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Do Principles of Architecture Change?

There is much involved talk these days by the protagonists of a new order of things in architecture and the allied arts. By involved talk is meant a new method of word grouping, in relation to simple things, that leads one into a mist of uncertainty and unreality.

It may be assumed, with reasonable assurance, that there is little in this material world of ours, with which we are dealing, that may not be defined in simple terms that the normal and average individual may understand. If this cannot be done, it is fairly safe to assume that the object or idea, whatever it may be, exists only as an intangible abstraction in the imagination of the speaker. In numerous articles and interviews with some of our new and modest architects and teachers, at home and abroad, much has been said in paraphrases of a most perplexing terminology, very scholarly, very dry, and very desolate.

Eddington contends that a minimum of 10 plus 6 measures of structure are required, in his mind, to organize and stabilize a physical world in empty space. He is, as usual, probably on the right track, but that is a job for the supermathematician and does not greatly concern us. However, much of the same process of thinking is now applied by these men in a most curious manner to the art of enclosing space—architecture. This is a totally different proposition from any angle of approach.

Now just what are we to think about these preachments concerning space and of the qualifying adjectives and functions given to it, vertical and horizontal? These are all indubitably very interesting speculations of our teachers. But in what way, manner or shape they serve a conceivable use in the daily life of painters, poets, sculptors or architects is not very obvious. What, also, may be asked of the present, well publicized vogue in regard to non-objective and non-representative painting in which, as stated explicitly by its proponents, there exists no reason or intelligence, as though the omission of these elements was a wonderful achievement?

Many of the grand architectural works of man have been analyzed on the basis of what is called dynamic symmetry. This after-the-fact system of analysis amuses some of us very much. The clear eyed Greek, with his marvelous visual penetration and sense of coordination, balance and rhythm, required no artificial geometrical formulae by which to integrate and organize his superb structures. That the stalwart and sturdy men from the north who settled in Greece in early days were much less cultured than their descendants of later days, goes without saying. Yet their work in its simple essence is finer than the work of the Greek of later days in the so-called Periclean age. I wonder why it was so. It was more impressive, more elemental, more organic in its simplicity. Did these so-called barbarians know anything about dynamic symmetry? I fear not. They were merely finer builders, finer creative artists, finer artisans in their sometimes crude and always virile way.

Dynamic symmetry, as well as the various formulae for designing, has many fascinating and amusing angles without doubt. The inventor of dynamic symmetry, for example, has exploited his theory very ably. But when one considers that it is only from one single and solitary station point that a building may be geometricized, the system does not appear to have any conclusive usefulness to the creative designer.

Moreover, the station point of analysis has very little chance of being—as it should be, if the theory is all it pretends to be—the finest view of the building. The view changes at every station point of the observer, at every angle of vision—some angles acute, some obtuse—with many possibilities that the acute one is the most dramatic and wonderful of all. The great art of modern photography tells us this story in brilliant realism. Dynamic symmetry does not cause this, or any design formula whatsoever. It is merely the net result of the entire building, with its four dimensional substance and quality fully disclosed in time, plus the particular nature of the civilization that brought it into being.

The human eye and, in addition, a deep psychic and creative understanding of the organic nature of a building, is all the true architect and builder of any age ever required. And even now, with all our ramifications and involvements — social, industrial and economic — that is all that is needed.

I wonder, for example, just where any sort of mechanical ways and means to design would apply to those seemingly casual and yet most alluring and captivating buildings, as well as sculpture and craftsmanship, in the early days in Asia Minor, before Romanesque came into being, or in germinal Iran, in the North of South Asia, in Croatia or along the Dalmatian hinterland, as well as, according to that brilliant and masterful writer, Josef Strzygowski, in England, Northern Germany, Scandinavia and across Siberia.

In the primitive work of all races, in all countries and ages, may be seen the free spirit of man busy, uncontrolled by any sort of formulae. Neither dynamic symmetry, nor any other sine qua non system, had any place in their buildings. There is no symmetry in them, dynamic or other, but a most delightful lack of balance in the ordinary sense of the word, and a heart touching sense of men engaged in doing something they delighted in, as part of their daily lives.

If we adopt any system where the creative imagination does not appear, where does the simple eloquence, embodied in spiritual ideals and aspirations, come in? It does not come in, not in the theory of dynamic symmetry, nor in the various assumed and arbitrary postulates concerning space, over which our new teachers grow eloquent.

I wonder did Michaelangelo consider these modern ideas, or their equivalent when, prone on his scaffold, he was decorating the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel? Did medieval master builders, artists and craftsmen consider what they were doing as related to an involved series of planes set at various and curious angles? They did operate on the trial and error basis, as we know, and far removed indeed from any rule or dry routine for designing.

Yet their eccentricities, geometrically speaking, are half their beauty and naive charm. Little by little they learned to build by experience. They worked, as we should work, in happy consonance with the deepest responses and impulses that the human being is capable of expressing; and their stint is our vicarious glory.

It hardly seems possible that the mind is free, if aided by artificial stimuli and mechanical ways and means, when the purpose is one of creation.

Like botanizing upon a grave, it seems outrageous to analyze creative architectural work or sculpture or painting, in search of fitting exhibits disclosing, perhaps, a close approximation in form to the requirements of these theories, for when all is said, the apparent revelation does not prove anything to anybody apart from our new teachers and their sycophants, since the authors were blessedly ignorant of them as applied to their jobs.

One who analyzed some of the architectural work of recent years on the basis of this new approach to design found in the work many interesting squares, right triangles, oblongs, and many entertaining diagonals, as related to verticals, as well as plane piled on plane. The creators were greatly amused at these disclosures of their genius as they had no conscious knowledge of the existence of these forms.

With this farrago of involved expressions in our minds, does one suppose that the natural and universal instincts of mankind will be thwarted by them and these mechanical determinants of form take their place? Hardly. The lark will sing its heavenly song, as Shelly puts it, in profuse strains of unpremeditated art, the nightingale will sing as of yore, the crow will caw and the frog will croak his harsh dithyrambs as in ages past and in ages to come.

Creative craftsmen of all kinds and artisans as well will continue to sing their songs of unpremeditated art too—their songs of accomplishment, and, let us hope, the autointoxication of our ardent protagonists produced by an overdose of meaningless verbalisms will disappear. Just as the present mode, as it exists in many places, of telling people what to think, what to do, what to believe, what to worship, will disappear.

Rules of procedure in the arts tend not to discipline the mind, as it may appear, but tend rather to dissipate natural and normal impulses in many ways, and thus the creative tension so vital in the production of art work of all kinds, as well as the art of living, becomes atrophied and most likely will disappear.

A dry mechanical quality is clearly envisaged where these theories are employed. Corbusier once said that a house is a machine to live in—a dangerous path to follow if literally pursued, unless humanized in the working out. Livableness is a prerequisite and mechanism secondary.

Concerning the philosophy and practice of the Constructivists, better known as the widely-heralded International Style, a great deal may be said because, broadly speaking, it is a fertile field of endeavor and may reveal much in the future if pursued with imaginative spirit, here in America. At present this principle of activity is being exploited in a shamelessly indifferent and spiritless manner, not in the least, as far as may be seen in the buildings, in the interest and exfoliation of a great art of building.

Piers, lintels, arches, domes and cantilevers with their extensions and derivatives are all we have, including walls, of course, of useful structural forms. These forms are universal and the various races of men have ever spoken through them in their various ways, even when influenced by foreign infiltrations. However, the less influenced, the finer the work.

These forms are static and in equilibrium one to another, that is they cohere, mesh and blend in the universal law of Form and Function. These word definitions of structural forms are symbols of profound significance. All architecture lies behind them.

Just as words, loose and fallow in the mind of a poet, may become immortal poetry of an infinite variety, so in just such manner may the forms of structure be resolved into great architecture when the poet assembler arrives on the scene to perform his act in the drama of building.

These forms are not ends in themselves, as the Constructivists seem to hold; only means to an end. When used without significance by the designer, they convey no message whatsoever of hope for the future of architecture. That they are ineptly used is obvious from observation, by and large, of the results.

Macaulay once said this, in substance, in criticism of a poet: "These words of the author, in the history of British literature, have made great and immortal poetry, but this cannot be said of Montgomery and his use of them." Much of the same criticism may be made on the work of the Constructivists, as much of their work is clearly allied to that of the poet of whom the essayist wrote.

The architect's job is to make his chosen structural forms live in all their static grandeur of equilibrium and mobility and never to exaggerate or stultify them as is being done here and abroad.

There are no methods now, and there never were, outside of ourselves or apart from our own personal resources, that are in the least degree salutary in their influence over us. It may therefore be said that when methods and systems arrive, the personal equation disappears and architecture becomes, as it has many times in past ages, the lost art of building.

After all, the functioning of the man himself is the only course to pursue and to express to the limit. His inherent capacity, properly nurtured and trained for his generation in all needful things, is the primary obligation he owes society.

The competent architect has little need of a drawing board and its adventitious aids of paper, pencil and eraser in deploying his intellectual and spiritual resources in creative design. Memorable achievements may arise, as they have in ages past, and at times in our present day, in the architect's mind, through communion, in deep meditation with his problem, listening to its suggestions, its imperatives—since it is ever vocal—isolated entirely from studio influences. Thumbnail sketches etched in the texture of architects' minds are of vastly more value than all the geometrical or other drawing board formulae in the world.

The writer happens to know that a great master designed probably his most memorable and epoch-making building in a five minute interval while walking on a noisy street. He came back to his office and drew the design from top to bottom in about the same length of time. This is not meant to record speed, merely the process which is open and free to all who care to think organically in the pure clean air of the spirit.

Adorned and unadorned simplicity in architecture are excellent things and the range of possibilities is infinite. Yet with the multiplicity of materials in the building line at our disposal, architecture is apt to become a medley of incoherences and banalities. This multiple usage, in many places, seems to be the present mode.

There are perhaps too many materials altogether; some of them of the imitative type are an affront and a nuisance

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I. S. A. Arranging Subway Meeting

The Chicago subway is now an actuality. Dirt is moving. The architect's interest in this project is more than its effect on property values. The engineering of the subway interests him vitally, insofar as this engineering affects foundations of structures now existing along its route, as well as foundations to be built in the future.

The Program Committee and the President of the Society are working on the program for a meeting devoted to the subject of the building of the subway, where the speakers will be the foremost engineers and soil experts connected with this undertaking. They are also planning to have authoritative legal talent, competent to discuss the legal rights of property owners, and in this connection representatives of the Building Owners and Managers Association will be heard. The meeting promises to be a most important one, where diagrams of the cut will be displayed and discussed by the speakers as well as architects in attendance.

While the date has been set for Tuesday, February 21, the place has not yet been fixed. Besides members of the Illinois Society of Architects, there will be invited members of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. and other architects. Architects are advised to be on the lookout for individual invitations that will come to them later in the mail.

While building in general still lags, the professional architect is kept interested in architecture through the lively discussion by architectural school professors over what real and honest architecture should be and is not. These professors expound philosophies in new phrases which, when closely examined, are found to be the old truisms that have always held good. Their product in design looks different, usually unconvincing and generally sensational. Many young architects ape these designs, deluding themselves with the belief that their own product is modern, logical, practical, when in truth it is a copy of the product of a much heralded sensationalist's brainstorm.

The professorial group occupying the stage at the moment is from the Bauhaus at Dessau in Germany, led by Gropius, Maholy-Nagy and Mies van der Rohe.

The Bauhaus, founded by Gropius soon after 1918, was much propagandized by its creators, but by 1930 was on its last legs, according to German architectural journals. Gropius left the school, migrated to England and practiced in association with an Architect Fry. Van der Rohe succeeded Gropius as director of the Bauhaus. It did not prosper and closed soon after the Hitler government came in. Now the establishment is a school for nurses.

Gropius came to the United States and became chief critic in architectural design at Harvard in 1936.

Maholy-Nagy, a professor at the Bauhaus, came to Chicago in the summer of 1937 and became head of the New Bauhaus, a school of industrial design founded by The Association of Arts and Industries. Maholy-Nagy was sponsored by Gropius. He operated the school one year. Then it was closed. If or when it will open again, only time can tell.

Van der Rohe came to Chicago in the fall of 1938 to head the architectural school of Armour Institute of Technology. The introductory banquet with speeches heralding his coming was liberally reported in the December-January number of the I. S. A. Bulletin. Since then an exhibition of van der Rohe's German Pavilion at the 1927 Barcelona Exposition, his Tugendhat House in Czechoslovakia, a small house in Berlin, another in Magdeburg, a fancied design for a tall steel and glass cage, a reinforced concrete warehouse design, and two or three models of one story flat roof dwellings, has come and gone.

In 1911 and '12, three men whose names, if not their work, are well known to American architects today, were working in Architect Peter Behrens' office in Berlin, at a time when the new German Embassy Building for St. Petersburg, Russia, was being planned. Its erection was completed in 1914 and the building was completely destroyed soon after in the World War.

These three men are: Walter Gropius of Berlin, Le Corbusier of French Switzerland, and Mies van der Rohe of Aix la Chapelle. This is the triumvirate that founded what the architectural world is pleased to call "the international style of architecture".

The profession is interested; it wants to be shown more of the achievements of these men and their school. They have all written and preached. Gropius has built the Bauhaus Group and Siedlung Dessau-Törten; Le Corbusier has the Swiss Club in Paris and a vanished tent outside the 1937 Paris Exposition; Van der Rohe has the Barcelona Pavilion and Tugendhat mentioned above. But what else of theirs has materialized in space? Space! That's the word they like.

It is suggested that this group, knowing in their own minds the solution of this world's architectural troubles, band together in the publication of a book of their executed designs, giving plans, sections, and photographs taken from a normal point of view. The American architect will then judge for himself.

Walter R. McCornack, prominent Cleveland architect, will become dean of the School of Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology next fall when William Emerson, head of the school for twenty years, retires.

Buff color gets its name from the buffalo and originally buff referred to the soft light leather of chamois type used in soldiers' uniforms.

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to sensitive people. As of old, and after all, the fewer the materials of a genuine nature the better, in any building. It is better to have three good materials, naturally treated and naturally used, than six or eight egregiously used. So many of the materials we have are such ghastly imitations and if the art of building sings a Miserere, it is not far to look for the reason. Yet there are, let us not forget, many modern synthetic materials of a high order of usefulness to creative designers, with lovely textures and color that are at our service. Let them be used simply and naturally, being frank with their kind and sympathetic with their possibilities and within their range of usefulness. The real ones are here to stay. The imitative will disappear.

When one considers that so much of our heritage in architecture was accomplished in stone, glass and wood, we may properly pause. Some work in the present day is done in a similar manner, but how! The Sahara desert has nothing on it for desolation and aridity. There is a saving grace in an occasional architectural oasis which is a blessed relief and for which we are grateful indeed.

—George G. Elmslie.

Dr. Giedion in this Country

Dr. S. Giedion, general secretary of the International Congress for the Promotion of Modern Buildings, with headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland, is visiting American cities. While in this country, he is giving a course of lectures at Harvard University on modern architecture in Europe. He is particularly interested in the subject of town planning and is making a study of conditions in various American cities. His work at Harvard, under the Charles Eliot Norton Fellowship, will continue for the present academic year and the results thereafter will be published by the Harvard University Press.

Bad town planning, Dr. Giedion says, is worse than no town planning and he believes that there is a wonderful opportunity for some of our wealthy public-spirited citizens to get behind such a movement, which he believes is the keystone of every culture. A nation without such consciousness is a nation without culture, he says, in calling his lecture "Town Planning, The Life of Architecture."

Modern architecture does not impress Dr. Giedion because it is modern but because in it he sees the symbol of projection of modern thinking.

Housing Tour in Europe

A tour of housing projects in England, France, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Russia, under competent leadership, is announced by The National Public Housing Conference. It leaves New York June 22, returns August 10, and costs approximately $595.

To brighten up the dinner plate, potatoes are now being produced in colors: red, pink, blue, yellow, russet, purple, as well as white with blue or red eyes.

Government scientists believe that cotton has a future in house construction, notably in roofing and wall materials.

Dutch brick and English brick used in colonial Virginia homes did not refer to origin of the brick but to the size, Dutch brick being smaller.

A borax and boric acid solution in water is found effective to fireproof curtains and other household fabrics and to protect them from sulphur gas injury.

December and January Chapter Meetings

It was about six o'clock on December 20 when members of the Chicago Chapter, young and old, repaired to Tom Tallmadge's studio. They found Tom presiding at the punch bowl wearing a studio gown and a yellow satin jockey's cap. He was not very talkative, but he was active in filling glasses.

After an hour the men walked over to Normandy House, a block and a half away, where dinner was served them. They numbered forty-one men. President Roberts and First Vice-President J. Howard Raftery were both out of town, so Jerrold Loebl, the Second Vice-President, assumed the chairman's responsibilities. They were not heavy. Words of wisdom were on this occasion replaced by words of pleasantry. It was the Christmas season.

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Chapter members, architectural faculty members of Armour Institute, Chicago Sketch Club members, lady librarians from the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and from the American Library Association, and Armour Institute architectural students, formed the component parts of the seventy attendants at the January 10 meeting of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. This meeting was held at Normandy House, preceded by a dinner.

President Roberts called Thomas E. Tallmadge to the chair to preside during the program, whose announced subject was "Book Talks for the Architect." Mr. Tallmadge began his talk by introducing Mies van der Rohe and associate professors and then launched into a review of architectural history in this country, showing influences and styles. He held that the present-day tendency to disparage all architectural results of periods that had gone before was a mistake; that the Renaissance period dominated by McKim, Mead and White, the Romanesque dominated by Richardson, the Victorian Gothic before that—all had left something in whose precipitate creditable and inspired work could be found. He spoke of the library as the depository, with particular reference to the Burnham Library in Chicago.

Philip N. Youtz, author of "Sounding Stones of Architecture" and now director of the Pacific Area Golden Gate Exposition, was to speak. He could not come to Chicago, but sent a letter, or short address, expounding his theories. This was read by Mr. Tallmadge.

The chairman then introduced Ludwig Hilbersheimer of the Armour architectural faculty, an authority on city planning. Mr Hilbersheimer's paper sketched the growth and development of cities from medieval days; coming to the lifetime of many of those present, Lever Bros. in Liverpool and the building of their industrial town, Port Sunlight, were considered. Ebenezer Howard, and his town Letchworth, Raymond Unwin, the change from pedestrian to automobile towns—all played their part in the development. Camillo Sitte, Ludwig Sierks, Soriy y Mata and the Russian N. A. Miljutin, authors of books on city planning written between 1889 and 1930, were referred to. Hermann Ullmann's book "The Flight from Berlin" and Henry Ford's "My Life and Work" make clear that the last two authors believed the future was in smaller industrial towns where the inhabitants supplemented their income from the factory in their own gardens where products for the family table could be raised.

Syberen Nydam, structural engineer, spoke to the architectural student preparing to take his state board examination for license. For years Mr. Nydam has acted as coach to candidates preparing for this examination.

Dr. Walter C. Behrendt, Technical Director of the Buffalo City Planning Association, who had delivered an address on city planning at the Art Institute during the afternoon, told of his being inspired thirty-five years ago to study city planning by an exhibition of Burnham's city plans in Berlin. He also referred to the American sculptor of about 1850, Horatio Greenough, whose book shows the author's surprisingly advanced thought on city planning. Dr. Behrendt's discovery of thoroughly sane modernism in Minneapolis tall buildings of thirty years ago was of interest.

Ushering in the finale, Mr. Tallmadge referred to gems in the Burnham Library, dwelling on Louis Sullivan's series of twenty plates, "A System of Architectural Ornament;" Percier and Fontaine; Piranesi; Robert Adam original publications; Vitruvius, 1513-21;

Asher Benjamin, 1797.

President Roberts felicitated Mr. Tallmadge on the knowing and graceful way he had conducted the meeting.

Chicago Building Congress Organized

Some 225 men representing architects, engineers, general contractors, sub-contractors, realtors, home builders, mortgage finance, labor, material equipment manufacturers, and building and material equipment dealers, dined together at the Palmer House on December 13, 1938 for the purpose of creating a Chicago Building Congress. There is a need, it was felt, for an organization to view the building industry as a whole and dedicate its time and efforts to the promotion of activity in building. In New York City, Boston, and Washington, D. C. such building congresses have been organized and have proved their worth.

At each man's plate were cards requesting attendants to fill in their name, address and occupation and at the bottom a typed application for membership in the Congress, requiring the applicant's signature. Each participant also found the proposed constitution and by-laws of the Chicago Building Congress.

The speech-making began with Elmer C. Jensen, Chairman of the meeting and well-known Chicago architect, reading a paper which explained in detail the purpose of the Congress. Mr. Jensen was followed by Thomas S. Holden, President of the New York Building Congress and Vice-President of the F. W. Dodge Corporation. Mr. Holden's paper gave an outline history of the move of building congresses, dwelling particularly upon the activities and achievements of the New York Congress.

After Mr. Holden came Paul D. Angell, Vice-President of the Chicago Real Estate Board. His paper dwelt upon the constitution and by-laws found in mimeograph form at each diner's place. Mr. Angell is the author of the scheme for public service building corporations, explained in detail and discussed at the September meeting of the Illinois Society of Architects. Housing and slum clearance under private initiative were dwelt upon in his talk.

George C. Nimmons, well-known architect of Chicago, came next with a resolution of approval of the constitution and by-laws, and also proposed officers for the Congress which the meeting was to vote upon. He stated further that application for a charter would be made.

Before his resolution was put to a vote of the meeting, two representatives of organized labor spoke, explaining that they were not empowered to vote. While neither found objections to the aims of the Congress as presented, organized labor must have time to consider the constitution and by-laws. The matter was too new for them to express any opinion before further study.

John Holabird, prominent architect of Chicago, spoke on the necessity of such a Congress for the City of Chicago as proposed. Oscar Rosenthal, well-known builder and gifted orator, read a paper with citations from his experiences on arbitration boards and the like where builder and building labor were involved. His statements were an encouragement to success, though he pointed out the possibilities of failure based on certain earlier organizations.

Chairman Jensen closed the meeting on a hopeful, happy note of the building industry's revival and progress.

Note: Subsequent to the meeting, the Chicago Building Trades Council was the first organization to make application and pay for membership in the Chicago Building Congress, Inc.

The high importance of the Anglo-Norman school as perhaps the most advanced and progressive of all the branches of northern Romanesque has only recently been fully appreciated. That in this school first appeared the structural scheme from which the full Gothic system was eventually to be evolved is now generally admitted and its consequent importance can hardly be overrated. In the southern French schools the system of roofing by barrel-vaults was generally in use, and though in Burgundy the alternative system of groined vaulting, permitting full clerestory lighting, was sometimes adopted, even here it never became the normal method. The school of northeast France remained backward in this respect, and it was only when a system of ribbed vaulting had been evolved in the Norman school that it was adopted in the Ile-de-France.

—A. W. Clapham.

Maginnis on Outstanding Problem

Charles D. Maginnis of Boston, president of the American Institute of Architects, declares "ugly communities" the nation's outstanding artistic problem.

"The place which the architect should occupy in the revived order is of public no less than professional concern. He has clearly played too inadequate a part in the national life hitherto, having in mind the challenge to his capacities, which is indicated in many communal problems that are still waiting intelligent address.

"In the increasing discussion of its revolutionary aspects, I believe the public is getting a clearer sense of the immediacy of architecture. It is often assumed to represent the sum of building, rather than the quality of it. We have buildings enough, but only here and there have what we can properly recognize as architecture. We have beautiful units in our streets but, as a rule, ugly communities.

"The average man regards his individual environment as a matter of consequence. He will make sacrifice for an attractive home. If he lives in the suburbs, this concern will extend so as to include his neighborhood also. His city is another matter. He is entirely complacent about it; he has developed for it a peculiar sort of patriotism, which is a singularly sensitive passion. For instance, he derives a positive unction from the congestion of his community and the implication that it has arrived at the dignity of having traffic problems of particular inscrutability.

"We will encounter some oasis of architectural respectability, articulated by occasional items of monumental sculpture, which we too easily accept as adequate symbol of the civic consciousness. The rest is nondescription. The talent is copiously available in America by which our cities can be brought to the impressive standards of order which obtain in the best communities of Europe.

"The architectural profession, which is supremely qualified for this challenge, has so far been permitted to deal with units of the city scene rather than with the whole of it. It must be enlisted into this larger relationship with local government if our cities are to vindicate the pretensions of our national culture."

—From the "New York Sun."

Write Your Own Headline

In the first column of the "Chicago Tribune's" editorial page of November 7, there appears under the caption "Narrow and Shallow," the following editorial:

"Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright is reported to have informed the youth gathered to hear him at William and Mary college that the restoration of Williamsburg 'shows how narrow, how shallow life was in colonial days.' If the speaker intended to give his class a demonstration of narrow and shallow thinking, he chose his remarks well. It is a pity he was given the opportunity at a college. There are too many young people who have been encouraged by the narrow and shallow thinking of malcontent elders to blame their forbears for everything in life that doesn't please them.

"Mr. Wright says he has 'long ceased to take off his hat to our forefathers, seeing what a mess they left us.' We can't deny they or some of them left us Mr. Wright, but we are not cruel enough to blame them for Mr. Wright's opinions. We don't think those opinions important except as illustrating the propensity of the immature to shirk responsibility. There is nothing narrower or shallower than the implication of Mr. Wright's contempt for 'our forefathers'—namely: that they were in duty bound to hand over to us a perfect world and foolproof institutions.

"There are plenty of signs of a deteriorated morale among our people under the influence of recent years and none is less creditable than the prevalence of the squawk. The mess which Mr. Wright dislikes has been made not by our forefathers, but by the bogus prophets of today who hold them in contempt and depart from their wiser ways. The 'narrow and shallow life of the colonial days' produced Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, and the statesmen who sent forth the declaration and drew the constitution, all sprung from the 'narrow and shallow' life of the colonies; likewise a stock whose character and achievements our generation would be the better for remembering and respecting. The eighteenth century was far from narrow or superficial except to narrow and superficial thinking, and as to Mr. Wright's reactions to its taste we may leave that to Mr. Wright. Williamsburg will not be torn down because he does not approve it."

Washington's Share is $200,000,000

Washington, D. C. has a $200,000,000 building boom, not "just around the corner," but here, and—by way of extreme contrast—the clearing of the terrible slums.

Not until recently have I realized the magnitude of the work to be immediately undertaken. Examination will show how extensive and diversified are the projects. And they are all commendable. They have all passed the acid test of the planning commissions and appropriation committees and the money necessary is definitely available.

Traffic through Rock Creek Park is growing constantly. A congested grade-crossing is to be eliminated by another beautiful stone bridge. Paul Cret made a thing of beauty of the last one built, over Rock Creek at Calvert Street.

A first real attempt to relieve the hazardous pin-wheel traffic at principal circles is to be tackled at Thomas Circle by depressing Massachusetts Avenue under 14th Street. Incidentally, to compare the present mad whirl of automobile traffic with the leisurely movement of the horse and buggy days before the war is to have a fine index of the relative tempo of the times. If one takes time out to think, though, he cannot help wondering if it is all advancement.

The development of the Municipal Center north of the intersection of Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, in itself the biggest, single municipal improvement yet undertaken here, will relieve overcrowded courts and municipal departments. The development of the Northwest Rectangle, centered around the intersection of Virginia and New York Avenues, west of the Ellipse, is most striking. It will soon eclipse the Federal Triangle, if not in accommodations provided, easily in conception and design. Only a few years ago no visitor to Washington ever heard of this section of the city, it being largely negro shacks, "Foggy Bottom," down by the gas works.

The east side of this development is now formed by the recently completed Interior Building and the older Pan American Union. The southern side of the rectangle is composed of the Public Health Service, Federal Reserve Board, National Academy of Sciences, and Pharmaceutical buildings—a commanding group in themselves, all facing Constitution Avenue, though properly separated. The new War Department building will be located west of 21st Street, opposite the new Interior building, to be backed by a new Naval Hospital and Navy building, facing the Potomac. The old State, War and Navy building will soon house only the State Department. When the new War Department building is completed, the Munitions building will have its life span definitely terminated, so the Northwest Rectangle will face the Mall without obstruction.

In spite of the furore about losing a relatively small number of cherry trees, the Jefferson Memorial will be built approximately where L'Enfant intended such a structure should be, opposite the White House, the Mall forming the upright. South of the Mall, near the Capitol, will be located new quarters for the Social Security Administration and Railroad Retirement Board, while the waterfront on Washington Channel will have its face cleaned and lifted.

East of the Capitol, that part of the city which the Capitol faces and where it was anticipated the city would first develop, improvements will consist of enlargement of the Navy Yard and a new bridge over the Anacostia River. Another major improvement, not in the present approved list, is the entrance into the city of a wide express highway through the Anacostia River valley from Baltimore.

Southeast of the city proper, on the Virginia shore of the Potomac, an extensive area is to be filled in to accommodate a large airport. Such an improvement is so badly needed as to have threatened the closing of all existing landing fields as too dangerous.

The Washington Memorial Driveway to Mount Vernon is to be extended some five miles south to Gunstan Hall, a famous Colonial estate with a formal garden. The drive is also being extended north past the Key bridge in Georgetown.

Nearly finished in the immediate environs of the city are a Navy Model Testing Basin, near Great Falls, Va., Marine Barracks at Quantico, Va., Cancer Institute and National Institute of Health at Bethesda, Md., Agriculture Research at Bettsville, Md. and Public Roads Research Laboratory near Alexandria, Va.

All of these projects and more have been approved and money to the extent of nearly $150,000,000 is available. Some $60,000,000 will be spent in the area on private construction, largely residential, within a year, so that it may be said that a $200,000,000 building boom is now on in Washington!

Turning from millions to less than nothing, my second theme is far less pleasant to contemplate, yet one which demands attention, namely, the slums of Washington. With all the beautiful buildings we look upon with such pride, Washington has some of the worst slums in the country festering in its midst.

The particular reason for the beginning of Washington's slums is probably a little different than in other cities. In the early days of the city, servants for a household were housed in a separate building back of the mansion and facing on an alley. Good enough in themselves at the time, as the city grew the number of alley dwellings grew, though of an increasingly poor type, with less and less maintenance, until they and the neighborhood became disreputable. Some good work has been done by a so-called Alley Dwelling Authority, appointed by Congress about five years ago, but its power was limited. Recently the President approved a loan to the A. D. A. by the U. S. Housing Authority of $6,600,000 toward four slum clearance projects in the Capital, as a real start.

The objections commonly raised against the USHA program are gradually being disproved by actual projects as they are developed. Mistakes will be made as in any new endeavor, no matter how commendably attempted, but fundamentally they have been few and of minor importance. Slums are being cleared and many a family is being decently housed who formerly lived in filth with no hope of improving its condition.

You will recall the study made on the proposed Blackhawk project, back of the Gold Coast in Chicago, which had to be abandoned because of land sharks. Official municipal records showed that the area in question paid the city in taxes only 6% of what it actually cost the city to furnish the area fire and police protection, schools, courts, utilities, etc. The rest of the city, of course, paid the remaining 94 per cent, but did not know it.

This purely economic phase is sufficient argument to justify slum clearance as now being done, even without consideration of the human phases. And the claimed interference with private real estate interests has often been proved to be the bunk.

—F. Charles Starr, Washington, D. C.

Big Block Building by Ancients

The passion for dealing with great boulders dates back to the Neolithic, or New Stone Age, when Europeans and other widely scattered groups had enough team spirit or sufficiently strong dictators to engineer a big project. These took the form of giant stone tables constructed over graves. Boulders up to 18 feet long were used.

By 1800 B. C. England's natives were building great stone circles, and some geologists believe that they must have transported some stones all the way from Wales, over 100 miles away, to Stonehenge. These "imported" boulders altogether weighed almost 100 tons.

Meanwhile, Egyptians specializing in obelisks were moving, by sledge and boat, enormous stone needles bashed out of the quarry. Five hundred tons was their best record, though they began work on one much larger. Beside this figure, the building blocks of the Great Pyramid, averaging a mere two and a half tons, seem tiny. But they make up for it in quantity: over two million such blocks in that pyramid alone.

Mayan Indians in American tropics set up towering monoliths, richly carved. Bolivian Indians made a nine ton monolithic gateway. Easter Island's natives carved more than 600 great stone faces, 20, 30, even 70 feet tall. On the Island of Yap, stone cartwheels too big to move around became money.

And modern America adds its contribution by carving superheroic sized presidents on a Dakota cliff.

—Science News Letter.

National Exhibition of Representative Buildings

In Blackstone Hall, The Art Institute of Chicago, was shown from January 8 to 29, inclusive, what the creators call "The National Exhibition of Representative Buildings of the Post-War Period." This is the second section of the national exhibit. Its circulation is managed by the American Federation of Arts. The assembling of this exhibition is the work of the Committee on Education of the American Institute of Architects. This Committee has as its chairman Mr. C. C. Zantzinger of Philadelphia, and Dean William Emerson of M. I. T. as vice-chairman. The Committee is composed of well-known men who have won their spurs in the practice of architecture and in education

This exhibit is of particular interest to architects because of the selection made from an enormous field. Most of the examples shown are well known. Below are listed, with the architects' names, most of the exhibits.

Federal Buildings in Washington, D. C.

Federal Trade Commission (Bennett, Parsons & Frost); Departments of Labor, Interior and Commerce (Arthur Brown, Jr.); Federal Reserve Board (Paul Cret); Post Office Department (Delano & Aldrich); Archives Building (Office of John Russell Pope); Interior Department (Waddy Wood); Commerce (York & Sawyer); Justice (Zantzinger & Borie); Internal Revenue and Bureau of Engraving (Supervising Architect's Office); U. S. Post Offices and Court Houses designed by architects in the Procurement Division, Supervising Architect's Office. There are aerial views showing orientation of buildings.

State and Other Government Buildings

Ramsey County Court House and St. Paul City Hall (Holabird & Root); North Dakota State Capitol (De Remer & Kurke with Holabird & Root, Assoc.); Hartford County, Conn. Court House (Paul Cret with Smith & Bassette); Forest Products Laboratory, Madison (Holabird & Root).

Municipal Auditoriums

Kansas City (Alonzo Gentry, Voskamp & Neville, Hoit, Price & Barnes); Oklahoma City (J. O. Parr); San Antonio, Texas (Ayres & Ayres).

Office and Business Buildings

Rockefeller Center, New York; American Bank and Trust Company, Philadelphia (Davis, Dunlap & Barney); Field Building, Chicago (Graham, Anderson, Probst & White); Daily News Building, Chicago (Holabird & Root); Chicago Tribune and New York News (Howells, Hood & Fouilhoux); Empire State Building, New York (Shreve, Lamb & Harmon); 450 Sutter St., San Francisco (Miller & Pflueger); Northwestern Bell Telephone Building, Minneapolis (Hewitt & Brown and Rhodes Robertson); Beekman Tower, New York (John Mead Howells); Irving Trust Bldg., New York (Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker); Kress & Company Bldg., New York (Edward F. Sibbert).

Libraries and Memorial Buildings

At Pasadena, Cal.; Baltimore, Md.; Westbury, Long Island (Tilton & Githens); at Los Angeles, Cal. (Goodhue); Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D. C. (Paul Cret); Indiana War Memorial, Indianapolis (Walker & Weeks); Joslyn Memorial, Omaha (John and Alan McDonald); Bok Singing Tower, Florida (Milton B. Medary); Art Museum, Seattle (Bebb & Gould); Goodhue's Spanish Renaissance Dome, erected for the 1915 San Diego Exposition, with post-War annexes by Cram & Ferguson.

Churches

Grace Ev. Lutheran Church, River Forest, Illinois (Tallmadge & Watson); Our Lady of Lourdes, Los Angeles (L. G. Scherer); Church of St. Joseph, Seattle (Albertson, Wilson & Richardson); Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, Interior (Cram & Ferguson).

Engineering Works with Architect Consultants

Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco (Strauss & Paine, Inc.); Boulder Dam Power House (Gordon B. Kaufmann).

The genesis of the exhibit is found in a request to the A. I. A. more than two years ago from the Royal Institute of British Architects for an exhibition of contemporary American architecture to be shown in the R. I. B. A. Building in London. The Committee on Education started to work on this, but finding a representative show would pass beyond the bounds of an exhibit such as the R. I. B. A. contemplated, the London show was dropped but the Committee continued its labors.

More than one thousand buildings were submitted by officials and directors of the A. I. A., Chapters, unaffiliated practicing architects, and architectural schools. The specific intent was to choose representative buildings, irrespective of school, style, or individual. The exhibit is booked on a two year tour, with showings in all principal cities, schools and universities in this country. Its purpose is educational.

I. K. Pond Writing Autobiography

The April-May '38 Bulletin recorded I. K. Pond's unexpected contact with a moving auto truck. This unexpected meeting happened on March 15 and for about two months Mr. Pond lay in St. Luke's Hospital with a 5-inch long stainless steel triangular-section spike driven through his thighbone. The jar of the collision was deleterious to his organism and so another two months were spent in bed at home recuperating. Then came auto rides, first to a circus and then through Chicago's parks. He visited his clubs again occasionally.

In the meantime he was busy writing and collecting earlier writings with the result that on December 15 many of his friends received a new volume of writings from his hand entitled "A Strange Fellow and Other Club Papers" by Irving K. Pond. This compilation of nine delightful essays, read before the Chicago Literary Club, on nine different subjects, shows the catholicity of Mr. Pond's interests.

This is I. K.'s third volume; the first "The Meaning of Architecture" (A. Kroch, Chicago); the second "Big Top Rhythms, A Study in Life and Art" (Willett, Clark & Company, Chicago-New York, 1937); and the present volume (privately printed by Willett, Clark & Company, 1938).

But Mr. Pond today is busier than ever, though no longer in the active practice of architecture. He is writing his autobiography and what he will have to say of his experiences and contacts with men in architecture and in other fields is looked forward to with avidity by his fellow architects and his many other friends. This autobiography will most likely see the light in 1939.

Is Registration a Protective Measure?

It is claimed that architectural registration laws are enacted to protect the public against harm that might result from the design and construction of buildings by unqualified persons. That is the excuse for the law, but probably not the real purpose. Most likely its real purpose is, in effect, an attempt to create a monopoly in the design of buildings for the benefit of architects. Incidentally, as a part of the monopoly, it is intended to prevent architects outside a state from competing within a state which has registration laws unless they also take out a license or become "registered".

To show that this protective tariff idea is prevalent, a quotation from a high official of one of the states may be cited, as follows: "We are surrounded by states which have strict architectural registration laws which make it imperative that the architects of this state protect themselves also with registration laws. Otherwise the architects from without our state would come over our state lines, while architects from our state could not work in other states where such laws exist."

This seems to be a plain statement of what is probably the real purpose of registration laws, and there does not seem to be much consideration for the safety of the "dear public" in it.

—Victor A. Matteson.

The International Council of Religious Education at its annual meeting at the Stevens Hotel, Chicago, the week of February 6 to 11, will have an exhibit of church architecture photographs. Architects desiring to exhibit should communicate with Edward F. Jansson, Architect, 740 Rush Street, Chicago.

Cologne Cathedral

Every architect, of course, and every traveler, and everyone who looks at photographs, knows Cologne Cathedral—at least in silhouette. The architect knows that this medieval monument dates back to the 12th century and before; that it was built piece by piece through some hundreds of years and that it was finished in our day; that it is perhaps the only great fane existing that has been carried out consistently from the beginning to the end, following one and the same plan. This plan is today on view in one of the appendages of the cathedral.

The cathedral stands on the northeast corner of what was the Colonia Agrippina. Its north side foundations rest upon the foundations of the ancient Roman town. The site is an artificial mound raised by the ruins of buildings dating from the Roman and Frankish periods. On this spot stood the capitol, the Forum, and the Temple of Mercury. Agrippina, the mother of Nero, was born in Cologne.

The first historically authenticated church erected on this site was dedicated to St. Peter in the 6th century and existed in the time of Charlemagne and Bishop Hildebold. The church of St. Peter fell a prey to flames early in 1248. In August of the same year, the foundation stone for the present structure was laid. Who the architect at that time was will probably never be known. Tradition mentions the Dominican friar Albertus Magnus as the inventor of the plan. Arnold carried on the building of the choir (1295-1301). There is a record of the architects, beginning in 1330 to about 1469.

In 1347 the erection of nave piers and walls and the southern tower was commenced. Then followed a period of stagnation. In 1437 the south tower was ready for the bells and this is the stage that it remained in until 1868, when the old derrick, erected during the 15th century, for hoisting building material, was finally removed.

In the 16th century the northern aisle of the nave was completed and in 1560 all work came to a standstill. In the 18th and first years of the 19th centuries, the edifice had reached a very low estate.. Plundered within and without, it was converted into a storehouse for forage in the time of Napoleon I. Wordsworth wrote of it:

"O for the help of angels to complete
This Temple—Angels governed by a plan
Thus far pursued (how gloriously!) by man,
Studious that He might not disdain the seat
Who dwells in heaven! But that aspiring heat
Hath failed; and now, ye Powers! whose gorgeous wings
And splendid aspect yon emblazonings
But faintly picture, 't were an office meet
For you, on these unfinished shafts to try
The midnight virtues of your harmony."

Germany's political and industrial misfortunes carried on after Napoleon. With the rediscovery of the original plan toward the middle of the 19th century, Sulpiz Boisserée published a magnificent work on the cathedral. This gave impetus to the interest taken in the restoration and completion of the edifice. The Prussian government granted a modest annual subsidy for its restoration, begun about 1830. The idea of finishing the building became more and more vivid and took deep root in the popular mind.

In September, 1842 the Prussian king laid the stone marking the continuation of the structure toward completion. From that time forward, progress was surprisingly rapid. By the end of 1849, the entire south facade, with its delicate tracery and finials, was finished and the north front well along. The roof construction of iron, as well as the center tower, was finished in October, 1855. Ernst Zwirner, the architect at that time in charge, placed the golden star over the spire of the central tower on October 15, 1860. Thirty years Zwirner had spent as chief architect of the cathedral. He died in 1861 and was succeeded by Richard Voigtel, who had been employed on the cathedral work since 1855. In 1863 the cathedral was finally available for use.

The Franco-Prussian war in 1870-71 was a disturbing influence. Twenty-two bronze cannon, captured by the German army, weighing 25 tons, were presented to the building committee who had them melted and recast into one large bell. This bell weighs 27 tons.

On August 14, 1880, Cologne proclaimed to the world that the cathedral was finished, 632 years, to a day, after the laying of the first stone.

The day of the Olympian artist is past, for which we breathe a sigh of relief, for it may be truthfully said that the Olympian outlook has not had too happy an effect on the profession and on the public.

To be more specific, while the architect has in the past strained to impress a wealthy and perhaps ephemeral clientele, he has all but forgotten the two true main sources of his supply—the general public, by and large, and those institutions of finance which actually decide what and how much money may go into the building industry.

The architect would do well to cultivate these two elements of the body politic. He would do well to learn their wishes, their points of view, their problems, and persuade them (the general public and the financiers) that the architect is indispensable to the general welfare.

—Edmund Randolph Purves, Philadelphia.

A Correction

In the obituary notice of Charles Z. Klauder, appearing in the December-January Bulletin, Mr. Klauder was credited with being the architect of "a large dormitory group on the south side of the Midway" for the University of Chicago. Emery B. Jackson, architect for the University of Chicago, advises that the dormitory group had for its architect C. C. Zantzinger of Zantzinger, Borie and Medary, Philadelphia; that Mr. Klauder was the architect of Eckhart Hall on the main campus of the University at 5734 University Avenue.

On January 26, 1939, Alderman McDermott, Chairman of the Council Sub-Committee on Building Code of the Chicago Common Council, declared Chicago's new code completed with the seven final chapters adopted by the Common Council. The Code sets up a Commission to be appointed by the mayor, consisting of three aldermen, three engineers or architects, and the building commissioner, to function as a reviewing body for amendments to the Code.

John W. Weiss, Chicago architect, died in his Wilmette home on November 25, age 70 years. Mr. Weiss had been an industrial architect in Chicago for nearly half a century. His earlier years were spent in the offices of Heul and Schmid, D. H. Burnham & Company, Frank Jobson, and later a partnership with Frank Davidson was established, under the firm name of Davidson and Weiss, Architects. For the last fifteen years his firm was Weiss & Niestadt.

Mr. Weiss joined the Illinois Society of Architects in June, 1915 and was a member at his death. He was a director of the Society from 1925 to 1928.

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Kenneth M. Murchison, architect, commentator, banker and humorist, died during the Christmas holidays at his home in New York, age 66. A New Yorker by birth, he graduated from Columbia University, studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris, was architect of Delaware, Lackawanna and Western terminals at Hoboken and Buffalo and architect of Baltimore Union Station. His practice took him all along the Atlantic Coast as far as Havana, Cuba. Past-President, Architectural League of New York; Fellow, A. I. A.

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Carl F. Gould, architect, whose work is found in many sections of this country, died at Seattle, Washington, January 5, age 65. Born in New York City; graduated at Harvard; studied at Beaux Arts, Paris; served in the offices of McKim, Mead & White and George B. Post. He had charge of the State Capitol at Madison for Architect Post; assistant to D. H. Burnham & Company in the San Francisco plan; moved to Seattle, Washington in 1908; established Department of Architecture, University of Washington, 1914 and was professor in charge 1914-26. He was architect for a number of government buildings in the northwest, including U. S. Marine Hospital. Member of the American Institute of Architects and ex-president of the Washington Chapter.