his constant preoccupation with "reasons why," even for those things which are obviously failures. In the Paris of our generation, striving for logical explanation was particularly noticeable among the painters and sculptors. In their shows, they were not satisfied with placing their wares before the public; they had to be introduced by the unavoidable "manifesto" announcing, like a fanfare of trumpets, the dawn of a new art and the Gotterdammerung of the old.

Raoul Turpin is likewise highly articulate. . . . "Turpin talkative and restless, abounding in gestures, digressions, outlandish comparisons, formulas of esoteric aestheticism, or pretentious non sequiturs, mixed with street-Arab mischief and irreverence. . . ."

He is entrusted by a promoter, Haverkamp, with a project centering around a medicinal spring and including not only the medicinal features, but . . . in order to combine pleasure with business . . . a casino, hotel and a group of country houses. . . . "As Haverkamp had recognized, in his own way Turpin was a great worker and a conscientious man. His very incoherences often derived from his scruples. He thought about his job day and night. If he sometimes arrived at it late, he was never in a hurry to leave it; and he knew how to poke into holes and corners and detect an error of half an inch in the width of a foundation, or a flaw in the plaster.

"He had a sound basis of honesty. Though he had himself suggested several of the contractors whose bids the company was still considering or whose services it had already retained, he had drawn no secret commission from any of them, and he had gone through their estimates with a fine-tooth comb.

"His lack of nicety, when he was lacking in it, was venial and belonged to the sphere of scrounging. (For example, the year before, he had got a little garage built for him; and the contractor had never sent him a bill for it, though there was no definite understanding between them as to what return he was to make for this present.)"

. . . "Beneath his air of bravado, he was in fact a restless soul, in his life and still more in his art. He gave modern tendencies his sincere but troubled adherence. He was not one of those people whom fear of going too far leads to discover half-way formulas—which the future may adopt and which may become the common denominator of a few masterpieces; for if there are periods when genius tends towards excess, there are also others when its role is to arbitrate and to moderate.

"In Turpin fear of being mistaken found expression rather in a kind of incoherence, as it does in those politicians who are said to have given pledges to extremist parties. But this incoherence itself he managed to mask with charm. The natural bent of his mind was charming.

"Among all the future buildings of the watering-place, it was the casino which he had chosen for the purpose of giving his modern taste a free outlet. The design which he had made for it might have been signed—at least at first sight—by the brothers Perret, who

were friends of his. The silhouette of the building was of great simplicity: a fairly large cupola, very pure in its lines, resting upon a quadrilateral single-storey building, entirely made up of horizontal lines, and connected with the cupola by two stepped bases. In the geometrical bareness of the whole there was that evidence—or that illusion—of logic which some people at this period were beginning to prize at the expense of everything else.

"But just when the eye was on the point of being staggered by so severe a modernism, the slightest touch of fantasy hinted at something of an Arab palace in this casino, or of a gigantic mosque. It was in such adroitly suggested alibis that part of Turpin's cleverness lay.

"The hotel and the hydromineral establishment were in quite a different style. They included large, steep-pitched roofs, tall chimneys, a kind of attic storey thrust far forward, wooden galleries, corbels formed by projecting beam-ends. They evoked impressions of England, of Switzerland, of the Tyrol, on account of a sort of freshness in their fantasy, and their way of striving, in the details of their structure, not so much after decorative or harmonious effects as after pretexts for suggesting something amusing to do. One was tempted, like a child, to run from window to window, along that romantic balcony. But, despite all its reminiscence, the whole had something new about it, and even something provocative, coaxingly provocative, though.

"Turpin used material with the same taste for compromise and second thoughts. In a fine burst of modernism, he proposed to swallow up hundreds of cubic yards of reinforced concrete in the construction of his casino. But a considerable tonnage of metallic framework was also required; and there was not one of the traditional materials, down to brick and any old rubble, which he did not lay under contribution. . . ."

"Close study of his plans would have revealed the fact not only that all these materials elbowed each other in dubious promiscuity, but also that sometimes they served the same purpose twice over. It would have been seen that Turpin's enthusiasm for reinforced concrete did not exclude some secret doubts about it. Just as a General stiffens a body of doubtful troops with seasoned veterans, so Turpin introduced a beam or a steel girder into dangerous places. Of course, these tricks of his

were not apparent except to a colleague. The public would never notice them. . . ."

But Jules Romain has the kind of analytical observation which never misses a trick. (Even these discrepancies in the style of the buildings—the casino in the Perret manner, the hotel in the Deauville pseudo-Norman tradition—reveal a "work of transition," as was to be expected around 1910.) Hesitation in using materials to the full extent of their properties is also most typical. It gives Turpin an excellent opportunity to display his resourceful scholasticism. . . . "He had found one or two superb arguments to excuse the contrasts in style which the buildings at La Celle-les-Eaux were going to present.

"What you have to do," he said in effect, "is discover the Spirit of the building. I mean by Spirit the sum of the effluences which radiate from the master-idea. So don't preach Beaux-Arts platitudes to me. The master-idea of this casino of mine is Gambling. But in the illumination of that idea, for my part, I see two things. On the one side, calculation, the purity of numbers, logic. So you want a sober, mathematical, logical building. Three plus six equals nine; nine times nine, eighty-one; square root of eighty-one, nine; square root of nine, three. Right every time. But on the other side I see the worship of Chance, of Fate. A mystical, a religious element. So I must stamp upon the implacable contour of my casino the overriding imprint of religious feeling. Yes, but what religion? A religion based on Fatalism. What is written is written. Insh Allah! Don't be surprised, then, that this casino of mine, rigidly modern in its formula though it is, should also have the mellow look of a holy place of Islam. At one and the same time a factory of Numbers and a temple of Fate.

"As for my hotel and its annexes—well, what's the master-idea of it? Health, isn't it? But what are the illuminating ideas? That, in order to restore Health to your bunch of bag-o'-bones, you are going to appeal to the Forces of Nature, to Water and to the Forest. And quite true, too; because, while these old buffers swill this dish-water of yours, the air of the forest of Rambouillet will be entering into their lungs.

"So I have sought to accentuate the impression of the open air, of a region of forest, of a region of streams and springs. I've conveyed

an Engadine setting. I've stressed the sense of being abroad. . . . In a hotel like this you're not going to feel as though you were taking a cure. No, you're going to feel as though you were a tourist, an Alpinist; a fellow bursting with health, with hair on his chest and a feather in his hat."

But at other moments he was quite ready to recognize that this mixture of styles was "disgustful," and that in architecture unity is the golden rule. But a poor architect in 1909 was not working for Louis XIV. He was working for "rotters" to whose aesthetic infirmity he had to pander, and whose softening of the brain he had even to flatter. . . .

Our third portrait brings us to the full flowering, twenty years later, of the modernist movement. It occurs in a short novel by Evelyn Waugh—"Decline and Fall," published in 1928.

Mrs. Best-Chetwynde has bought an historical mansion in Hampshire—"King's Thursday." Far from being impressed by its glamorous past, she sighs to a reporter, "I can't think of anything more bouregois and awful than timbered Tudor architecture. . . . Liberty's new building cannot be compared with it. . . ." She forthwith proceeds to have it torn down, and within nine months, her architect is at work on the new house.

. . . "It was Otto Friedrick Silenus's first important commission. 'Something clean and square,' had been Mrs. Best-Chetwynde's instructions, and then she had disappeared on one of her mysterious world-tours, saying as she left, 'Please see that it is finished by the spring.'"

Professor Silenus—for that was the title by which this extraordinary young man chose to be called—was a "find" of Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde's. He was not yet very famous anywhere, though all who met him carried away deep and diverse impressions of his genius. He had first attracted Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde's attention with the rejected design for a chewing-gum factory which had been reproduced in a progressive Hungarian quarterly. His only other completed work was the decor for a cinema-film of great length and complexity of plot—a complexity rendered the more inextricable by the producer's austere elimination of all human characters, a fact

which had proved fatal to its commercial success. He was starving resignedly in a bed-sitting-room in Bloomsbury, despite the untiring efforts of his parents to find him—they were very rich in Hamburg—when he was offered the commission of rebuilding King's Thursday. "Something clean and square"—he pondered for three hungry days upon the aesthetic implications of these instructions, and then began his designs.

This . . . "Something clean and square" . . . of Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde, is a succinct and pungent statement of the more lengthy "Theory of Volumes" of LeCorbusier, who wrote . . . "Our eyes are made to see forms under the sun. Light and shade reveal forms: cubes, cones, spheres, cylinders or pyramids are the great primary forms which show well under the light. Their image is neat, tangible, without ambiguity. This is the reason why they are intrinsically beautiful shapes, the most beautiful shapes."

In the same way, Jules Romains had said of Turpin's casino . . . "In the geometrical bareness of the whole, there was that evidence—or that illusion—of logic which some people at this period were beginning to prize at the expense of everything else."

However, by 1928, both Turpin and LeCorbusier had already become somewhat "passé," as we learn from the following:

. . . "I saw some of Otto Silenus's work at Munich," said Potts. "I think that he's a man worth watching. He was in Moscow at one time and in the Bauhaus at Dessau. He can't be more than 25 now. There were some photographs of King's Thursday in a paper the other day. It looked extraordinarily interesting. It's said to be the only really imaginative building since the French Revolution. He's got right away from Corbusier, anyway."

"If people only realised," said Paul, "Corbusier is a pure 19th century, Manchester school utilitarian, and that's why they like

him.'"

From the aesthetics of LeCorbusier, Silenus has grown to condemn anything which might recall nature or man, this humanity which was the aim of Gumbriel Senior.

. . . "The problem of architecture as I see it," he told a Journalist who had come to report on the progress of his surprising creation of ferro-concrete and aluminum, "is the problem of all art—the elimination of the human element from the consideration of form. The only perfect building must be the factory, because that is built to house machines, not men. I do not think it is possible for domestic architecture to be beautiful, but I am doing my best. All ill comes from man," he said gloomily; "please tell your readers that. Man is never beautiful; he is never happy except when he becomes the channel for the distribution of mechanical forces."

This machine worship is lucidly analyzed by Huxley in his "New Romanticism." . . .

. . . "The passion for machines, so characteristic of modern art, is a kind of regression to what I may call second boyhood. At twelve we were all mad about locomotives, ship engineers, machine tools. It was the ambition of everyone of us to be a stoker, or an engine-driver—anything, provided only that our job should entail hourly contact with the adored machine. But growing up, most of us found that human souls are really more odd and interesting even than the most elaborate mechanism."

If he hates humanity, Otto Silenus keeps a place in his heart for animal life. . . . "I have just been to Greece to see the buildings there," said Professor Silenus. "Did you like them?" "They are unspeakably ugly. But there were some nice goats."

And so we reluctantly close this tour through a hall of mirrors with the hope that our restraint in collecting further examples will prove a spur to other harvesters.



A LETTER FROM MR. WILLIAM ADAMS DELANO

The Editor of this magazine was more than pleased to receive this thoughtful letter from Mr. Delano. The team-work design on the Washington Triangle buildings being of no little interest in an architectural sense, many persons thought it was important to know just how the team play worked out. The coordination and self-effacement that went on during that confederation of talent represents a bright page in American architectural effort.

My dear Mr. Morris:

Your two articles on "The Simon Era" were read with interest by Louis Simon's many friends but by none more sympathetically than by me. Nothing that anyone could say could adequately express the contribution that Louis Simon has made over these many years to the cause of good government architecture. His modesty, his self-sacrificing devotion to his work, his tact and patience with the routine of government procedure need no bush.

There is little interest taken by the present generation of architects in the so-called Triangle Group of buildings but this may revive at a later date and, for the sake of accuracy for those who may write on the history of American architecture, I hope you will find space in your next issue for this letter.

You state in your second article that I was responsible for the idea of a Board of Architectural Consultants to design the Triangle. I should like to have been, but I was not. I have been to some pains to find out how the idea originated.

Mr. Charles S. Dewey was Assistant-Secretary in charge of the Architectural Branch of the Treasury at the time that the Government bought the remaining land between Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues. It already owned the part on 14th Street, on which York & Sawyer were constructing the Department of Commerce Building. Mr. Dewey had the idea that a group of architects should be appointed to develop the enlarged scheme. He had already called in his friend, Mr. Edward H. Bennett of Chicago, as a consultant on the originally owned property and Bennett had made a plan and a perspective for that part; and he had also been offered an Assistant-Secretaryship in the Treasury, which at the time he felt unable to accept. When the larger tract was acquired by Act of Congress, Mr. Bennett and Mr. Dewey presented to the Secretary a list of architects who might form a consultant group, and the Secretary at once accepted the idea. This list, in alphabetical order, was:

Edward H. Bennett, Chairman,
Louis Ayres, of New York City,
Arthur Brown, Jr., of San Francisco,
Wm. Adams Delano of New York City,
Milton B. Medary of Philadelphia,

(on his death succeeded by his partner, Clarence C. Zantzing)

John Russell Pope of New York.

Mr. Mellon wrote to each of us asking for our aid, saying at the same time that he had no funds to pay us other than our traveling expenses and a per diem subsistence allowance while in Washington, but expressing the hope that if Congress voted money for the buildings each of us would be given one to design.

I was at that time a member of the National Fine Arts Commission and had some scruples about accepting this appointment, but Mr. Moore, our Chairman, urged me strongly to accept—especially as my term on the Fine Arts Commission was nearing its end.

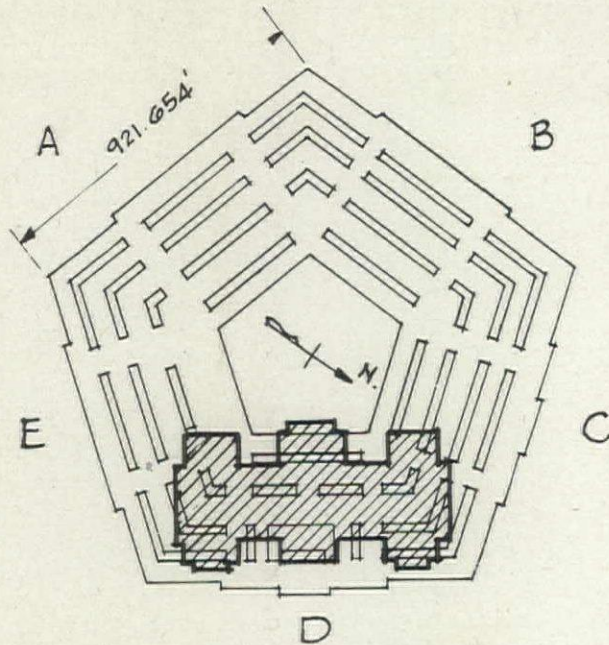
Several of the members of the Board of Architectural Consultants made sketches for the general plan. Arthur Brown, Jr., came to stay with me just before the first meeting and together, one hot Sunday afternoon, we made a rough sketch plan of the group, which in essence, after much discussion, was finally adopted. When Congress voted the money, Ayres was finishing the Department of Commerce; Brown was given Interstate Commerce and Labor; I was assigned to the design of the Circular Plaza on 12th Street and the Post Office Department Building facing on it; Louis Simon, for the Treasury, was given the Internal Revenue and Medary the Department of Justice.

My only contribution to the formation of the Board was this: For some reason, never explained, Pope had not answered Mr. Mellon's original invitation, which fact had annoyed the Secretary. After the rest of us had been at work for some months I asked Mr. Mellon if he would not reinvite Mr. Pope, for, with others on the Board, I had the feeling that his ability would be an asset. After some consideration he did and Pope joined the Group and was later given the Archives Building. Bennett, who all this time had acted as Chairman and had had general control of the development, was later given the Apex Building.

This, as far as I have been able to remember or discover from others, was the way in which the Triangle was developed.

Very sincerely yours,

WM. ADAMS DELANO



Relation of plan area of the capitol to that of Pentagon.

THE PENTAGON BUILDING

Shortly after the first portion of the new building for the War Department at 21st Street and Virginia Avenue had been completed, War Department expansion made it necessary to start on another War Department building in Arlington near the old airport. This resulted in considerable confusion, since reference to the War Department Building did not differentiate as to whether the one in Virginia or at Virginia Avenue was meant.

Some people fell into the curious habit of calling one building the Old New War Department Building, and the other the New New War Department Building. The newspapers began to refer to the Virginia building as the Pentagon Building, because of its five-sided plan, and while this is a distinguishing name, it does not carry the service designation and may not at length be used as the official designation of the structure.

The so-called Pentagon Building is a tremendous structure, on a really grandiose scale. To give some idea as to the extent of this project, suppose one took the huge Commerce Building, which at the time of its construction was considered as possibly too long for practicability, and by some arrangement with the Inventor's Council moved it and set it down on the Old Air Field in Virginia, and then found four other buildings of the same size to put alongside it in the form of a pentagon—there would then be something approximating the project—now nearing completion for the New War Department Building.

This structure will house between thirty and forty thousand people. That is approximately the size of many of our important industrial cities. The placing of this structure, therefore, is equivalent to locating a new city in hitherto undeveloped area. For that purpose appropriate city services had to be installed. It is

interesting to note that one telephone exchange in the City of Washington is composed of 10,000 telephones and that in this building there will be many more than 10,000 telephones.

The ground upon which the building is built was a poorly developed and uninspiring area, at the Virginia end of the Highway Bridge from Washington. It made an undignified principal southern approach to the capital.

Here was located the city's largest and most flourishing pawn shop; the city's only commercial airport, privately owned and distinctly inadequate and unattractive; a brick yard; a public swimming pool, and a large group of gas stations. Here, too, were several night clubs, whose revels at one time caused the hiring of extra police, carefully selected, to care for their overflowing exuberance.

Prominently located were several roadside eating places, including an igloo where frozen custard was dispensed. The architecture might have been considered appropriate for a city of international fame such as Washington. It included colonial, Mediterranean, the most modernistic of modern, and the igloo with inverted icicles on its parapet.

Another section was dignified by the name of South Washington. There is a legend of a Virginia sheriff who was felt to have proved himself a hero by merely walking through it alone at night. When time came for South Washington's removal, certain parts were neither used for temporary quarters nor torn down and salvaged; they were purified by fire, and it made a beautiful blaze.

There has long been argument as to who owns how much of this area. Once it was Virginia; then the District of Columbia; then Alexandria County, Virginia; then Arlington County, Virginia. The gradual north-

ern movement of the Potomac's southern high water mark, due to extensive fill and reclaiming of land, has created valuable territory from which everyone would like to collect taxes, but no one would care to maintain and police. Uncle Sam is closing the argument. The National Capital Airport assisted greatly. Now there is the War Building. This War Building project will cost when completed approximately \$35,000,000.00 and will house approximately 30,000 employees. It requires a complete new highway system which acts not only as an approach to the building but also forms a southern gateway to the capital, a thing greatly needed. The Bureau of Public Roads is assisting and all work is being coordinated by the War Department. In connection with the approaches and the "clover leaves" necessary, a total of 51 road bridges are being built.

The project requires its own sewage disposal plant, its heating plant, its water main carried from the Washington end of the Key bridge, its power plant, and during construction its concrete plant. Eighty thousand cubic yards of top soil have been scraped off the site and piled for future approach work.

To provide parking facilities for the workmen during the earlier part of construction, the permanent South Parking Area was rushed to completion. This area accommodates 4,000 cars and easily handles the workmen and those employees now in the occupied portions of the building. The North Parking Area now nearing completion will take care of an additional 4,000.

The five sides of the building are designated as Sections A, B, C, D and E. The angle between Sections C and D points slightly east of north, causing Section D to face the Potomac with Washington in the distance and a lagoon nearby. The most important offices are to be located in this Section D.

The lagoon is a practical use of a huge borrow-pit from which came some of the earth required for the extensive fill over large areas of the site. The landscaping and development of the lagoon and all such approach work is to be held to a minimum at this time.

Construction started with Section A, September 11, 1941, Section B following closely. Section A is now nearly completed and is occupied while B is to be occupied shortly. The occupancy is being accomplished six months ahead of the original schedule.

The remaining sections are following in alphabetical order, each now showing a different stage of completion, and affording a picture of construction from pile-driving to the cleaned and occupied building.

Reinforced concrete construction is being used throughout. The outside faces of the pentagon are faced with a buff limestone, generally of coarse shot-sawn texture. Pilasters, treatments around doors, etc. are finished smooth. The inner faces of the pentagon and all walls in the inner courts are of architectural concrete. The texture of this was obtained by using 8", V joint sheathing for forms, placed horizontally. After removal of forms the concrete is given a thin, natural colored, cement wash.

In the finished concrete wall the wood graining is quite clear, but dominated by the projecting horizontal V of the joints. The effect is pleasingly subdued,

showing an obviously concrete wall treated in a successful although inexpensive manner.

→ "Unfading green" Vermont slate is being used entirely for the roofing material. The amount required was so great that no single quarry could fill the order. Therefore, many quarries pooled their resources and succeeded in producing a beautiful roof of a slightly variegated gray green. The general effect is reminiscent of the old copper roof on portions of the United States Capitol.

The building is four stories high, the first floor, once called Ground Floor, being unusual for its huge bus terminal located in Section E. From this point busses will fan out to contact all points of Washington and its suburbs. The bus concourse is located on the 2nd floor directly above the terminal.

Each floor holds a large cafeteria and dining room with auxiliary kitchen. All of the foregoing are in Section E, the remainder of the building being well supplied with large and very well done Lunch Bars for those wishing a cold snack or too hungry to walk all the way to the Main Dining Rooms.

General employee traffic from floor to floor is handled through systems of stairways and ramps. Passenger elevators are being omitted but those for freight are installed at central supply points throughout the building. A number of escalators will later be provided when materials are available, for those who find difficulty in negotiating stairs or ramps.

Walking on the ramps is amazingly easy. They are designed with approximately a 10% grade and of a generous width to take large crowds of foot traffic, custodial trucks, and even an Army jeep if desired.

The marble, bronze, aluminum combinations familiar in the triangle buildings will not be found in the War Building. Elaborate finishes and expensive materials are not being used. A certain small number of lobbies and rooms are receiving treatments of natural finished wood, but nowhere is there ornate design.

Floors in office space and corridors generally are of asphalt tile, worked out in simple and subdued patterns. Doors are of hollow metal but bases are wood; walls plastered and ceilings of acoustic tile. The building is entirely air-conditioned; lighting is all indirect, the combination affording very desirable working conditions.

At the angles where the different sections adjoin, suites of private offices are provided for occupancy by generals. These consist of several large office rooms looking out on both elevations, private toilet, shower, closets, and public and private entrances. It is recognized that these men may spend long hours and days at the building, and provision is made for them to do so.

Eventually it is expected that Section D, facing the Potomac, will house the Secretary of War, Assistant Secretaries, Under Secretaries, the Chief of Staff, and all their respective retinues and office forces.

A small auditorium is being provided on the fourth floor, the remainder of the floor being taken up by a limited amount of office space and by mechanical equipment.

Visitors to the War Building this past winter and

(Continued on page 26)



HOUSING AT BRISTOL, PA.

One of the two-family units at the Bristol Project.

The Public Buildings Administration, Federal Works Agency, achieved something rather unusual in variety of construction and design when it sponsored the defense housing project recently completed at Bristol, Pa. This was a 200-unit project in 135 buildings plus a community and administration building.

Stofflet & Tillotson, 2043 Eastburn Ave., Philadelphia, Pa., were the contractors and the original bid was \$833,900. P. E. Gary was project engineer for the government and M. E. Hultslander was superintendent for the contractor.

Project was started on March 1 and entirely completed by August 1, except for a few items held up by material shortages. Speed of construction was achieved largely through the use of dry-wall construction. Upson Giant Strong-Bilt Panels were used throughout and were cut to room sizes at the factory before shipment. Application of the panels began about April 15 and all of this work except the administration building, started last, was finished by June 19. Crews of from six to thirty men worked on installation of panels, being organized so that certain ones installed the ceilings, others the side-walls, and still others the panels in the bathrooms; but only one crew worked in a unit at a time.

There were seventy single-family, two-bedroom units in the project, renting for \$37.50 per month. There were twenty-five two-family units with two bedrooms each which rent for \$35.50 per month, and fifteen two-family units with one bedroom each which rent for \$33.20 per month. Highest rental is \$39.80 per month per unit with three bedrooms of which there are twenty-five two-family houses.

Rental figure includes utilities. Hot air gas heat is installed. Walls are finished with paint. Living rooms are finished in grey, bathrooms and kitchens in ivory, and bedrooms (in the two-bedroom suites) in green for one and peach for the other. Available apartments were eagerly sought and met quick approval. A large portion of them are occupied by Fleetwing aircraft workers.

Photographs by courtesy of the Upson Company, Lockport, New York.



General view of the Bristol project.



*Interior of one of the units,
showing dry-wall construc-
tion.*

9 Pearl St., Brandon, Vermont.
December 3, 1942.

My dear Ed and Faith,

I wonder if you know where we are, and how and when we got here. The last time I saw you, Ed, at the dinner given to you and Ogle, I doubt if I, myself, realized what a clean, quick sweep would be my—or our—private tornado. 3500 Lowell Street ceased to be Buckingham property on Nov. 10th, though we were not actually out of there until the 18th, and from the 10th to the 18th, it was a nightmare.

Until the 10th we expected 43 days to wind up all our affairs, and be gone. But the 43 dwindled to 30 on that date, which left us 8, when we were expecting 20 more. That made it very hectic indeed, and both a physical and nervous strain. The other three left in the car the morning of the 18th, while I stayed on to watch the loading of the last van-full of effects. Van left at dusk. Then I packed my bag on the walk in front of the front door by street light, as electricity had, that day, been shut off.

I did hang around Washington two days and nights after that, clearing up loose ends, and finally boarded a sleeper at 1.00 a. m., Saturday, the 21st.

I had every intention and wish to go out to Grosvenor Lane before I left. I planned it time and again, but the evenings were always too far advanced before I could possibly call it a day. I was truly disappointed and sorry not to bid all of you good-bye. I had to treat a lot of people like that, though I made an attempt to see a few, who were close at hand, during those last two days, while I was a homeless waif in Washington.

We have a very interesting home. Though old—very old—in its marble foundations and frame, it appears as brand new from without. While much of the interior looks old—as the rough beams in living room, dining room and kitchen, this also is new. In short, the house was made over from top to bottom, inside and out by an artist and his wife, who overdid the job considering their pocket-books—and had to sell. Living room is 24' x 27' with a 4'-0" x 3'-0" fireplace, of which the mantel of rough stone and old, but moulded, wood is 8'-0" long.

The same is true of the kitchen fireplace except that here the opening is 6'-0" x 3'-8" and overall length 8'-4". This huge thing is quite necessary as the room is on the north side of the house and exposed on three sides. The range is electric—not coal—and the room itself is no cubby-hole. It is a story and a half high, with rough rafters, though I imagine they are not structural. Kitchen equipment is all new—bright, shiny and up to date. So far, we have eaten all our meals here.

The Hall (note the capital) is quite baronial—with a third fireplace—the baby of the three, though it must be about the size of your own—no slouch. Helen says the L. R. beams also are very old, having been transplanted here from an antediluvian barn. My own bedroom—winter studio is over the L. R. and is as long—but its width is cut down by the roof slopes and 4'-0" vertical sidewalls. Oh, it's no tunnel, as I suppose you are thinking. There are two large closets on either side of one end, with a window between, through which you see a fine mountain vista. There's such a vista through the windows at the opposite end of "the tunnel"—too—though not so spectacular there.

I have a wood-burning iron stove in my room. With a few kindlings and a stick of maple I can toast myself a golden brown in 7½ minutes. We have a very fair hot air heating system, which, however does not heat my room. Hence the stove. The room is alternately, as cold as Greenland, and as hot as—as Washington in July.

Helen's room is on the 1st floor with bath attached—as is my bath, in the mezzanine. There are two other bedrooms on the 2nd floor though one is baby-size. Upper hall already contains a fair-sized bookcase and a sofa and I imagine will have a writing table sooner or later, in front of quadruple windows.

Dining room appeared small when I first stepped into it, but when I noticed the table, I realized the room was considerably larger than our old one at 3500 Lowell St.

As in most old houses, there are closets galore and very spacious ones.

Finally, there's a room back of L. R. called the writing room—with a lavatory attached.

So you see, as we three, then we four were able to move around No. 3500 without scraping elbows, we are not likely to do so here.

I forgot the conservatory off the L. R. Its "floor," a step down, is of earth with flag-stones. Lilacs blossomed there last February, I hear say.

A fellow who seems to be a considerable part of our daily lives is our coal furnace caretaker. He must be to (eligible to retire) toothless, as strong as a horse, big-hearted, and as profane as a longshoreman. He answers to the appropriate (?) name of Manly Grace. He was, during the Thanksgiving dinner next door, the subject of much hilarity with the rector and the ladies who declared they couldn't even mention Manly Grace without using profanity themselves—as was apparent. The rector got a big kick out of that.

If you are wondering if I am not man enough to take care of my furnace myself, the answer is—I hope so, but my day simply isn't long enough to accomplish all to be done around here these first weeks in the new home, and to stoke a coal furnace too. But I hope to keep Manly Grace anyway, as I had more than enough of such work for 26 winters on Lowell Street. The irony of it! After 26 winters of such servitude—almost *penal*—I buy a beautiful polished aluminum-trimmed "Arcoflame" oil burner, and expect to spend the rest of my winters in luxurious comfort—and now this! But I have at least the peace of mind of knowing the administration is not after me—yet—as an oil-consumer, who seems to be about as wicked as an opium-smoker. I am comfortably enough heated even in this occasionally arctic climate, and need dusting off of coal ash only when Mr. Grace's three times a day is insufficient, which really isn't too often.

We have a barn (*all Vermont barns seem to be red*) which was the former artist-owner's studio. He made a Jacobean balcony out of the hay-mow, with a likewise Jacobean staircase. The work that gives it that character is jig-sawed, but the affect is very much as intended. It will be a nice place for me to mess around in without fear of splashing water color on the wall paper, as there is none—I mean in summer time! At present the "studio" is as cold as a barn.

Speaking of water colors, you know—or didn't you?—that I bought several such pictures from the exhibits held by the Fine Arts Division. Two of them are to hang over our living room and hall mantels, and will help to remind us, if we ever need it, that this is indeed a new home. They never hung on the walls of 3500 Lowell St. Tell Weston this when and if you see him. He tried to acquire one of those pictures—but I beat him to it. Tell Mr. Rowan too, as he helped and advised me at that time and otherwise made himself very charming!

Our floors are of wide boards—stained and waxed—and *not* mathematically level. Also there are funny steps up or down where you don't expect them until you get the instinct. I've had several real falls, but by the skin of my teeth—almost literally—and the Grace of God, I've broken no bones, or even worse, any of Helen's porcelain or glass. I've only skinned both knees, an ankle, and my right temple—a mere nothing.

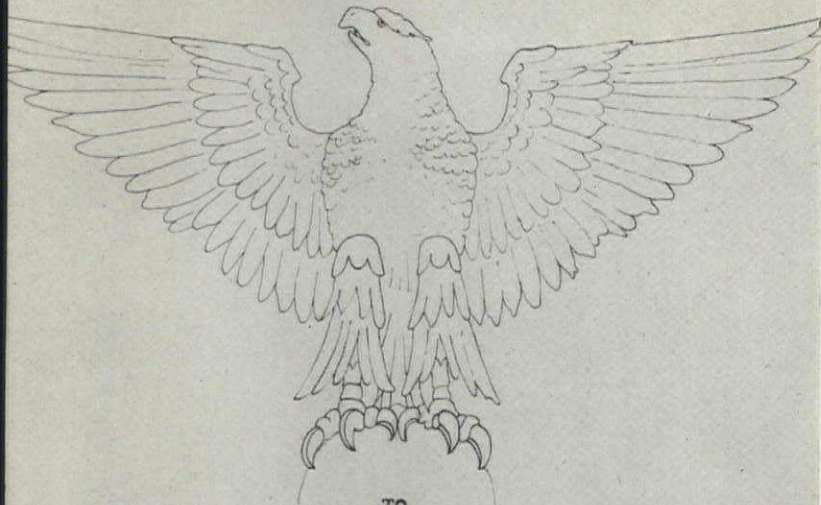
The house is 1½ stories. While this doesn't mean there's danger of bumping your head on sloping ceilings and in doorways less than 7'-0" high, still that's the feeling of which I have not yet rid myself. Between expecting steps up or down, prairie-like floors, sub-normal door heights, and sloping ceilings, I walk like a sailor just ashore, stoop-shouldered, and wry-necked. I'll get over it. Helen, whose room is on 1st floor is quite normal in neck and shoulders and *of course* from the neck, up, except when she starts raving over the beauty of her new home.

Shouldn't you suppose that if a roof pitch, or slope, is too gentle for slate, it is so far as asbestos shingles, too? The remodelers of this house seemed not to be of that opinion, as asbestos shingles were used on the gentler slopes—in the rear—though slate was generally used, and their reason for so doing is that the shingled roofs were too flat for slate.

Have you read enough about the new home? I don't blame you.

Sincerely and cordially

GEORGE H. BUCKINGHAM.



TO
"DUSTY"
(F.A.) MILLER
JANUARY 31, 1943

After long years of service, total thirty and nine,
Including two over there with the boys on the line,
It's sure to give you pleasure to let your memory dwell
On all the many things you've done, and know you've done them well
And now may your retirement that follows such success
Be just another turning-point to GREATER HAPPINESS.

<i>Alfred Parkard</i> DISTRICT ENGINEER	<i>Paul H. Williams</i> ASSISTANT DISTRICT ENGINEER	
<i>Carl H. Smith</i>	<i>William S. Tolson</i>	<i>Edward J. Fritch</i>
<i>Walter D. Morgan</i>	<i>Carl A. Anderson</i>	<i>Wm. S. Woodward</i>
<i>Tom K. ...</i>	<i>Wm. S. ...</i>	<i>Wm. S. ...</i>
<i>Paul B. ...</i>	<i>Paul J. ...</i>	<i>Wm. S. ...</i>

successful years there, was transferred to Kansas City in 1913 and in another year came to the Chicago District where he has served ever since, except a year and a half in the First World's War.

He has endeared himself to every member of the fast changing personnel of this District and we will miss his sunny disposition and jovial good fellowship more than his other numerous friends. Typical of his life and character are those familiar lines in Shakespeare's "Hamlet":

"This above all to thine ownself be true,
and it follows as night the day, thou canst
not then be false to any man."

Some nineteen or twenty members of the District Office sat down to a very attractively decorated table arranged artistically with the National emblems by the feminine personnel of the office and after a few introductory remarks, the party was started by drinking the following toast to the honored guest:

"Here's to you Dusty, a man we admire,
We'll miss you old chap, when you retire,
Drop in now and then for an old time chat,
And warm the old chair in which you have sat.
"We drink to you Dusty, and a long future life,
Away from official care, worry and strife;
May you get what you wish during life's sunset
glow,
With no "freezing of pleasures where e're you
may go."

Then followed a presentation of a wrist watch and a streamlined Parker pen and pencil set.

"Aware of the many years of life left to you, we present this simple time piece so that you will be able to keep track of little things, such as, moments and hours; the months and years will take care of themselves.

"When you throw your arm out and look at its face, may it remind you of your many friends and associates of your active life, some of whom you no longer see, and the hands remind you of the hands you often grasped in friendship, but may not clasp again.

"When you lay aside the monkey wrench and other paraphernalia of your profession, to take their place we present you with this pen and pencil set. Keep them always in good operating condition by letting your numerous and distant friends hear from you once in a while, demonstrating that the pen may become mightier than the monkey wrench".

At the conclusion of these ceremonies, an interesting testimonial prepared by one of the personnel, and signed by all the immediate associates, was presented, upon which was inscribed the following:

"After long years of service, total thirty and nine,
Including two over there with the boys on the line,
It's sure to give you pleasure,
To let your memory dwell,
On all the many things you've done,
And know you've done them well.
And now may your retirement
That follows such success,

(Continued on page 26)

On November 7th, 1942, there occurred in the conference room of District No. 5, Chicago, a social gathering and luncheon, in honor of one of our most respected and beloved associates and fellow workers, "Dusty" Miller, who was about to retire from active service and enjoy a long deserved rest and vacation.

During the past several years when the District personnel was not so large, it had been our custom to celebrate the birthdays of the various members with a surprise party, when possible, and we have had many very delightful and beneficial affairs of this character, but with the recent reorganization, which practically doubled the personnel, the usual birthday celebration was practically out, so this year, we decided to have a Hallow'en party and when it was discovered that Mr. Miller was to retire about this time, we decided to combine the party as a Hallow'en party and a surprise party with "Dusty" Miller as the honored guest.

"Dusty" Miller, probably better known to the field than any other engineer, entered the service in the Washington Office in October, 1903, and after ten

The Pentagon Building

(Continued from page 21)

spring must needs have been hardy folks. The armies of workmen and equipment constantly crossing and recrossing these areas, caused acres of mud of varying depths in rainy weather and dust storms to rival the mid-west when dry.

Colonel Renshaw's office found it necessary, in order to equip visitors before they ventured forth, to stock a full line of overshoes of assorted sizes.

The building is a nice problem in rotation of operations. Excavation crews started at Section A, moved on to Section B. Foundation operations followed in A, completed work, moved on to B. First-story form builders swarmed into A, were thrown out and pushed into B. Concrete workers played their piece in Section A and like a theatrical troupe moved at the completion of the stand to the next section. That is, of course, the natural and usual construction procedure, but in this case it was stepped up to an impressively large scale.

There has been much discussion as to the advisability of concentrating so much business and so many workers in one location. Time and usage will decide that question. But regardless of what the verdict from an economic and administrative standpoint may be, from a construction standpoint, that is from the standpoint of the designing architect, the designing engineers, the construction superintendents, the contractors, the subcontractors and the suppliers of materials, it is an achievement much more extensive than an ordinary construction project, just as the building itself is inspiringly more extensive than ordinary buildings.

Testimonial to "Dusty" Miller

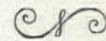
(Continued from page 25)

Be just another turning point,
To GREATER HAPPINESS."

From this time on we enjoyed a very delightful menu mingled with many intellectual quizzes, jokes and stories, thus ended one of the most successful parties of District No. 5.

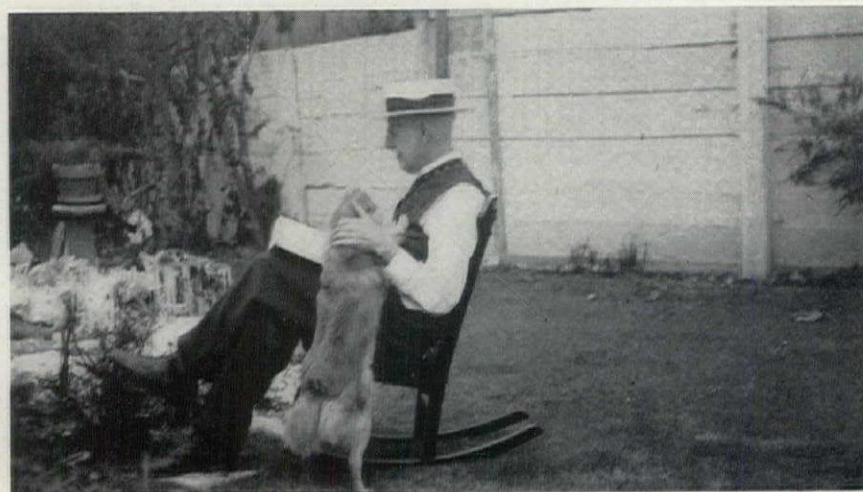
These social affairs, we believe, are conducive to closer cooperation and tend to consolidate our mutual interests and naturally benefit the entire District personnel.

ALLYN A. PACKARD



EDITOR'S NOTE

The FEDERAL ARCHITECT has been appearing at irregular intervals as the result of overwork in the printing plants in the Washington area. We hope that this has now been corrected.



Former District Engineer Richey, of the Public Buildings Administration—and friend.

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color shades of

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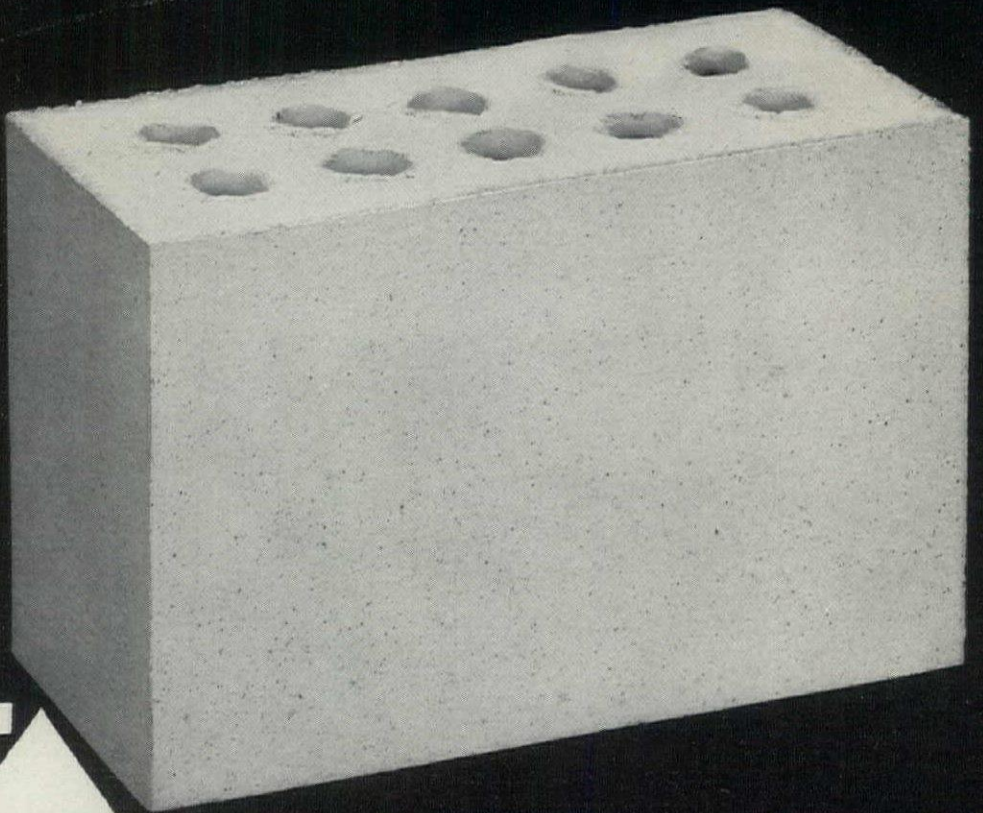
● Entrance, Belgard-Spero, Inc., Chicago; Sobel & Drielsma, Architects

FOOTNOTE ON THE WAR

The other day the Editor of this magazine was walking through an army barracks with several other architects on a little tour of inspection. One of the architects in the party was youthful in appearance, his thirty-odd years being easily mistaken for twenty-odd. He stopped by a group of soldiers, who laughed at him in a friendly way and said, "Thinking of joining the Army?"

The architect was embarrassed for, while the remark was quite evidently intended as a bit of friendly persiflage, he felt that he had the appearance of not holding up his end in the war effort. And yet he had been rendering distinguished service, not individually, but as an anonymous member of a group of War Department architects who had been driving for two or three years to keep barracks and hospitals in construction ahead of the demand. Their work and the similar work of the Navy architects deserves the Army-Navy "E," if any accomplishment does. We were hurt that an architect who had joined in such a helpful war effort should have had his efforts open to such misinterpretation.

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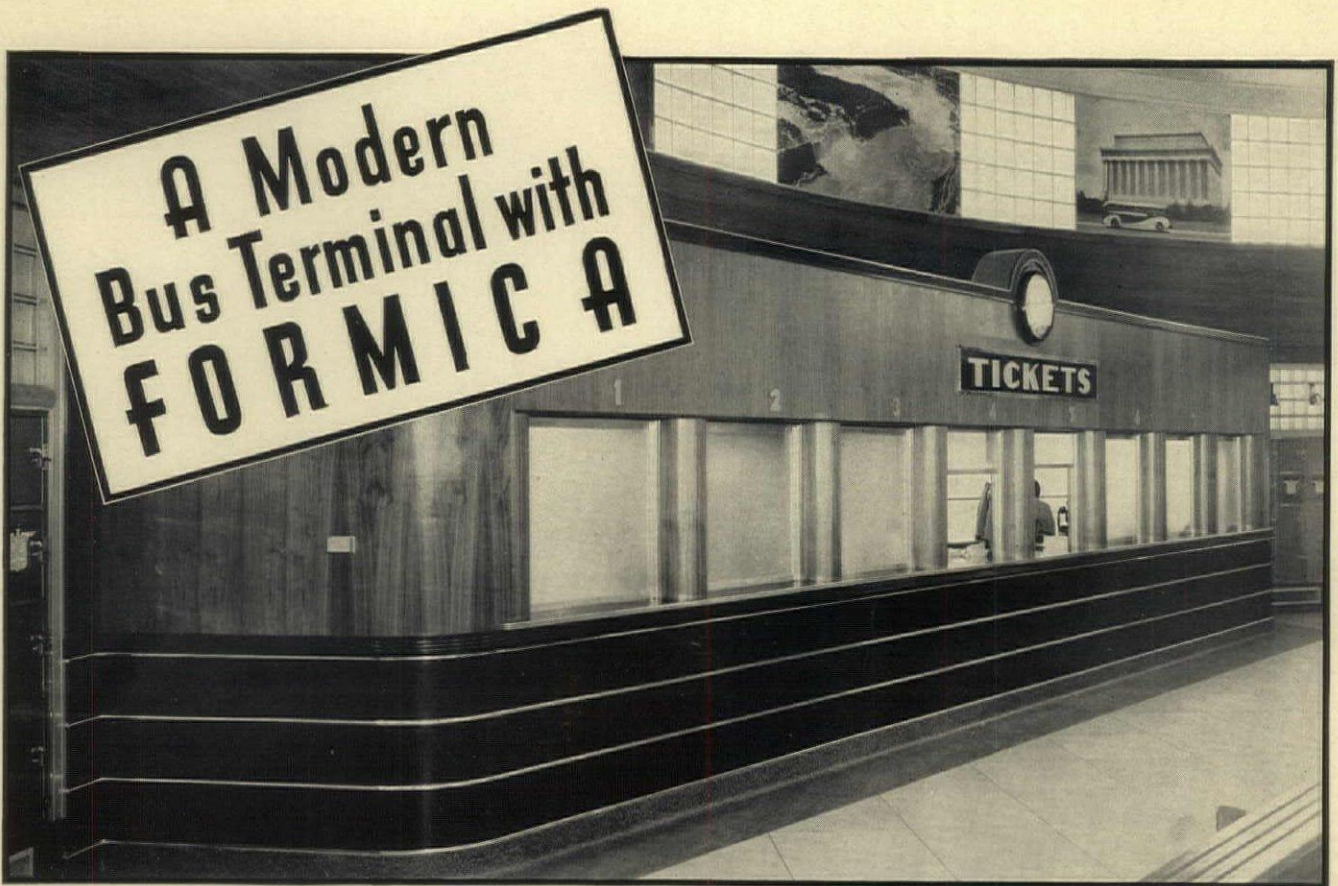
It is furnished in Brick ($2\frac{1}{4} \times 8$) and double Brick (5×8) sizes and in $3\frac{3}{4}$ or $1\frac{3}{4}$ thickness.

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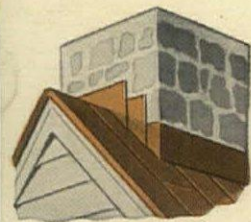


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