

Journal of The American Institute of
ARCHITECTS



JEAN LOUIS PASCAL

August, 1950

Alert

President Walker's Address to the Convention

Adam, Bdam, Cdam and the Slums—I

Standardization and Low-Cost Homes—I

Style and Styling

Confessions of an Architect—I

Regional Planning and the Small Town—II

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JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

WITH THE AIM OF AMPLIFYING
AS THROUGH A MICROPHONE
THE VOICE OF THE PROFESSION

AUGUST, 1950

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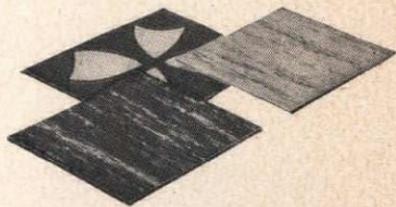
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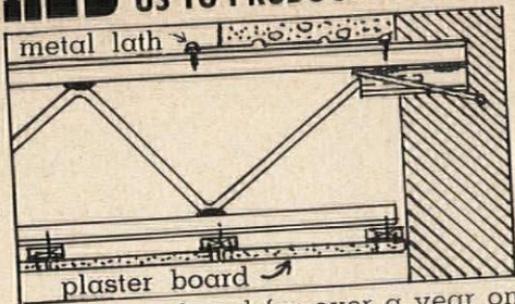
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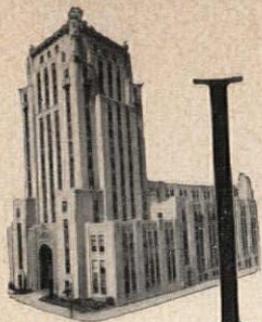
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TWENTY years bring changes--changes far greater in our fast-moving world than ever happened in Rip Van Winkle's day.

Americans are awakening to unpalatable facts--that the enterprise system which built our nation and made it strong is being subtly undermined; that advocates of backdoor socialism and communism thrive in our midst; most dangerous of all, that our young people are misinformed on economics.

For example, a recent survey of high school seniors reveals that they estimated that it takes only an \$81 investment to provide a job. Actually, as shown by the 1947 census, the 2256 establishments of the iron and steel

industry invested \$545 per worker that year alone in new plant and equipment. Total investment to provide one job runs well above \$10,000.

These youth had a similarly distorted picture of profits. They believe shareholders receive 24% of the sales dollar whereas they receive an average of less than 3%.

Misinformed minds are a ready field for imported false philosophies. And it is up to you, a business leader in your community, to take responsibility toward correcting these misunderstandings. The American businessman must not permit himself to be lost in Rip Van Winkle befuddlement.



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• ALERT •

IT has become increasingly obvious that the Korean situation is not temporary, that the American people must become thoroughly prepared for any war eventuality. This may mean, in a brief time, a dislocation of our civilian economy, and it will be especially evident in the allocation of materials—most of which are component parts of building. The Convention, aware of this early in the year, empowered the President to appoint a Committee under the head of National Defense. Mr. Douglas Orr, realizing the gravity of the present situation, has agreed to become its Chairman and a small executive committee has been appointed. This Committee will be broadened to include members throughout The Institute as a whole.

The members of the staff and your President have already met to discuss plans of cooperation with several Government officials immediately affected and will continue to build up the necessary contacts. This program will require hard work on the part of your President, Mr. Orr and the staff.

It is Important:

(1) that the members of the profession prepare careful experience records in such form that they not only will be impressive but that they can be left as records when the individual architect visits the Governmental agencies. Those architects who already have such experience records on file with Governmental agencies should

make every attempt to bring them up to date. We have been informed that few, if any, are in such shape. The Octagon would also like to build a file of these reports.

(2) By September 1, we will send out a postcard questionnaire concerning military and war experiences. It will be helpful to

When in Washington get in touch with The Octagon.

the Committee if the return post-card is immediately acted upon and returned. The present roster is both incomplete and largely out of date.

(3) The first pages of the JOURNAL will be used every month, until further notice, for news concerning activities and how architects can render professional aid to the Governmental agencies.

(4) If there are civilian defense committees being organized in your

neighborhood, insist on having one or more architects on them.

If the architectural profession is to be effectively used during this great effort, we must be prepared to cooperate fully among ourselves and with the Government. We can be proud of our efforts in the last war. What we now hope to do is have architects engaged earlier this time. May I, as your President, have your help?

RALPH WALKER

President Walker's Address To the 82nd Convention

The address has been excerpted to make room for the Alert.

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY that I have been greatly helped during my term of office by the willing and friendly help of the members of The Board and the staff at The Octagon.

I believe we are entering into a period of greater public esteem for the individual architect and the profession as a whole. I believe we as a profession are gaining in competence and in the desire to serve well the public—our client.

In welcoming you here to Washington, it is my pleasure to afford you the services of The Octagon and the Administration Building, which was so generously and in

large part given us by Mr. Dan Everett Waid—and whose memory we must always think of in the building.

For the first time in my long experience and relationships with the A.I.A., our Octagon properties are in first-class condition. They have been refurnished and refurnished to the extent that we may well be proud of our national home here in Washington.

I wish to call your attention to The Octagon House itself—which is one of the outstanding buildings in America and of which we should be very proud that we possess it—and the idea which

AUGUST, 1950

underlies the use of it and the garden. There are many times here in Washington when the hospitality of the A.I.A. is offered to distinguished people, both in the Government and visitors from foreign countries. We have never been able to do other than offer them this hospitality in hotels and other such public places. It will redound to our esteem as a national organization that we have now a gracious place where people of taste and understanding may find us in a hospitable mood.

There are one or two items of The Board's report that I wish to stress. One is the Commission on Architectural Education and Registration. At the Houston Convention, a resolution was offered by the Chicago Chapter instructing The Board to make a comprehensive study of registration laws and the possibility of having them more unified than they now are. I, as your President, in looking over the matter came to the conclusion that there were also problems related to the schools and the profession itself, as well as to that which was the point of reference for the proposed study. With the permission of The Board of Directors, a commission was appointed to undertake in the broadest pos-

sible manner a thorough investigation of our architectural education needs and procedures. Dr. Edwin Burdell, Director of Cooper Union in New York, was asked to be the impartial chairman of this commission, and three members of the Association of Collegiate Schools, three members of the Association of Registration Boards, and three members of our profession as practitioners, together with a member from the Accrediting Board, were asked to become members of the commission. The commission is now in action.

May I pause for a moment for a note of appreciation to the older men of the profession who so well served The Institute on the Committee of Education, and under whose leadership so many activities were developed.

I would like to stress the use of the Standard Accounting Forms. It has been said many times to me that the architect does not keep adequate books and is unable to truly determine his costs. The work of the committee, under the leadership of the chairman, Mr. David Baer, has done a very remarkable job, and those members of The Board who have started to use these forms find them very acceptable.

In my visits to the chapters and the regional meetings I have been quite convinced that a Field Secretary is not a necessary position in The Institute. I believe that the President and Vice Presidents and the upper members of the staff who determine policy should be a visiting team which visits separately different parts of the country.

To return to the work of the A.I.A. at the Washington headquarters and that accomplished on the chapter level, I believe that we have come to a point in national dues where we must adjust our program to meet our budget. Unless this Convention will otherwise instruct The Board, I believe it desirable to maintain the present dues for at least the next year or so, with the idea that those chapters who wish to engage in larger activities in both educational and publicity fields will raise their own dues to accomplish this work locally.

I asked a committee to undertake a study of Fellowship procedure. I have heard criticisms as to how often injustices are brought about by a lack of knowledge of the reputation of applicants in their different localities. There is also a feeling that the Fellowship ceremony is undignified

—that the citations often verged on the ludicrous. This committee has reported to The Board and suggested that a College of Fellows be formed, with the purpose of defining the qualities of Fellowship, sponsoring the application, suggesting the character of the material to be submitted by the applicant to the Jury of Fellows for consideration, and finally to conduct the ceremonies at the annual banquet; The Board insists, however, that the Jury of Fellows be maintained.

I wish to especially commend the long patience of Allan Neal, Wilbur Tusler, and James Mitchell, members of The Board, in carrying on the disagreeable duties of being on the Judiciary Committee. The by-laws submitted for your attention have been rearranged so as to ease up the increasing demands for self-sacrifice on the part of this committee.

I close with appreciation of the sacrifice made by the members of The Institute, whether in the work of the chapters, or the regions, or on a national level. Very often this sacrifice is large indeed, and the return is compensated only by the realization of the value of the work and the good fellowship which exists within our profession.

Adam, Bdam, Cdam and the Slums

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

By *Stayton Nunn*

Excerpts from a paper read at the Third Annual Symposium of Engineers' Council of Houston, Tex., May 6, 1950.

WE LIVE around the edges of our slums. We drive around the edges of our slums. We improve the streets around the edges of our slums. And we talk around the edges of our slum problems.

This morning I propose to keep my remarks close to the cores of our slum problems as I see them.

I have only one picture to show you. It is an economic and political picture, drawn in the engineer's own sign language. Unless you have sought first to face the economic and political picture frankly, there is, in my opinion, little to be gained from looking at any of the other slum-depicting or slum-antidote pictures an architect might draw.

Slums probably began sometime during the genesis of man; they probably developed naturally and inevitably along with man.

For want of an accepted story telling of the first slum, let me offer an allegory fabricated specially for this occasion. In deference to the customs of engineers,

I will try not to stretch the probable truth beyond its unknown elastic limit.

Bdam was a contemporary of Adam. Bdam was barely able, according to Adam's standards, to make a whole living for his family even in the secure environment of the Garden of Eden. When Adam's original social security expired and he had to go out and seek his own security in the natural world, Bdam followed him from force of habit.

Out where man was man Adam and Bdam encountered Cdam. Cdam was a cunning and powerful man. He was well adapted to the original capitalistic, free-enterprise environment.

Now, lest the telling of this story arouse animosity toward Cdam, let me point out he had to be cunning enough not to zig when it was time to zag; he had to be powerful enough to fight the beasts or to outrun them; and he had to be somewhat ruthless in dealing with some of his fellow animals,

who were not all his playmates. Else he would not have been there when Adam and Bdam came out to share with him the fortunes and misfortunes of the natural world.

Fortunately, when Adam was unable to outwit Cdam, he could outrun him. Unfortunately, poor Bdam could neither outfight, outwit nor outrun Cdam. Adam was kept so busy saving his own skin that he could be of no help to Bdam. It did not occur to Adam and Bdam at that early date to try to induce or force Cdam to enter with them into some kind of democratic arrangement under which they could outvote him.

Presently, in the natural course of human events, Bdam was reduced to slavery. Then he observed that Adam was still relatively free. Then Bdam began to think of himself as an inferior minority, without help and without hope. It was then that Bdam stopped curling his beard, stopped painting his cave and allowed his cave and its surroundings to become positively and actively squalid. Thus Bdam and his family became the first ill-housed third of the population.

But Bdam's cave was not called a slum. He and his family be-

came accustomed to it. Remote as it was from Cdam's and Adam's caves, the well-housed majority of the population could neither see it nor smell it.

Correlations between Bdam's low productivity and his status of enslavement were not obvious. Neither was it obvious that his de-vitalizing and demoralizing living circumstances reduced his productivity even as a slave. There were, on the contrary, many obvious correlations between his circumstances and the ease with which he could be kept in servitude.

Here, somewhat beyond the dawn of history my allegory ends.

Whatever the genesis of slums may have been, it would be fruitless to reproach our ancestors for this part of our heritage. Today the slums we have inherited challenge us; tomorrow the slums we are generating will in turn challenge our children.

As cities evolved, with slums that could not be hidden, there evolved also humanitarian consciousness, civic pride and kindred forces. These appear to have induced recognition of slums and related ills as symptoms of public disease, but they appear not to have been strong enough to force public treatment.

Although many gathering forces contributed, it required the combined resultants of modern democracy and industrialization, the developments of the natural sciences and of public education, and, finally, the impact of the first world war, to bring about enough public awareness of slum problems, and at the same time enough of the kind of political force required to start worldwide groping experiments in the democracies with the common objective of doing something about the slums.

Let me ask you to take for granted that close to five million government-subsidized dwellings in about twenty years were not brought to the industrialized western democracies by the stork. Then let me assure you that they did not come from Russia. In my view they came in naturally and inevitably with the tide of democracy. They were on their way long before the French Revolution.

During the time between the first and second world wars, a first European phase of a public rehousing movement produced more than nine-tenths and a second American phase less than one-tenth of a total of about five million new public housing units which were subsidized in various ways. Then,

until recently, World War II forced this movement to remain practically dormant, so far as its slum clearance objectives were concerned.

A short time after the close of World War I, at a time ripe for public reconstruction, the people holding the balance of political power in many European localities seem to have come simultaneously to these conclusions: that the living circumstances of slum dwellers constituted a menace to the majority who were not slum dwellers; that, unaided, the slum dwellers could do nothing about it; that reform having failed, it was time to try some new form of approach.

Early public rehousing calculations in Europe boiled down essentially to this: that the ill-housed minority in European cities constituted about a third of the urban population; that if the public were to undertake to rehouse these people decently, it would have to pay on the average about half of their rents in one way or another, or that the relative value of their incomes on the average would have to be doubled in some way or other.

Public-capital housing subsidy and public rent subsidy were prob-

ably as foreign to European individualistic free-enterprise ideals at that time as to ours. But expediencies were not nearly so foreign to Europeans nor so much dreaded by them as was Russia's Bolshevism. Any idea of pretending to try in any short span of time to raise the relative income level of a third of a national population to twice its value probably seemed just as hopeless and just as foolhardy to well-informed Europeans

then as it did to well-informed Americans. By contrast it appeared to them expedient to embark upon capital housing subsidy and public rent subsidy adventures.

They probably reasoned that, if the tangible and intangible costs of slums could be reckoned, it might be found that the cost of the slum disease had for years been more than the cost of treatments which might give promise of cure.

(To be concluded in September)

Honors

President Truman has appointed to membership on the Commission of Fine Arts the following architects: JOSEPH HUDNUT of Cambridge, PIETRO BELLUSCHI, F.A.I.A., of Portland, Ore., EDWARD FAIRFAX NEILD, F.A.I.A., of Shreveport, La., and, representing the sculptors, FELIX G. W. DE WELDON of Washington. These men replace the following whose terms had expired: William T. Aldrich, F.A.I.A., Boston; L. Andrew Reinhard, New York; Gilmore D. Clarke, New York; and Lee Lawrie of Easton, Md. The three additional members of the Commission are Frederick V. Murphy, F.A.I.A., Washington; Maurice Sterne, Mount Kisco, N. Y.;

and David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

JUAN FELIPE NAKPIL of the Philippines has been cited by the Alumni Association of the University of Kansas for his service as an architect, civil engineer, teacher and soldier. He was the organizer and first president of the Philippine Institute of Architects.

KIVETT & MYERS, architects of Kansas City, Mo., have received the Medal Award of the Kansas City Chapter, A.I.A., citing Macy's Kansas City store as the best local example in commercial design for the year 1949.

Standardization and Low-Cost Homes

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

By Lawrence A. Benenson

THE MOST UNPLEASANT SURPRISES are those that come upon us unaware. In years to come we will increasingly become conscious of a phase of American architecture contradictory to our way of life, yet inescapably part of it. When our house shortage is at last met, we may turn to each other and wonder what we were doing while millions upon millions of American families bought homes.

Almost all of our low-cost homes have become exactly the same!

The generations of posterity will find themselves in almost identical FHA bungalows—four rooms and bath on a small plot of ground.

The prime characteristic of any work of architecture, of course, is its plan. Unfortunately all of the plans of many hundreds of thousands of houses built every year to cost between, say \$5,000 and \$12,000, are the same. Some details may be different, but the plan is identical—four rooms and bath on one floor. There may be a basement and possibly an expandable attic, but these are not essential. The cheap models have neither

one, and the very expensive models have both, and perhaps even a touch of grace. But the spatial relationship never changes. The plan always has four rooms and one bath exactly alike. Kitchens may or may not be open to the living-room, depending on the builder's knowledge of "open" planning. Bedrooms may have a corner window and the living-room a picture window—other "modern" touches—but despite small individual differences, the fundamentals never vary. It seems to be about the only house America produces for anything like a moderate price.

The reason we may have overlooked the remarkable similarity of most homes now being built is that the magazines and books which show new small homes concentrate on the "different" ones. Naturally they can hardly repeat the same tired old formula over and over again and keep their readers interested. There are so few good low-cost new designs that we are inclined to exaggerate the importance of the exceptions to the rule. If you happen to study a great

number of houses actually being built (those *not* shown by the magazines) you have the eerie feeling that the plan is strikingly familiar. The same house is being built in every region of the country by every fair-sized builder for every family wanting a moderate-priced house. Oddly enough, the formula is not limited to conventional builders—the prefabricators have been even more anxious to jump on the bandwagon. In their understandable concern about public acceptance, they have hastened (with the exception of the Dymaxion experiment and a few similar failures) to set their draftsmen to retrace the same old room arrangement. Whatever revolutionary advances may have been promised by prefabrication, it certainly can hardly congratulate itself on its choice of plans.

The average man's family, looking for a house, has no real choice. There are very few speculative builders willing to try distinguished and different small homes, because they've found by experience it doesn't pay to pioneer into an uncharted realm. Most families, no matter what their incomes, are discouraged from custom-building by the specter of the immortal Mr. Blandings. The average potential

buyer is obliged either to stay where he is, or else buy that little old FHA four-room bungalow, just like everyone else he knows.

The usual house now produced by so many, ranges in size from 24' x 28' or 672 sq. ft. (the early TVA prefab is a good example), to about 28' x 32', or about 800 sq. ft. (the latest Levitt model). There is a living-room which runs from 165 sq. ft. to 210 sq. ft. The bedrooms in the smaller houses average 140 sq. ft. for the master bedroom and 110 for the children's room. Kitchens are generally 90 sq. ft. in size if the builder expects the buyer's family to eat in it; or if not, smaller, with a corresponding increase in size of the living-room to afford a place to dine. The plan of the house is generally exactly rectangular in shape, to avoid costly roof-framing problems.

The framing of the standard house is generally 2" x 4" studs, 16" on center, even in many prefab designs. Exterior finish is shingles or clapboards, generally of wood or asbestos shingles. The more expensive models may sport a brick veneer, or a few pieces of stone around the entrance. Roofs are asphalt shingles on a steep pitch, and the chimney is brick—one four-

inch with the surrounding a terracotta flue. Windows are variable, but most builders favor double-hung wood sash, and they try to provide at least one large fixed light, euphemistically called a "picture window." Interior finish is most often dry-wall, using 4' x 8' panels of gypsum board. More expensive models of this house are plastered (two coats on perforated gypsum lath) but the public has been found to be quite willing to accept the less expensive interior.

Mechanical equipment is no less standardized. The bathroom has the usual three fixtures, all in a line, almost invariably back to back with the kitchen, for economical piping. Heating is most often by forced warm air, although certain of the bigger builders have been successful with radiant heating directly in a concrete floor slab. The electrical system provides four circuits, using a 110/220 three-wire system. Ceiling outlets are provided in the bedrooms and kitchen, but not in the living-room, which has an added base receptacle instead. One factor that does vary slightly is the number of kitchen appliances, depending on what the builder can get in under the mortgage.

Certain of the very big operative builders have been successful in varying the same old design by introducing three rather than the more usual two bedrooms. With their ability to mass-produce, they have often succeeded in producing a total of five rooms while their smaller competitors can build only four for the same price. Levitt on Long Island (in a two-story model), Frank Sharp in Texas, and Kaiser on the West Coast, have each built a bigger and better home for their purchasers than the usual builder's bungalow described above, and have still stayed within middle-income budgets. These departures from the standard have been so well publicized, however, that the unwary reader would be inclined to think that everyone who wants a better home than the one I've described could have it easily. Actually, of course, the usual purchaser in a usual town somewhere in the United States cannot buy from Levitt, or Kaiser, or Burns. He buys the only model which his local builder can build, finance and sell, which always happens to be the same four rooms and bath.

The problem of housebuilding, it seems to me, is simple to express when we recognize the essential

character of today's house building. If the four-room bungalow is so popular—is, in fact the only house that middle-income families seem to get—can it be built at less cost to suit the budgets of low-income families? Further, if it does *not* suit everyone, can other houses than the standard one be built? Both objectives may be within our grasp if we set our sights on a realistic goal.

It seems to me that the best start would be to develop a series of products—standard and interchangeable—which could be used by all these houses now being built. For instance, if they have almost exactly the same width (say between 24 and 25 feet) why cannot a standard roof truss be designed which would fit all of them? If the bathrooms are all so alike, why could we not design *one* standard bathroom? The distance from the first to the second floor is almost identical for most low-cost houses (the standard 8'-high wall panel and 2" x 8" ceiling joists determine this distance), so a standard stair for each is quite feasible. An electrical "package" containing all the wiring, panel boards and outlets could be designed which would be suited to all at a vast saving in site labor. We all know

that a standard plumbing and venting stack is practical and has been used repeatedly by big prefabricators. Standard wall panels have been suggested, but the minor variations in size of each has prevented them up to now. A prefabricated standard chimney, perhaps made of asbestos, could save money over the old-fashioned, laboriously put together combination of bricks and mortar. And so on down the line. Every part of a house could be studied to see whether it couldn't be sub-assembled and mass-produced at a saving.

We must go a great deal further toward the integration of the house-building industry if we hope for any marked improvement. Hundreds of thousands of houses today by tens of thousands of builders look almost exactly alike. Let's take advantage of the circumstance rather than allow it to overcome us. There is probably more real difference in the five popular models of cars now being built than in the majority of the 900,000 houses being built this year. We can turn standardization from a disadvantage into a very real and tangible benefit—sub-assembled standard parts can supply the need for cheaper materials and reduce the cost of site labor as well.

It may seem that standardization of mass-produced parts is an odd solution to the problem of the dismal standardization we now have in small home plans. While admittedly it would help reduce costs, what could it do to relieve the dreadful monotony which now characterizes housebuilding? I believe that the paradox can be resolved readily if we select carefully those parts which should be standardized. Some elements of a house can be duplicated widely without affecting the basic problem of individuality (stairs could

be easily mass-produced without harm), while other parts definitely must never be standardized (for instance roof colors and textures). I hope to prove in the second part of this article that it is perfectly possible to have a necessary individuality along with a high degree of standardization. We can reach a marked improvement in housebuilding with the means already at our disposal. The curse of standardization can yet be turned into a blessing: greater variety and lower costs.

(To be concluded in September)

The Owner-Architect Contract

IN 1949 there was decided in the State of New York a case involving the unauthorized practice of law by an accountant (in *re Bercu*, 273 App. Div. 524; confirmed by the Court of Appeals without opinion). In this case there was no question concerning the use of any contract documents. The decision, however, had implications so sweeping that it seemed desirable to modify certain language in the above contract, which, in defining the architect's services, read:

('The architect's professional services consist of . . . the drafting

of forms of proposals and contracts; . . .')

Editions containing this language have been withdrawn from sale, and a new form has been issued which now reads:

('The architect's professional services consist of . . . assisting in the drafting of forms of proposals and contracts; . . .')

It is believed that this latter formula will remove criticism of the contract form, which has been expressed before and which is now at issue in the Michigan case, discussed in the April issue.

Style and Styling

An editorial from *The Times* (London) *Literary Supplement*,
April 7, 1950, reprinted through the courtesy of *The Times* Editors.

ALTHOUGH style is being increasingly confused with what is called "styling," often quite willfully, these are essentially incompatible concepts of industrial design. Difficult as it may be to define style in writing, every reader is aware of it as the personal element which the author of a book consciously or unconsciously brings to the choice and assembly of his words. To find a literary parallel with "styling" we should have to imagine that the writing of books involved two separate processes. After the author had made his last revisions and considered his work as complete he would have to hand it over to another writer, expert in imparting stylistic finish; and the keynote of that finish would be modified year by year like spring fashions in clothes. Thus Mr. Smith's outstanding new novel published in 1951 would automatically tend to render an (at the time) equally outstanding novel of his which had appeared in 1950 obsolescent because, as the publisher's "blurb" would hint fairly broadly, the latter had now become "stylistically somewhat outmoded."

It is, of course, true that in the applied arts which we group with the crafts, and more particularly among the vast range of technical products embraced by the generic term Industrial Design, distinguishing characteristics of nationality and period often seem to efface the designer's individual interpretation of his idiom. But the broad characteristics which crystallize into styles have nothing in common with the adventitious veneer of commercial styling. In all those innumerable skills, as pre-eminently with style in writing, design implies something that is intrinsic to the moulding of material to an eventual form which it was the designer's will to express thus and not otherwise, from the moment when he took his task in hand. For any real designer, the factors that inform design are inseparable from the use or purpose of the product concerned and the materials and techniques employed in its manufacture. Modern specialization has divided the one-man role of the old designer-craftsman between the technical and the over-all designer. If their collaborative work is to

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succeed in fusing form and function it is imperative for each to understand the scope and the limits of the other's sphere, not only thoroughly but appreciatively; and, above all, for the over-all designer's participation to begin, not at the outset of production, but in the very earliest stages of planning. And it is the search for some sign of their success—the early promise of a true contemporary style—which gives periodicals such as *Art and Industry* such interest for the layman.

It was only when machinery made it possible to produce thousands of facsimile reproductions of a design that the simple organic sense of style as the discipline born of a creative urge began to be obscured. From prehistoric times style had succeeded style in shape and ornament in almost uninterrupted sequence until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then its further evolution suffered that catastrophic check from which, as can be seen in so many fields of contemporary design, it has never fully recovered. Because it became so easy to copy decoration mechanically, manufacturers concentrated on the mass production of things such as household goods

“in a variety of styles to suit all tastes.” What was pernicious in this sterile eclecticism was less the clumsy or supine imitation it fostered than the belief it soon engendered that style was no more than an arbitrary surface treatment or decorative varnish, like the crude transfers which overprinted pennyplain into tuppence-coloured, quite independent of the nature and composition of the product to which it could be applied. That now widespread belief, which is inherent in modern styling, remains the paramount obstacle to the rational development of industrial design. Today it is just as easy to devise a spurious “streamlining,” that flaunts elephantine curves capriciously bedizened with triple bands of chromium plating, as it was to ring the changes on demented polychrome geometries in rexine and vitrolite, emasculated little flutings or reedings, and the crushed nosegay motif of “modernesque” decoration between the wars. There is no spark of vitality in any of these blatant and insensitive veneerings. They represent the same sort of commercialized “applications” as the “Tudor or Adam finish” of the hire-purchase furnishers.

M. Andre Gide remarked many years ago that the desire to find

expression, no longer in balance and proportion, but in extremes and exaggerations, is what, perhaps, most plainly distinguishes the *Zeitgeist* of our own age from the genius of any previous civilization. He added that to achieve success along these lines we must be prepared to forswear cultural embarrassments, "the *quod decet* of art being the first of such impediments which has to be jettisoned." The recent barbaric titivation of several British makes of motor-car, hitherto regarded abroad as the embodiments of a true, and truly British style, comes as a melancholy foot-

note to what is said above, as though to mark the capitulation of one of the last strongholds of forthright and seemly design. Against this sad defection can be set the admirable designs in inexpensive printed cottons and rayons that so suddenly and unexpectedly appeared last summer. Those designs were wholly new, lively, and altogether charming. Underlying their wide diversity was a clear family resemblance which seemed to herald the first hesitant emergence of that genuinely contemporary style we have waited for so long.

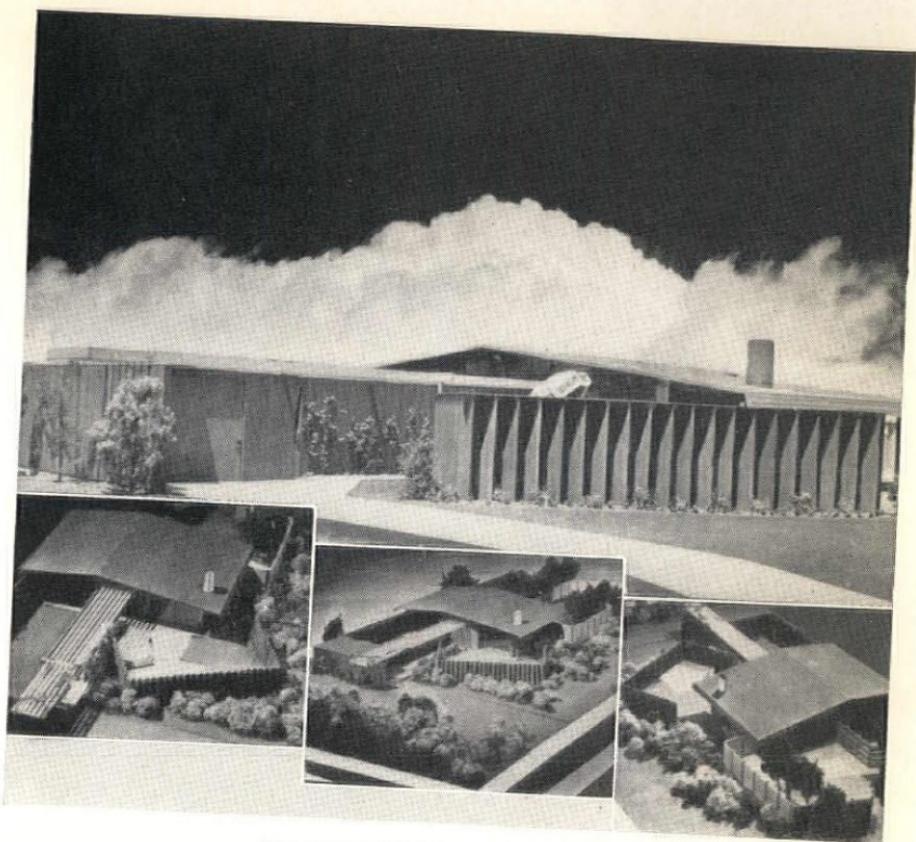
News from the Educational Field

YALE UNIVERSITY announces the establishment of a new Department of Design, of which Professor Josef Albers is the Chairman. The new department will administer a revised professional curriculum in painting, sculpture and the graphic arts—a four-year course, leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and closely allied with the Department of Architecture and the Department of Drama. Professor Albers came to the United States from Germany in 1933 after the Bauhaus had been closed. The primary purpose of this revised curriculum is to prepare students in the arts for the expanding range of professional op-

portunities for the trained artist in the fields of the graphic arts and of product design.

The FRENCH COMMITTEE for the Delano & Aldrich Fellowship has awarded this fellowship to M. Jean-Yves Normand, who will shortly be traveling in this country.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY will offer this fall a major course in architecture, leading to bachelor and master degrees. The courses will be offered by the Art Department, which is being enlarged in scope to the Department of Art and Architecture. Virgil Thompson, Associate Professor of Archi-



NATIONAL HONOR AWARDS OF 1950
FIRST HONOR AWARD IN RESIDENTIAL DESIGN:
HOUSE OF H. C. HVISTENDAHL IN CALIFORNIA
A. QUINCY JONES, JR., ARCHITECT



PLAN OF THE H. C. HVISTENDAHL HOUSE, CALIFORNIA
A. QUINCY JONES, JR., ARCHITECT

ture, will coordinate the program, and the University's School of Engineering will cooperate with the Art Department in providing training in structural principles.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'S
College of Architecture and De-

sign announces the first award of the Harley, Ellington & Day Scholarship to Andrew J. Smith of Tecumseh, Mich. This scholarship, in the amount of \$1,000, is awarded to an outstanding student about to enter his senior year of architectural design.

The Committee on School Buildings Reports

THE INSTITUTE'S Committee on School Buildings, of which Ernest J. Kump is chairman, Lawrence B. Perkins, temporary chairman, reporting to The Board of Directors at its recent annual meeting, recorded the following succinct findings:

Regarding the relations of technical personnel to school plant planning, this Committee agrees:

a) That the planning of a school building program is a project in which the community should participate.

b) That the community functions through its Board of Education, which, in turn, functions through its administrator in all matters, including school building programs.

c) That the administrator may supplement his knowledge by the employment of specialists within or outside of his staff.

d) That these specialists may include architects, educational consultants and laymen.

e) That the relative qualifications of these specialists do not diminish the line of authority of the administrator.

f) That the qualifications of the individuals who are specialists are more important than their titles.

g) That the architect has certain clear-cut functions for which he alone is responsible.

h) That the educational consultant likewise has certain clear-cut functions for which he alone is responsible.

It is therefore concluded:

a) That the administrator will direct the preparation of a long-range building program, using both architects and educational consultants in their proper fields. The leadership will lie with neither, but remain with the administrator, who

will draw upon the talents of the individuals in accordance with his estimate of their capabilities rather than what titles they bear.

b) That the administrator's position is recognized and strengthened by the employment of exceptionally qualified outside personnel. Neither he nor the Board can relinquish

their position from the line of authority. In the last analysis, outsiders can only furnish advice which the administrator will serve up to the Board for its consideration and empowered action. The Board, and back of it, the community, makes and keeps alive long-range building planning.

Confessions of an Architect

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

By *Joseph Hudnut*

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MANY YEARS AGO, when, newly armed with my beautiful degree in architecture, I looked about for some avenue through which the talent thus certified might reach an impatient world, I made many attempts to join my fortunes with those of a great architect, who in my college days had captured my imagination almost to the point of idolatry. But the great architect stubbornly refused to give me a job.

One day, when for the twentieth time I was leaving the outer office, or hypostyle hall, hung with the pictured trophies of his art (Georgian, Lombard, Louis Quinze, Ro-

coco, Roman) through which in those days we approached the shrine of an architect, the little blonde who was the sole inhabitant of the melancholy theater whispered something in my ear. "The Old Master," she said, "only takes on the boys who can bring in clients."

Now there was living at that time a bishop who, as it happened, was a good friend of my family and, being without conscience, I had no hesitation in asking him if he could not supply me with a commission for a little church. I know nothing about the bishop's conscience, but the fact is that he did supply me,

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and I returned in high spirits to the office of my great architect.

"You here again," said the Old Master.

"But, sir," said I, "I have a little commission . . ."

"How big is it?" asked the Old Master.

"Sir," said I, "it is a church and it will cost \$18,000."

"My dear boy . . . My dear boy, I am not looking for pigwidgeons."

It was at that moment, I am sure, that I became an architect. Then and there I decided to design and build that church myself.

There were in the neighborhood of New York's Union Square numerous specimens of that type of skyscraper called a "loft building," upon the crowns of which the conveniences of the day had laid imposing cornices from the Italian *palazzi*. Translated into sheet iron these had lost some of those subtleties of form and relationship to which this material is less congenial than are Parian marble or Roman travertine; and yet the dignity they gave to Union Square—a dignity not unlike that which a silk hat gives to a Tammany alderman—was obviously well worth the sacrifice of light and air in the top story which they thus enclosed and blinded. Besides, it was possible

to crowd many little skylighted studios into the spaces behind the cornices so—that, high above the noble galleries of the silk merchants and the conservators of chinaware, there existed, like mice in the top drawer of a highboy, busy little enclaves of writers and commercial artists, of sculptors and designers of tombstones, of photographers and architects in search of their first client. It was there that I drew the plans for the little church which the Old Master had rejected, and with my own fingers typed the specifications and contract documents which gave it reality.

No one but an architect can know the inexpressible happiness that was mine as the walls of my first and most beautiful building rose, stone upon stone, from the enrapturing soil of New Jersey. My first sweetheart did not ravish me with a deeper joy; the highest honors I have since received are only reminders of that sense of accomplishment and power which then saturated my heart; nor have I known any adventure which flung its radiance so far into my life.

Perhaps I ought not to call this church mine. I built it, if the truth must be told, out of my sketchbook. I saw it first at Little Twickenham-on-Thames and

brought it home in the form of water colors laid hastily on that companionable volume. But what of that? Was it not mine by right of discovery? Such transcriptions were in those days the universal inspiration of architects and formed as a whole the basic process of an art whose chief ingredient was an unashamed romanticism. Truly my shelves were already well stocked with a good trade of that marketable commodity.

We are apt to forget, when we look back upon the wide currency of that imitative architecture during the golden 1920's, that this currency was initiated and maintained not by our architects only but equally by the public which gave them employment. It was not an architect's conspiracy which in the Columbian Exposition of 1893 brought the Chicago experiment in rationalism to its unhappy end, but a conspiracy of architects and the American heart. No architect compelled the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Standard Oil Company to appear before the world in the togas of Cicero and Caracalla. Art does not live in a vacuum. Architects, who lay before the world the successive children of their imaginations, must await the arbitration of the public

to know what children shall be nourished and what children shall be exposed on the temple steps. Nor should it be said that those children who are selected for growth have for that reason a questionable parentage; it may happen that their authors were at that moment in tune with the sentiment of their time.

I shall say in defense of my romanticism only this: it was genuine and it served. I have in later times spilled much ink in the cause of a rational architecture, but I have never lost my respect for those whose love for the traditional styles of architecture was genuine and competent. I am a good witness in their behalf, for I remember only too well the ardor with which I searched for the secrets of Tudor and Colonial beauty and the delight which was mine when I believed that I had scattered some fragments of that beauty along the route of the New Haven Railroad. Certainly I was not conscious of any skulduggery and if I believed, in my innocence, that my skill in these matters condoned the strange circumstances which permitted a young architect, unpractised in the techniques of construction, to design and carry to completion a score or more of buildings (all of

which, by the way, are still standing and in excellent condition), that, after all, was sanctioned by a scale of values to which my public had consented.

The historical styles are to architecture what historical novels are to the art of letters. Both are costumed adventure. Both have their origins in a nostalgia for the "far away and the long ago" and in a desire to fuse into our drab and mechanized world some splendor, piety, good taste or scenic grandeur, either in time or space or in both, which lies beyond the boundaries of our world. There is this difference: the historical styles as used in modern buildings are, unlike historical novels, anchored in realism. They exist, not in the realm of the imagination merely but in the visible streets of our cities or in the actualities of the countryside "occupying space and with space around." They stand, not in holiday sunshine, but in the earthen air of our necessities.

Therefore the architect who would re-create in modern buildings the beauty which he has discovered in antiquity must constantly invite those who look at his work to break through whatever encrustation of care may habitually surround them and es-

tablish for themselves a mood not unlike that from which the architect has drawn his design. So long as his public is accustomed to such sudden leaps over time and space—so long as men anticipate in their habits of vision and of feeling that which the Georgian or the Gothic styles intend—the architect may indeed re-create for them some hint of that beauty at which his art is aimed.

It must be obvious that the basis of this art is, to say the least, hazardous in a world created anew by our triumphant sciences, and it must be obvious also that an art which thus stands aside from science—and therefore from the greater part of modern life—must leave unexplored vast reaches of modern experience.

Nevertheless it sometimes happens that an architect, addressing the spirit of man through the medium of the styles, succeeds in establishing a mood or sentiment not wholly detached from the genuine culture of our times. We are not so walled from those millions who before our time covered the earth with the witnesses of their pride and faith that we can not love and hope and pray in much the same manner as they; and I must confess that there are moments

when antique symbols give me a more persuasive assurance of human dignity and importance than the most reasonable masterpieces of present-day genius. An architect may, at his peril, use such symbols without, I hope, laying too heavy a burden upon the imagination of his time.

I think that this is especially relevant to those who build churches, for here, if anywhere, we may assume not only a readiness to anticipate the Gothic mood but an attitude of the heart so universal as to be in many ways identical (so far as we know) in modern and medieval times. Therefore I think that architects would do well—if that be not pharisaical—to await in church architecture a desire on the part of their clients for an escape from the medieval masquerade. It is not enough that an architect should be aware of a new Christianity.

I do not believe that I failed to serve my client—or my profession—justly when I raised a splinter of Twickenham-on-Thames on the bank of the Passaic River. My building was correct in style; each stone was laid with love; and the contractor, God bless him, quietly corrected my errors in the practical sciences of building.

After I had practiced architecture for several years, I was obliged, by the enactment of a new law, to obtain a license to practise. I am not yet persuaded that this licensing of our profession is wholly in the public interest; nor am I sure that every architect, after receiving his professional degree, should be required to serve three years as an apprentice in the outer office of an established practitioner in order that he may approach his first independent practice equipped with some experience in the practical business of building. The theory is plausible but it is often cruel. These three years after college are the crucial ones in a man's life. They are the years in which, if ever, he should dare something: a wage envelope every Saturday may be a poisonous thing for an artist. I have seen many a talented student overcome by that insidious anodyne, finding himself at the end of three years comfortably settled as a cog in some great architectural machine, with a good salary, a chance to be office manager some day, and hostages given to fortune (the phrase is Stevenson's) in the form of a wife, a mortgage and a baby. With his nose held to the drafting-board of his employer, a man has few

opportunities to make those too-partial friends who form the first cause of every architectural practice—and it may happen that there is no kindly bishop near the family tree. Sooner or later every architect must learn his craft at the expense of his clients. Why not, then, sooner? Sometimes when I expound to my students with all professional dignity the theory of apprenticeship I remember my own beginnings and my adventurous happiness—and then I feel very much like a whited sepulcher.

To return now to that architectural honeymoon which began with my New Jersey child—born, I am afraid, before the solemn rites had been performed. It chanced that there lived in the town in which my building stood a famous and lovely star of the comic-opera stage who, by very good luck, made a public reference to my architectural

talent. "On my street," she said—and her words found their way into the *Times*—"on my street they are building a God-awful garage and they are going to call it a church."

My friend the bishop came instantly to my defense. "I am shocked," said he—and how pleasant it is that bishops are so often shocked—"I am shocked to learn of this wholly gratuitous deprecation of the work of one who is among the most promising of our young architects."

No architect could have had an advertisement more arresting than the cynicism of a beautiful actress unless it be the solemn approbation of a bishop—even though the word "promising" may be at times somewhat factual. I should have been a poor marksman indeed if, armed with that double-barreled gun, I could not have brought down my second client.

(To be concluded in September)

Books & Bulletins

FARM STRUCTURES. By H. J. Barre and L. L. Sammet. 661 pp. 5½" x 8¾". New York: 1950: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. \$7.

The authors, respectively Professor and former Associate Professor of Agricultural Engineering

at Purdue University, have written what is both textbook for students and guide for professionals in this too-long-neglected field of design.

ARCHITECTURE AND THE SPIRIT OF MAN. By Joseph Hudnut. 301 pp. 5½" x 8¼". Cam-

bridge: 1949: Harvard University Press. \$4.50.

Bringing between book covers more than a score of Dean Hudson's pungent essays, several of which we have been particularly happy to print in the JOURNAL.

ACOUSTICAL DESIGNING IN ARCHITECTURE. By Vern O. Knudsen and Cyril M. Harris. 467 pp. 5½" x 8¾". New York: 1950: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. \$7.50.

A two-part guide: *a*) general principles and design procedures; and *b*) specific applications in practice, with examples. Knudsen is Professor of Physics and Dean of the Graduate Division, University of California at Los Angeles; Harris is a member of Bell Telephone Laboratories' technical staff.

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING. By Sherley W. Morgan. 334 pp. 9" x 12". New York: 1950: McGraw Hill Book Co. \$7.50.

Sherley Morgan, F.A.I.A., Director of Princeton's School of Architecture, assuming a basic knowledge of graphics and the use of drawing instruments, leads the student and the more experienced draftsman into an appreciation and understanding of precise and convincing visual expression.

WAYS WITH WATERCOLOR. By Ted Kautzky. 113 pp. 9" x 12". New York: 1949: Reinhold Publishing Co. \$10.

Ted Kautzky became known first

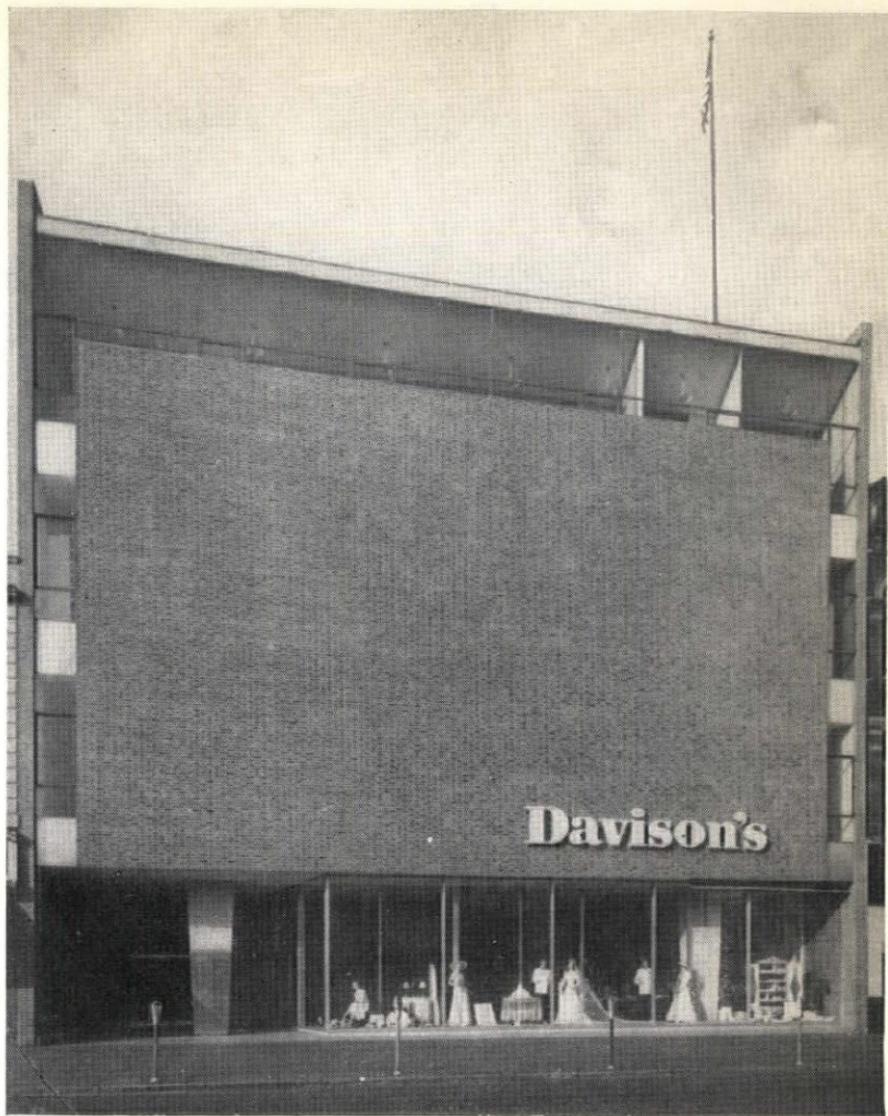
in this country for his unique pencil-drawing technique. For some years he was regarded primarily as a master in pencil rendering, but in the last decade the list of prizes awarded his water colors has grown to arm's length. His genius is of that rare variety which includes the ability to teach, not only by personal precept but also through the printed page.

HIGHWAYS IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE. Edited by Jean Labatut and Wheaton J. Lane. 518 pp. 6⅞" x 9¼". Princeton: 1950: Princeton University Press. \$7.50.

Architects, economists, sociologists, landscapists and city planners share in this broad symposium. Carlos Contreras' "The Highway and the Mexican Border"; Gilmore Clarke's "The Design of Motorways"; and the Summation by Jean Labatut are chapter headings that will provoke the interest of almost any architect.

EARLY CONNECTICUT MEETING-HOUSES. By J. Frederick Kelly. 2 vols.—754 pp. 9" x 12". New York: 1948: Columbia University Press. \$40.

To the architects who find beauty in almost any phase of this country's early building—and that includes practically the entire profession—the name of the late J. Frederick Kelly is a warmly beckoning finger. He could be counted upon to find the best examples of a particular field and analyze them



NATIONAL HONOR AWARDS OF 1950
FIRST HONOR AWARD IN COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE:
DEPARTMENT STORE FOR DAVISON-PAXTON CO., AUGUSTA, GA.
(OWNED BY R. H. MACY & CO.)
HAROLD M. HEATLEY AND KETCHUM, GINA & SHARP, ARCHITECTS

with sympathy and his vast knowledge. Unfortunately, his pencil, drawing-pen and camera have been laid aside forever.

THE PINE FURNITURE OF EARLY NEW ENGLAND. By Russell Hawes Kettell. 310 pp. 7¾" x 10⅝". New York: 1949: Dover Publications, Inc. \$10.

The first trade edition of this work, originally published in 1929 in a sumptuous edition limited to 1,000 copies—now a collectors' item. Illustrations from photographs and detail drawings form

the body of the book, with contiguous explanatory text.

MUSIC ROOMS AND EQUIPMENT. By Clarence J. Best. 111 pp. 6" x 9". Chicago: 1949: Music Educators National Conference. \$1.50.

The Music Educators Research Council adds to that of the publishers its enthusiastic stamp of approval upon Dr. Best's technical guide to the planning, construction and equipment of music rooms for schools, colleges and community use.

First Architectural School? No! But . . .

By Louise Hall

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE, DUKE UNIVERSITY

ASHER BENJAMIN (1773-1845) was indeed a pioneer architectural schoolmaster, but not in the sense most recently suggested (Mar. '50 JOURNAL). Attractively though his advertisement of 1801-02 describes his proposed "School of Architecture" in Windsor, Vermont, other similar advertisements antedate his.

The Colonial press displayed offers of instruction in drawing, a number by men who called themselves architects, and one printed as early as 1735. The fact is that

pupils had already been solicited for at least three proposed "Schools" before Benjamin was born. Such architectural schoolmasters of the eighteenth century, pot-boiling somehow when the fires of patronage burned low, represented no particular section of the colonies nor yet any single pedagogical pattern. Perhaps the most ingenuous was he who announced his afternoon classes "in the several Branches of Drawing . . . at 6 shillings per Week," and then added that "if it should suit any

Person he will attend from 5 to 6 in the Morning."

A pre-Benjamin advertisement from the early years of the Republic acquires fresh interest with the current renovation of the White House (Mar. and Apr., '50 JOURNAL). On April 17, 1790, just two years and a quarter—to the day—before his competitive design for the President's House won him the \$500 premium, James Hoban the Irishman (ca. 1762-1831), then of Charleston, South Carolina, inserted this notice which shortly appeared in *The City Gazette*, or *the Daily Advertiser*:

Architecture.

Several applications being made to the subscriber, has induced him to establish an EVENING SCHOOL, for the instruction of young men in Architecture, to commence the 3d May next. From the experience he has had and the testimonial approbation of one of the first academies of arts and sciences in Europe, he hopes to merit the sanction of the public, and give satisfaction to his employers. Terms and hours of attendance will be made known at No. 43, Trott-street

JAMES HOBAN

He refers to the following gentlemen for his abilities, viz:

Thomas Gadsden, George A. Hall, Roger Smith, Daniel Cannon, Esquires.

Plans, elevations, sections of buildings, &c. drawn at short notice, and the different branches of carpentry executed on the lowest terms and most approved manner, by

HOBAN & PURCELL.

April 17.

Although Benjamin was not the first architectural schoolmaster, his classroom was broad as the United States of America, his pupils, generations of all sorts of citizens. Benjamin's was the earliest American architectural imprint to mingle original designs with adaptations from English plates: *The Country Builder's Assistant* (Greenfield, Massachusetts, 1797). And from this first of his seven titles down to the last posthumous issue at the outbreak of the Civil War, his influential handbooks went into 44 known (plus two presumptive) editions. Of course other men published in the decades before the War, but no books approached Benjamin's in number or staying power.

Cherished as almost biblically in-

fallible by half a century of builder-“mechanics”—and ineffectually deplored by the few trained professionals—Benjamin’s dog-eared volumes no sooner lay resting outmoded in many a dark provincial attic than they were painstakingly exhumed as respectable relics by another generation—of trained professionals.

The War was then over. The forefathers’ union had been preserved. Justification lay in the past. Study the past. Venerate the national heritage. Write histories. Measure buildings. Assemble genealogies. Celebrate the One Hundredth Anniversary of American Independence. The Colonial Crusade was on the march. Benjamin’s books could live again in just such an atmosphere.

The coming Centennial had been talked of for three years when, in 1869, Richard Upjohn gave his presidential paper before the Third Annual Convention of The A.I.A. on “The Colonial Architecture of New York and the New England States.” He mentioned no individuals such as Benjamin, it is true—an omission which a former member made bold to suggest he remedy at once, as though the names might be gathered up in an evening or two at the public li-

brary. However, A.I.A. members during the next depression decade would set forth to collect any and all professional ancestors, nameable or nameless.

On the very first day of the Centennial year, 1876, prophetically appeared the first issue of *The American Architect and Building News*—voted in advance to be the organ of publication for the A.I.A. proceedings. While throngs of summer visitors gaped at the Philadelphia Exhibition, carrying away a lamentably indelible memory of its spurious “New England Log House,” the new periodical presented a more scholarly approach in a survey of American architecture since about 1700. This was followed in the fall, before the Exhibition closed, by the first in a long series of documentary drawings destined eventually to reappear in the folios of *The Georgian Period* (Boston, 1898 *et seq.*).

The sentimental afterglow of the Centennial still illumined the past when the Thirteenth Annual Convention of The A.I.A., 1879, directed appointment of a committee to report a year hence on “the practice of American architects and builders of the colonial period, and the first fifty years of

national independence." McKim was appointed—who with Mead, Bigelow and White had gone sketching and measuring in New England in 1877—and Cady of New York, and Peabody and Longfellow of Boston. The chairman, George Champlin Mason, Jr., of Newport—later A.I.A. Secretary—presented on November 17, 1880, the committee's research proposals and preliminary report. This he closed—be it noted—by quoting an 1807 advertisement for Benjamin's second book, *The American Builder's Companion* (Boston, 1806); citing as best-known the fifth book, *Practice of Architecture* (Boston, 1833); and attributing to Benjamin the Rhode Island Union Bank Building in Newport of 1817.

With scarcely an historical instant of hesitation, survival turned to revival for Benjamin's books. During their first half-century, infallible, and soon patriotically venerable, they became all too readily copiable from reprints "suitable for the draftingroom." Today, if taken only as motif-mines and thought-savers, they are impeachable by a book-shy generation in the usual revolt against the immediate past. Yet, in longer view, they are memorable for the variety of their influence and their astonishing persistence through a century and a half.

Asher Benjamin did not found our first architectural school. But . . . he has proved extraordinarily durable as an architectural schoolmaster.

Regional Planning and the Small Town

IN TWO PARTS—PART II

By *Lewis Mumford*

Address before A.I.A. Convention Symposium I, "Urban and Regional Planning," Washington, D. C., May 13, 1950.

NOW THE CONDITIONS we are laying down here, as essential for the small town, if it is to make its special contribution—the contribution of balance, health,

a normal family life—to new civilization that will supplant the metropolitan one, cannot be achieved by any single small town, nor can it be achieved by allowing

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the forces that produce disorderly growth—land speculation, private initiative without public responsibility, shortsighted, uncoordinated public planning, with no effective control over the land—to prevail in the future as they have in the past. Social control over size, density, area, cannot be maintained by any single town, no matter what its size: all these goods can be achieved only through a regional framework of organization, and through a regional authority, which will be able to carry out a policy favoring the preservation of the small town through the building of new towns. The small town cannot survive by itself simply because it is not worthy to survive by itself: no small town, however peaceful and orderly and healthful, can afford by itself more than a modicum of our civilization. When a generation ago Sinclair Lewis showed that Main Street was dull, provincial and narrow, despite its many solid human virtues, he did not err in his estimate; in the old pattern of life the small town was necessarily an ingrown place, a place of narrow horizons: so that its active spirits either left it for the big city, or sought, by bustle and enterprise, to make it over into a bigger community. And accord-

ingly, if we wish to limit the size of cities, we must not merely offer to the small town special advantages to make up for that limitation; we must also provide the kind of political organization which will even out advantages between otherwise competitive towns within the same general area, so that people will be as loyal to the region as a whole, as interested in its general welfare, as they are to their neighborhood or to their local community.

The need for finding a regional equivalent to metropolitan advantages has not, I think, been sufficiently stressed by those of us who have been establishing the case for urban decentralization. Many of the advocates of decentralization, such as Ralph Borsodi and his School of Living, such as Arthur Morgan of Yellow Springs, Ohio, have stressed the purely rural advantages of decentralization and have held the small community before people as an ideal, by reason of its drastic contrast to the mechanized, synthetic, expensive, tawdry pleasures and advantages of the metropolis. In some degree, this movement has been a backward-looking one: an attempt to recapture the good old days. I would not disparage this movement or

even quarrel with what seems to me an over-emphasis; without such bold contrasts people cannot perhaps be lifted out of their inertia. But when all is said for the rural, the primitive, the direct and the simple, most people in our culture still have what seems to me a healthy desire to participate in the intellectual and social advantages of a highly developed civilization; they do not seek simplicity and sanity and balance in any form of isolationism. Though we now enjoy this civilization under severe handicaps in Paris and London, in New York and Chicago, there is no need to despise its real goods. So the great question for regional planning is how these advantages are to be achieved in terms of the city of limited size.

At this point I must question Howard's original assumption that a city of 30,000 people would have all the facilities that urban life in our time can provide without the disadvantages of bigness. Sometimes he even talked as if the Garden City, the new organic form of the city, were a self-contained community. But as a matter of fact he himself knew better than this; and where he used the words "self-contained" he actually meant only relatively self-contained, in the

sense of providing for most of the daily needs of most of its inhabitants. For those who have studied his classic work know that in the chapter on Social Cities, toward the end of the book, he properly modified his original assumption. He knew that the big city, whose population he proposed to draw off into smaller, well-defined communities, has in fact one great advantage over the small town: namely, it brings together a greater number of people, and therefore larger range of talents, aptitudes, professions, within a common field for cooperation. Taking note of this fact, Howard suggested that ten garden cities, properly grouped and woven together into a close unity by a rapid transportation system, would have all the advantages of a city of 300,000 people, without the disabilities of congestion, of distance from the open country, of over-mechanization. If the growth of the small town must be limited, its limitations will be more acceptable if it becomes part of a regional constellation of cities, with a common regional government for its over-all activities, and with a capacity for mobilizing and distributing its cultural resources into each small town, instead of concentrating them, in a fixed, static,

immobile pattern in a single dominating center.

We have yet to invent the form of political authority that will make this growth possible. But we have a precedent for it in America in the old New England township; for the township was often a relatively large area, sometimes ten miles wide and a dozen long, which united for the purposes of town government the inhabitants of its constituent hamlets and villages, as well as scattered farmers in the open country. Certain purely local functions, like that of operating the elementary school, were reserved for the smallest local unit, the school district, often just the dozen or twenty families that occupied a hamlet; while the common functions, like the building and upkeep of the highways, were performed by the township through its elected officers. Increase the scale of the area and communities, bring in the new social and technical services of our day, draw a clean line between local and regional functions, and give the Regional Authority powers similar to those that New York-New Jersey Port Authority now has—do this and we will have a renovated form of the New England township, an administrative organ capable of

holding its own in competition with the overgrown metropolis. Unless we create such active centers of regional administration, a large part of what is called regional planning is mere paper work: preliminary surveys for plans that will never mature, plans that will never indeed pass beyond the stage of wishful thinking, since neither the public demand nor the political apparatus for carrying them out has been brought into existence.

Let us not talk about regional planning until we believe in the principles of regionalism with sufficient conviction to demand the political authority that will be necessary, on the basis of a progressive extension of the welfare clauses in our state constitutions, to carry them out. For we need a regional authority with the power to float bonds and to make investments in new communities which our housing authorities now have; we need a regional authority with the power to zone for urban and rural uses, and where necessary to buy land for public uses of an undetermined nature; we need an authority that will be capable of planning new cities, in order to keep the new towns under its jurisdiction from passing, under continued population pressure, beyond the normal

limits of their growth; we need a regional authority with the power to set aside primeval areas and to fix new industrial sites; so that recreation facilities and industrial opportunities will be planned with a view to the needs of the population as a whole. No single community, however enlightened—not even the biggest of metropolitan centers—can make such plans or carry them out.

Once the ideal of organic balance was effectively established in people's minds, as a constantly operating one, guiding all decisions of private and public policy, it would be possible, I think, to give to the smallest community within a region most of the positive benefits that the inhabitants of a great metropolis now profit by—but for the most part enjoy only in a feeble and limited way. Our problem is to create by organization and plan, which utilize to the full all the technical resources of the modern world, what the big city has produced so far only by congestion, a congestion accompanied by an inordinate amount of waste and futile expense and human wear and tear. But let us not fool ourselves: there *are* things that a million people can do, when they have achieved an appropriate mode of

organization, that a few thousand people cannot, with the best will in the world, achieve. When a million people pool their resources they may be able to afford a symphony orchestra, a repertory theater, or a great stadium for sports and spectacles, to say nothing of special vocational schools or institutes of research. What the advocate of the small city says, in answer to the metropolitan claim, is that it is not necessary to promote congestion and waste in order to have the advantages of cooperation: what we say is that, with the motor car, the telephone and the radio, a region with a radius of seventy-five miles, properly organized, can establish closer cooperation among its members, precisely because of the open pattern of settlement, than the big congested metropolis today, within whose confines an endless succession of frictions and stoppages and frustrations make a mockery of its boasted technical achievements. With a regional pooling of purpose, and with appropriate political powers, the small town will not merely come abreast of the metropolitan center: it will surpass it.

Now there are certain parts of this country where a particularly happy development of the small

town would be possible, if once the objectives I have been defining were generally accepted; areas where, because of a slowness in industrial development or the thinness of settlement, there are no obstacles, except lack of imagination and of initiative, to creating a pattern of community life immensely superior to the metropolitan one. The Columbia Valley, from the western part of Washington close to Portland, Oregon, is obviously one of those areas: an area that cries for a regional planning on behalf of the small town, because the present tendency is to funnel population into Portland and Seattle, without any regard for regional balance.

Another such valley, one of the loveliest for habitation in our whole country, is the San Bernardino Valley in southern California, now seriously threatened with a tidal metropolitan invasion from the west: here the small towns, like Claremont, set in the midst of orange and lemon groves, flanked by the snow-capped San Bernardino mountains, towns spaced at goodly intervals, still limited in size, still capable of overcoming all the minor defects of haphazard growth, might conserve and develop all these advantages to a degree not

achieved anywhere in our country, if only they awaken in time to the advantages of the balanced life they have almost achieved, and if they take the necessary political steps to protect themselves from the disorganization and muddle that threatens them; for without such political and economic measures, the San Bernardino Valley will probably, during the next generation, meet the same fate as that of Long Island, another rich agricultural region whose unique regional resources have now been largely destroyed, to provide sleeping-quarters for weary New Yorkers.

Still another place where the development of the small town must be furthered by appropriate regional planning has already possibly occurred to you; namely the Tennessee Valley, for unfortunately, by the very terms on which the TVA was brought into existence, no provision was made for the town building functions which should accompany, normally, its provisions for the development of power, stream navigation, better agricultural practices, and industrial development generally; and the tendency is still too much toward letting the big cities in this region become even bigger, though

places like Knoxville have far overpassed the most favorable limits of growth for a single urban center. Once the benefits of regional planning for the small town were understood in this region, the initiative for such a regional authority might and should be taken by the respective state authorities, creating by treaty a joint authority like the New York-New Jersey Port Authority.

But if one state in the country is more outstanding than any other in providing a favorable occasion for regional planning on behalf of the small town, the balanced rural-urban community, it is North Carolina. For this is a state that does not boast a single city with much over a hundred thousand population: a state mainly of villages and small towns, with the towns themselves, by some happy accident, already grouped in clusters, like Winston-Salem-Greensboro-High Point, like Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill. If the forces of the past continue automatically to operate in North Carolina, these small towns will form, within a generation, dense metropolitan aggregates, as unfavorable to human development as the dingiest industrial districts of the North: the towns of twenty thousand or fifty thousand

population will merge into one another to form a single congested urban clot; for there is no doubt that cotton manufacturing, furniture making, cigarette manufacture, pottery-making are all in a thriving state; and the industries and the population and the necessity for urban development will continue to expand for a considerable time.

But there is no inherent reason for repeating the sordid and wasteful pattern of the past. If the people of North Carolina appreciate the values of the small town, and if they realize that the advantages of metropolitan concentration can now be obtained by political organization, without congestion, they can halt the present tendency to urban expansion, by establishing permanent greenbelts around the existing centers, and by deliberately planting new industries and new plants in new centers, also designed for a limited population. At least four great regional areas could be developed, from the coastal plain to the highlands, which would preserve intact all the agricultural and scenic resources of the state, and would permit the cities that are now approaching the stage of ruinous internal blight and equally ruinous suburban expansion

the opportunity to rebuild their central areas on a sounder pattern.

One more illustration of the new regional pattern, based on the small town, and I shall have done. Take the matter of giving access to books and works of art. The metropolitan method is to heap up all necessary facilities in one place, often in a single building, which becomes as overcrowded and disorganized in time as the city itself: witness such a shambles as—well, there is no need to mention names, for every big city shows the same typical results: mainly static collections, displayed for the most part without selective purpose, available only to those who make special visits to the center or live near it. This whole method of use and display is obsolete. We need a regional grid for culture, like the electric grid for power, capable of utilizing the entire system to supply a local demand which cannot be satisfied out of local resources. In England, since the early thirties, the library authorities have created such a cultural grid: the borrower from a small town branch, who cannot find the book he wants in his local library, gets it through the regional library from any library in the region; and when the regional system does not

contain it, he draws upon the national pool. In that way the resident of the smallest center has as many books at his command as if he lived in the heart of London. This principle is capable of the widest application, for it gives the small community the advantages of bigness without the penalties of congestion. Once we develop such a regional and inter-regional system we shall dismantle the gigantic catacombs in which art is now stored; or rather we shall use them as central storage reservoirs from which a refreshing stream of art will continually flow out to every other part of the community. In a feeble way, we have the beginnings of such a system of diffusion; but except in the English inter-loan library system we have not begun to carry it out as widely as we need to. Without such planning, we cannot hope to give the small town the social and cultural advantages of the great metropolitan centers of the past.

I trust that this rapid survey of the possibilities of regional planning for the small town has left you with a more comprehensive definition of regional planning than was common a decade ago, and with a more hopeful picture of the

possibilities of making the small town the nucleus of a new bio-technic civilization. What I have been trying to paint for you is not a picture of a small community, dedicated wholly to conserving its traditional way of life, seeking to live solely by the use of its local resources, clinging desperately to the good old ways and the good old days, erecting barriers against new forces and new ideas, resisting the impact of new opportunities and new possibilities for industrial organization and social life. Quite the contrary. What I have sought to demonstrate is that a balanced community, limited in size and area, limited in density, in close contact with the open country, is actually the new urban form for our civilization; and that this new pattern can be achieved only by deliberate political organization, through regional authorities having larger scope in their planning than any existing municipality. In outlining this conception, I have deliberately broken with the idea that regional planning is merely a means of dealing in a coordinated manner with the natural background: a matter merely of preserving and extending the forest cover, watching over the wild life, safeguarding the water supply, utilizing mineral

resources, rehabilitating the soil, extending the facilities for transportation. Yes, regional planning demands at least all of these activities, brought into firm working cooperation; but it demands much more than that. The further purpose of regional planning is that of creating a balanced environment, with balanced communities, for people who are determined to lead an autonomous and balanced life, which will not merely recapture traditional values that have often fallen by the wayside but will more fully utilize the positive advantages of an advanced civilization. Just as a town of limited size, surrounded by a wide greenbelt, is much more favorably disposed to the use of planes and helicopters than a big metropolis, where the landing-field is sometimes half an hour or more away from the center of the city, so such towns are more capable of making use of many other inventions and institutions peculiar to modern civilization, providing we learn to create by regional organization the facilities that the big metropolis brings out largely by planless, or almost planless, congestion. The age of the big city is over, though the monuments of its folly and arrogance may long remain in existence, pro-

vided we do not, as a final act of madness, bring on a war that will wipe out its inhabitants and leave it a waste of radio-active cinders and dust. But if the small, biotechnic city is to come into its own, as the agent of a new civilization,

it will have to learn the arts of regional planning, regional culture and regional design; and create a life more highly organized and more purposeful and far more widely cultivated than that of the outmoded metropolis.



Architects Read and Write

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



AUGUSTE PELLECHET DIES

BY CHARLES BUTLER, F.A.I.A., New York

I REGRET to have to report the death on May 22nd last of Auguste Pellechet, a member of the Committee on Selection of the Delano & Aldrich Fellow, since its creation about twenty years ago. He has also been an Honorary Corresponding Member of The Institute since 1937 and has served The Institute loyally for many years.

He happens to have been my intimate friend for close to sixty years, as we prepared for the Beaux-Arts together, got in together, graduated together, and, when I was attached to the French Ministry of War to plan hospitals for the French Army during the first World War, he was, at my request, brought back from the front to work with me. He was also associated with me when I planned the American Memorial

Hospital in Reims shortly after the first war; so that we have been together for a long period both in war and in peace.

Monsieur Pellechet was an Officer of the Legion of Honor and was last year awarded a gold medal of the Société Centrale des Architectes, which is the most distinguished body of architects in France, corresponding to The A.I.A.

Tributes paid to Monsieur Pellechet since his death show the very high esteem in which he was held by his colleagues, his clients and the contractors who worked under him, and the word "integrity" stands out among them all. His death is to me a great personal loss. We had hoped to get over to France next summer and see him once more.

Calendar

June 24-September 4: Chicago Fair of 1950, dedicated to dramatizing achievements of science, agriculture, commerce and industry.

August 21-24: National Technical Conference of the Illuminating Engineering Society, Hotel Huntington, Pasadena, Calif.

September 18-21: 52nd Annual Convention of the American Hospital Association, Atlantic City, N. J.

September 20-25: International conference of the International Federation of Landscape Architects, Madrid. There is also a 3-day excursion arranged to Toledo, Segovia, La Granja y Cuenca, and a 9-day excursion to Sevilla, Granada and Cordoba. Details may be had from Viajes Melia, S. A., Plaza del Callao, 3, Madrid.

September 26: Second Research Correlation Conference of Building Research Advisory Board, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C. The subject: Fire Resistance of Exterior Non-Load-Bearing Walls.

September 28-30: Annual Convention of the California Council, A.I.A., Ahwahnee Hotel, Yosemite National Park, Calif.

October 1-November 1: First Annual Exhibition of the Society of Contemporary Designers, California State Exposition Building, Los Angeles, Calif. For further details as to entries, address the

Society at 914½ South Alvarado, Los Angeles 6.

October 12-13: Annual Convention of the Architects Society of Ohio, Commodore Perry Hotel, Toledo, Ohio. The Toledo Chapter, A.I.A. is acting as host.

October 16-19: 17th Annual Meeting of the National Association of Housing Officials, Hotel Statler, Detroit, Mich.

November 2-4: Annual Convention of the N. Y. State Association of Architects, Syracuse, N. Y.

November 9-11: Annual Convention of the Louisiana Architects Association and Annual Meeting of Chapter officers of Gulf States District, New Orleans, La.

November 27-December 2: 19th National Exposition of Power and Mechanical Engineering, Grand Central Palace, New York, N. Y., under the auspices of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

September, 1951: Congress on Building Research, to be held during the Festival of Britain, London, with the purpose of reviewing the progress made in research in relation to architecture, building, and associated branches of civil engineering. Those interested in having further details may address The Organising Secretary, Building Research Congress 1951, Building Research Station, Bucknalls Lane, Garston, Watford, Herts, England.

The Editor's Asides

LEWIS MUMFORD'S "Regional Planning and the Small Town," concluded in this issue of the JOURNAL, reminds us that Mumford's first writing on cities appeared just 31 years ago, and it was in the JOURNAL in its former incarnation under Charles Harris Whitaker's editorship. The title, "The Heritage of the Cities Movement in America."

Incidentally, we'd like to post a bet, to be collected by our heirs, that in 31 years from now Mumford's thesis as set forth in these July and August issues will be recognized as reasoning of the first order, and, I venture to hope, prophecy in process of fulfillment.

AS OF JULY 15, John J. White, Jr., The Institute's Director of Public and Professional Relations, has returned to the private practice of architecture.

Frederick A. Gutheim, special writer for the New York *Herald Tribune* and author of "The Potomac," is joining the Headquarters staff at The Octagon.

ALBERT KELSEY'S recent death brings to mind the sumptuous two volumes on the Christopher Columbus Lighthouse Memorial Competi-

tion—a competition for which Mr. Kelsey was professional adviser and of which he prepared this record. The Pan American Union, Constitution Ave., Washington, D. C., has a number of these volumes which it will present to those who are particularly interested. All you have to do is to apply.

ONE OF THE favorite outdoor sports in college reunions is debate over the architecture of recent additions to the campus. In a recent issue of the *Cornell Alumni News* Romeyn Berry, in his column, "Now In My Time!" was impressed by his observation that the articulate majority of Cornell's returning alumni this spring rather favored the Collegiate Gothic as introduced some years ago in Baker Dormitories and echoed subsequently in the Drill Hall, Willard Straight and the Law School. Mr. Berry saves his own bouquets for the Hydraulic Laboratory, a functional structure, nearly sixty years old, set in the mists of Triphammer Falls.

Perhaps we are not too far distant from the day when returning alumni will think and speak not of Georgian, Collegiate Gothic or

Early Federal styles but rather whether or not the new accessions appear to their eyes as good architecture.

PHILIP L. GOODWIN, architect of New York's Museum of Modern Art, has been given a commission that should keep him awake nights for a while. The job is to add a fairly large wing to Egerton Swartwout's Yale Art Gallery, and Dean Sawyer says that the exterior "will blend in design with the Art Gallery and with the adjacent Jonathan Edwards College."

A DIRECTORY OF LARGE-SCALE RENTAL HOUSING has just been published by the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of New York, Inc., and edited by Ira S. Robbins. Of the more than 100 projects listed, the statistics recorded are: number of family units, number of construction rooms and rental rooms, average rentals, number of square feet per dwelling unit, number of persons per dwelling unit, and the coverage. There are private housing projects, limited-dividend corporations, cooperatives, FHA 608's, insurance company and savings bank developments, in addition to public housing both temporary and permanent. Rentals

range from \$5.41 per room per month to \$66. Copies of the Directory are available at \$2 each from the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council, 20 W. 40th St., New York, N. Y.

THE EDINBURGH ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION suggests that some Institute members may be in Edinburgh during the period of autumn to spring, 1950-51. If so, the Edinburgh Association would like to welcome an Institute member who could give a short address on some subject of mutual interest. If any member's plans for next winter fit in with this proposal, it is suggested that he write Mr. Esme Gordon, 36 Heriot Row, Edinburgh 3, Scotland.

HHFA is still casting out its lines in the comprehensive project of research into the possibilities of reducing costs of housing. To the University of Pennsylvania goes the job of studying the costs of marketing building materials. Facts are sought regarding these costs and the functions and services that create them. There may be among us those to whom this may appear something like that classic "attempt to unscrew the inscrutable."



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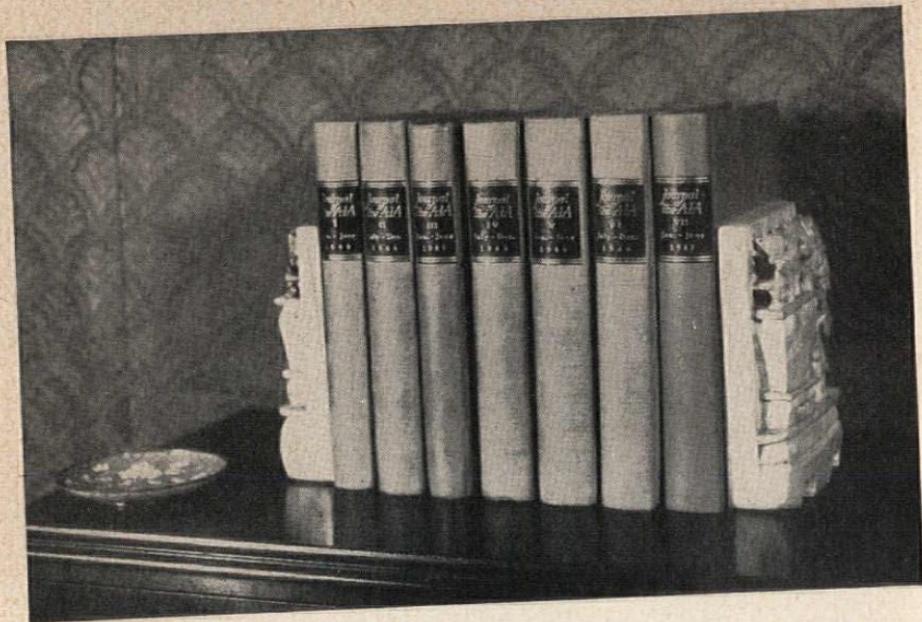
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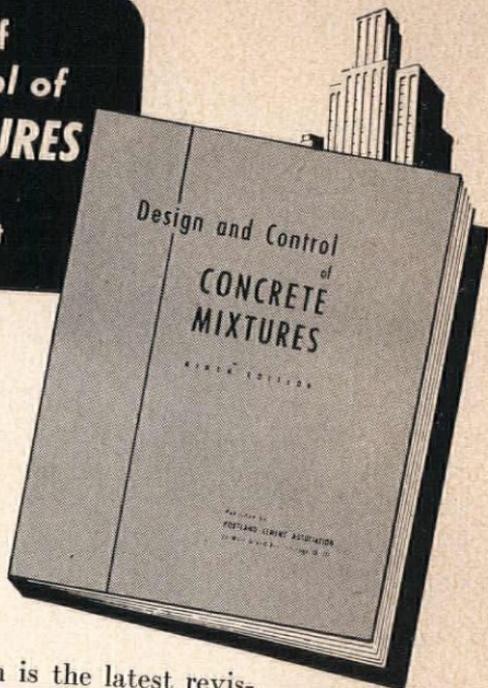
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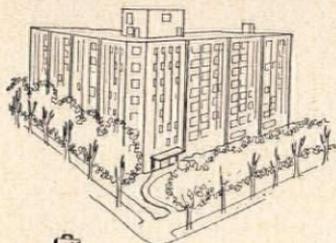
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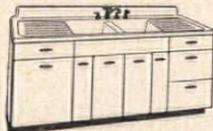
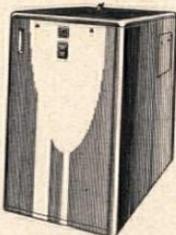
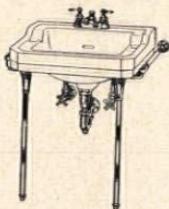
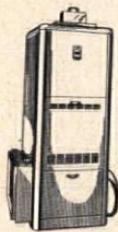
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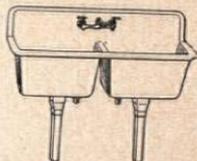
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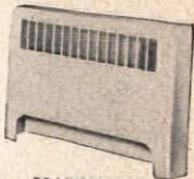
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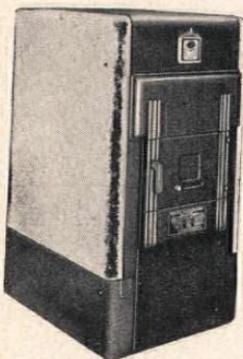
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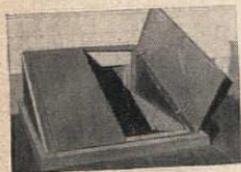
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