Wednesday, January 30, 1924. Vol. LIX. No. 1517.

THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL & Architectural Engineer

With which is incorporated "The Builders' Journal."

FROM AN ARCHITECT'S NOTEBOOK.

GIOTTO'S TOWER.

In the old Tuscan town stands Giotto's tower,
The lily of Florence blossoming in stone,--
A vision, a delight, and a desire,—
The builder's perfect and centennial flower,
That in the night of ages bloomed alone,
But wanting still the glory of the spire.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

27-29 Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W.1.

Piccadilly Circus in the 'Forties

From a Coloured Lithograph by T. S. Boys

It is a far cry back to scenes like these, and yet, up to a few months ago, the locale was unmistakable—Piccadilly Circus and Lower Regent Street, with Swan and Edgar's corner in the right foreground. In this print (dated 1840) Boys shows the first alterations to Nash's work—the new shop-fronts to Swan and Edgar's premises.

THE

ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL

27-29 Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W.1.

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When Labour Governs

WHATEVER else may be said of the new Government, the fact will remain that the Prime Minister and the great majority of his Ministers are all Socialists. When trying to appreciate their attitude towards the architectural world, it is necessary to bear in mind that Socialism has nothing whatever to do with Communism (which believes in force), and it is far removed from the newspaper idea of levelling everybody down to the same colour of tie. Names such as William Morris and Walter Crane should be a sufficient reminder that the Arts and Crafts Movement grew up with the Socialist Movement. Instead of explaining at this point what Socialism does mean, it will be less boring from the architect's point of view to throw in small doses of Socialism as the article proceeds and to state straight away that architects should welcome a Labour Administration. (It should here be noted that "Labour" and "Socialist," as the newspapers have so kindly pointed out, are the same thing, but "Labour" is a shorter word.)

The architect, if only the general public knew it, is a very important personage. His influence and his work can completely change the face of things; but if he is a bad architect, or if he is no architect at all, he can spoil environment to such an extent that people's lives, although they don't often realize it, become drab and uninteresting.

This is where the Labour Party comes in. A Socialist says that it is quite wrong for people to live in drab surroundings, and even if his surroundings are pleasant, a man is very little better off if his wallpaper pattern is glaring and his room is heavily ornamented. For a man, even though he may have an eight-hour day and a living wage, does not profit much if he has no sense of the beautiful. He will not be truly content unless his mind can appreciate good books and good art. He must be encouraged to learn the difference between real and false issues.

And so we come back to the architect again. By his training he is equipped with the knowledge of what is superfluous and what is essential in design. He is economical and far-seeing in planning, he studies human beings and can give them the correct setting and sympathetic design for civic centres.

All these things a Labour Administration wishes to encourage and actively to help. There would be a Ministry of Fine Arts, if the Labour Government obtained power as well as office. This Ministry would not be the dictator of artistic taste in the narrow sense of the word, but would rather be a centre of encouragement for the furtherance of the Arts. A Commission has already been appointed—by the late Government—and the new Government will give it every encouragement and support. Art, however, cannot remain in a purely consultative position; there must be an active policy later on, if Art is to exert its proper influence upon the nation. Labour looks forward to working hand in hand with Art.

It is deplorable that such doubtful schemes as the St. Paul's Bridge should be launched whilst the obviously necessary Charing Cross Bridge is urgently required. This scheme now awaits a little co-ordination, and the bridge can be built. A Labour Administration would appoint representatives to effect a conference of those concerned and, as it would be for the advantage and the well-being of the community, these representatives would see that the scheme was thoroughly considered and then put in hand. But administrative foresight would not stop at that. Socialists wish to house the people decently, and therefore to clear away the slums. In the Charing Cross Bridge scheme there is an excellent opportunity for doing away with the sprawling slums on the south bank of the river, near Waterloo. A useful and stately road at a high level can be made from Charing Cross, past Waterloo, to London Bridge, and without going into the scheme more in detail, good tenement flats could be grouped most interestingly alongside such a road. Such schemes have only been sketched and talked about, and then shelved. A Labour Government will see that they are not shelved; because all such schemes tend to increase the happiness of the people, and that is the guiding principle of Socialism.

Again, taking London as an example, the traffic question can only be solved with the aid of competent town-planning experts. Labour people realize this. Other people may have realized it. But up to the present very little progress has been made because the responsible bodies have been too busy on other things. A Labour Government would earmark this town-planning traffic control and go into the whole question from every point of view, because it knows, amongst other things, how very serious are traffic delays to efficient business. At the same time, if streets are to be improved, the new buildings must be good, so that the civic sense of the passers-by may be raised and their eye rested and pleased by good proportion. Architects, therefore, would be invited to co-operate in any such schemes and their advice would be taken.

It will be realized that such a state of affairs means that the architect and the town-planner are going to occupy a very important position in the State. Up to the present England has been rather proud of the fact that the State does nothing to stimulate the Arts. The late Government wished to tax us for going to the British Museum. Architecture has fallen low because there is no intelligent demand for it. People's lives are not so fashioned that they take an interest in architecture, and the architect's vision is accordingly dimmed. Our streets are now so uninteresting that we actually want to brighten London. But our sense of beauty in the meantime has been so dulled that the result is that we stick excrescences over buildings and we use bright electric signs at night time, and our sense has become still more dulled.

It is not necessarily a leader that is wanted; it is a lead. A Labour Administration will give such a lead, because a Socialist says that money spent upon the happiness of the people, by increasing their interest in beautiful things, by helping the drama and the theatre, and in other ways quickening the intellect, will be money well invested because the nation as a whole will be more efficient. It may be said that all decent-minded people believe these things. A Socialist Administration does not only think about them, but will direct every action and frame every measure with a view to obtaining such a state of affairs. It is a signifi-

cant fact that the First Commissioner of Works is in the Cabinet. They have yet to prove to the general public that, besides being idealists, they are also what are commonly called business men. Given the chance, they will do that. The start they have already made has allayed various fears, and architects need not be troubled with the idea that building enterprise or architectural activity is going to suffer. The idea is entirely false. This administration recognizes the importance of architecture and of the other arts, and will endeavour to broaden their influence, which at present is enjoyed by comparatively few.

Upon its formation the Cabinet announced its intention of accelerating the working of the present powers and the introduction of developing measures in the Housing Act. The quite justifiable suspicion of building operatives will be removed and they will co-operate wholeheartedly in solving the housing problem. Any rings will be broken up, as the new Government has no axe to grind, but the welfare of the nation to consider. They will not treat architects as they have been treated in previous schemes.

If the architect wishes to back up this Administration he must at the same time put his own house in order. He must so equip himself with knowledge and vision that he raises the prestige of the profession. The general public may then trust in his ability and in his good taste. Insincerity is being cleared away from the political world, and insincerity must also go from the practice of architecture and from the design of our buildings.

ALISTER G. MACDONALD.

[The foregoing article offers a reliable statement of the attitude of a Labour Government towards matters in which architects are interested, Mr. Alister Macdonald being, of course, the younger son of the Prime Minister.—ED. A. J.]

What's Wrong with the R.I.B.A. Prizes?

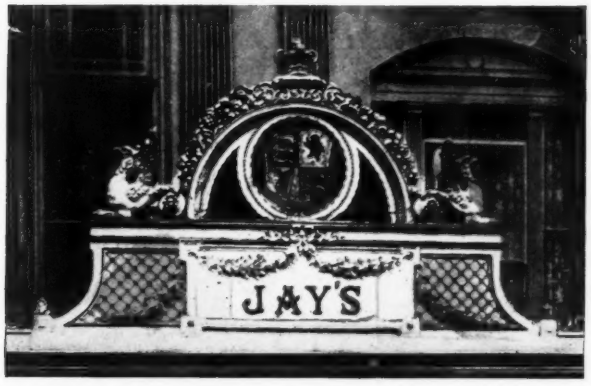
What is to be done about the R.I.B.A. prizes and studentships? From the full list of "awards" (if the term is really applicable) given in this week's issue, it will be seen that for one prize no drawings were submitted, while in three other instances it was found impossible to make any award at all. Why is it that the prizes and studentships which have been so ardently competed for in the past, and whose list of prizewinners bears the names of so many men who have since become famous in the world of architecture, should make little or no appeal to the present generation of students? It cannot be said, except in one case, that the subjects are unattractive or of such a nature as to cause the study of them to be regarded as a waste of time and effort. The study of mediæval architecture—the exception we have in mind is the "Pugin"—ought not, of course, to be regarded as a waste of time; but, at the moment, mediæval architecture is decidedly out of the picture, and the ambitious student can hardly be blamed if he gives preference to subjects which are likely to be of more practical use to him in his professional career. What, then, is the explanation of the present very unsatisfactory state of affairs? Simply this: that since the majority of the R.I.B.A. prizes and studentships were instituted a revolution in architectural education has taken place. In the old days, when the pupilage system was the recognized method of obtaining an architectural education, the student, after the day's work in the office of his principal, could study for the R.I.B.A. competitions in his evenings, and mostly he had plenty of leisure for it. To-day, with the architectural schools running five-year courses of full-time study, the student has neither the time nor the inclination for other work; he has to concentrate entirely upon his school work if he is to pass his examinations. And so the R.I.B.A. prizes and studentships are neglected. There is not even time for the Prix de Rome. How may the R.I.B.A. competitions be restored to their former prestige and glory? Only, it would seem, by making them part and parcel of school work. They should be embodied in the school curricula and worked for during normal hours of study.

The Commission of Fine Arts

The creation of a Commission of Fine Arts is an act of statesmanship for which Mr. Baldwin's Government is likely to be remembered when its political misfortunes are long forgotten. The only thing we dislike about it is the name. Why "Fine Arts"? It has a thin and precious sound and stirs no generous emotion. The man in the street who, after all is the one who will be most affected by its judgments, is not likely to be aroused to enthusiasm by a Commission of "Fine Arts"; he doesn't know what they are. Why could not this Commission be called plainly what it really is—a Commission of Public Improvements? Names count for a good deal in the psychology of the ordinary man, who is apt to resent or to ignore anything above his head. The question of title aside, this Commission is to be warmly welcomed, belated though it be. It is like to find itself fully occupied. In such matters as the architecture of public buildings, public monuments, town planning, housing, the lay-out of public parks and open spaces, and so forth, its advice should be much sought after. We even hope that its constitution may allow it to proffer advice without the asking. In the rebuilding of metropolitan streets it could do much to improve the architectural amenities by counselling the subordination of individual interests to those of the community as a whole. It could do real public service by pointing out to the City Corporation that a new bridge is wanted not near St. Paul's Cathedral, but at Charing Cross. By intervening in time it could help to preserve buildings of architectural value that are thoughtlessly threatened with destruction. It could be of the utmost service to the community if it could advise, not only with regard to projected works, but also upon the conservation of whatever of good already exists, without those who are immediately concerned coming to the Commission for advice of their own volition. No feeling of delicacy or of restraint should prevent the Commission from giving advice where advice is obviously needed, even though it be unasked. In other words, the Commission, to do the best work, must be not merely consultative, but alertly advisory. Its constitution allows it no power of compulsion, which is wise. By persistent work, however, it should gradually induce the recognition of a good standard of taste, and then, of course, the battle is as good as won.

Style and Structure

The commotion in the architectural world over the question of stylistic expression is all to the good. It shows that architects are no longer the faithful devotees of what Mr. Voysey once called "shirtfront architecture." The term is good; it very happily hits off much of the elevational stuff that has grown up in our streets during this first quarter of the twentieth century. Eight out of every ten modern buildings leave you with the impression that you could strip off the decorative junk from their elevations with immense advantage to the buildings beneath. Columns, pilasters, pediments, cornices, friezes, swags, and all the rest of the Renaissance paraphernalia grow wearisome and commonplace with repetition. So fine a feature as the column ought surely to be used with great discretion and restraint. To plaster it over every elevation is to vulgarize it. Perhaps we are coming to the time when we shall not use it at all, for, with modern methods of construction, it is seldom employed to serve a structural purpose. More often than not it is merely a sentimental concession to accepted æsthetics. There is something very hollow and disillusioning about the sight of a steel stanchion being clothed in best Portland to resemble a Corinthian column. Also it is an expensive way of getting architectural effect. We have not yet devised a satisfactory method of clothing modern structure architecturally; but by looking at a building simply as a problem in solid and void, and putting out of our heads all thought of conventional garb, we shall ultimately find a way of salvation.



A DECORATIVE DETAIL ON JAY'S OLD BUILDING.

Regent Street: An Obituary.—2

By A. TRYSTAN EDWARDS, M.A., A.R.I.B.A.

ONE'S glance might linger upon the façades of old Regent Street and remain satisfied that they are unities, that they are neatly crowned by a proper boundary in the shape of parapets and occasional balustrades which often have the support of an expanse of wallage between cornice and topmost windows. In a few instances it must be confessed that the proportion of window to wall is smaller than could conveniently be accepted in a modern shop, but a comparison between the old and new buildings of Regent Street will show that the new façades provide numerous examples of the requisite priority of wall over window, but the former is so torn with meretricious decorative features that the desired repose is not forthcoming.

Nash's façades were by no means bald (in fact, the plain rectangular reveal is here scarcely in evidence at all), and an enormous variety of architrave, bracket, and other ornament was employed to lend distinction and grace to the window openings. The decorative adjuncts, however, were never allowed to encroach too much upon the expanse of smooth stucco surface which was to be the form and symbol of repose. Where, however, in the Old Regent Street designs it was found necessary for the window area to be in excess of the wall area contiguous to it, care was taken either to express this fact logically by a columnar or pilaster treatment, which gives the façade the needed strength, or else to surmount the fenestrated portion with a broad expanse of wallage. The little domed shop at the corner of Vigo Street is an example of this, as is also the house in Lower Regent Street illustrated last week. The front of the bay is here nearly all aperture, yet it has sufficient solidity, while the three large windows on the floor above have a substantial mural top-piece. It will be observed that in Nash's designs the columnar treatment is sometimes also applied to façades where the proportion of wallage to window area is most generous, as in the County Fire Office itself. In this instance the columns are needed not so much to give the appearance of strength, but to give emphasis and importance, to form a pronounced punctuating feature to the sweep of the Quadrant.

A virtue of Old Regent Street often commented upon was the perfect proportion of the street itself. In Regent Street Nash was in the fortunate position of being able to determine the relation of height of building to width of street by architectural considerations alone, and in this, as in other matters, he took careful steps to arrive at a form which would be most acceptable to the people using the thoroughfare. The proportion chosen was not only good æsthetically, but it resulted in one of the most cheerful and sunny streets in all London.

Yet another excellence must be touched upon here. Even at the risk of being controversial, I may affirm that the material of Regent Street was perfect. Once during the period when about a third of Nash's buildings were still standing, I happened to be in the company of a gentleman from the country who, having heard a great deal about the work of reconstruction in Regent Street, was most interested to survey the scene himself, and to form his own conclusion. To my surprise he professed himself unable to understand all the pother that had been made about Regent Street. "Why, the new buildings are charming. I can't think how anyone can be so captious as to find fault with them. How bright and fresh they look when contrasted with the nasty dull grey stone buildings in their vicinity." I was obliged to enlighten him on the matter. "My poor benighted friend," I said, "the qualities which you have been praising, the brightness and freshness, belong to the buildings which were erected a hundred years ago, but still maintain their youthful appearance with but slight attention, while the dull grey façades you condemn are none of them more than twenty years old."

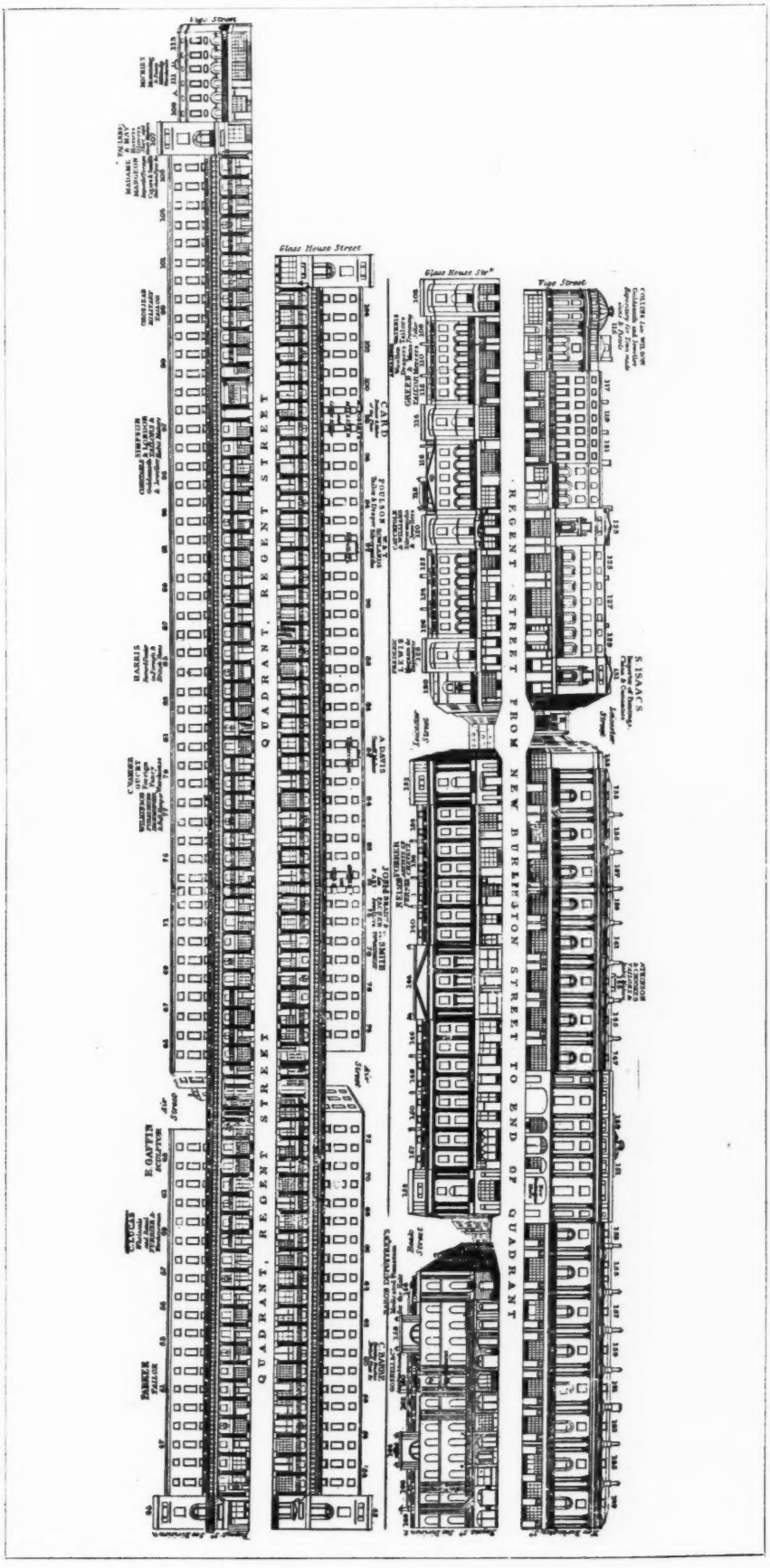
Now, stucco is a *polite* substance. It is often used to cover things in which nobody need feel any great interest, such as joints of brickwork in the rooms of a house, or the undersides of ceiling rafters; we may grant that oak beams have a certain charm of their own, but a prejudice against stucco leads to peculiar results in internal decoration. To visit the houses of people who have this prejudice is a somewhat depressing experience. In the midst of barrenness and beams one feels like a rat ensconced between the rafters. But beautiful as is a stucco cornice and moulded ceiling, useful as stucco is as the background of wall-papers of all kinds, it is in its external use that its greatest and most imposing effects can be obtained.

Painted stucco is the ideal material for street architecture. It has an ivory surface which responds in a very sensitive manner to varying conditions of light and atmosphere. No other texture either natural or artificial is productive of such delicate harmonies in cream and in white, in gold and silver and grey. One of the most beautiful sights in the world used to be the west side of Piccadilly Circus midday in April after a shower of rain. In a smoky city almost the only buildings which can be made perennially clean and fresh are the stucco-fronted ones. Of course, Portland stone in exposed positions where it is well washed by the rain, as in the river front of Somerset House, for instance, is a delightful material. In the architect's rendered drawings new stone buildings are represented as snowy white, but neither architect nor client ought to be deceived by this, for in the ordinary London thoroughfare a few months after their erection they become black just like the Piccadilly Hotel. Presently this tall smoky

A VIEW OF REGENT STREET IN 1923, LOOKING NORTH. MESSRS. LIBERTY'S BLOCK IS IN MIDDLE DISTANCE.

Photos: "Architects' Journal."

A DETAIL OF THE CENTRAL FEATURE OF MESSRS. LIBERTY'S BLOCK (NOW DEMOLISHED).



A TALLIS VIEW OF OLD REGENT STREET.

frontage will have extended like a blight over the whole of Nash's beautiful quadrant.

Besides being a polite material, stucco is an intellectual material; it reeks of intellect. This is because a composition in stucco is a question of form rather than of craftsmanship. If it is praised it is not on account of its cost or the labour expended upon it, but for its beauty, for the degree of subtlety and refinement expressed in the design itself. Nothing is more conducive to vulgarity in architecture than the idea that an imposing effect is going to be obtained by the use of expensive materials. There was more grace, more actual civic worth and dignity in the least of Nash's Regent Street frontages than in many a modern building which flaunts its fine ashlar, and to which the rarest quarries have paid tribute. Too great concern about the value of materials is very often shown in the design of jewellery. A person of discernment would far prefer to wear a beautiful design in paste than an ugly one in real diamonds (which latter is often an excuse for mere boastfulness of the pecuniary worth of the article), and a nicely chased bracelet in silver gilt expresses a far more aristocratic spirit than does a coarser one of pure gold.

The incomparable advantage of stucco is that it is cheap; the materials for its construction are abundant, and it can be manufactured in a uniform texture. Moreover, it makes no appeal to the false pride of the vulgar rich, it is susceptible of being worked to exquisite detail, it weathers splendidly, and is an ideal surface for paint. The search for coloured materials, themselves destined to become a dirty black, seems utter waste of time when a fresh coat of paint on stucco will give a good and even far better effect. Besides the sense of moral righteousness which caused Ruskin to condemn stucco as a sham was the attitude of William Morris, who seemed imbued with the obsession that the chief function of a building was to provide health and happiness to the operatives and craftsmen. Apart from the fact that a plasterer is as good a man as a bricklayer any day, this insistence on the importance of the art of craftsmanship tended to direct attention away from the civic qualities of a building, its shape and character, and its relation to its neighbours. This question of stucco is a crucial one, and in accordance with the judgment of critics with regard to it they may be divided into sheep and goats. Everyone who decries the value of stucco may immediately be suspected of belonging to that large class who concentrate their attention upon the *minutiæ* of architecture, and have but an imperfect appreciation of the more important aspects of this art.

If a particular building erected in stone or marble is held to be admirable, the same building faced with stucco would also have great merits. In fact, it is even true to say that in the modern city there are occasions when the stucco edifice is architecturally superior to its stone counterpart. This will be manifest as soon as one considers the elements of definition and contrast on which an architectural composition must always depend. In general, it may

Photo: "Architects' Journal."

THE ENTRANCE TO SWALLOW STREET IN THE QUADRANT.

By courtesy of "The Town Planning Review."

PART OF THE WEST SIDE OF OLD REGENT STREET

be affirmed that the windows of a building are a series of rectangles of a distinctly *dark* tone. Granted that reflections of light may occasionally make the windows shine brightly, or that the presence of white blinds give them a light tone, it is true to say that windows nearly always appear dark holes in the wall. Now, owing to the smoke of modern towns, the wall is also dark; hence the windows fail to assert themselves and the shadows of the mouldings and ornament are scarcely visible, with the result that the decorative forms so carefully chosen by the architect are not properly articulated.

It is an act of self-stultification, and even shows an attitude of surliness towards the public, for an architect obstinately to cling to the principle that it is wrong to use a medium which can be ever kept clean and bright. The *desire to please* has not been developed in such a person. Moreover, there is one very important advantage in stucco which has not been, as far as I know, sufficiently emphasized. As we do not live nowadays under the dominion of the curfew, it stands to reason that a great deal of urban architecture is viewed just as much by night as by day. All the old-fashioned stone and brick architecture of the past was exclusively *day* architecture, that is to say, its true quality was only apparent in sunlight. At night time, it is true, a silhouette was sometimes visible, and the outline of buildings on a hill would be clearly expressed, but all the internal detail of a façade would be cast in obscurity.

A lesson in the value of stucco could be easily acquired by anyone who cared to stand at Piccadilly Circus and look up towards the Quadrant. It was a fairy scene. But beautiful as this view was by day, it was lovelier still by night. A gentle glow pervaded the face of the quadrant, while every scrap of detail received its full value, and the outlines of the whole stood in most brilliant contrast to the indigo sky. Turn round and look at the monstrous exhibition of vulgarity on the east side of the circus. In the dark masses of buildings the fenestration is practically invisible, and formal emphasis is directed to the glorification of illuminated signs of port wine, pills, and soap whose repetitive motions show us to what depths of futility it is possible to descend. Do these advertisements even serve their purpose, one may be tempted to ask? Any right-minded man would surely say, "Port I will drink, but never *that* port. Pills I may, indeed, be induced to swallow, but never *those* pills. Cleanliness I will pursue, but by any other means than through the agency of *that* soap." Yet country cousins come and gape with astonishment and even admiration at this degrading spectacle. Of course, in excuse, it may be said that these stone buildings are so dull at night time that there must be a little relief, if only an attempt at comic relief. The answer to this is that the means of making the streets of London beautiful by night is ready to hand. The genius of Nash has shown the way.

Some time ago there was a movement in favour of creating a "Brighter London." What have the advocates of this "Brighter London" to say to the obscuration of the brightest spot in all the metropolis? By the time these words appear in print "Brighter London," nay "Brightest London," will be no more. Is there no room then for good-mannered architecture in the metropolis? Was this catastrophe really inevitable? Before embarking upon so controversial a topic it may be pleasant to turn for a moment to imagine the fair picture of Regent Street as it emerged from the hands of its creator. According to contemporary testimony it was "A truly magnificent specimen of modern London which, within a few years, has arisen to beautify and exalt the town. What would be the wonder of our ancestors, even those who lived so recently as the early part of George III's reign, could they look upon the grand view before us with its spacious circus in front, or the avenue of classical buildings branching from its terminations, or the stupendous column of granite 'pointing to the skies' in memory of the Duke of York? The scene altogether is a noble one, worthy of the capital of a great nation." And another writer of the same period says, "Who that remembers the narrow, dingy, dirty thoroughfare called Swallow Street, with its adjacent poverty-stricken alleys, can forbear to rejoice on seeing the wide, noble, and decorated vista of costly shops and other buildings which, in the improvement of London, has arisen on its site? Regent Street is the depository of foreign excellences and luxuries and the refinements of home manufactures; it is the mart whence Fashion derives her ornament, the favourite lounge of 'men about town'; the region where architecture does not disdain to lavish upon shops her columns and entablatures and porticoes; the glory of the trading section of the West End, the assertor of the pride and wealth of retail dealers. Though this noble avenue of edifices built for and devoted to trade is of very recent origin, a thing comparatively of yesterday, already have numerous shop-keepers realized ample fortunes in it and retired to enjoy their independence in country villas and gardens."

(To be concluded.)

A DETAIL OF THE FRIEZE IN THE FOYER.

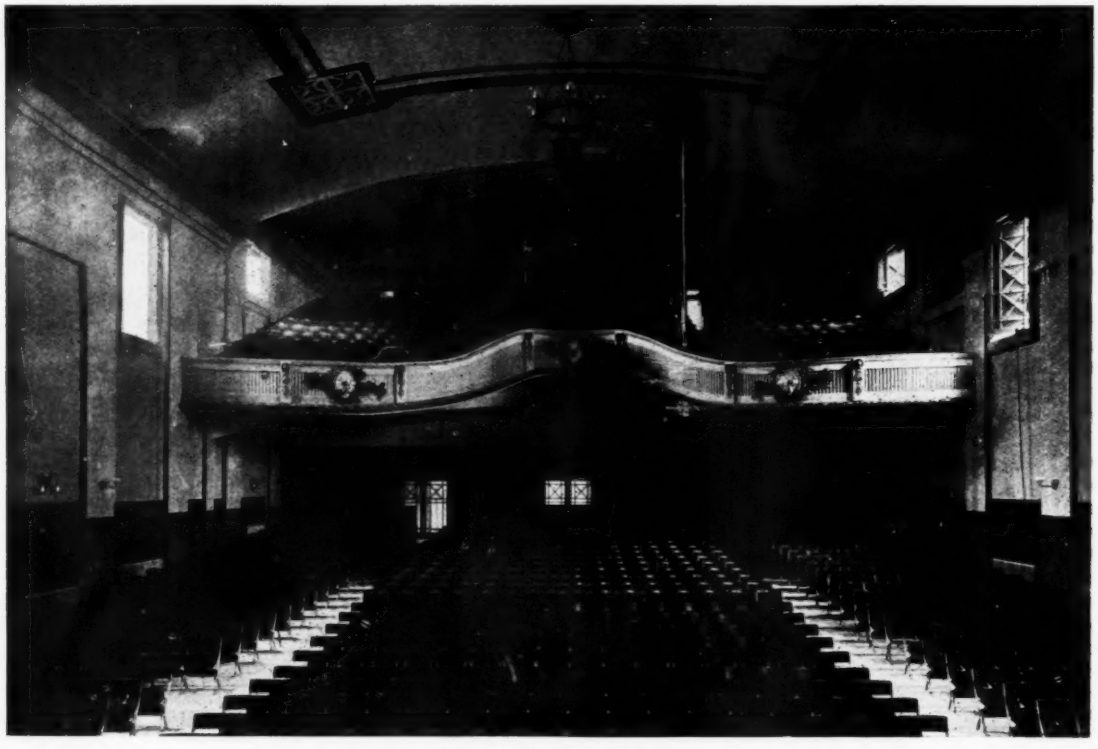
The Oak Cinema, Selly Oak, Birmingham

HAROLD S. SCOTT, A.R.I.B.A., Architect

THIS new cinema has been erected for Messrs. Selly Oak Pictures, Ltd., on a corner site at the junction of High Street and Chapel Lane, Selly Oak, Birmingham. It is 82 ft. wide in the front, 64 ft. wide at the back, and 127 ft. long, and provides seating accommodation for 900 in the auditorium and 300 in the balcony. The exterior is faced with mottled Hollington stone and 2 in. Titford facing bricks, and the balcony, floors and roof flats are of reinforced concrete.

The accommodation includes a spacious foyer, which extends for a height of two floors, the manager's and staff rooms and stores, the auditorium, with a seating area of 85 ft. by 64 ft., and under the rearward part of the balcony are the operating room, the re-winding room, the staff retiring room, and the workshop. Great care has been taken by the architect in planning the building to enable the picture to be thrown direct on to the screen without distortion. In the interior, the panelling and the frieze in the foyer are perhaps the most outstanding decorative features. The frieze is modelled from old Pompeian examples, and represents a triumphal procession of the arts and crafts.

The balcony is 60 ft. wide, 24 ft. deep at the sides, and 18 ft. in the centre, and is supported mainly by a beam 9 ft. deep with a thickness of 4 in. at the sides and 8 in. in the centre, extending across the building. This beam, which rests on two steel columns, each 12 ft. from the centre line, and reinforced concrete wall columns 12 in. by 12 in. in section, also acts as the wall of the rooms beneath the back of the balcony. At points 9 ft. from the centre, diagonal beams, with a span of 30 ft., extend to the wings of the balcony at an angle of approximately 30 degrees from the main beam. From the back of the balcony to the parapet are six raker beams cantilevered out beyond the main beams to a maximum distance of 11 ft. The two centre rakers extend back through the back wall of the auditorium to support floors at the particular level in front of the building. In the balcony there are eleven steppings, each of which is 33 in. wide.

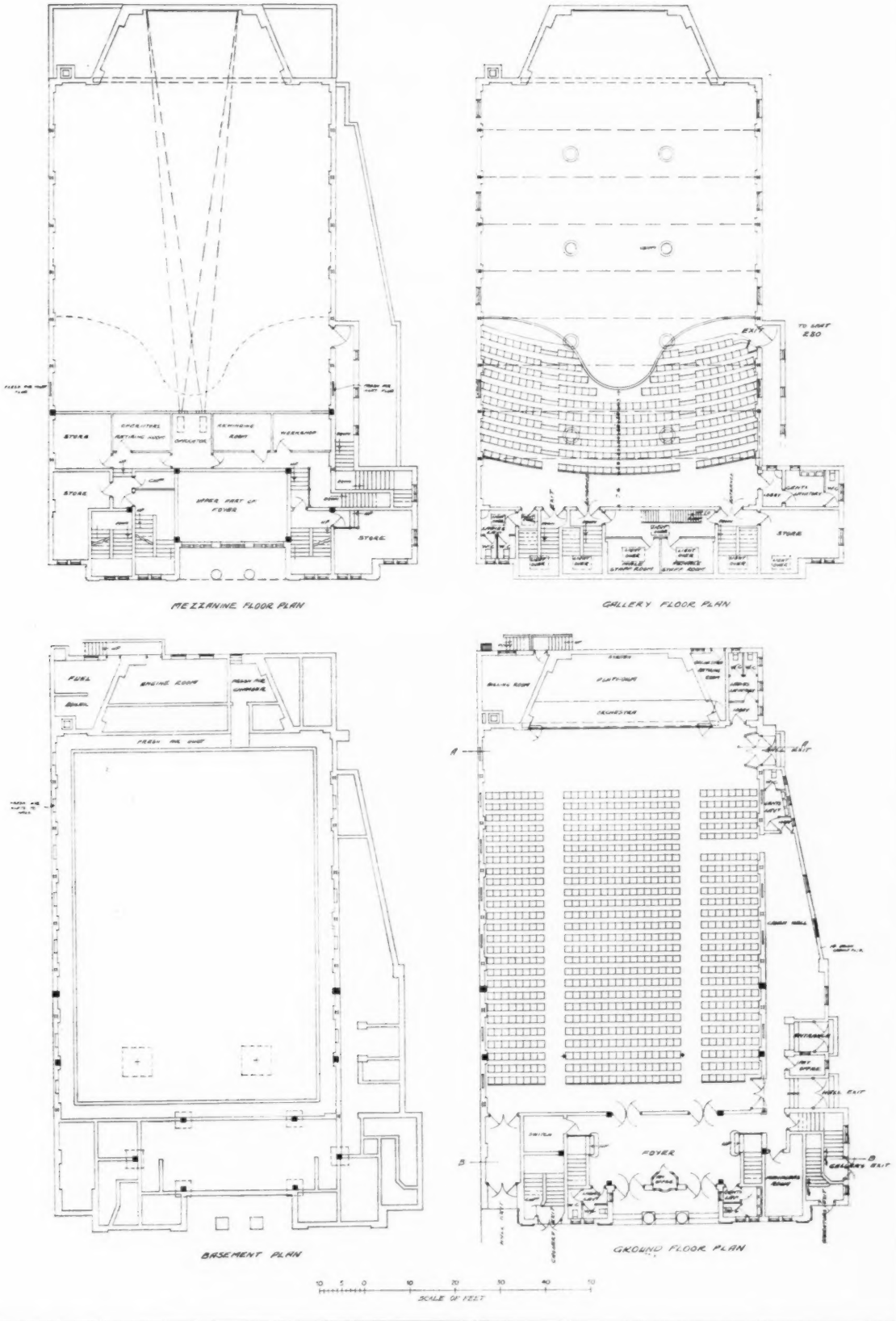


A GENERAL INTERIOR VIEW

Current Architecture. 222.—The Oak Cinema Theatre, Selly Oak, Birmingham

Harold S. Scott, A.R.I.B.A., Architect

In its main elevation this theatre strikes a refreshingly new note in picture house design. It has a width of 82 ft. and the materials used are mottled Hollington stone and 2 in. facing bricks. The theatre provides accommodation for 1,200 persons—900 on the ground floor and 300 in the balcony.



THE OAK CINEMA THEATRE, SELLY OAK, BIRMINGHAM: PLANS.
HAROLD S. SCOTT, A.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT.

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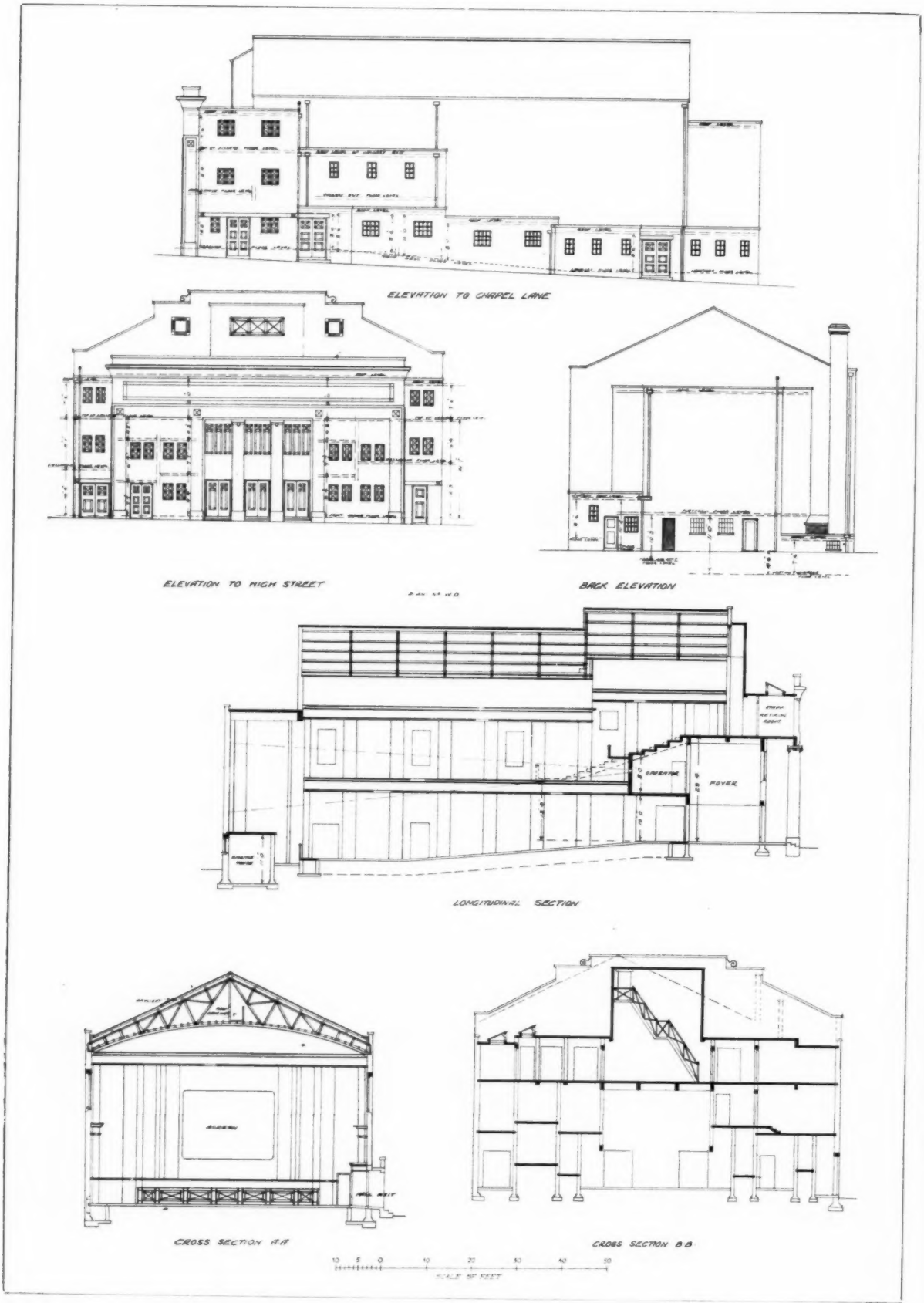


THE OAK CINEMA THEATRE, SELLY OAK, BIRMINGHAM: SECTIONS AND ELEVATIONS.
HAROLD S. SCOTT, A.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT.

The beam over the proscenium has a clear span of 41 ft., and is 42 in. by 12 in. in section; the floor slabs vary in thickness from 3½ in. to 4½ in., and they are supported, where necessary, by the usual beams.

The roof slabs are supported on beams of 12 in. by 6 in. section. These beams have a span of 16 ft., and are placed at 10 ft. centres. The roof slabs are 4 in. in thickness. The roof is covered with Bangor slates.

Messrs. T. Elvins and Sons, Birmingham, were the general contractors, the sub-contractors being as follows: Val-de-Travers Asphalte Co. (asphalt); Indented Bar and Concrete Engineering Co., Ltd. (reinforced concrete construction, fireproof floors and partitions); Messrs. E. C. and J. Keay, Ltd. (steelwork); Porcelain Tile Co., Tunstall, Staffs (tiles); Doulton & Co., Ltd. (sanitary ware and fittings); Wm. Morris & Co., Ltd. (lead down pipes and r.w. heads); Acme Flooring and Paving Co. (1904), Ltd. (flooring); G. T. Hyde and Son (gasfitting); Parker, Winder and Achurch, Ltd. (electric wiring); Stratford-upon-Avon Guild, Ltd. (plaster work); Harry Hunt, Ltd. (electric light fixtures); Henry Hope and Sons, Ltd. (heating and ventilation, and stained glass and leaded lights).

The Principles of Architectural Composition.—3

By HOWARD ROBERTSON, S.A.D.G., Principal A.A. School of Architecture

IT appears to be a fact that the human eye is pleased by definite forms, because such forms can be readily grasped and understood, and through this property produce an impression amounting to satisfaction. Regular figures such as the square, the circle, the equilateral triangle, are all shapes which have the property of frank definition. They are devoid of any suggestion of tentativeness or hesitation in their proportions, and for this reason have stability. It is the presence of this quality of stability which probably explains the success of such recognized proportions as that of the double cube room previously referred to, and the doorway with its opening of a double square. The presence of proportions based on a figure having such a stable nature as the square satisfies our desire for strength, security, and settled repose, though it should be made quite clear that other requirements of composition may render the use of such definite shapes undesirable. This question will be treated in a chapter devoted to a more detailed discussion of proportion.

It should be clearly understood that there are no limitations to the number of elements which may go to form a composition, provided that their grouping be so arranged as to furnish a dominant or focal point of interest, which point should be the one to which the eye is first attracted and to which it naturally returns after an examination of the various subordinate details of the composition.

This centre of interest or focal point may be an actual solid element, or, more subtly, it may consist of a certain line, area, or point which constitutes what we will call the centre of gravity of the composition. This centre of gravity may actually be a blank space in the composition, on which the eye rests while at the same time it perceives within the angle of vision the elements which have been correctly placed to result in unity. The eye grasps, as it were, not one object, but a balance of objects. (Such a case occurs in the composition of Greenwich Hospital already cited.)

The effect of grouping in composition, resulting in a unity whose position is on the centre of gravity of the picture, is similar in principle to the composition of forces in mechanics.

A number of isolated forces in mechanics may be composed into a single force termed the resultant. The direction and position of the resultant will vary according to the weight and direction of its components, but it will pass through the centre of gravity of the particular group under consideration. In the same way the grouping of a number of elements in a composition tends towards a resultant effect, and this effect will reach its maximum intensity at a point which is the centre of gravity of the composition. In order that the composition should be satisfactory, this centre of gravity should not be awkwardly situated—not at the extreme edge of the composition for example—for the eye demands stability, and stability is best realized in an approximately central position, which is one giving the best conditions for balance and order.

A knowledge of this principle will enable us to compose through a cultivation of the practice of visually weighing one element with another, and subsequently placing them so that they form a nicely-balanced picture, with a well-placed centre of gravity, and this quite independently of whether the elements are of the same type or are, on the contrary, of all sorts of shapes and sizes.

The figures 26, 27, 28, 29 illustrate architectural "compositions" and buildings in which the dotted lines show the various centres of interest corresponding to the forces in mechanics. These "compose" to give a main resultant axis of interest which indicates the centre of gravity of the group. The centres of gravity of the compositions are indicated in the approximate position where the trained eye seems naturally to place them, though it is only in the case of a perfectly symmetrical composition that the placing can be mathematically determined since it will then be in the exact centre of the composition. It should be noted that in architectural, as well as pictorial compositions, an appreciation of the "weight" or importance of an element is not arrived at by visualizing its size alone. Colour, tone, texture, the strength and vigour of its design, have a strong effect on its value in the picture, and we may therefore find, in a picture of building, a large and faintly emphasized mass on one side being balanced on the other side by a smaller but more vigorous element (Fig. 26).

It must not be inferred from these deductions that lack of complete balance is to be deprecated either in a picture or the design of a building, but at the same time the designer must remember that no composition should produce a feeling of discomfort or clumsiness through injudicious disposition of emphasis, and that there is a certain limit beyond which a shifting of the centre of gravity produces what is commonly described as "top-heaviness" or "lop-sidedness."

In order that a sense of composition may be developed, it is advisable to practise the production of satisfactory arrangements of simple shapes, either light and dark geometrical figures, or architectural masses shaded in different depths of tone (Fig. 30). For the faculty of appreciating the proper proportioning and placing of elements, of whatever nature, to form a unity of composition, is the secret of ability to design and compose with grammatical correctness in the language of architecture.

It is extremely important for the student of composition to bear in mind that the correct handling of complex architectural elements cannot be attained until the appreciation of the composition of simple forms has been arrived at. Architectural elements are neither more nor less than geometrical shapes and forms which have been endowed by the designer with attributes of life, interest, purpose, and function (Figs. 31 and 32), and the chief failure of bad architectural design lies in lack of power to handle simple form in such a way as to produce good proportion in the relation of the main masses to each other, and to the building as a complete unit.

(To be continued.)

[The first articles in this series appeared in our issues of January 9 and 16.]

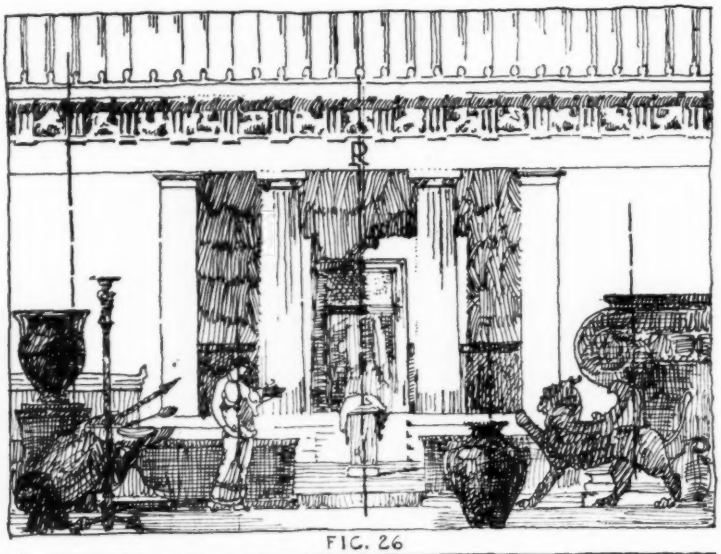


FIG. 26

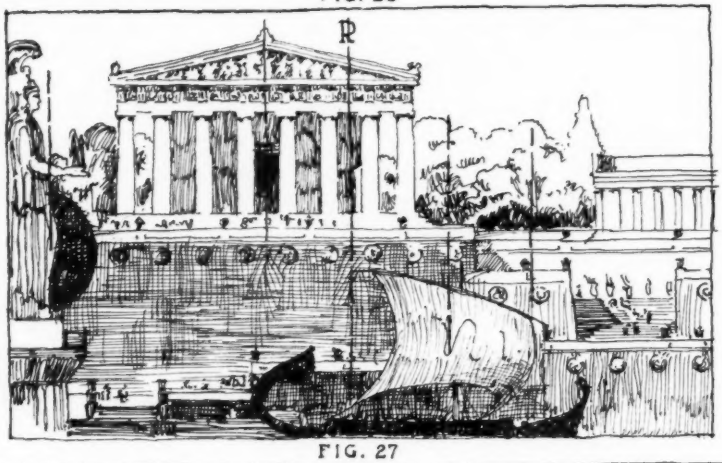
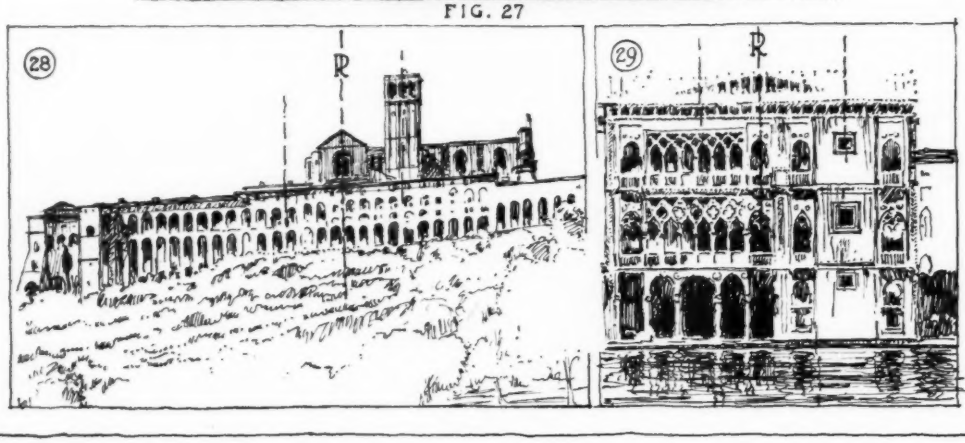


FIG. 27



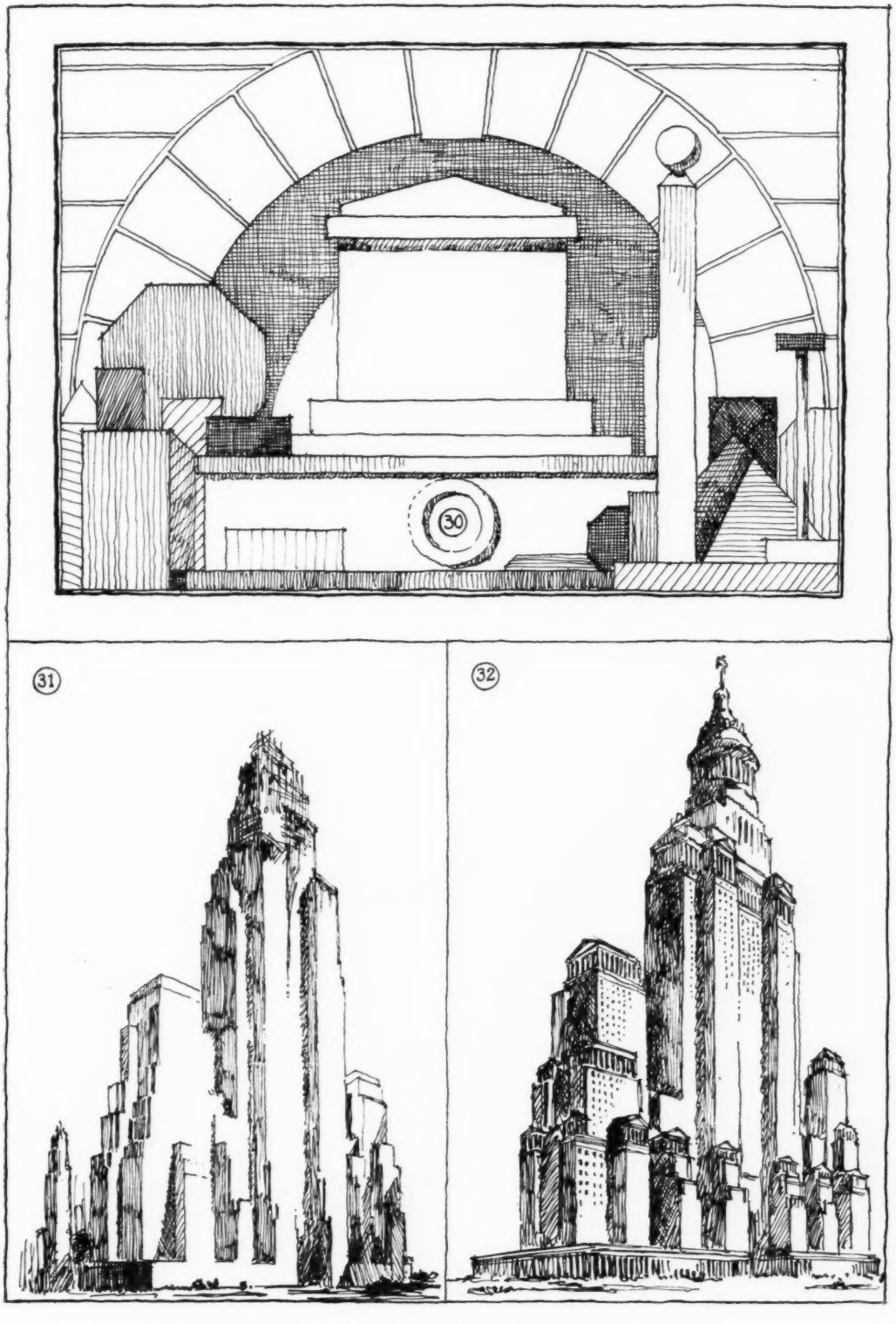
THE PRINCIPLES OF ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITION: DIAGRAMS.

FIG. 26.—A "balanced" architectural composition (based on an A.A. student's drawing) in which the subsidiary elements to the right and left are different in shape, but form a general balance of "weight."

FIG. 27.—An unsymmetrical composition (based on the work of a student of Columbia University) in which a free arrangement of elements combines to produce a centre of gravity which is practically in the middle of the picture.

FIG. 28.—The church and convent of San Francesco, Assisi. A free and unsymmetrical composition.

FIG. 29.—The Casa d'Oro, Venice. A very delicate and clever adjustment of "weights" to produce a central focus and a balance in a composition really consisting of two elements but in which the presence of a third is suggested, thus avoiding duality.



THE PRINCIPLES OF ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITION: DIAGRAMS.

FIG. 30.—A composition of geometrical shapes and simple forms, in which varying weights and tone values serve to form a balance between elements of widely different shape. In spite of lack of complete symmetry the centre of gravity remains in the middle of the picture.

FIGS. 31 and 32.—Sketches based on designs by Helmle and Corbett for the "Skyscraper of the Future," showing how simple geometrical shapes (31) form the basis of the finished architectural conception (32).

The R.I.B.A. Prizes and Studentships

A Criticism of the Designs

THE drawings sent in for the R.I.B.A. prizes and studentships are fewer than ever this year. Six sets were entered for the Soane, four for the Pugin, and for the Owen Jones only one. As the drawings are few in number, so is their quality very poor. Perhaps never before in the history of the R.I.B.A. prize-giving has such a miserable collection been on show.

The Soane Medallion

The subject set for the Soane medallion was the designing of an Anglican cathedral church. "England's" set of four strainers is certainly worthy of the award. It is decidedly the best, and the rest are nowhere. "Dean," "La Trinite," and "Seep" have adopted very Roman designs (an Anglican church ought not to be too Romish?) and "Seep" has gone to the trouble of placing on plan no fewer than seventeen chapels, exclusive of the lady chapel. "Phœnix" has sent in drawings which are perhaps second best, but his design is very severe, and not very English. "England's" design is in middle-pointed Gothic, beautifully rendered.

"La Trinite" accounts for the plain unadornment of his cathedral by an inscription explaining that the building has been "conceived as a structure capable of fulfilling its function on erection, yet possessing great opportunity for decoration at a future period"—a course followed "from consideration of the low standard of skill and artistic ability in the crafts at the present time." "La Trinite" should have concerned himself more with the winning of the prize. "Lampsacus" misread the title of the subject set, and found out his mistake only just prior to sending in. His design is for a very colourful town hall.

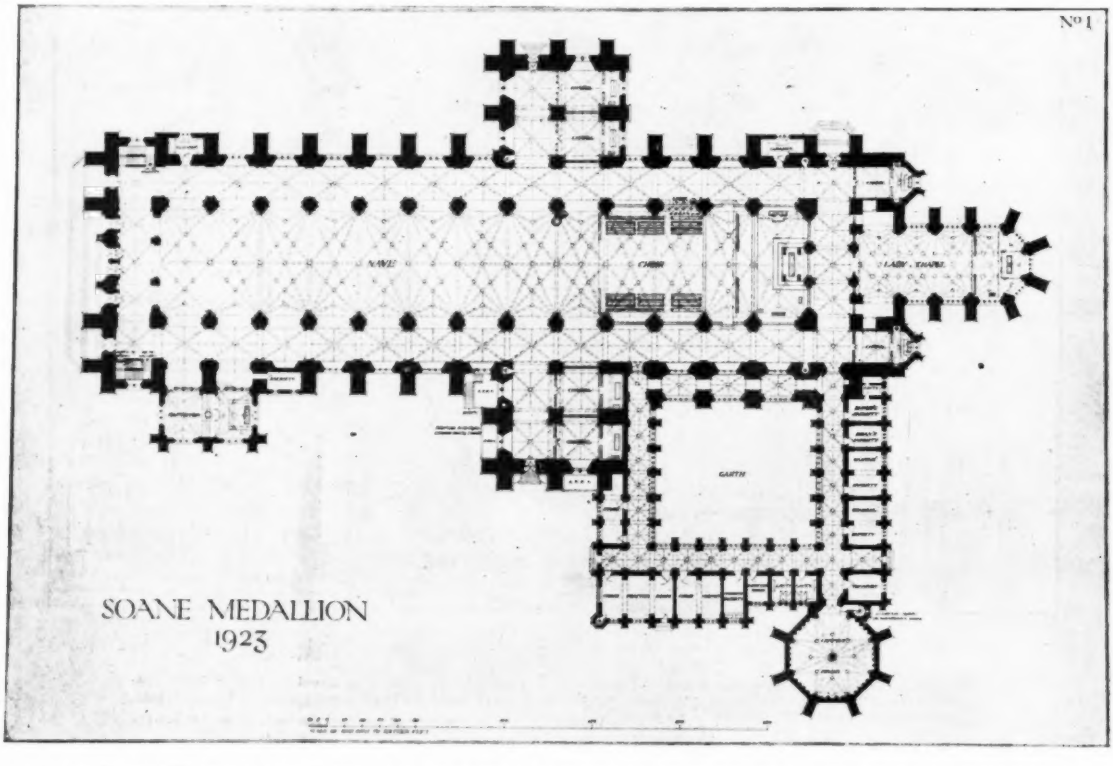
The Pugin Prize

The Pugin prize was not awarded. If any of the four applicants wonder why, let them examine the drawings sent in last year by Newton Thorpe, and they will see the quality of draughtsmanship demanded.

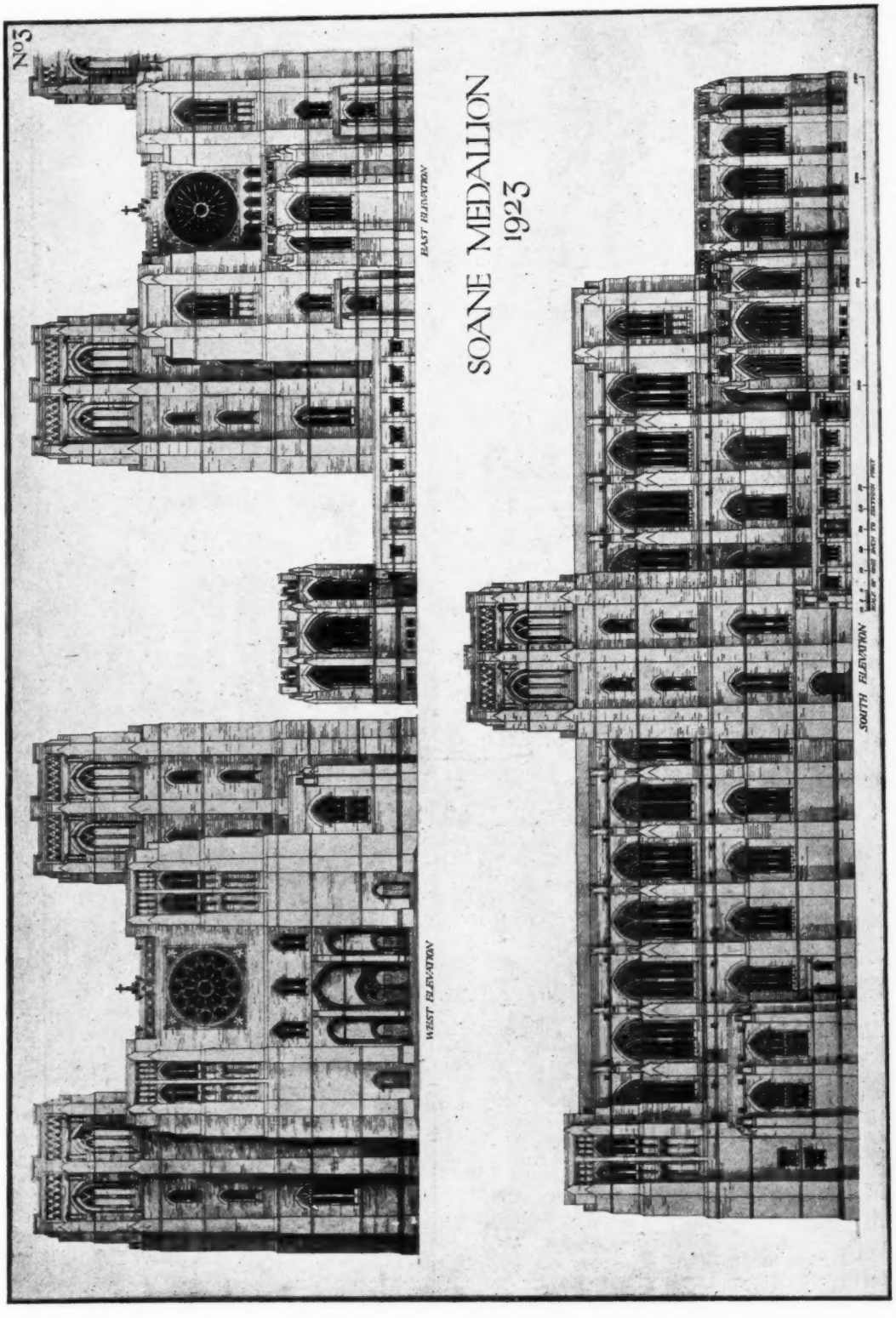
W. J. P. Price (who sends in three strainers and some loose sketches) seems to have been fortunate in sketching Peterborough Cathedral when he did. If his sketch is to be credited, the noble pile, leaning dangerously to the right, and with all its arches badly buckled, collapsed the next instant. J. F. Hampton's drawings are the best of the Pugin sets. The other sets are such as the Institute might have grudgingly passed as testimonials of study for the Intermediate. G. J. W. Messent's effort consists of drawings of some churches in Norfolk, and D. H. McMorran's drawings of the Parish Church of SS. Peter and Paul, Northleach, Glos.

The six strainers sent in by J. H. Sexton for the Owen Jones prize (his was the only application received) show beautiful work, and are among the best awarded this prize for some years. Here we have a real sense of colour and design.

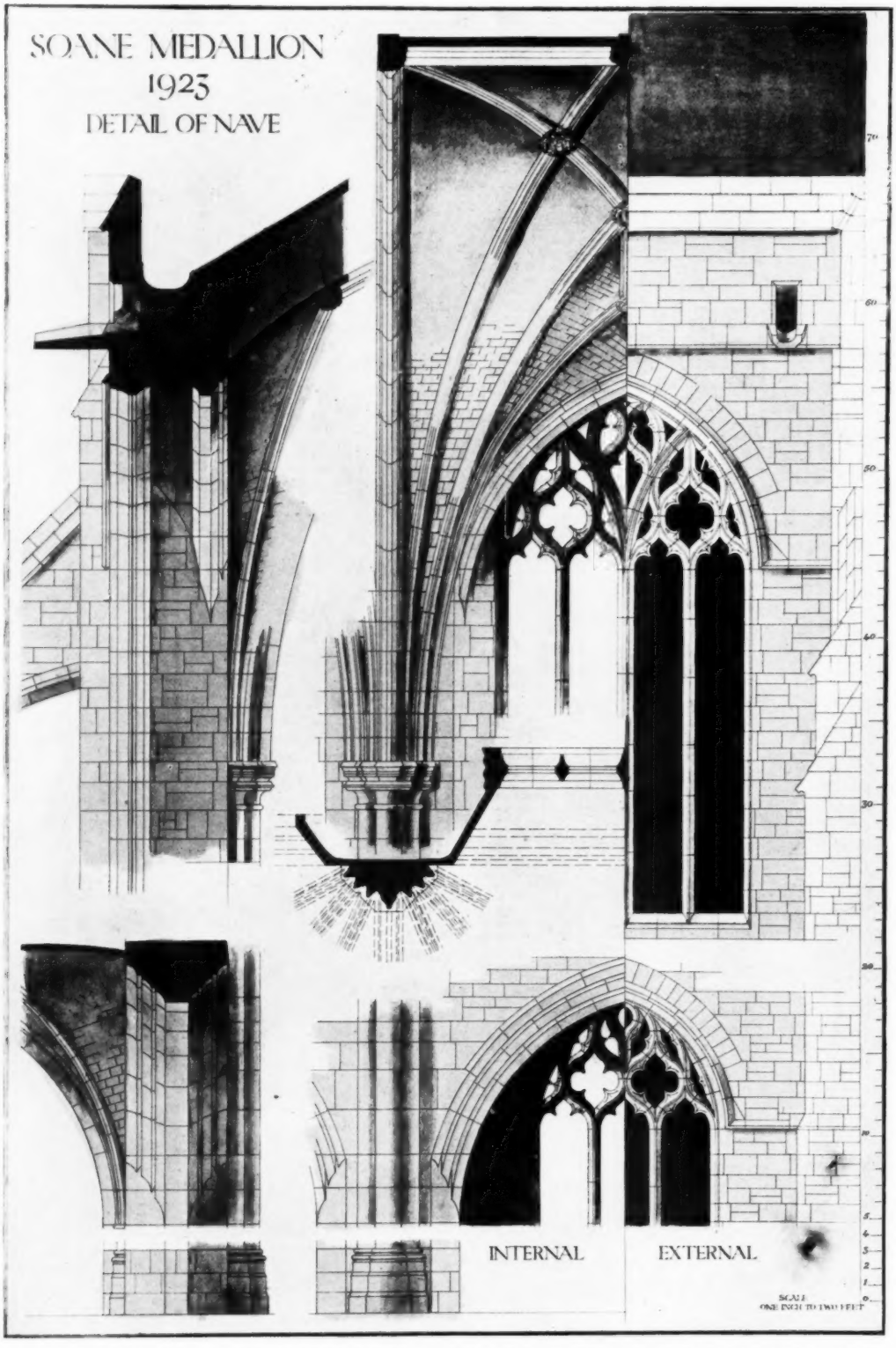
"Orient's" design for a single story factory was the only one sent in for the Grissell gold medal. As a design, it is very poor. The prize was not awarded. H. J.



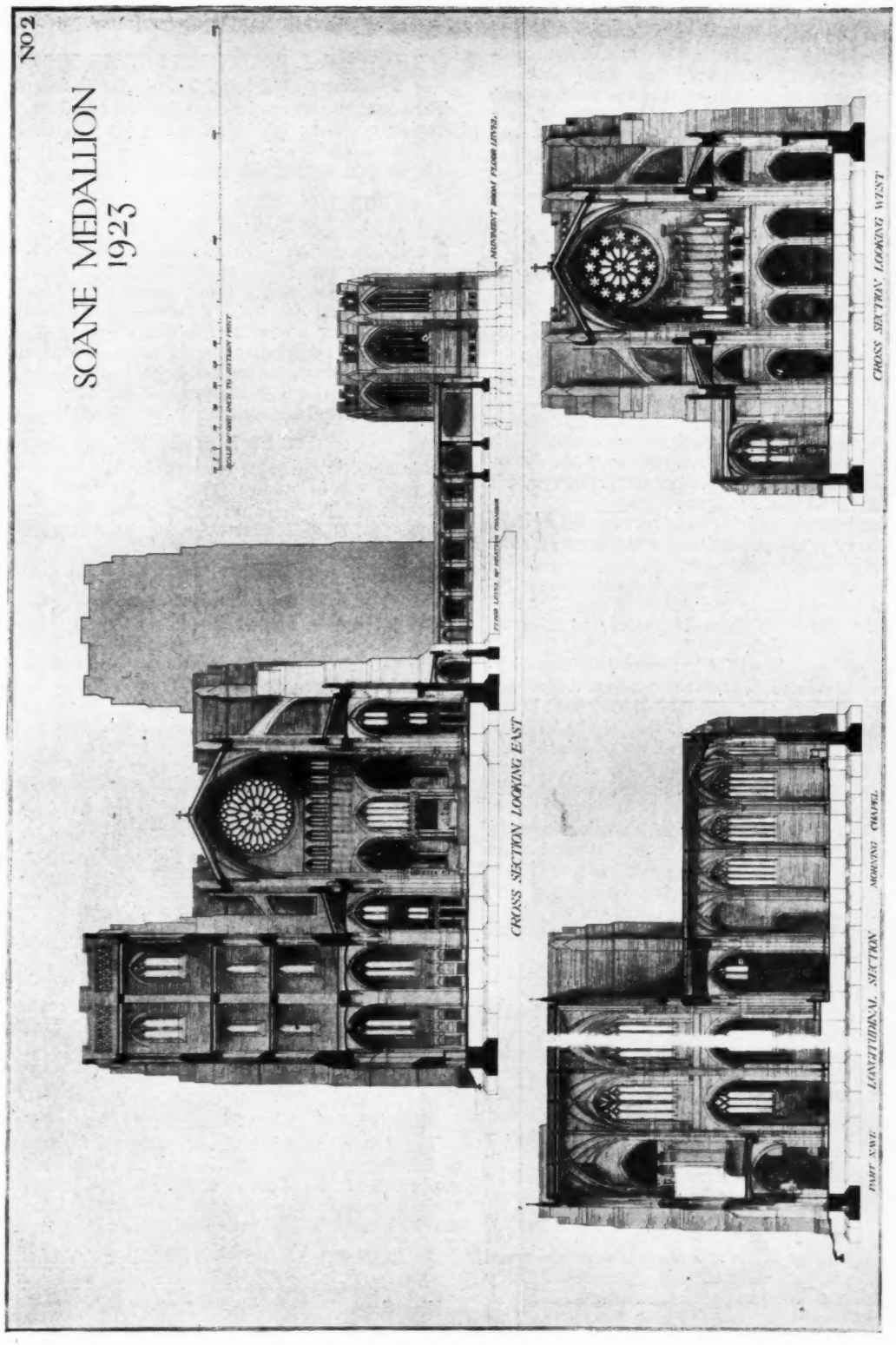
THE SOANE MEDALLION 1923. AN ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL CHURCH: PLAN OF WINNING DESIGN BY J. S. KELSALL ("ENGLAND").



THE SOANE MEDALLION, 1923. AN ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL CHURCH: THE WINNING DESIGN. BY J. S. KELSALL.



THE SOANE MEDALLION, 1923. AN ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL CHURCH: A DETAIL OF THE WINNING DESIGN.
BY J. S KELSALL



THE SOANE MEDALLION, 1923. AN ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL CHURCH: THE WINNING DESIGN. BY J. S. KELSALL.

Unwanted Prizes

The Decline of the R.I.B.A. Competitions

The falling off in the number of competitors for the R.I.B.A. prizes and studentships in post-war years has become very marked, and it must be the cause of some perplexity to the Board of Architectural Education.

The falling off may be attributed perhaps to the great amount of schoolwork in which students have now become immersed; perhaps to times having so much changed that the conditions of the R.I.B.A. prizes are a trifle inconvenient and old-fashioned; perhaps to the prizes having lost something of their pristine "glitter" for the ambitious young men of the present day; or perhaps there is nothing wrong anywhere, and the falling off is due only to things not having quite settled down again since the war.

With a view to coming to some conclusion upon the matter we invite correspondence—preferably from students themselves.

An inspection of the lists of previous awards of the prizes which fell due this year reveals the following: the essay medal and twenty-five guineas was not awarded in 1921, 1922, 1924. Nearly ninety years old (it was first awarded in 1836), it was awarded without a break for fifty years. Since then it has been withheld on eleven occasions. Past winners include Thomas Hardy, T. A. Britton, Paul Waterhouse, Percy Scott Worthington, Arthur T. Bolton, Sir Banister Fletcher, and H. C. Corlette.

The Pugin studentship and £75 was first awarded in 1865, and awarded every year onwards until 1922, when, for the first time in its history, it was withheld. It was awarded in the following year (1923), and now, in 1924, again withheld. Past winners include Sir Aston Webb, Leonard Stokes, Detmar Blow, William Haywood, Charles de Gruchy, and Wontner-Smith.

The Grissell gold medal and £50 has very often been withheld. First awarded in 1876, on nine occasions it has been either not competed for or the standard of work sent in has not justified the giving of the prize. One of the "Design and Construction" group, it has never been popular among students, and the subject set is usually one of a severely practical nature. The name of J. B. Fulton is among the past winners.

The Arthur Cates prize of £30, first awarded in 1903, was withheld in 1904, but awarded annually until 1920. In 1920 and the three successive years no award was made, and now, in 1924, no entries were received.

The prizes which were awarded this year were the Soane, the Owen Jones, the Ashpitel, and the silver medal for recognized schools. Both the Soane and the Owen Jones have usually been keenly competed for, and the award has rarely been withheld.

In a note in this week's issue, we suggest that the falling off in the number of competitors and the quality of work is due to the intensive study of architecture in the architectural schools, but until we have some definite guide as to why the student of the present day shows so little enthusiasm for the winning of prizes which have been household words in the profession for so many scores of years, it is idle to suggest ways and means of increasing that enthusiasm; one recommendation can be made, however, whatever may be; that is, that future benefactors of the R.I.B.A. should leave the Institute a freer hand in the framing of the conditions of award. At present there are many prizes and studentships dispensed by the Institute the conditions of which they would gladly bring up-to-date were they not prevented from so doing by the terms of the bequests.

The Awards of 1924

The full awards of the prizes and studentships (given in skeleton form in our last issue) were announced at the general meeting held on Monday, January 21. They are as follows:—

THE ROYAL INSTITUTE SILVER MEDAL.

The Essay Medal and Twenty-five Guineas.

Three essays were received for the silver medal under the following mottoes: (1) "Fortezza"; (2) "North Point"; (3) "Tuum Est."

The Council were unable to award the prize.

THE TRAVELLING STUDENTSHIPS.

1. *The Soane Medallion and £150.*

Six designs for an Anglican cathedral church were submitted under the following mottoes: (1) "Dean"—four strainers; (2) "England"—four strainers; (3) "Lampsacus"—four strainers; (4) "La Trinite"—four strainers; (5) "Phœnix"—four strainers; (6) "Seep"—six strainers.

The Council awarded the medallion and, subject to the specified conditions, the sum of £150, to the author of the design submitted under the motto "England" (Mr. John Scott Kelsall, Rydal Mount, St. John's Road, Eastbourne).

2. *The Pugin Studentship and £75.*

Four applications were received for the Pugin studentship from the following: (1) J. F. Hampton (A.)—four strainers; (2) W. J. B. Price—three strainers and loose sketches; (3) D. H. McMorran—four strainers; (4) C. J. W. Messent—four strainers and book of sketches.

The Council were unable to award the Pugin studentship.

3. *The Owen Jones Studentship and £100.*

One application was received from the following: J. H. Sexton—six strainers.

The Council awarded the certificate and, subject to the specified conditions, the sum of £100 to Mr. J. H. Sexton, 7 Ethelburga Street, Battersea, S.W.11.

The Grissell Gold Medal and £50.

One design for a single-story factory for the construction of motor-car engines was submitted under the following motto: "Orient."

The Council were unable to award the prize.

The Arthur Cates Prize of £30.

No drawings were submitted in competition for the Arthur Cates prize.

The Ashpitel Prize.

The Council, on the recommendation of the Board of Architectural Education, awarded the Ashpitel prize (which is a prize of books, value £10, awarded to the candidate who has most highly distinguished himself among the candidates in the final examinations of the year) to Mr. Eustace Harry Button, 1 Royal York Crescent, Clifton, Bristol (probationer, 1920; student, 1921; and who passed the final examination, December, 1923).

The R.I.B.A. Silver Medal for Recognized Schools.

The Council awarded the silver medal for the best set of drawings submitted at the annual exhibition by post-graduate students of the recognized schools exempted from the final examination, to Miss Isabel Maud Chambers, of the Architectural Association School of Architecture.

THE TRAVELLING STUDENTS' WORK.

Henry Saxon Snell Prizeman, 1923.

The Council approved the report of Mr. Ernest G. Theakston, F.R.I.B.A., who travelled in France.

The competition drawings are on exhibition in Gallery No. VI, the Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, W.1, until February 4, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. (Sunday excluded).

The Dudley Memorial Competition

A Criticism of the Designs

AS announced in our last issue, Mr. W. Curtis Green, A.R.A., F.R.I.B.A., the assessor in the competition promoted by the Dudley Corporation for designs for the Brooke Robinson Memorial Buildings and War Memorial, has awarded the first premium to Messrs. W. Alexander Harvey and H. Graham Wicks, of Birmingham. Fifty-five designs were submitted.

Following is a criticism of the designs by a special correspondent:—

The conditions of the competition set out that the building was to comprise (*a*) public hall; (*b*) coroner's court; (*c*) small museum, war memorial tower, and new sessions court. The war memorial tower and new sessions court were to be distinct from the Brooke Robinson memorial.

The conditions also stated that the main frontage and entrance to the public hall was to be in St. James's Road. The hall was to seat 1,500 people. An approximate size of the coroner's court was given as 1,350 ft. super., and it was suggested that it should be planned on the ground floor, with a retiring room and waiting-room, and that the museum and curator's room should be over the coroner's court.

The sessions court was given an approximate size of 5,000 sq. ft., it was to have a separate entrance for the magistrates, and it was stated that it should be planned to be available for quarter sessions. Provision, therefore, had to be made for a jury box and grand jury room, with separate entrance for members of the bar, solicitors, and witnesses, and witnesses' waiting-rooms, solicitors' room, barristers' robing room, an office for the clerk to the magistrates, and a clerk's office.

A clock tower to be erected as a war memorial and fronting Priory Street was to contain in the lower story the names of the fallen on bronze tablets.

The site is at the corner of Priory Street and St. James's Road, facing an irregular open space. The Priory Street frontage is bounded by the police court and public buildings, a heavy and clumsy Gothic building in red brick, which sets the style of the new buildings. On the left of the site in St. James's Road is a fairly modern public library in the Renaissance period. It was a wise suggestion that the style should follow that of the older Gothic work rather than the more modern Renaissance building.

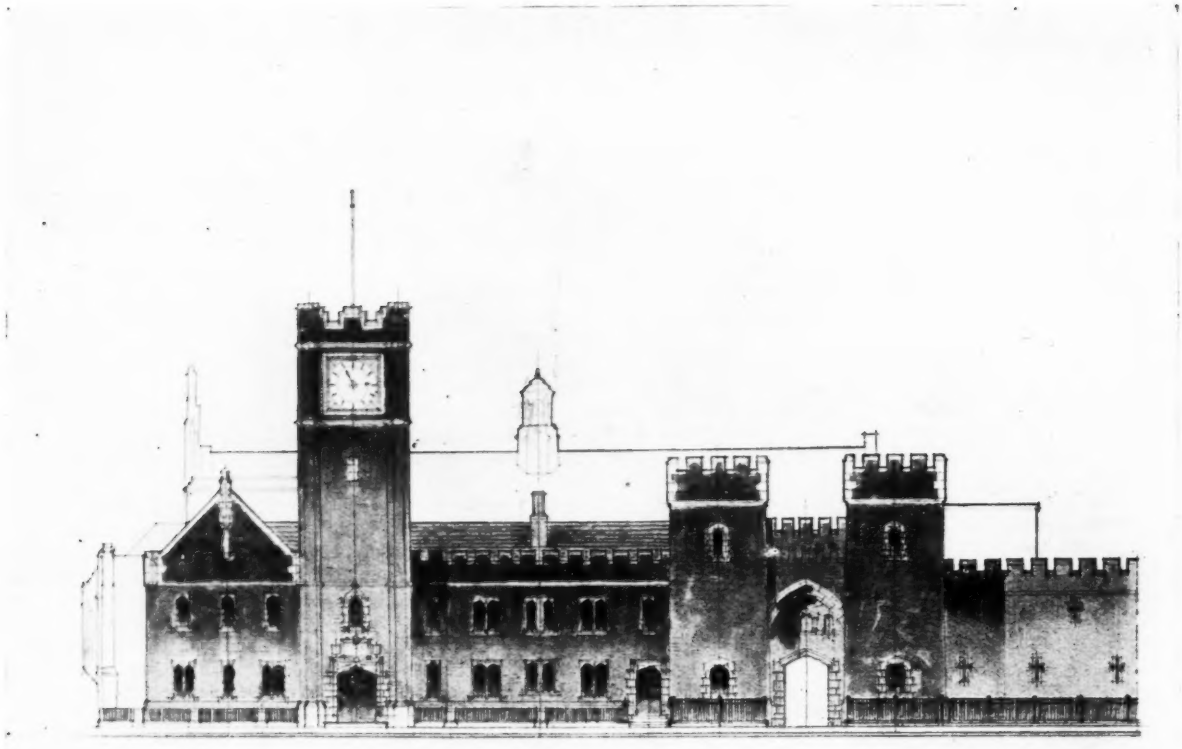
Mr. Curtis Green, the assessor, says in his report that the general standard of excellence is not quite so high as might have been expected. We are bound to agree with him entirely. Of the fifty-five sets of drawings sent in, a very low percentage show that appreciation of the Gothic tradition which we have a right to expect in a country the architectural distinction of which rests almost solely upon its examples of Gothic work. A composition such as was expected as a result of this competition could have been found over and over again in the collegiate work at Oxford or Cambridge. Many of the designs give the impression that the authors had never in their lives sat down to sketch a Gothic building. There are a few notable exceptions. The adjoining buildings certainly had not much to recommend them, but at least they had breadth. In many of the designs this great quality is frittered away in useless and niggling detail. This may be the result of the classic training now given in the schools, or of the growing American influence. But we cannot help feeling that of the fifty-five designs submitted, scarcely a dozen could be found which could be said to be worthy successors of the work of Philip Webb, Norman Shaw, Bodley, or Leonard

Photo: Elliott & Fry.

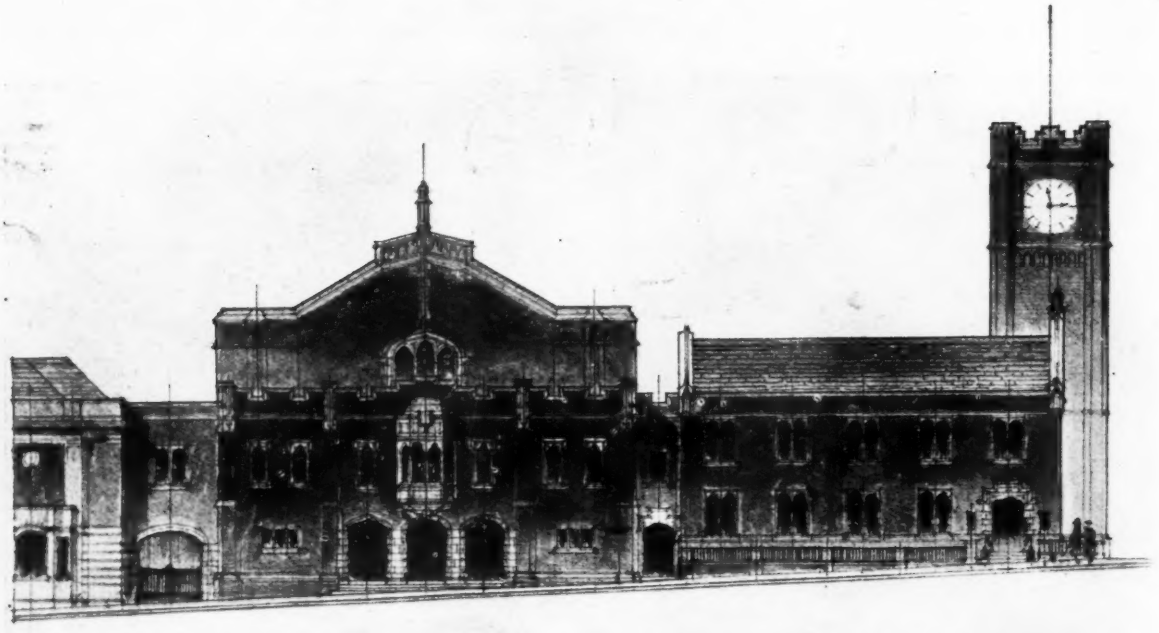
MR. W. ALEXANDER HARVEY, F.R.I.B.A. MR. H. GRAHAM WICKS, M.C., A.R.I.B.A.

THE WINNERS OF THE DUDLEY MEMORIAL COMPETITION.

(*Some biographical notes are given on page 235.*)

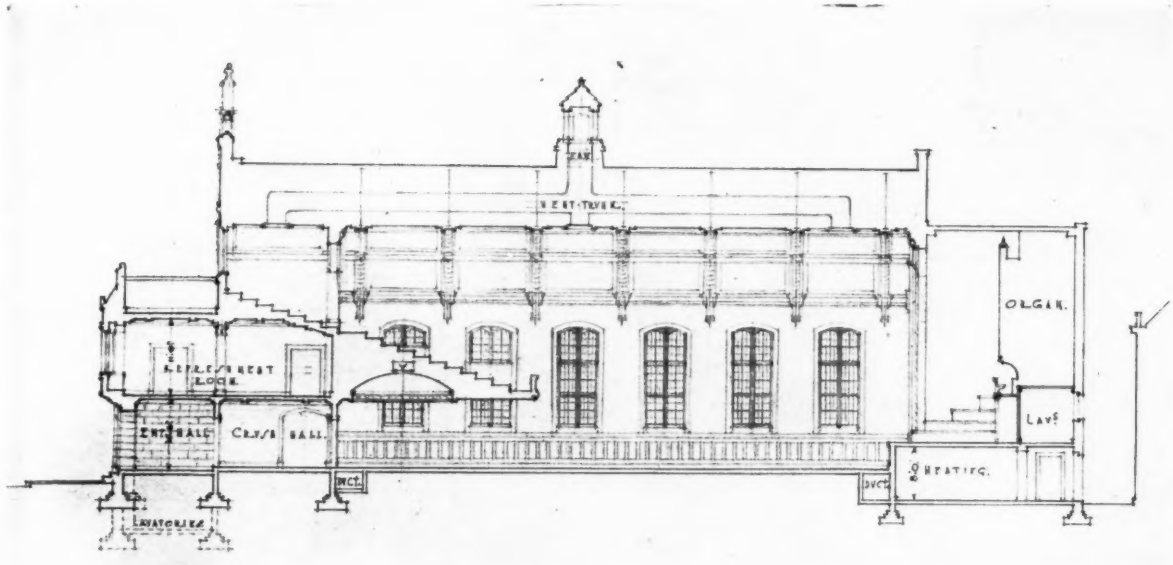


ELEVATION TO PRIORY STREET.

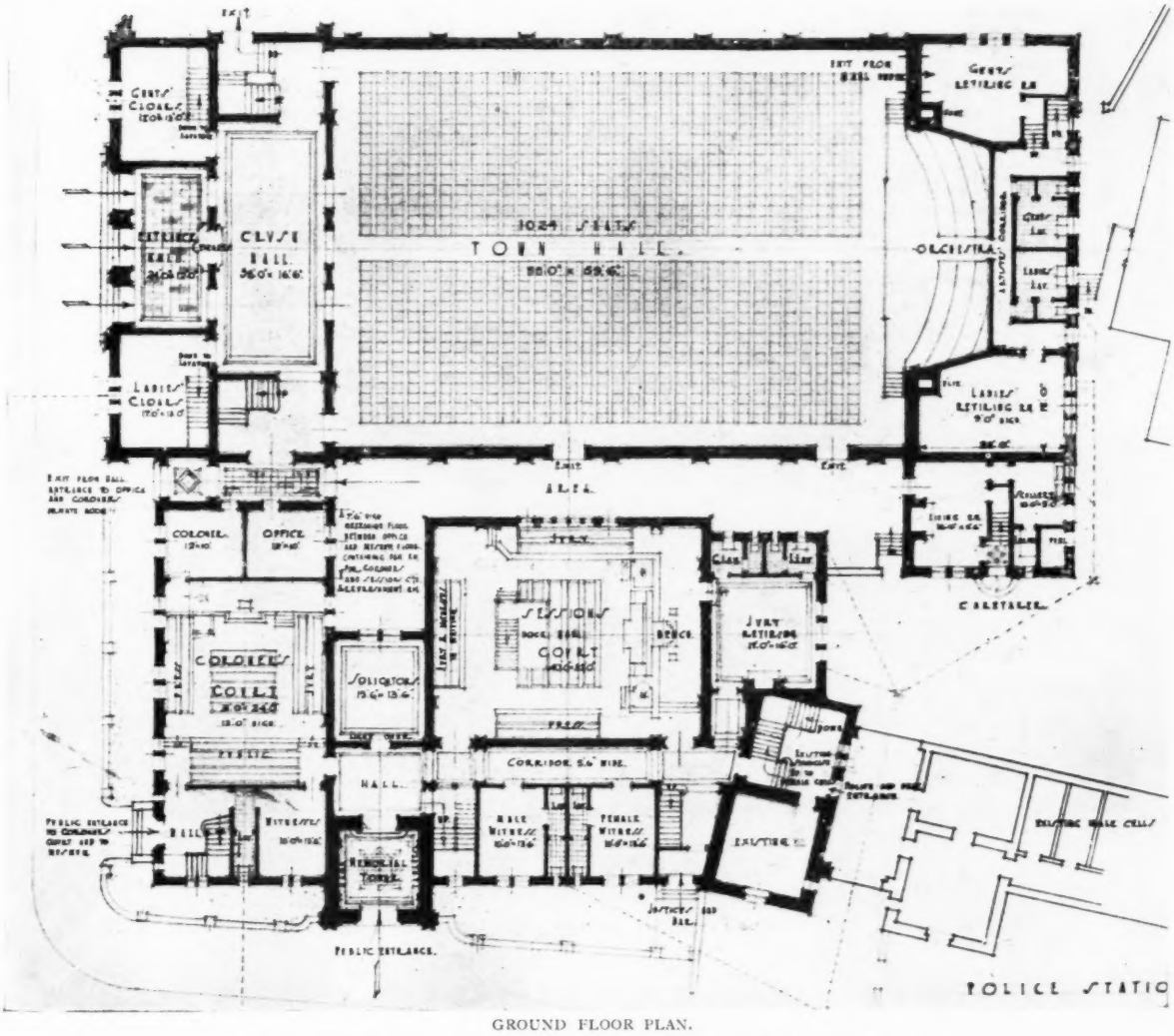


ELEVATION TO ST. JAMES'S ROAD.

DUDLEY MEMORIAL COMPETITION: ELEVATIONS OF THE FIRST PREMIATED DESIGN.
W. ALEXANDER HARVEY AND H. GRAHAM WICKS, F. AND A.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECTS.



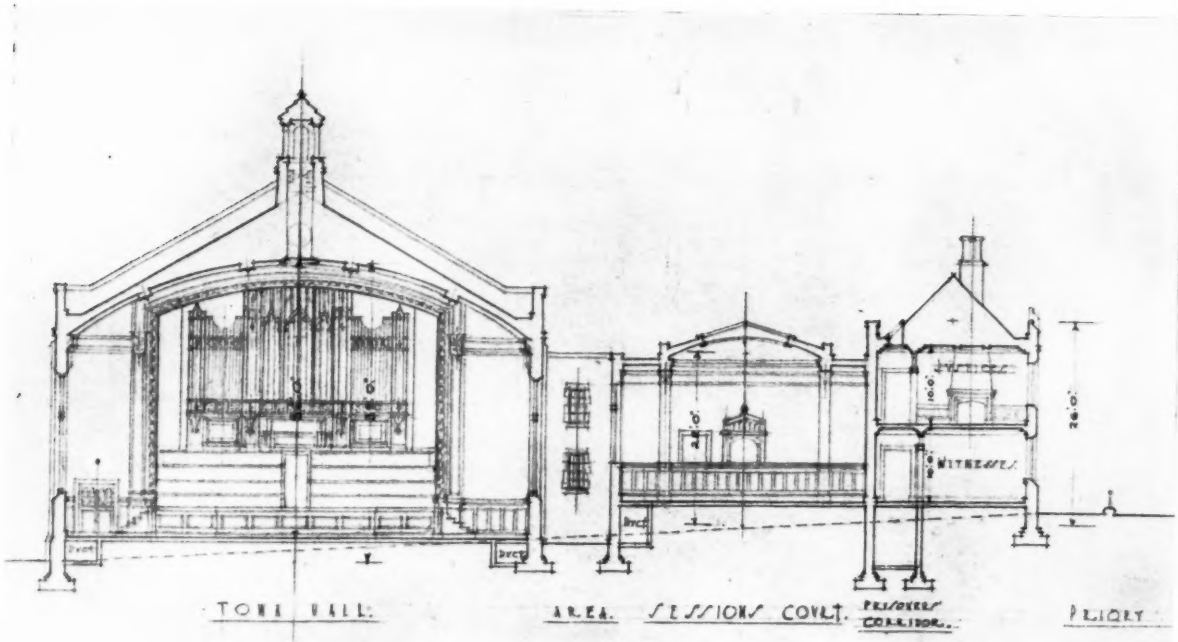
LONGITUDINAL SECTION.



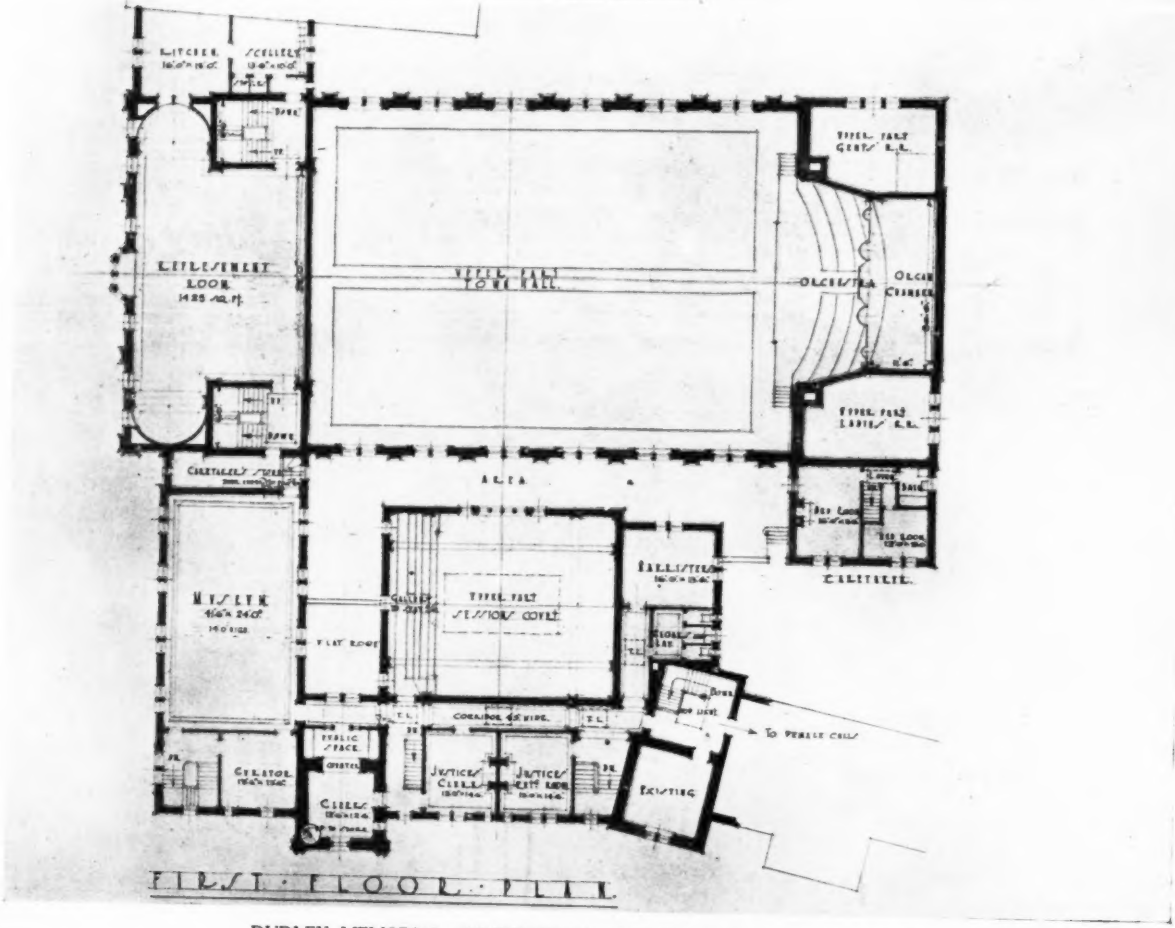
GROUND FLOOR PLAN.

DUDLEY MEMORIAL COMPETITION: THE FIRST PREMIATED DESIGN.

W. ALEXANDER HARVEY AND H. GRAHAM WICKS, F. AND A.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECTS.



CROSS SECTION.



DUDLEY MEMORIAL COMPETITION: THE FIRST PREMIATED DESIGN.
W ALEXANDER HARVEY AND H. GRAHAM WICKS, F. AND A.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECTS.

Stokes, men who have, in latter years, put the Gothic tradition again on its feet, and whose influence has helped to produce the beautiful work now in progress at Liverpool.

We feel that the general result is somewhat expressive of what the French modern Gothic has become, hard, academic, unsympathetic; like an antiquated actor played only for sentimental reasons, or when the rôle is characteristic of senile decay. However, there are some very notable exceptions, and one design at least of outstanding merit.

We are entirely in agreement with the assessor's award. He has placed No. 54, by Messrs. Harvey and Wicks, of Birmingham, first. In his report to the committee he says: "The public hall has good entrances. An ample crush hall is provided, and there are good approaches to the gallery and refreshment rooms. Private access to the session court and coroner's court, and rooms in connection with these, are well and conveniently arranged, while the museum and curator's room are both independent of, and united to, the other departments. The courts and private rooms are of pleasant shape and proportion." To this we would add that the provision of an open passage on the session court side of the public hall is of great advantage, as it gives emergency exits where wanted. The responsibility of making adequate provision for the safety of 1,500 people is not a matter which can be lightly undertaken. Furthermore, this passage provides direct ventilation to the sessions court, etc. We think it is a disadvantage not to have the magistrates' room on the same floor as the courts, especially as during the sessions it would be used as the retiring-room for judges. The elevations are pleasing. Prominence is given to the main building in St. James's Road. It is doubtful if very much will be seen of the end gable of the hall, as it is screened by the front wall of the crush hall and refreshment room in front. The tower is well placed and in good proportion. The detail as represented on the ½ in. drawing is weak. We think it would be an advantage, especially in Gothic work, to have had all the elevations drawn to ½ in. scale. The assessor, no doubt in consideration for the competitors, allowed the scale to be optional; the result is, that it is difficult to compare and criticize the merits of one design against another where the scales are different.

No. 3, Messrs. Stockdale, Harrison and Sons, and Geo. Nott, of Leicester, has been awarded the second place. It is undoubtedly the best elevation submitted. How far an assessor is justified in depending wholly upon the plan in his decision need not here be discussed, but there must have been a great temptation to overlook the certain practical requirements in planning in which this design falls behind that placed first. It is certain that had it obtained the first place Dudley would have possessed a building of singular beauty.

No. 6, by Messrs. H. V. Ashley and Winton Newman, of Gray's Inn Square, W.C., is placed third. We think that position is justifiable, as it is probably, on the whole, the best of the "also rans." The entrances absorb more of the plan than is justified on so restricted a site. Panic exits are only provided on one side of the public hall. The elevations are well conceived, but are somewhat out of sympathy with the adjoining work.

No. 34 is one of the most attractive designs in the room. The elevations to Priory Street are particularly well conceived. The ½ in. detail does not do justice to the tower. The plan is simple, but as the assessor says: "Too much reliance is placed on borrowed or top lights." The entrance to the public hall is hampered by the cloak-room accommodation.

No. 11 has a well-planned entrance to the public hall. The corridor surrounding the hall may be a desirable feature, but not on this site, as it has led to crowding of the rest of the plan and has produced an absence of light in the entrance hall and courts.

No. 21. The gallery exits are not convincing, and would probably lead to crowding in the crush hall. The corridor on the session court side of the hall is a good feature. The elevations are delightful, especially that to St. James's Road, but they would have looked much better if drawn to ⅛ in. scale. The tower is somewhat lumpy in outline, but is strong in feeling.

No. 41. The gallery exits are not good, and would lead to confusion in the crush hall. The approach to the museum is mean and insufficient. The design and arrangement of the courts is good.

No. 44 is a well-designed scheme with a good Gothic sense. Few designs have the galleries to the public hall so well planned. The tower is unnecessarily attenuated.

No. 49 is spoilt by a big and clumsy tower. The large crush hall may be desirable, but has led the author into difficulties with his cloak-rooms.

No. 52 is one of the distinctive designs. The clock tower is well designed. The entrance to the public hall has been subordinated, and gives no idea of the building behind. The coroner's court accommodation is scattered.

No. 38 has good elevations, broad in effect and strong in treatment. The coroner should have had a separate private entrance, and not shared one of the entrances to the public hall. The communication between the courts and offices is bad. The public would have difficulty in finding their way about.

No. 39 is interesting in composition and treatment of material, but extravagant in plan. The author is evidently not familiar with the organization and the functions of the law courts.

No. 30 is a good all-round design, simple in plan and elevation; but the provision of only one exit from the gallery is a fatal mistake.

No. 35 has well-planned entrances to the public hall. The extent of the gallery has led to unwarrantable extravagance in height of the hall.

No. 7 produces an interesting group of buildings, Gothic in style and treatment, but sprouting out into Italian Renaissance. The campanile is not unpleasing, but somewhat incongruous. The coroner's court is unnecessarily large, and the crush hall is cramped.

The assessor notes that Nos. 10, 27, 30, 42, 48, and 52 all have good plans, but each has some defect in plan or elevation or must be ruled out on the score of cost.

The Winners

Mr. William Alexander Harvey, F.R.I.B.A., received his architectural education at the Birmingham School of Architecture, was articled to David Smith and Sons, of Birmingham, and also studied under Mr. W. H. Bidlake, M.A., F.R.I.B.A. He is a member of the Town Planning Institute, was president of the Birmingham Architectural Association in 1918–19, and is a past member of the R.I.B.A. Council. He is also consulting architect to the Bournville Village Trust, and to Kettering and Newburn, Widnes and West Bromwich Councils, and joint consulting architect to the Oldham and District Councils, including Chadderton, Crompton, Royton, Lees, Springhead. Among the more important publications of which he is the author are "The Model Village and its Cottages, Bournville" (1906), "Economies of Planning and Employment of New Materials," and the "History of Selly Manor."

Captain Herbert Graham Wicks, M.C., A.R.I.B.A., received his architectural education at the Birmingham School of Architecture, and was articled to William Alexander Harvey, with whom he has been in partnership since 1912. From 1914–19 he served in the Royal Field Artillery in France and Belgium, and was awarded the Military Cross and mentioned in despatches.

The most important works carried out by Messrs. Harvey and Wicks include Westhill College, Selly Oak; Carey Hall and Kingsmead Training Colleges, Bournville Schools, Bournville Church, Tamworth War Memorial and Hospital extension, Ruskin Hall and Friends' Meeting Houses, Birmingham, numerous residences, housing schemes, and factories. The firm also restored Grimshaw Hall, Warwickshire, and removed and restored Selly Manor, Worcestershire.

Little Things that Matter. XXIV—

The Planning and Arrangement of Furniture in Living Rooms

By PERCY V. BURNETT, A.R.I.B.A.

MUCH has been written in the last few years about kitchens, sculleries, labour-saving and general domestic problems, and whereas these have improved immensely, the living and sleeping accommodation still remains absolutely neglected.

No matter how small a house or how cheap its construction, the details of its use must be studied if it is to be comfortable; and having heard so much about the working arrangements of a house I cannot but be struck with the general lack of consideration that the leisure side has received.

I am all in favour of labour-saving within reason, but a house is built to provide comfortable living accommodation for a family, and not a soft job for a maid, so surely we should devote our first considerations to the detail planning of the sitting-rooms and bedrooms. To spend much time juggling with the position of the sink or dresser in the kitchen and then leave the position of the dining-table in the dining-room to chance is misdirecting our energies. These notes are intended to demonstrate how to set about planning living-rooms.

Dining-rooms.

The main function of a dining-room is to provide suitable accommodation for meals, hence we must commence with the dining-table and plan our room round it. Firstly, how many people will normally sit down to meals, and what accommodation is required for guests? These questions answered, we can begin.

To seat four people the table is usually 3 ft. 6 in. wide, whilst for six and over it is 4 ft. 0 in. The length depends upon the number of seats; 2 ft. 6 in. centre to centre being comfortable, with an extra 6 in. each end to allow for dishes, etc.; 2 ft. should be allowed all round for chairs, and 2 ft. 6 in. for the maid's serving space.

The lighting should be so arranged that no diner casts a shadow upon his plate, particularly at the head of the table. This suggests that daylight should reach the table diagonally across the corners, and from more than one source.

The door should open clear of the serving space, and be so placed as not to cause an inrush of cold air on to the diners. It will be found that the corner of the longest side of the room farthest from the fireplace is the most suitable position.

Sideboards vary from 4 ft. 6 in. to 7 ft. long, and are usually 1 ft. 9 in. to 2 ft. 3 in. wide. They should be placed close to the point of service, whether it be door or hatch, and should not project into the serving space. A maid should be able to open the drawers or cupboards without the doors, etc., reaching near the chairs, and the sideboard being one of the main ornamental articles of furniture in the room it should be well lighted and in view of as many diners as possible.

Undoubtedly central heating is best for a dining-room, as no other method provides such even distribution of heat. Coal and gas fires have the effect of making the nearest side of the table uncomfortably hot, whilst the remainder receives very little heat at all. Where their use is unavoidable they should be kept as far from the table as possible to allow the heat to become distributed.

This gives us the dimensions of 15 ft. 6 in. by 14 ft. 9 in. as the ideal size of a dining-room for four persons, and 17 ft. by 15 ft. for six persons (Fig. 1), the length increasing 2 ft. 6 in. for each additional two persons. Figure 3 shows an alternative.

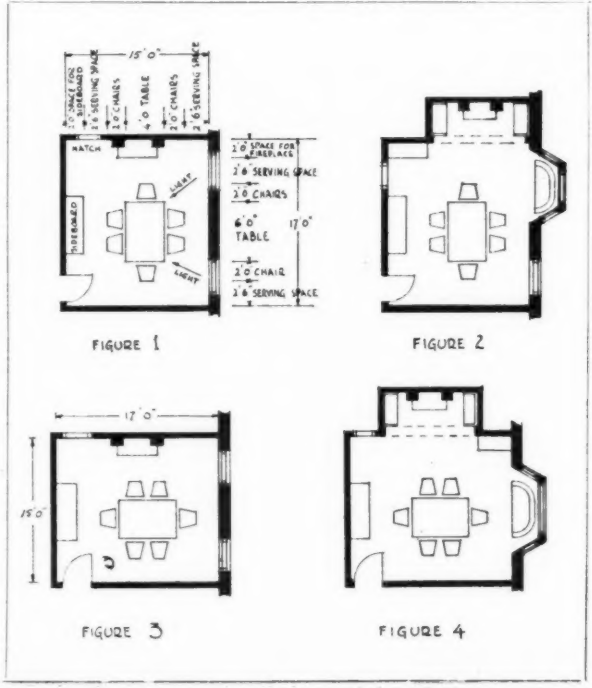
No other furniture is strictly necessary for use in a dining-room, but, as it will undoubtedly be inserted, these dimensions should be regarded as the minimum.

The floor of a dining-room should be carpeted. To rest one's feet upon cold wood blocks during a meal in the winter is most uncomfortable, and many accidents have occurred through maids slipping on this type of floor whilst carrying trays. For this latter reason a loose carpet covering only the space round the table is insufficient, because a maid carrying a tray cannot see the floor and would be continually tripping over the edge of the carpet.

The decoration of a small dining-room is best kept as simple as possible, and the ornamentation left to the table itself, for what is more appetizing than the sight of a white linen cloth, gleaming silver, and glass? After all, the dining table is the principal content of the room, and everything else should be subordinate to it.

When it is intended to use the dining-room also as a sitting-room space should be provided for grouping chairs, etc., round the fireplace, and for sitting close to the windows without trespassing upon the serving space, and, perhaps, the most economical manner of doing this is by adding an ingle nook and bay window (Figs. 2 and 4). The additional furniture to be accommodated will be armchairs, settee, and perhaps a bookcase.

The foregoing suggestions will not often be realizable in our designs, but it is only by keeping an ideal in mind that we can arrive at a satisfactory compromise. The modern tendency to make a dining-room a small apartment in which a crowd of chairs are uncomfortably grouped round a shoddy would-be-antique gate-leg table is pernicious, and may be regarded as a passing phase. In time our clients' opinions will undergo a reaction in favour of something more substantial, and already there are signs of a return to a reasonable sense of values. To eat a meal in comfort amidst suitable surroundings means enjoying that meal



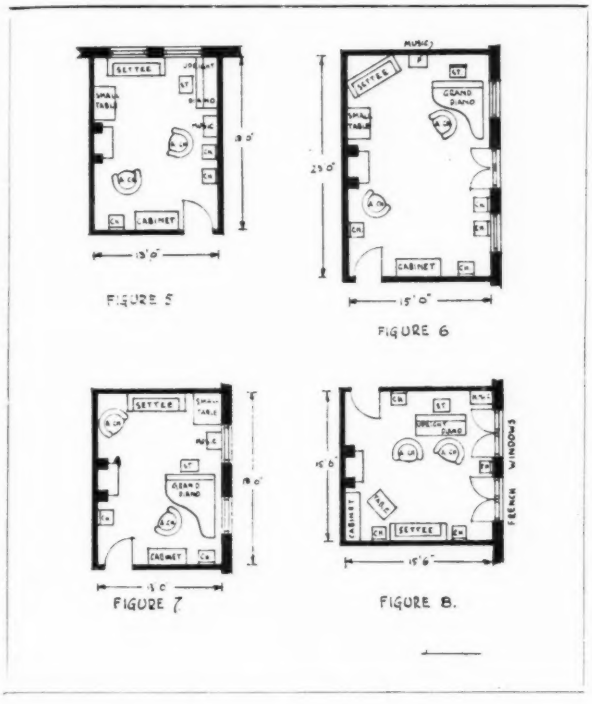


FIGURE 5

FIGURE 6

FIGURE 7

FIGURE 8.

and benefiting from it, whilst discomfort is the forerunner of indigestion and kindred ills.

Drawing-rooms.

The essential furniture in a comfortable drawing-room is a piano, stool and music cabinet, settee, two armchairs, china cabinet, small table, and small chairs.

An upright piano is usually 5 ft. 6 in. wide by 2 ft. 3 in., and is best placed with its back to the wall with left-hand light. A grand piano is 5 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft. to 7 ft. 6 in. long, according to type and make, and should be placed quite clear of the wall on all sides; 1 ft. 6 in. should be allowed for the stool, and in all cases there should be room for a music cabinet immediately adjacent. Where possible, the pianist should face the room, which should be oblong in proportion rather than square if our hostess is possessed of a singing voice, with the pianist and singer close to the short side farthest from the door.

Many Victorian drawing-rooms were designed ending in an ample bay opening with French windows on to a garden or terrace, and whereas this has its advantages it is fatal if the room is to be used for music; and in several otherwise delightful drawing-rooms that I know the reverberation quite spoils any vocal effort. This can be overcome if the room can be made high enough, but the other alternative of many curtains is not to be recommended upon hygienic grounds.

The settee, usually the headquarters of the hostess, should be placed with a direct view of the whole room, and should have a bell-push and small table close at hand for dispensing tea.

The china cabinet, in which will be stored the household gods, should be well lighted and in a central position. The size varies considerably, but 1 ft. 9 in. by 4 ft. 6 in. may be taken as a fair average.

Armchairs should be near the fireplace and away from the walls, whilst small chairs should be evenly distributed against the walls, from which they can be moved at the will of the users.

Strictly speaking, no other article of furniture is required in a drawing-room, but this room invariably becomes the warehouse for various odd pieces "picked up" here and there, and should be of ample size, 13 ft. by 18 ft. being the minimum for comfort.

The floor should be wood block where it can be afforded, with either rugs or loose carpet.

The decoration of a drawing-room should be light and delicate, particularly as this is the room in which the ladies will shine in their full splendour, and a wallpaper is more suitable for small rooms than distemper or panelling. If it is desired to hang large pictures the wallpaper should be devoid of any prominent pattern, and should be regarded as a pleasing foil to the pictures themselves. Also it should be remembered that large pictures require special lighting consideration, and look their best in a high room.

Drawing-room windows should be disposed so as to give left-hand light to the piano, and a good light to the cabinet and pictures. Many people prefer French windows, and although they are very pleasant in the summer, in the winter they make the room gloomy and cold.

This room will often be used for entertaining, and visitors will judge the whole house by the impression they obtain here, so let us make the approach through the hall as imposing as conditions permit, and let there be a cloak-room near at hand.

Figures 5 and 7 show suggested arrangements for rooms 13 ft. by 18 ft., whilst Figure 6 shows a larger room more suitable for music and dancing. A square proportion is sometimes unavoidable, but can be arranged quite satisfactorily with care (Fig. 8).

Bedrooms.

Perhaps no room in the English house has been more neglected than the bedroom. In this room we spend a third of our lives, which is considerably more than we spend in any other room, and by skilful planning much can be done to promote not only peaceful sleep and good health, but good temper.

The two main functions of a bedroom are sleeping and dressing, and it is the latter function that has caused more matrimonial disagreement than almost any other cause. To plan a large room with merely a door, window, and fireplace, with room for the beds, and call it a double bedroom, is probably condemning some unfortunate individuals to the discomforts of makeshift for what may be twenty to thirty years of time collectively out of their lives, and the effect upon their outlook upon life in general is bound to be tainted with dissatisfaction.

To deal with double bedrooms firstly:—

Much matrimonial bickering can be avoided by separating the sleeping and dressing accommodation, and for this reason a small room containing the beds with dressing rooms leading off is far the best arrangement. When this is not practicable alcoves cut off by curtains will serve the same purpose. Alternatively, a single dressing-room leading off a large bedroom is quite satisfactory, and enables the early riser of the family to dress without disturbing the lazy one.

Single beds are 3 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft. 6 in., and double 5 ft. by 6 ft. 6 in., and 2 ft. should be left on each side. This gives us 11 ft. by 6 ft. 6 in. as the size of an alcove for twin beds, or 11 ft. by 12 ft. as the minimum size of a double bedroom having separate dressing-rooms. A settee is often placed at the foot of the beds, and daylight is best introduced from the side. The heads of the beds should be against an internal wall, and should not face a window, particularly where the room receives early morning sun, as it should.

Dressing-rooms, where used for no other purpose, need not have a larger floor area than 80 ft. superficial if there are built-in cupboards, but the lady's dressing-room may well be larger if she is fashionable, as that excellent quality entails many changes and consequent need for wardrobes, etc. A dressing-table is 1 ft. 9 in. by 3 ft. 6 in. to 5 ft., and is usually placed against the window, blocking out half the light and casting a bad light on the person in front of the dressing-table. The ideal light when sitting at a dressing-table comes diagonally from each side (Figure 9: lady's dressing-room), but the arrangement shown in Figure 9—gentleman's

dressing-room—is also satisfactory. The glass-line of these windows should be about 3 ft. 6 in. above floor level.

It is insufficient to say that built-in cupboards are desirable in dressing-rooms; they are really an absolute necessity, and no dressing-room is complete without them. The proper storage of clothes is more a function of the room than of the furniture, and if we provide a bath in the bathroom we should also provide a cupboard in the dressing-room. These cupboards should open to admit the light, and if they can be ventilated easily so much the better, as this is a great help towards preventing moth.

A man requires in his dressing-room a dressing-table, cupboard, and chest of drawers. A woman requires all

In some cases a private bathroom is required, and it should not be entered from the bedroom, but rather from a lobby dividing the bedroom from the dressing-rooms, as in Fig. 9.

Figure 9 shows a convenient arrangement embracing these points, and one which has been found in practice to work very well. Figure 10 shows a simpler arrangement, whilst Figure 11 shows the bedroom used also as the lady's dressing-room, with a gentleman's small dressing-room leading off. Many people prefer this plan, as ladies like plenty of room whilst dressing.

Single bedrooms provide a much simpler problem than their double brethren, the necessity for dressing-rooms

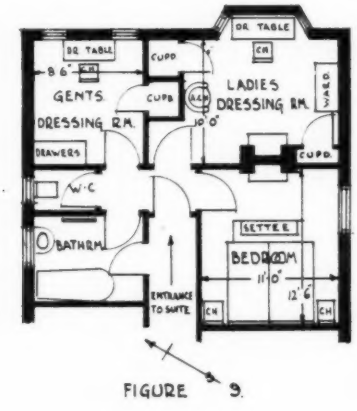


FIGURE 9.

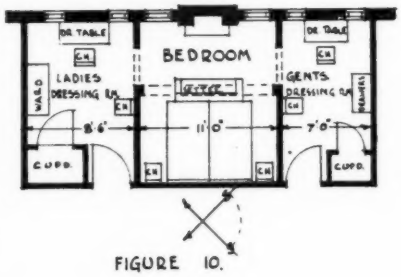


FIGURE 10.

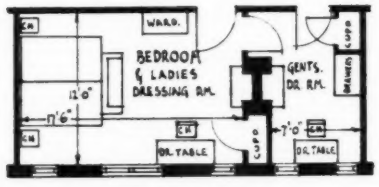


FIGURE 11.

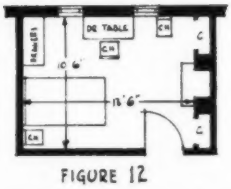


FIGURE 12.

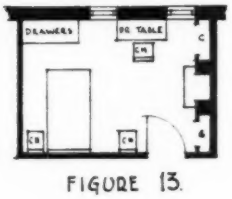


FIGURE 13.

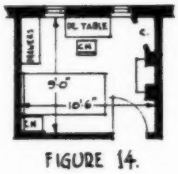


FIGURE 14.

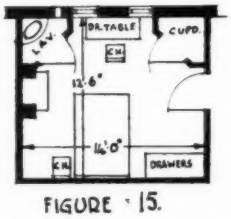


FIGURE 15.

these with an extra cupboard and a wardrobe as well. The more of this furniture that can be built in the better, both for labour-saving reasons and convenience. If the lady intends to use her dressing-room as a boudoir it should be larger and suitably decorated.

No consideration is given here to the placing of washstands, as these relics of pre-sanitation are fast disappearing, and people are learning to use their bathrooms instead.

In the decoration of bed and dressing-rooms brightness should be the main objective, and we must remember that the decorations of these rooms have to pass muster in the inhospitable hours of the early morning. Delicacy of pattern and warmth of colour should be aimed at, but dignity avoided, for who can feel formal at 7 a.m. with his hair on end? The floors should be pile carpeted for the benefit of bare feet.

being dispensed with. The remarks referring to dressing-tables and cupboards for double rooms also apply here.

The position of the door is very important in a small bedroom, and the guiding rule should be: never have the door in the same wall as the head of the bed unless they can be kept 6 ft. apart.

The absolute minimum dimensions for a small single bedroom are 9 ft. by 10 ft. 6 in., anything smaller being both inconvenient and unhygienic. Figure 14 shows a suitable arrangement for such a room, incorporating the preceding notes. Figures 12 and 13 show slightly larger rooms, 10 ft. 6 in. by 13 ft. 6 in., this being about the minimum for comfort.

Some people like lavatory basins in their bedrooms, but these are unhygienic, and also maids are tempted to use them for emptying slops. Where they are required they should be enclosed in ventilated cupboards, as in Figure 15.

Canadian Architecture

Mr. Percy Nobbs at the R.I.B.A.

IN the course of a paper read before a general meeting of the R.I.B.A. last week upon "Canadian Architecture," Mr. Percy E. Nobbs, M.A., F.R.I.B.A., said :—

I find myself here to-night in a double capacity—first, as a member of this great and ever-growing Institute; and, secondly, as a representative of my professional brethren in the Dominion of Canada. Prodigal son or visiting brother, it is in virtue of your interest in the achievements of my Canadian confreres that I have this honour of addressing you, and if you find me a bit of a rebel they may find me a bit of a traitor, so I am likely to hang in any case. As a representative I cut but a poor figure, lacking that glorious assurance which inspires so many of my Canadian brethren in their several ways of design, for I am a shadowy victim of philosophic doubt and free thought in architecture—an evolutionist thorn in the flesh alike of pious anglomaniacs, savage modernists, paganized latinists, and commercial stylemongers. Perhaps the happiest augury for the future of Canadian architecture is that these several cults are professed with such exuberant fervour—a sign of life. The reactions of time, and of a rigorous climate, can be relied on to re-discover for us a tradition.

Until a century ago there were two well-established traditions in Eastern Canada, with French and English origins, both curiously parallel to the contemporary work in the cities of the Baltic. The English tradition was, of course, closely allied with that of New England. These traditions, inherited from the France of the Louis and the England of the Georges, were partly ameliorated by climate and partly by the use of that greatest of all timbers, now well-nigh squandered out of existence, white pine. But these semi-indigenous traditions are no more, for to build in the good old ways is now become desperately expensive, and that part of the goodness which was craftsmanship is quite unattainable. In Halifax and St. John, Quebec, Montreal, and Kingston there are buildings from the design of men trained in the offices of Adams and Cockerel, who came to Canada as civil officials attached to naval and engineers' services. Their works are equal in delicacy and grace—and, I may add, in stability—to anything of the kind in England. But such treasures are in a sad way, and public interest in their preservation is as yet non-existent. A survey of the older architecture is now begun by the students of the Department of Architecture at McGill, while the Province of Quebec Association of Architects has a scholarship for travel and study of old French work. These are poor expedients when public pride is lacking.

The outstanding curse of life, and therefore of art, on the American continent is standardization. This vitiates everything from the plans of pantries to the outlook on foreign affairs, and carries with it a vast momentum of inertia. So, one town becomes like another throughout the States of the Union and, by an infection which there is no possibility of avoiding and no use in denying, throughout the provinces of Canada as well. The older towns still have the bouquet and savour of individuality. Halifax and St. John retain their rugged silhouettes on ridge and crag; Quebec her discreet fronts on narrow and precipitous lanes, with dainty spires wherever a church may cling upon her slopes; Three Rivers her ancient memories in stone; Montreal the disordered picturesqueness of a lingering eighteenth century civilization at odds with modern commercialism; Kingston her forts and her palladian façades; and London (in the bush) her shaded avenues of elms.

Toronto, till the other day, possessed an element, if, not of the picturesque, at least of the intimately reminiscent, that brought to mind the flavour of old English towns. Then that was taken away, as we knew; it was the public-houses redolent of the "putty, brass and paint" of old England.

The smaller towns of Ontario still retain a certain charm due to a not over-accelerated development. But the cities of Ontario, and the cities and towns of the plains, are American, with certain very American standard features such as useless but elegantly designed columnar porticoes to the banks, and useless and ill-designed Gothic towers upon the churches; and where educational institutions of any importance occur, a display of collegiate stage setting, mullions and buttresses and parapets all turned out by the acre, with a singular lack of all that Mr. Prior would understand as of the Gothic spirit. Now, in the Eastern States of the Union, the demure and legitimate classic inherited as a real tradition from Georgian times is able to achieve solutions for all manner of collegiate problems, and cheaply too.

Materials throughout Canada vary about as much as they do in the similar range of distance from London to Moscow. Of lumber the best goes abroad. White pine has been wantonly exhausted. British Columbia fir is now used, even in Nova Scotia. Except birch and maple for flooring, all good hardwood comes from the United States. Barring the West, all lumber is now inferior or expensive, or both, a striking example of exploited natural resources. In Alberta there are superb brickfields, whose product matches the best in the United States—that is, in the world—but the brickfields of the chief centres of population yield sound material uninteresting in texture and colour. Most first-class face brickwork in Canada is done with American bricks. The situation as to stone is similar. Most stone used comes from the States. Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia have granite, and some of the plants are as highly developed as any in the world. The grey limestones of the St. Lawrence Valley, Kingston, Montreal, and Quebec are unsurpassable as a dignified material, but they are costly to work compared with the softer sandstones and limestones from the States. The olive sandstones of Alberta and New Brunswick are sad in tone and not really comparable with the grey limestone or American sandstone for weathering quality. Winnipeg has a pale limestone with a strong shell-mark admirably suited to large scale work; this finds its way as far east as Montreal and as far west as Edmonton. Material has thus but little local significance in Canada. In many cases whole streets of buildings have involved transport in the raw over 500 miles and more from half-a-dozen directions.

It is only within the last twenty years that the means for a complete technical professional education of Canadian architects have existed in Canada, and only within the last ten years that the recruitment of the profession from the University schools has become commensurate with the opportunities. There are in Canada to-day between eight and nine hundred architects, and about a score are now entering practice each year, with the diploma of one or other of the Canadian schools. Previous to the institution of these schools, the Canadian offices which claimed a reputation for teaching were never numerous. Indeed, the offices have been all too blithe and irresponsible in transmitting their teaching responsibility to the schools. At this time, then, the schools are just beginning to make an impression on the general output of architectural design in Canada.

I have had abundant opportunity to observe the contributions of three more or less distinct elements to the problems of Canadian design, and I have no hesitation in attributing to the British immigrant the sincerest and most inventive efforts to modify traditions to new requirements and local conditions, and incidentally to appreciate the good work done in Canada between 1700 and 1900.

Enquiries Answered

Enquiries from readers on points of architectural, constructional, and legal interest, etc., are cordially invited. They will be dealt with by a staff of experts, whose services are specially retained for this purpose. If desired, answers will be sent direct through the post. In no case is any charge made for this service.

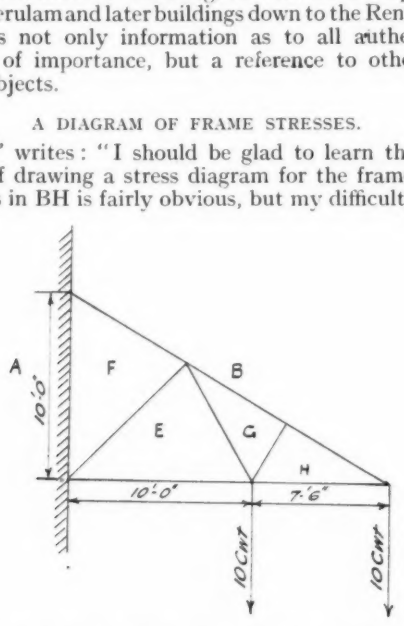
THE ARCHITECTURE OF HERTFORDSHIRE.

"C. J." writes: "Is there any ecclesiastical or domestic architecture of interest in Hertfordshire, and is there a book dealing with it? Can you give me any information with regard to Aldenham Church? What is the best work on the ruins of Verulam?"

—The county is packed with buildings of architectural interest, both ecclesiastical and domestic. Querist cannot do better than refer to the Hertfordshire volumes of the Royal Commission on Buildings of Historical Importance, both for Verulam and later buildings down to the Renaissance. This gives not only information as to all authenticated buildings of importance, but a reference to other works on the subjects. E.

A DIAGRAM OF FRAME STRESSES.

"D. P." writes: "I should be glad to learn the proper method of drawing a stress diagram for the frame shown. The stress in BH is fairly obvious, but my difficulty is with



the stresses in BG and GH. Neither Charnock, Waldram, nor Adams give anything similar."

—Your correspondent's difficulty is the familiar one of a member (GH), which is theoretically unnecessary with the method of loading shown. All cases of frame stresses which are not patently obvious (and many which are, or appear to be) are best studied by making up scale models with plasterers' laths jointed with round nails in fairly large holes, with each member duplicated by a string tie from joint to joint. Such a model frame, when loaded, shows at once by the tightening of the string ties which members are in tension; and if loaded upside down (under which condition all stresses are reversed) similar tightening will disclose which members are normally in compression. Any insufficiency in the bracing is betrayed by a tendency to collapse under load. Such a lath-and-string test would quickly have disclosed the fact that member GH is redundant with the loads applied as shown, and that a frame (Fig. 1) in which it is omitted does not tend to collapse. The stress diagram (Fig. 2) of such a frame presents no difficulty. P. J. WALDRAM.

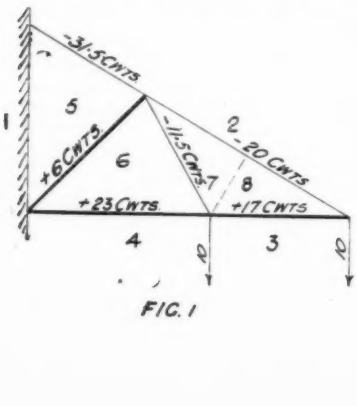


FIG. 1

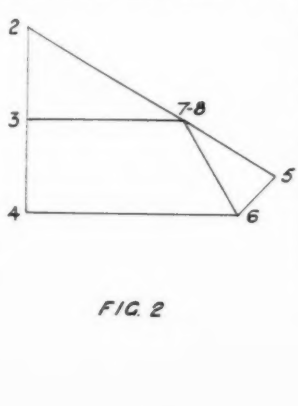


FIG. 2

ACOUSTICS OF A CHURCH.

The acoustics of a church are complained of as follows.—

"A preacher is fairly audible in the extreme front or back, but in the middle of the church one can practically hear nothing. . . ."

The church is described as a large barn-like building, with practically nothing to break up sound. The volume, or enclosed air-space, from the plans is approximately 200,000 cub. ft. It is very difficult without more information to know what is the cause of the trouble. What, for instance, is the number of the congregation? Is the church good for musical tone, and is speech from the pulpit the only cause of complaint? If the congregation is small it is quite likely that in this, as in so many churches of this type, the trouble is one of excessive reverberation. The barrel vault giving minimum surface for maximum volume would tend in this direction. A good general rule for architects to remember is that there should be at least one person present for every 200 cub. ft. air-space. The air-space of this church appears to be approximately 200,000 cub. ft., so that the audience necessary to control the reverberation would be 1,000 persons. My experience of this type of auditory is that a few persons sit scattered in various parts of the church in family pews. If they could be prevailed upon to sit in a body and the transepts were cut off by partitions of absorbing material, advantage would be gained. In this case I should advise a partition wall 10 ft. high, of some strong absorbent material across the nave at the end under the last roof truss, thereby shortening the length of the nave. The most efficient absorbents are slag wool, 2 in. thick, between wire netting, or three layers of Cabot quilting, or Guastavino tiles, now procurable in England. If acoustic plaster is used it should be spread straight upon coke breeze blocks. The whole of the west wall above a height of 10 ft. should also be treated with strong absorbent. The obscurity noted in the centre of the church is due to long-reflected paths of sound from the west wall, a very common complaint in churches. The only way to obviate this is to treat the reflecting surface which is causing the trouble. Curtains are useless unless they are very thick and hung in layers, with an inch air-space between them. They are useful for appearance sake in covering the absorbent partitions.

HOPE BAGENAL.

SALT AND FRESH-WATER BATHS.

"B. S." writes: "Where can I see some good modern covered bath buildings, including plunge and slipper baths, with dual system of fresh and salt water, and filtration and aeration plant?"

—At the Hastings public baths the swimming pond is supplied with sea water, and the slipper baths with fresh water. There are arrangements for the filtration of the sea water, but so far as we know there is no aeration plant, although this could be installed at small cost. Examples of aeration and filtration installations can be seen at the Finchley public baths, Squire's Lane, Finchley, N., and similar plant is being installed at the public baths now in course of erection at Heaton and Walker, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

A. W. S. and K. M. B. CROSS.

Town Planning—A Medical Opinion

Professor Robertson, who is celebrated for his work as the Medical Officer of Health for Birmingham and previously for Sheffield, is giving a series of lectures at University College, London. The first was delivered on January 18, and was devoted to a general consideration of the effect of environment on health.

Professor Robertson gave instances of the need for improvement in the structure and design of the individual home, so that, for example, no opportunity should be given for dirt to collect, which was dangerous to health and added needless toil to the housewife. He laid most emphasis, however, on the need for good environment for the home, lacking which, improvement of the house itself would largely be wasted effort. Dingy and dirty surroundings caused depression of spirits, in which people were more susceptible to disease. He used the term "good environment" to cover surroundings free from smoke, dust, and noise, with green spaces in sight (he reminded his audience that in olden times gaolers were particularly careful to prevent prisoners, whose spirit they wished to break, seeing any green grass or growing plants or trees), and recreation grounds and gardens close at hand, and with cultural facilities, shopping centres and workplaces all placed so that they could be reached in comfort and without undue fatigue. He looked to town planning to ensure this environment, which was so essential to healthy and vigorous life.

With regard to the effect of overcrowding on health, the lecturer showed a number of slides of a plan of the City of Birmingham. It was noticeable that the place having the highest infantile mortality rate, and where the disease rate was most intense, closely tallied with the most densely populated part of the city, where back-to-back houses abounded.

Professor Robertson also produced a table comparing the highest and lowest death rates in various towns, and invariably the highest rate coincided with the most crowded ward and the lowest with the least crowded, although in several instances both were populated by artisans. The following are some examples :—

	HIGHEST DEATH RATE.		LOWEST DEATH RATE.	
London ..	Shoreditch ..	19·2	Lewisham ..	10·4
Glasgow ..	Mile End Ward	21·3	Cathcart ..	9·8
Birmingham	St. Martin's Ward	16·7	King's Norton	7·8
Leeds ..	West Ward ..	17·9	New Ward ..	9·8
Sheffield ..	North Ward ..	18·3	Ecclesall ..	9·2

Summing up this side of the case, the lecturer stated that the general effect of slum conditions was to double the death rate and more than double the rate of sickness, with the consequent waste of happiness and efficiency and cost of remedial services.

One interesting point to which attention was drawn, was that when buildings were placed so closely together, or so near to public thoroughfares, that privacy was intruded upon, householders almost invariably put up lace curtains so as to exclude the gaze of their neighbours or of the public, but most unfortunately at the same time they thereby excluded those parts of the rays of the sun that were disease destroying.

Professor Robertson expressed the view that the most powerful agencies for remedying these conditions and preventing their repetition were education and the Town Planning Act. With regard to the latter, he was, of course, a pioneer, in company with such men as George Cadbury and Ebenezer Howard, to whom he drew special attention. His experience made him confident that the people at present forced to inhabit the slums would respond to better conditions, and that the well-being and prosperity of the nation depended upon those conditions being provided.

Contemporary Art

The Leicester Galleries.

The present exhibition of sculpture by Jacob Epstein includes some admirable portrait studies, but no monumental nor architectural work in continuation of the sculptor's promises of earlier years. Architecture is crying aloud for more distinctive plastic work than it is accorded, and Epstein, it seemed at one time, was the artist who had it in him to supply the need. More recently he has proved his capacity for monuments in his Christ, as well as in his Venus. The necessary restrictions and discipline would help his astonishing and disturbing art. For the moment he is marking time and startling London with portraits and studies that are sometimes truthful, as that of "R. B. Cunninghame Graham, Esq."; often morbid, as "The Weeping Woman," and occasionally decadent, as the "Reclining Nude." In this last work there is a suggestion of Rodin's later stage, and the "Carving in marble of two arms" calls to mind the same sculptor's studies of hands, giving a further interest to the intrinsic intriguing character of this highly-finished if not highly-modelled piece. Contrary to the prevailing fashion among the younger sculptors, Epstein does not rely on simplification, for these arms, simple as they appear, are elaborately fashioned. Indeed, the whole of the work here shown proves that the artist, depending upon realism as a basis, with a determined type-selection, elaborates expressionism more highly and more acutely than most plastic artists. It is this that gives his work its exceptionally discomposing character.

Other Galleries.

There is less constructional work in the theatrical art of Aubrey Hammond at the Piccadilly Gallery than I hoped for, but of his talent for the designing of costumes and his skill at posters there is no doubt. The many examples prove him to be a sound and not over-versatile artist.

A show of paintings of Irish life by Jack B. Yeats, R.H.A., at the Gieves Art Gallery had an all too short stay there. Irish scenery as well as Irish life was admirably rendered, and with equal intensity. It is this quality that makes the work of this artist so telling, and it exists in his paint as well as in his observation. The fine colour of "High Spring Tide" illustrates the quality in its dual aspect.

It is a curiously compounded show that A. Brantingham Simpson is holding at the Greatorex Galleries—Nature, humour, and a clever technique succeed in creating a desire for fewer examples at a time. Seventy-two of such works, small and compelling, are too many, for each one irresistibly demands your attention. The show is called "More Fancies," and consists largely of etchings and lithographs, and there are two or three examples of quick clay modelling.

Prints again form the exhibition at the Independent Gallery, and here there are 104, but they are by some seventeen different artists, mostly French. It is a valuable collection, sent over by the society known as "Les Peintres-Graveurs Indépendants," and not the least of the excellences of the collection are the studies of architectural subjects.

The Venice International.

In April the next biennial international exhibition will be held at Venice, and owing to the general dissatisfaction with the British representation of 1922, some effort is being made to improve matters. The smaller pictures and the water-colour drawings collected by the new committee are to be seen at the galleries of the Faculty of Arts, Golden Square. There are a good many very charming pictures of buildings from cottages to palaces by the younger and forward men of the English school, but the selection is not so representative of the older men. I should like to know what is being done for architecture and sculpture.

KINETON PARKES.

Parliamentary Notes

[BY OUR SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE.]

Housing Progress and Shortage of Labour.

Sir Wm. Joynson-Hicks, the Minister of Health, stated in the House of Commons that during the five months in which the 1923 Housing Act had been in operation he had approved plans for the building of 85,036 houses. Of these 31,000 would be built by the local authorities, and 53,600 by private enterprise. They had got private enterprise going. Already, in the case of 44,000 houses, contracts had been let, and arrangements were being made to build. There were 17,600 houses already being built under the Act, and 3,500 had been completed. There would be, in the first year after the passing of the 1923 Act, 100,000 houses built under its provisions. That number would be greater than any number built in a single year during the last twenty years, with the exception of one year, when 105,000 houses were built. The average yearly pre-war figure was 63,000 houses, so that they had more than got back to the pre-war figure. In addition to the 85,000 he had mentioned, he was every week approving over 3,500 further houses. The best year under the Addison scheme produced only 88,900. But he could get more houses built if more building labour were available. In 1901 there were 101,000 bricklayers; to-day there were only about 53,000. There were 27,000 plasterers then, as compared with 13,000 now; 8,400 slaters, as compared with 2,880. There was practically no unemployment in the skilled sections of the building trade to-day, and there was ample work in sight for the skilled operatives and for at least a 25 per cent. dilution during the next ten years. He warned whoever might be responsible in any new Government for housing not to destroy the foundations of a scheme which, he believed, would give more houses than any other scheme that could possibly be devised.

This speech was strongly criticized by many Labour members, one of whom stated that it would be necessary to build 200,000 houses a year for thirty years to restore normal housing conditions.

Colonel Vaughan-Morgan, a Unionist member for one of the London constituencies, said that the streets of London were strewn with relics of past schemes which had failed to reach fruition. The great plans of Wren, the unrealized ambitions of Inigo Jones—to mention only two of the great architects of the past—who had visions as to what London might become—where were they? Some of the present housing schemes had been delayed by shortage of labour, and he urged that more men should be recruited for the bricklaying and plastering trades.

Mr. D. G. Somerville said that the reason for the shortage of building labour was that, after the war, owing to socialistic doctrines impregnating the trade unions, the latter did not allow any dilution of building labour.

The Cenotaph.

Colonel Vaughan-Morgan asked the First Commissioner of Works whether he was prepared favourably to consider the proposal to fix a light at the top of the Cenotaph, to be kept constantly shining; and whether he was aware that the French authorities had adopted and put into practice a proposal having a similar object?

Sir John Baird replied that the question was carefully considered last June. Sir Edwin Lutyens, the designer of the Cenotaph, stated in the Press his objection to the proposal on the ground that the Cenotaph was not designed for the purpose. He shared the views of the distinguished architect in the matter.

Smoke Abatement Bill.

Sir Wm. Joynson-Hicks stated that it was hoped to introduce a Smoke Abatement Bill this session.

Progress of Scottish Housing.

Mr. F. C. Thomson, Solicitor-General for Scotland, informed Sir George McCrae that the number of houses authorized to be built by local authorities and public utility societies under the Housing, Town Planning, etc. (Scotland) Act, 1919, was 25,550. At December 31, 1923—the last date to which figures as to progress were available—21,087 of these houses were completed. Under the Housing (financial assistance to builders) Scheme (Scotland), 1920, certificates "A" were granted by local authorities in respect of 3,326 houses. Only 2,324 houses, however, were completed within the period allowed for participation in the State subsidy. Of the completed houses 96 were built under the crofters' scheme. Under the Housing Act, 1923, to date the Scottish Board of Health had approved schemes for the erection of houses by local authorities embracing a total of 6,731 houses. At December 31, 1923—the last date to which progress figures were available—225 of these houses were under construction, but none had been completed. As regarded schemes for the assistance of private enterprise under the above Act, local authorities at December 31, 1923, had issued certificates "A" in respect of 557 houses. Of these 372 were under construction and twelve had been completed.

Municipal Housing.

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks informed Mr. Sunlight that in connection with an application from a local authority to erect houses themselves under the provisions of the Housing, etc., Act, 1923, the authority were required to satisfy him that this was the most appropriate way of meeting the needs of their area. If it should appear that a local authority had refused offers from private builders to erect the working-class houses required with the aid of a subsidy, he should require to be informed of all the circumstances and the reasons for the refusal and should consider these in connection with the Council's application. Out of 89,510 houses in approved schemes, 57,577 were to be built by private builders.

Mr. Lowth asked how many tenders for houses had been approved since the passage of the Housing Act, 1923; how many houses were included in the tenders; how many houses had been completed; and how many schemes had been submitted for approval?

Sir Wm. Joynson-Hicks said it was not a condition of consent to the erection of houses under the Housing, etc., Act, 1923, that local authorities should submit tenders for approval. He had authorized the erection of 89,510 houses under the Act, and these were included in 907 schemes. On January 1, 44,183 houses were included in contracts, direct labour schemes, or in certificates approving plans issued to private persons; 3,506 houses had been completed on that date.

The Housing Subsidy.

Mr. Wilberforce Allen asked the Minister if he was aware that considerable hardship was being caused to many persons by reason of the existing restrictions on the granting of subsidies in respect of houses commenced by them before October last, which prevented them completing such houses; and whether he would take steps so to amend the law as to allow of subsidies for houses commenced at an earlier date?

Sir Wm. Joynson-Hicks replied: The hon. member would appear to be under a misapprehension as regards the date from which subsidy was payable under the Housing, etc., Act, 1923. Section 2, which empowered local authorities to make grants to private persons, had effect from April 26 last, and houses included in schemes approved by me since that date were eligible for the subsidy provided they complied with the conditions laid down and were not commenced prior to the date of approval of the scheme.

Competition News

The Winner of the Coatbridge Competition.

We much regret that through a misunderstanding, Mrs. E. M. B. Hughes, the winner of the Coatbridge War Memorial competition, illustrated in our last issue, was confused with another lady architect of the same surname; hence the biographical particulars which we gave last week do not apply. Mrs. Hughes is A.I.Arch. (Scot.), and F.S.A. (Scot.), and practises in Glasgow. She holds the Diploma

MRS. E. M. B. HUGHES.

of the School of Architecture, Aberdeen. From 1915 to 1920 she was lecturer on architecture, painting, and sculpture at the School of Art, in the same city. Her works include the Rutherford Memorial, 1921; a house, "St. Martin's," Bearsden, 1922–3; and alterations and additions to No. 14 Huntly Gardens, Glasgow, 1923, and to 5 Windsor Terrace, Glasgow, 1923.

Craftsmen Competitions at the Building Exhibition.

At the forthcoming Building Exhibition, to be held at Olympia in April next, it is intended to revive the competitions for craftsmen which proved so interesting and useful a feature of these exhibitions many years ago. It is also intended to have a display of finished work produced by the students of the various schools.

A committee has been formed to arrange the details, and the first meeting was held at 43 Essex Street, Strand, W.C.2, on January 16. There were present: Messrs. J. Alfred Gotch, P.R.I.B.A. (in the chair); E. Stanley Hall, M.A., F.R.I.B.A., president of the Architectural Association; E. J. Partridge, F.R.I.B.A., president of the Society of Architects; T. P. Bennett, F.R.I.B.A., head of Architectural Department, Northern Polytechnic Institute; H. G. and H. C. Montgomery, and A. Cameron, who has agreed to act as honorary secretary.

It was resolved that the competitions should take place in the following trades: carpenters and joiners, plumbers, bricklayers, smiths, plasterers, masons, painters and decorators, glaziers.

The management of the exhibition offered to give a money prize of £5 to the first-prize winner; £2 10s. to the second; and books to the value of £1 to the third; together with a diploma of merit. It was agreed to approach the companies of the City of London interested in the building trades, with a view to their giving special diplomas to the schools, as apart from prizes to individuals. The time for holding the competitions, and the conditions to be observed, were agreed upon, the subjects to be set being left for further consideration. Particulars may be obtained from Mr. A. Cameron, 43 Essex Street, Strand, W.C.2.

The Raffles College Competition, Singapore.

The following awards in the above competition are announced:—

First (No. 17)—Cyril A. Farey, A.R.I.B.A., and Graham R. Dawbarn, M.A., A.R.I.B.A., 19 Bedford Square.

Second and Third (Nos. 16 and 21 bracketed equal)—(16): E. Vincent Harris, F.R.I.B.A., 29 St. James's Square; (21): S. Woods Hill, A.R.I.B.A., Fort, Bombay, and E. C Henriques, A.R.I.B.A., Namdars Bungalow, Audheri, Bombay.

Hon. Mention—W. S. Huxley, F.R.I.B.A., 44 Great Russell Street.

Mr. John Begg, late consulting architect to the Indian Government, was the assessor.

New Secondary School for Worcester.

The Worcester Education Committee have decided to invite local architects to submit designs for the erection of a proposed new secondary school at the Thames House site.

List of Competitions Open

Date of Delivery.	COMPETITION.
Feb. 14	Proposed New Cottage Hospital for Durham. The Holmside and South Moor Collieries Welfare Scheme Committee invite designs for a new cottage hospital, and premiums of £75, £50, and £25 respectively are offered. Mr. T. R. Milburn, F.R.I.B.A., is the assessor. Apply not later than December 26. Joint Secretaries, Welfare Scheme Committee, South Moor Colliery Co., Ltd., South Moor, Stanley, S.O., Co. Durham.
Feb. 29	Architects practising in the West Riding of Yorkshire are invited to submit designs for the City of Leeds Branch Public Libraries, Cardigan Road, Burley, and Hough Lane, Bramley. Premiums, £35, £20, and £15. Assessor, Mr. Percy S. Worthington, M.A., Litt.D., F.R.I.B.A. Apply Mr. Robert E. Fox, Town Clerk, 26 Great George Street, Leeds, with deposit of one guinea.
March 1	Proposed Concert Hall and Public Baths for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Premiums of £750, £250, and £100 respectively are offered, the first premium to merge into the commission or other payment to be made to the author of the successful design. Assessor, Mr. Alfred W. S. Cross, M.A. Apply, with deposit of £2 2s., to Mr. A. M. Oliver, Town Clerk, Town Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
April	A competition has been promoted by the Canadian Government for designs for a full-length statue of the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier to be erected in the grounds of the Parliament Buildings, Ottawa. The winner will be commissioned to carry out the work. Second premium, $1,000. Apply the Secretary, Public Works Department, Room 784, Hunter Buildings, Ottawa.
April 26	At the instance of the British Drama League the proprietors of "Country Life" have promoted a competition for designs for a national theatre. The proprietors of that journal will bear the cost of building a complete large-scale model of the first prize design, to be shown at the British Empire Exhibition. Jury of Award: Mr. J. Alfred Gotch, President R.I.B.A.; Sir Edwin Lutyens, R.A., F.R.I.B.A.; Sir Lawrence Weaver, K.B.E., F.S.A.; Professor C. H. Reilly, F.R.I.B.A.; Professor Hubert Worthington, A.R.I.B.A.; Mr. Harley Granville-Barker; Mr. Albert Rutherston. Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth, Hon. Secretary. First prize, £250; second prize, £100; for the best model sent in with a design, £25; for the best perspective view of the interior of the larger auditorium, £25. Designs are invited from architects, or architects associated with decorative designers, of either sex, who must be British born or of British parentage. The work of such architects resident in the British Dominions will be especially welcomed. Apply Editor, "Country Life," 20 Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2.
Sept. 30	Designs are invited for a statue in bronze and a pedestal (at a cost of about £5,000) in honour of the late Sir Ross Smith, K.B.E. Apply The Agent-General for South Australia, Australia House, London.
No Date	The Hereford Town Council invite designs for the proposed reconstruction of the Market Hall and adjoining premises. Premium £100 for the best design as adjudged by a competent member of the R.I.B.A. Apply, with deposit of £2 2s., to Mr. Robert Battersby, Town Clerk, Town Hall, Hereford.
No Date	Proposed new police and fire brigade station on the Marlborough Crescent Market site for the Newcastle City Council. Three prizes, amounting in all to £900, will be offered. An assessor, nominated by the President of the R.I.B.A., will be appointed.

Correspondence

British Glass in Housing Schemes

To the Editor of THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL.

SIR,—I think that in connection with housing schemes the advantages of 21 oz. sheet glass instead of 15 oz. glass are scarcely appreciated. For large size panes the 21 oz. is invariably used, but now that the custom is to have larger windows with smaller panes, 15 oz. glass is far too often used.

I think that British 21 oz. sheet glass is preferable for many reasons. In the first place, it is 50 per cent. stronger and less liable to be broken. Being thicker than 15 oz., it keeps houses warmer in winter and cooler in summer. The surface is freer from imperfections than 15 oz., and so there is less distortion of vision. It has not the "tinny" appearance of 15 oz. glass, and therefore gives the house a better appearance.

I find the additional cost in housing schemes with which I am connected only amounts to about 5s. per house on account of the fact that the home manufacturers are always glad of the orders for small sizes of 21 oz.

I think this point is well worth consideration by those responsible for housing schemes. "SURVEYOR."

Academic Dress

To the Editor of THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL.

SIR,—With regard to the comment in your issue for January 16 on the adoption of the Report of the Committee on Academic Dress, as the voting apparently was in perfect order and a majority were in favour, the matter should rest there. It does not necessarily follow that the dress will be universally adopted, or even worn, but it gives certain members the option to do so if they choose.

It is forgotten, perhaps, that there are numerous institutions in the country, where at public functions, such as prize givings, etc., academic dress is demanded, and it seems rather out of place and unfortunate if the architect should be, perhaps, the only person unable to comply with this stipulation, however grotesque his academic garb may be.

The adoption of the report removes the possibility of this disability, and for such as it is worth is to be welcomed. Seeing that the lot of the professional architect nowadays is not very grand, consisting, as it does, of the possession of a representative building in Conduit Street, an anæmic publicity, and a gigantic struggle to live, the addition of an academic costume should help rather than hinder him, but to crown him with a biretta seems to my mind somewhat cruel. NEIL MARTIN-KAYE, A.R.I.B.A.

Societies and Institutions

A.A. New Members.

At the last meeting of the Architectural Association the following new members were elected: F. J. Watson, S. L. Thomson, W. T. Lord, E. L. Thompson, R. B. Bana, G. H. H. Heritage.

The Building Surveyors' and Inspectors' Association.

At a meeting of the Building Surveyors' and Inspectors' Association, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, it was decided to form a branch for the London area. The meeting was representative of members of the London district, and several visitors from other professional associations were present. The chairman of the Association, Mr. W. J. Stone, M.R.S.I., welcomed those present, and spoke of progress made with the educational policy and of the desire of the Association to extend its field of operations. Mr. W. S. Dalton, of the London County Council, was appointed chairman of the new London branch, the headquarters of which will be Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W.1. The committee of the new branch will, at an early date, appoint a secretary and treasurer, and a Press and parliamentary secretary.

The Surveyors' Institution Special Diploma Examinations.

The council of the Surveyors' Institution has decided to give a special diploma in agricultural and tenant-right valuations. The conditions and standard of examination will be similar to those attaching to the special diplomas already established in forestry, rating, sanitary science, and advanced land surveying.

The Annual Dance of the Cardiff School of Architecture.

The Cardiff School of Architecture Club held its fourth annual dance at the Technical College, Cathays Park. The assembly hall was tastefully decorated for the purpose. About 120 guests were present, including Mr. Percy Thomas, F.R.I.B.A. (President of the South Wales Institute of Architects), and Miss Thomas; Mr. Ivor Jones (Hon. Secretary of the South Wales Institute of Architects), and Mrs. Jones; Mr. Lewis, Ph.C.; Mr. W. S. Purchon, M.A., A.R.I.B.A., and Mrs. Purchon; and Mr. Winder, M.A., A.R.I.B.A.

The Southend School of Arts and Crafts.

The twenty-fifth annual exhibition of work of the students of the School of Arts and Crafts, Southend, was opened by Sir Martin Conway, Slade Professor at the University of Oxford. He also inaugurated the new wing, which has been added to increase the scope of the architectural section of the allied crafts. This school has advanced with astonishing rapidity and success. Housed in temporary quarters of its own, under the capable and energetic efforts of the principal, Mr. A. J. Connabier, A.M.C., the school now has a total of 300 students. The instructors now number twelve, against five in 1914, and are mostly drawn from the Royal College of Art. The new wing will be used for instruction in the more practical side of architecture, with Mr. Leonard Freeborn and Mr. D. N. Martin-Kaye, A.R.I.B.A., as specialist instructors in design and construction respectively. The latter hails from the A.A. schools, upon whose system of architectural training this section is being developed. It may be recalled that Mr. C. W. Sully, a former student, won the A.A. open scholarship last year direct from the school.

During the course of the exhibition Sir Charles A. Nicholson, Bt., presented the prizes.

The Prices of Building Materials

Sir H. J. Mackinder, the chairman of the Inter-Departmental Committee appointed by the Ministry of Health to survey the prices of building materials, has issued his report for November and December last. The most appreciable fluctuation between October and November is in the case of lead. The general rise in price referred to in his report on October prices has been still further accentuated, and in the majority of districts included in the schedule the November prices show an increase of approximately £6 to £7 a ton. Timber appears to be somewhat easier in price in London and Edinburgh. The price of bricks and cement remains generally at the same level; there has, however, been an advance of 2s. a thousand in common bricks at Swansea, and a fall of 2s. at Edinburgh. From Manchester, where a fall of 5s. a ton in British Portland cement was shown in October, a further drop of 2s. is reported. There has been no change in the price of light castings. There have been a number of local fluctuations in the other materials, but no general move in either direction. There has been practically no change in the level of prices between November and December, the one point worthy of note being a fall of 6s. 2d. a thousand in facing bricks at Dundee. Copies of the report can be obtained from His Majesty's Stationery Office. Price 6d. net.

Professional Announcements

On page 207 of our last issue we stated that Mr. James Burford, A.R.I.B.A., and Mr. J. D. M. Harvey had opened an office at 3 Staple Inn, Holborn Bars, London, W.C.1. Owing to the ambiguity of the wording it might be inferred that Mr. Burford and Mr. Harvey had entered into partnership. This is not the case. Mr. Burford's practice is in no way connected with that of Mr. Harvey.

The Week's News

Temporary Houses for Bradford.

The Bradford Housing Sub-Committee have provisionally agreed to erect 100 temporary houses.

Epsom Housing Loans.

£43,000 has been loaned by the Epsom Rural District Council to people building their own houses in the villages.

Working Class Dwellings for Harrogate.

The Ministry of Health have sanctioned a loan of £24,000 for the erection of working class dwellings.

A New Fire Station for Newcastle.

Newcastle proposes to build a new fire station. The cost is estimated at £125,000.

Wembley Stadium Improvements.

Extensive improvements, to prevent a repetition of the storming of the Wembley Stadium, are nearing completion.

£150,000 for Cornish Roads.

A scheme for road and bridge improvements to cost £150,000 has been adopted by Cornwall Highways Committee.

Ninety-four Houses for Newton Abbot.

Plans have been passed for the erection of ninety-four houses on the Milburn estate, Newton Abbot.

The Birkenhead Housing Scheme.

Two hundred and fifty houses—the first portion of a scheme to provide 1,100—are to be erected at North End by the Birkenhead Corporation.

More Houses for Scarborough.

Plans have been prepared for extensive housing improvements in the old part of the town. The scheme will necessitate the demolition of 199 properties.

A New Public Washhouse for Liverpool.

A new public washhouse, with space underneath for forty slipper baths, is to be erected in Minshull Street, off West Derby Street, by the Liverpool Baths Committee.

The Congested Traffic on Waterloo Bridge.

The London County Council Improvements and Highways Committee are considering the advisability of widening Waterloo Bridge to relieve the traffic congestion.

Proposed New Art Gallery for Jersey.

Miss E. A. Barreau has offered £8,000 for the erection and endowment of an art gallery in Jersey. Of that sum £2,000 is to be devoted to an art scholarship to assist local art students.

Brighton Aquarium to Go.

The Brighton Corporation have decided to lay out ornamental grounds and to erect a restaurant and a concert hall on the site of the Aquarium.

A New Shelter for Douglas Pier.

A shelter of glass and iron, 622 ft. long, is to be built on the south side of Victoria Pier, Douglas. The Tynwald Court have voted £7,000 towards the cost.

Change of Address.

Owing to proposed reconstruction of 33 Princess Street, Manchester, Messrs. F. Newton and Sons, architects, have taken temporary offices at 23 Cross Street (third floor).

More Houses for Thorne.

The Thorne Rural District Council have received the sanction of the Ministry of Health to erect 400 houses in the district by private enterprise. The Council contemplate the erection of 48 houses at Thorne.

A New School for Beckenham.

The Beckenham Urban District Council have decided to accept the offer of the Housing Committee to allot six acres of land on the Elmers End housing estate as a site for a new public elementary school.

The London County Hall.

While work has been proceeding for some months on the foundations, no decision has yet been reached as to when the new wing required to complete the London County Hall is to be constructed. When the new wing is completed the staff of the County Council now housed outside the County Hall will be transferred to it. This may enable the County Council to dispose of the Old County Hall in Spring Gardens.

Morecambe Improvements.

A meeting of burgesses have approved the Morecambe Parliamentary Bill, by which the Corporation propose to provide a promenade, a coastal road to the north, bathing and paddling pools, and two parks.

A Thurnscoe Improvement Scheme.

Six hundred new houses are being built at Thurnscoe. Messrs. W. H. Radford and Son, of Nottingham, are to report to the Urban District Council on the question of enlarging the sewerage and sewage disposal works.

Edinburgh's Housing Needs.

The Director of Housing of Edinburgh is investigating the possibility of erecting houses without the aid of bricks. During the next eighteen months 1,500 houses at least are required, and the city is experiencing a great shortage of bricks and plasterers.

The Venice Bridge Project.

The proposal to connect Venice to the mainland by a bridge has been abandoned. It has been vigorously opposed by the inhabitants of Venice, where strikes and riots have taken place.

An Old London Well Discovered.

An old well, found under the shop floor of No. 16 Farringdon Road, is believed to be "Clerks Well," from which Clerkenwell takes its name. Close by a fine piece of Roman wall has been unearthed.

Proposed New Promenade for Seaton.

A Ministry of Health inquiry has been held into the application of Seaton Urban District Council to borrow £4,250 for the construction of the western promenade, to run from the existing promenade to the Chine.

The New Lambeth Bridge.

The Bill, promoted by the London County Council, to secure powers for the rebuilding of Lambeth Bridge has been passed by the examiners of the House of Commons, and put forward for first reading.

More Houses for Exeter.

The Exeter City Council have decided to apply to the Ministry of Health for sanction to a loan of £28,000 for the erection of forty-five houses and the construction of roads on the Buddle Lane site.

Building Developments at Bexley.

Extensive building is to take place on Baldwyn's estate, in the parishes of Bexley, Dartford, and Wilmington. Already plans for fifty houses have been deposited with the Bexley Urban District Council. The estate has an area of 420 acres.

The Royal Sanitary Institute.

During this month fifteen Members and thirty-two Associates have been elected by the Royal Sanitary Institute. Lord Salisbury has accepted the presidency of the thirty-fifth congress of the Royal Sanitary Institute, to be held at Liverpool from July 14 to 19.

A Big Dock Scheme for Southampton.

The Southampton Corporation have resolved to hand over to the Southern Railway 120 acres of mudland near West Station for the development of docks along the river Test. The scheme is estimated to cost £8,000,000. Twenty acres of the land will form sites for factories and workshops.

Lincoln Cathedral Repairs.

Twenty-five thousand gallons of liquid cement have been squirted by electrically driven machinery into the walls of Lincoln Cathedral. It has been discovered that a large portion of the walls are hollow or are filled with rubble, which is now little better than dust.

The late Mr. C. W. Reeves.

Mr. C. W. Reeves, senior partner of C. W. Reeves, Son & Mason, of Gray's Inn Square, W.C., architects, died on January 15, following injuries sustained in Wellington Street, Strand. On the previous Saturday he was knocked down by a taxi cab. He was seventy years of age.

New Motor Works for Edinburgh.

Plans are being prepared for the erection in Edinburgh of a large garage and workshop by the Wolseley Motors (Limited). Mr. John Jerdan, F.R.I.B.A., of Edinburgh, is the architect. The cost of the building is estimated at between £60,000 and £70,000.

A New Parish Hall for Rivenhall.

The Braintree (Essex) Rural District Council have approved the plans of Mr. F. Sidney Webber, architect, for the new parish hall to be erected at Rivenhall. The hall, which is being presented by the patron of the living, Dr. A. E. Western, will be built at once. Mr. P. C. Sayer, of Great Totham, is the contractor.

The "Olympic Village."

For housing the 50,000 Olympic competitors there has been constructed at Colombes, near Paris, a huge modern camp, which is described as the "Olympic Village." The athletes will be lodged in a series of bungalows arranged around central courtyards, each possessing verandas, with plants and flowers striking a gay note. There will also be kinema halls, concert halls, and a wireless installation, as well as shops.

Hendon Opposes Watford By-pass Road.

The Hendon Urban District Council are opposing the scheme for the construction of the Watford By-pass Road. They consider that the widening of Queen's Road, which runs almost parallel to the proposed new road, would serve the same purpose, would save, according to one estimate, £50,000, and would obviate the destruction of badly needed dwelling-houses. The by-pass road has been planned by the Ministry of Transport and half the cost, estimated at £140,000, has been promised by the Middlesex County Council.

A New Block of Flats for Belgium.

The Commercial Secretary at Brussels informs the Department of Overseas Trade that a large block of flats and offices with an area of 7,000 sq. yd. is to be erected at a cost approximating 25,000,000 francs. The plans will not be completed for some six months. In the meantime United Kingdom firms desiring to offer fittings, furnishings, etc., may obtain the name and address of the company concerned on application to the Department of Overseas Trade, 35 Old Queen Street, London, S.W.1. Reference 21611/F.W./G.P. should be quoted.

Housing Progress in Scotland.

The following figures show the progress that has been made in State-aided housing schemes in Scotland to December 31: Permanent houses completed, 20,320; temporary houses completed, 665; reconstructed houses completed, 101; houses completed under the private subsidy scheme, 2,319; a total of 23,405. There are 2,884 houses at present under construction in connection with housing schemes carried out by local authorities and public utility societies. The total amount paid by the Scottish Board of Health in respect of the 2,319 houses completed under the private subsidy schemes is £549,666 13s. 4d.

Proposed Housing Trust for Plymouth.

With the object of easing the housing situation in Plymouth, Lady Astor, M.P., proposes to establish a housing trust on lines similar to the Peabody Trust in London. In order to set it on foot she proposes to give £10,000 with which to build the first houses. It is suggested that small houses should be erected rather than barrack-like blocks of dwellings. The Town Council will be asked to provide a site for the first houses to be built by the trust. Assistance will, it is hoped, be forthcoming from the State subsidy. The trust will include representatives of the Corporation and various welfare organizations, as well as the Ministry of Health and the donor.

"The Smaller House"

In a way the small house presents problems in planning and design more difficult than does the mansion. In the latter the architect is ruled only by matters of style and convenience, regardless of cost, but the "proposed small house" is a fearful taskmaster.

A book of smaller houses, just published by the Architectural Press, contains selected examples of houses and bungalows illustrating the best practice in modern English domestic architecture. All the work is by distinguished architects, and the volume should be of the greatest value, both to the architect and his intending client. A longer notice of the publication (which is issued at 25s.) will appear in a subsequent number of the JOURNAL.

Westminster Bank: Annual Meeting

The annual ordinary general meeting of the shareholders of Westminster Bank was held at the Head Office, 41 Lothbury, E.C., last Thursday. Mr. Walter Leaf (the chairman) presided.

The Chairman observed that though the effect of a revival of trade had shown itself rather tardily, yet the evidence of the last quarter was fairly unanimous in showing better conditions and hopeful prospects. Not, of course, that the prospect was uniformly rosy. There were several very important industries in which unfortunately it could not be said that the corner had been turned. But in the majority of the bank's reports from all over the country they heard, in one form or another, that the outlook was considered good, and that the new year was opening with confidence and hope. Following upon a review of the leading industries of the country, he alluded to the Fordney Tariff, pointing out that the balance of trade, as between this country and America in the first nine months of 1923 compared with the first nine months of 1922, had moved nearly £27,000,000 in favour of this country.

Commenting upon the political situation, he said it was piquant and interesting, but for the business man not wholly unsatisfactory. Business wanted to be let alone; we had enough of Government interference during the war, and we had no desire to be made the subjects of rash experiments in economics, whether they took the form of deliberate inflation, protection, or capital levy. And from the fear of such experiments the election had delivered us, probably for a good many years to come. Government, it seemed, would in the near future be a matter not of rash legislation, but of administration carried on under constant and jealous observation, and subject to short shrift if it overstepped the limits of justice and sanity. That was not a prospect to inspire any serious alarm for the present. It seemed to him that the convalescence of the country, after the fever of the war and the disastrous destruction which it involved, was proceeding with all the steadiness for which we could reasonably hope; and the need of the day was, as before, for patience, work, and peace.

The report, extracts from which are published below, was unanimously adopted.

The net profits of the bank for the past year, after providing for bad and doubtful debts, and all expenses, amount to £1,804,783. This sum, added to £536,585 brought forward from 1922, leaves available the sum of £2,341,368. The dividend of 10 per cent. paid in August last on the £20 shares, and 6¼ per cent. on the £1 shares, absorbs £631,269. A further dividend of 10 per cent. is now declared in respect of the £20 shares, making 20 per cent. for the year; and a further dividend of 6¼ per cent. on the £1 shares will be paid, making the maximum of 12½ per cent. for the year. £100,000 has been transferred to bank premises account, £300,000 to rebuilding account, and £100,000 has been placed to contingent fund, leaving a balance of £568,480 to be carried forward.

Publications Received

The "Practical Engineer" Mechanical Pocket Book and Diary for 1924. Edited by Ernest G. Beck, Wh. Ex. Assoc.M. Inst.C.E. Price, cloth binding, 2s. 6d. net; pluviusin, 3s. net. Oxford Technical Publications, 1 Bedford Street, London, W.C.2.

The "Practical Engineer" Electric Pocket Book and Diary for 1924. Edited by Conrad Arnold, A.M.I.E.E. Price, cloth 2s. 6d. net; pluviusin, 3s. net. Oxford Technical Publications, 1 Bedford Street, London, W.C.2.

"Practical Cabinetmaking," by Henry G. Phillips. Price, 5s. net. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., Broadway House, 68–74 Carter Lane, London, E.C.4.

"Review of the Architectural Work in India, 1918–1921." Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour, Public Works Branch. Price, Rs. 5. Superintending Government Printing, India, 8 Hastings Street, Calcutta.

"Sands and Crushed Rocks." By Alfred B. Searle. Vols. 1 and 2. Price, 52s. 6d. net. Henry Frowde and Hodder and Stoughton, 1 Bedford Street, London, W.C.2.

Trade and Craft

A Useful "Date Remembrancer."

A "date remembrancer" for the wall of the office or workshop has been issued by Messrs. W. H. Willcox & Co., Ltd., of 38 Southwark Street, London, S.E.1. It contains a month on a page, and gives useful information concerning the engineering products of the company.

Some Important Contracts.

Mr. Robert Adams, of 3 and 5 Emerald Street, Holborn, W.C.1, informs us that his fittings were used in the following buildings, illustrated or mentioned in our New Year Special Issue: Bush House, Aldwych, door-springs; Lyons' Corner House, Coventry Street, the whole of the floor door-springs, the firm's patent panic bolts, and all the window gearing. Other buildings for which the firm supplied their "Victor" door-springs and other fittings include: Messrs. Peter Robinsons, Walmar House; Messrs. Benham and Sons; Harvey Nichols & Co.; Horne Bros., Newgate Street; Cassell Bros., Ludgate Hill. All the floor door-springs used at the London County Hall are the firm's "Victor" patterns. A large number of these are the shallow type which are supplied to design for reinforced concrete floors, and others are the large size standard pattern "Crown Victor," used for carrying very heavy iron doors.

A Collection of Decorative Wallpapers.

Messrs. John Line and Sons, Ltd., of 213–5 Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1, have issued their 1924 collection of Dumas decorative wallpapers, and an entirely new portfolio of hand-coloured plates. The productions are unique in design and aglow with colour. Somewhat smaller in scale than formerly—the majority embody motifs which may be more easily cut out to build up decorative schemes in accordance with individual fancies. The 1924 portfolio offers a feast of ideas and a means to suggest schemes to the client. The portfolio can be purchased only by subscribers to the stand book. The stand book, 4 ft. 3 in. by 30 in., contains 100 sheets, including sixteen built-up decorative schemes mounted on linen, and the portfolio contains fifty hand-coloured plates in an attractive coloured case. Cretonnes to match all the 1924 designs are obtainable in London, and the source of supply of these will be gladly given on application.

Kaye's Portland Cement.

The origin, the history, and the methods used in the quarrying and manufacture of Portland cement are described in a brochure just issued by Messrs. Kaye & Co., Ltd., a firm established in 1854.

Of particular interest to the architect is the following tabulation, which gives an average of the principal points of quality of Kaye's Portland cement as determined by tests made on a large number of samples taken direct from contracts at various times.

Fineness :—

Residue of 76-mesh sieve	(5,776 holes per sq. in.) ..	0·7%
,, 180 ,,	(32,400 ,, ,,) ..	7·1%

Specific gravity: 3,139.

Setting time: Three to six hours.

Soundness: Under boiling test as prescribed by the British Standard Specification it shows practically no expansion.

Tensile strength :—

	7 days.	28 days
Neat Cement	750	870 lb. per sq. in.

Binding power :—Tensile strength of mixtures of cement and sand—

1 cement, 3 sand ..	lb. per sq. in. (1 week old)	400
1 cement, 4 sand ..	,, ,,	340
1 cement, 5 sand ..	,, ,,	228
1 cement, 6 sand ..	,, ,,	175

Compressive resistance :—

	28 days.	90 days.
Neat cement ..	9,405	11,085 lb. per sq. in.
Concrete: 1 cement, 2 sand, 4 ballast	2,193	3,057 ,, ,,

Composition: Chemical analysis shows it to possess the ingredients, in proper proportions, normal to Portland cement of good quality, and to be free from inert matter or adulteration.

Illustrations are given of the more important buildings in the construction of which the firm's cement has been used, and of parts of the quarries and works of the company. A copy of the brochure may be obtained from Southam Works, near Rugby.

A New Home for Streets.

Messrs. G. Street & Co., Ltd., the well-known advertising agents, have moved into new and more commodious premises at 6 Gracechurch Street, E.C. For nearly eighty years Streets have been established at 30 Cornhill, the original founders at a very early date in the firm's history having taken a few rooms at No. 30. Gradually extending business demanded more space until all the upper floors at this address were occupied. Some fifty years back extensive alterations were made, including the refronting of the building and the addition of another story. Owing, however, to the property changing hands, it was not possible to conclude a renewal of the lease, which expired at the end of 1923; accordingly it became necessary to find other premises, and this was secured in a new building at 6 Gracechurch Street, where five floors will be occupied. The building contains ample floor space, and will make an adequate home for Streets, who, by the way, are in their ninety-third year of existence. The building is situated at the Cornhill end of Gracechurch Street, next to the Hong Kong-Shanghai Banking Corporation, while an entrance with service lift is situated in Corbet Court.

The Reinforcement of a Redcar Road.

The accompanying illustration shows a trial stretch of reinforced tar-macadam road under construction at Redcar. This road is a section of the new trunk road between Middlesbrough and Saltburn, and is being laid by Messrs. Richard Hill & Co., Ltd., of Middlesbrough and London, reinforced concrete engineers, under the direction of Mr. R. H. Hampton, the borough engineer of Redcar. The illustration shows the manner in which the steel mesh is used for the reinforcement of this type of road. The special mesh employed in this instance is "Maxweld" fabric, 6 in. by 12 in., the steel used in its manufacture conforming with the British Standard Specification for structural steel. The fixed mesh of the fabric provides a series of pockets or keys into which the tar-macadam becomes interlocked. Its use, while neutralizing disintegrating tendencies serves also to transmit local shock destruction over a large area. The firm claim "that a tar-macadam roadway thus strengthened will show a 50 per cent. longer life than an unreinforced roadway of the same material." Messrs. Richard Hill & Co. will be glad to advise borough engineers and surveyors on the reinforcement of roads in any part of the country.

Every new improvement for what may be termed "the Reform of the Road" is of the greatest value nowadays. The road is coming into its own again, and though the old four-horse stage coaches may never again traverse its stretches, it is busier now than even before the railways came, with the private car, the heavy motor lorry, and the charabanc.

A REINFORCED TAR-MACADAM ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT REDCAR.

Tenders

Aldershot.—Taking-down existing building and erecting a new shop with domestic premises, 35 Union Street, Aldershot. Messrs. Friend and Lloyd, of Aldershot, architects :—

Mardon and Ball	£2,975
Goddard and Sons	2,950
J. Harvey	2,900
Cæsar Bros.	2,899
Kemp, Stroud & Co.	2,789
F. C. Bath	2,748
Poole and Sons, Fleet, Hants (accepted)	2,677

Littlehampton.—Erection of new fire station in Maltravers Road, for the Urban District Council :—

White and Son	£1,320
Linfield and Sons	1,157
P. Cooper, Midhurst (accepted)	958

London.—Provision of head teachers' rooms at the following schools, for the London County Council :—

Ethelburga Street, Battersea—			
Triggs & Co.	£192	10	0
Sims and Russell	153	0	0
H. S. Lee, Ltd. (accepted)	133	0	0
Thornhill Road, Islington—			
The Pitcher Construction Co.	£447	0	0
Whitby's, Ltd.	439	0	0
S. Shaw	396	0	0
Stevens and Sons	372	0	0
J. C. Mather (accepted)	361	0	0
Canal Road, Shoreditch—			
G. B. Farrar & Co	£295	0	0
Whitby's, Ltd.	293	0	0
S. Blow, Ltd.	282	0	0
W. M. Brand	269	0	0
W. J. Dixon and Son	238	10	0
J. and C. Bowyer, Ltd. (accepted)	220	0	0

Pontefract.—Erection of 10 houses on the Wakefield Road site, for the Town Council :—

W. Horner, builder	£2,099	17	10
C. L. Jackson, joiner	1,120	0	0
W. Pearson and Sons, plumbers	555	0	0
Stewart Bros. and Son, tilers	445	15	0
T. W. Senior, plasterer	250	0	0
Hy. Butler and Sons, painters	125	18	4
W. Horner, roadmaker	156	5	6

Pontefract.—Erection of 24 houses on the Baghill Road site :—

W. Horner, builder	£4,640	2	0
C. L. Jackson, joiner	2,620	0	0
W. Pearson and Sons, plumbers	1,104	0	0
G. Spurr and Sons, tilers	865	4	0
T. W. Senior, plasterer	600	0	0
Hy. Butler and Sons, painters	306	4	0
W. Horner, roadmaker	572	5	0

Porth.—Erection of a library and institute at Pontypridd Road, Porth, for the Committee of the Institute of the Lewis-Merthyr Workmen. Mr. A. E. Trotman, of Porth, architect :—

E. R. Evans and Bros., Ltd.	£7,649	0	0
T. F. Howells	7,500	0	0
Knox and Wells, Ltd.	7,437	0	0
T. Broad & Co., Ltd.	6,419	0	0
T. R. Jones (accepted)	6,292	11	2

Westminster.—Formation of head teachers' and staff rooms at the Millbank School, Abbey, Westminster, for the London County Council :—

Triggs & Co.	£393
J. and C. Bowyer, Ltd.	298
Sims and Russell	285
W. J. Dixon and Son (accepted)	270

New Inventions

Latest Patent Applications.

919.—Baines, J. S.—Method of building walls, roofs, and floors. January 12.

927.—Cuming, A. J. Roach.—Construction of steel frame buildings, &c. January 12.

872.—Friedrich, C.—Chimneys. January 11.

747.—Herrera, M.—Staircases. January 10.

Specifications Published.

189151.—Wake, J. F., and Spence, D. D.—Binding material for use in road-making and for analogous purposes.

208926.—Clements, J.—Shuttering for casting walls *in situ*.

Abstract Published.

207111.—Walls.—Beckett, E.—132 Hulton Street, Salford, Manchester. Double walls.

The above particulars are specially prepared by Messrs. Rayner & Co., registered patent agents, of 5 Chancery Lane, London, W.C. 2, from whom readers of the JOURNAL may obtain all information free on matters relating to patents, trade marks, and designs. Messrs. Rayner & Co. will obtain printed copies of the published specifications and abstract only, and forward on post free for the price of 1/6 each.