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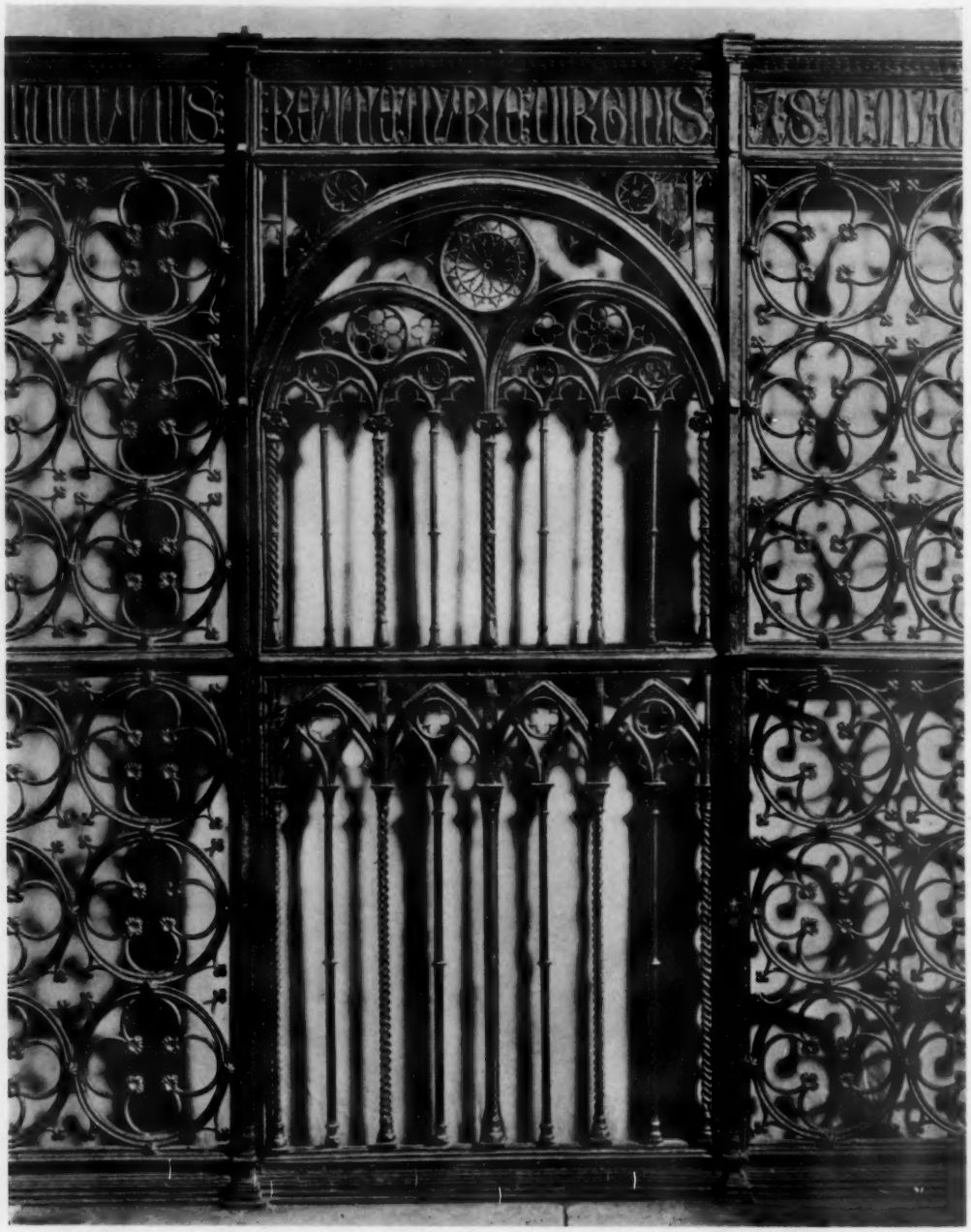

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THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

XCVII WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 1910 No. 1794

WHAT IS ARCHITECTURE?

THE communication received from Mr. Arthur Francis Buys, printed herewith, awakens interest in a definition of "What is architecture?" that would be generally acceptable to the profession as a whole.

Knowing that, owing to many different points of view, there was a divergence of opinion, we submitted proofs of Mr. Buys's article to a number of architects. Among the many replies received, a majority accept without discussion the definition as given by Mr. Buys.

Unfortunately our space will not permit us to print all of the answers received.

Mr. Irving K. Pond, president of the American Institute of Architects, writes as follows:

"I have read with interest the article entitled 'What Is Architecture?' and feel that your contributor has summarized his argument in a definition which is quite sound in principle and fairly adequate. It has not sounded the depths, however, to my own mind, although it has gone to the furthest extent the laity could be asked or expected to comprehend.

"Because of conditions extraneously opposed, as well as because of the limitations of my own nature, I have been unable, in the only medium through which architecture really can be defined, to formulate a definition which shall satisfy my own self, and I mistrust my ability to express anything more satisfactory to myself through the medium of words. However, if we are to define architecture according to present-day practice, we encounter three distinct propositions: First, building simply to serve a useful purpose. This is merely builders' architecture, produced in many instances by architects of repute. The next proposition, and embodying a higher phase, is building with some idea as to ultimate attractiveness. This phase takes two forms—the one, dominating the work of the majority of the architects, consists merely in the employment of certain architectural formulæ which have been learned at school or which have been picked up promiscuously and applied more or less superficially with the idea of producing 'architecture.' This, as I say, characterizes the work of the majority of the architects, a body of men who have long since ceased to think, but who are carrying on in adult age the imitative faculties of the early adolescent period. The second phase differentiates the work of those who are seeking to give to architectural formulæ new life and meaning, and characterizes the work of architects who, whatever their failings, are striving to live up to and fulfil the functions of sensitive and logical creators. The third proposition concerns the highest type of all: that in which the creative mind has conceived the architectural problem as one of inherent beauty. The forms in which use is expressed are not *made* beautiful, but use itself is conceived as beauty. This may be a fine distinction, but it marks all the difference in the world between that object of which beauty is the very essence and that object to which beauty is applied, or the forms of which are shaped to some idea of beauty.

"So my definition, not of architecture as practiced, but of real architecture, would read as follows: Architecture is the art of expressing, in terms of building concrete use conceived in ideal beauty."

Mr. Edward Pearce Casey writes:

"I have read, with pleasure and great interest, Mr. Buys's article and would only suggest in the excellent definition, the insertion of the words 'structures and monuments,' as architecture includes, with most of us, bridges, viaducts and other structures, as well as many monuments."

Mr. Claude Bragdon:

Architecture is a "higher power" of building—building become eloquent and expressive; it might be called Emotional Construction; to the doing of a thing is added the saying of how it is done. In this way are developed the architectural languages which we call styles. Here, as elsewhere, the creative spirit flows ever onward from old forms to new ones, thus leaving behind it, at the end of every impulse, a complete architectural vocabulary, which may continue to be employed, but which is bound to disintegrate and to degenerate like a flower plucked from its parent stem, unless, as sometimes happens, it be grafted on to a new, vital and organic building impulse.

Mr. Buys's interesting communication follows:

THE present age is not inclined to accept blindly the traditions of the past or to refrain from analytical examination of what have heretofore been regarded as established theories, safe from attack for all time. The searchlight is being turned upon the obscure places, the light of day is being let in upon the dim cavern, hoary with the mystery of the past, the microscope is being focussed upon the hitherto unknown, and, so far as man is capable of doing so, mystery is being metamorphosed into knowledge and scientific exactitude is replacing dogmatic opinion. This age-tendency displays itself in every direction and, it would seem, usually resolves the obscure, abstract and disconnected theories concerning a science or an art into a definite, concrete principle whereby all future action may be governed and whereby truth is clearly discernible, so that he who runs may read.

It is not strange that in matters architectural we find the same tendency evidenced and that controversies are being waged over hitherto unassailed authority; till we find fearless reformers, or would-be reformers, emboldened by the readily aroused interest on the part of their fellow professionals who have dared to hint, nay, even assert, that the doctrine of Parisian infallibility is itself a fallacy.

When the estimable Mr. J. Stewart Barney propounded to a group of architects a series of questions concerning catch-words and phrases constantly in use

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by members of the profession, the answers received displayed no unanimity of opinion; he tells us that "the result was chaos." It is to be regretted that he did not include among his questions the broadest of all he could have put: What is architecture? The writer is of the opinion that had Mr. Barney done so the result would still have been "chaos" and there would have been as many theories advanced, differing in their essentials, as there were answers.

The writer confesses to his inability to find a satisfactory or comprehensive definition of the word "architecture" as applied to present-day practice. There appears to be no lack of literature dealing more or less exhaustively with what for the want of a better name we will term the philosophy of architecture; such literature often laying down vast and complex systems of laws and theories, regulating and arbitrarily seeking to settle questions which we may assume to be among those alterable and constantly shifting, non-conclusive affairs, known to us all as matters of taste. Yet who will deny that, compared directly with what has been written upon the theories and principles relating to other sciences and arts, architectural literature displays a considerable degree of ambiguity and inconclusiveness that renders it difficult for the embryo architect to discern between the false and true, and quite impossible for the layman to find any standard of authority whereby he can come to an appreciation of true architecture.

The desideratum appears to be a definition of architecture that would set bounds to and seek to localize the purposes of the art; that would not confine its observations to the obvious, but qualify its conditions to a comparatively exact degree.

To illustrate more clearly the writer's idea of existing conditions, let us raise the question whether a definition would be worthy of such a title, that would offer as an answer to the query, "What is brick?", the perfectly truthful and equally indefinite statement, "A building material." Let us go on, however, and qualify the statement by adding that brick is a building material of burnt clay, made in rectangular blocks, then our definition is fulfilling its purpose and telling us something of the subject matter. In like manner (it seems to the writer) when architecture is defined as "the art of building," no conclusion is reached; and should we add the qualifying adverb "beautifully" we can scarcely claim to have defined the word in question.

In the consideration of existing definitions which we may quote by way of developing our subject, two points are to be observed. First, that many of the authorities which might be consulted have refrained from condensing their theories into the limitation of a definition and have left to others the task of so reducing to lowest terms the theories they propound. Second, that at least from a literary standpoint, the notion of just what constitutes architecture appears to have undergone some change with the years, and our failure to find the satisfactory definition may be due largely to this fact, that the older-school writers, especially those of the Victorian era, seemed inclined to separate architecture from the art of building and make of it a distinct phase or tributary quality, which might, or might not, be associated with a building operation. Thus, we have Fergusson alluding to architecture as "the poetry of the art of building," in distinction to engineering, which he calls "prose." Again, we have Freeman, writing almost contemporaneously, describing architecture as "the soul of building," making of it a purely intellectual quality whose presence, we might conclude, is frequently a matter of question.

The writer believes that he voices the consensus of present-day opinion when he states that our attitude is to regard architecture as an art wide enough to embrace all building activity according to any definite principles of design or construction, into which the poetical or intellectual element enters, to a greater or less extent, determining thereby the degree of true architectural merit of the work in question. In other words, that the element which we will term "æsthetic," is only one of the various elements that go to produce the work of architectural merit, and that the notion of limiting architecture to this element is not in accordance with present-day thinking or practice and one thoroughly out of harmony with the spirit of our times.

A few quotations from various authorities, taken more or less at random, but partly with a view to illustrating the changing attitude toward the subject of our discussion, could scarcely fail to include an extract from John Ruskin. The definition appearing in the *Seven Lamps* is as follows: "Architecture is the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man, for whatsoever uses, that the sight of them may contribute to his mental health, power and pleasure." Surely, a more fragmentary or unsatisfactory definition were hard to find in architectural literature, and the strangest part of it all is Ruskin seems to have meant just what he said. It is to be observed that it is the "sight" alone of these edifices raised by man that concerns the architect. He leaves us in no doubt of his position by further elucidating and by stating that it is the architect's sphere to impress upon the form of a building "certain characters venerable or beautiful, but otherwise unnecessary."

Fergusson, whose exhaustive treatise seems to the writer deserving of deepest consideration and serious study, echoes to a large extent this view of the matter in his definition, which describes architecture as "nothing more or less than ornamental and ornamented construction." Here, however, there appears to be a distinct advance over the Ruskin definition, in the recognition of the fact that architecture is more than the addition of ornament to a building and that an unornamented structure may be ornamental and architectural without adornment.

Coming down to recent times we have Statham, one of the few among British writers who recognize the principle of expression which present-day opinion seems to insist upon fully enough. He has refined architecture as "the art of erecting expressive and beautiful buildings," insisting upon the relatively greater importance of the element of expression; calling attention to this fact as his reason for naming the two elements in the order given. The cause of "expression" is not in need of a champion, having been nobly defended, if not in actual practice, at least in

theory, by all exponents of the "Beaux Arts" training. No better enunciation of this principle has come to the writer's knowledge than Mr. Lloyd Warren's recently published remarks, wherein he describes the French trained architect as "searching to express his interior plan in every way on the exterior, and even his manner of construction, often at a loss it would seem for esthetic consideration; and moreover, at any cost, stamping the building with the character of its use." But to revert to Statham, can we accept as a comprehensive statement of the facts a definition that takes no account of the great element of utility other than to be concerned in its outward expression?

While it seems to have remained for the American writers to recognize this element of utility, not only in outward expression but as the first consideration of the designer, we find, nevertheless, the late Russell Sturgis, in his dictionary of architecture, giving us a definition that to some extent echoes the idea of the older British authorities. He defines architecture as "the art and process of building with some elaboration and with skilled labor and by extension, the result of such building." He gives as a further definition, "the modification of structure, form and color of * * * buildings, by means of which they become interesting as works of art." In spite of this echo of the separation idea, there is here a modified and broadened viewpoint, ascribing something more to architecture than the addition of ornament to a structure otherwise a mere building.

But there yet seems to the writer a vast deal left unsaid, until we turn to the words of Prof. A. D. F. Hamlin and find a most satisfactory statement of the case. Prof. Hamlin defines architecture as "the art that seeks to harmonize in a building the requirements of utility and beauty." In this we have come a long way from the Ruskin theory of the ornamental moulding on the stone breast-work, and here, at least, is a recognition of the fact that architecture is as much concerned with the requirements of utility as with any other consideration, through the effort to harmonize these various elements into a perfect whole. But where is our much emphasized element of expression? If this definition is to be a kind of formula or analysis, is no account to be taken of this important side of the subject? It is perfectly conceivable that a building might be never so beautiful and serve its purpose admirably from every utilitarian consideration, and yet, were it a power-house built after the accepted manner of church building (if indeed there be such a manner), or a private residence resembling a "hotel-de-ville" (an only too common occurrence), then have we not false architecture, yet, it would seem, measuring up to Prof. Hamlin's terms. The writer is perfectly aware of an implied recognition of the element of expression in Prof. Hamlin's subtle use of the word "harmonize"; suggesting that a full acceptance of the requirements of utility might force upon the outward form of the building an expression of its purpose; but one can hardly accept an implication when dealing analytically with a subject.

Our investigation thus far leads us to the conclusion that the older definitions to the contrary, notwithstanding, the aim of true architecture appears to be threefold, and in its modern aspect seeks to embody the requirements of utility, the principles of true expression, and give its product beauty of form and outline, or adornment of surface, as the plasticity of its materials and the exigencies of the first two considerations may permit.

But is this all? Have we based our theories on the solid rock of fact; have we named all the elemental principles which enter into the creation of a work of architecture?

Since we refute the notion of architecture as applied decoration and insist that a work of architecture is first a building, then a specific kind of building and finally a thing of beauty, we must further assume that the architect stands responsible for the finished creation of his art, though erected through the medium of the building contractor and his many allies. This, the writer believes, is generally conceded, the architect's responsibility being in a measure qualified by certain conditions forced upon him, as to the purpose of the building, nature of the materials and extent of funds available for its erection. These are but factors in his equation, component parts of his composition; to a certain extent the materials with which he works his will and gives expression to the thought of his mind. As designer or creator no consideration can be left to another to deal with. He ordains what materials shall be used and in what manner, and his plan is as much concerned with structural considerations as with esthetic. From its first inception the designer has kept in mind that his design is to be wrought into a building—he has made it buildable. Can true architecture spring from anything short of a full consideration of constructive principles?

Does not the great cathedral, or fragment of a cathedral, that is the glory of Beauvais, with all its marvelous beauty, it overpowering boldness of conception, its choir, that springs to such unequaled height, fail to rank with the great masterpieces of Gothic art because they who planned and raised this miraculous seeming structure—whose nave reached higher than any other builders had dared to carry theirs and whose vast surfaces of stained glass, with their narrow connecting piers, seem hardly related to earth at all—forgot that it was not a dream-cathedral they were raising; that there were considerations more serious than the surpassing of rival cities; that stone and glass have limitations as to strength that must be regarded; so that after a few short years the great structure fell, to be laboriously rebuilt, with additional piers to support the crown of the nave arches and to bear forever the evidence of afterthought and to testify as long as they shall stand to the folly of those who raised this wonderful edifice. Yet St. Pierre of Beauvais, so long as it held together, and so long as its great central tower, that wonder of Medieval France, stood propped aloft upon the attenuated piers and unsubstantial arches of the crossing, was fulfilling nobly enough every requirement of utility and beauty and was expressive beyond all description.

Is this not the climax of our argument? Are we not ready to lay down a basic principle upon which all other considerations must rest, and from which, as a

source, all other elements must proceed. Must not then true architecture first take account of constructive principle, and from this consideration, must not our architect proceed, step by step, to the requirements of his program; form his plan, seek its expression, and render it an object of beauty? It is to be an object of beauty, but at no sacrifice of constructive principle; it is to tell its own story as a building, it is to be a specific kind of building, adapted to serve certain requirements, but to the end a structure.

Have we erred in our discussion? Is the writer wrong in contending that this is the art of architecture as practiced to-day, as practiced always in actual fact? Why then these many theories, these definitions, such as one recent writer gives us: "Architecture is a decorative art; that is, it consists in applying fine art to certain objects of utility, in this case, buildings."

Are our architects then spending so little of their time at architecture? Are they taking a building already designed, either on paper, or conceived of mentally, by some outsider or by themselves, acting in an unarchitectural capacity, and to this object, which is not architecture, adding their ruffs and frills, their furnishings and furbelows of architectural ornament or fashioning into architecture the unarchitectural?

Is this then the art of architecture and only this?

The writer fails to see any other interpretation to such a definition as the one last quoted—if these writers mean what they say (and they say it plainly enough), then this is all there is to the matter and we had best observe that in addition to being architects most of us are called upon daily to design buildings. The worker in ceramics fashions his vase, knows the texture of the clay from which it is to be made; his concern is not only in the decoration and glaze. The designer of furniture does not content himself in elaboration, in carving, varnishing, upholstering. His art is to fashion the chair, strong as well as graceful; serviceable as well as beautiful. Is not the case of the architect analogous to that of the craftsman who produces the article of utility in the shape of the object of beauty, who renders the useful beautiful, but leaves it still utilitarian.

The architect, who is distinctly the creator of his building, let his efforts be never so supplemented by various specialists, is still the commander-in-chief of his forces, is still the one to whom all others look; who will merit praise or blame as his work succeeds or fails, though the engineer was called in to design the steel framework; though the expert may have "laid out" the heating and ventilation system; though in a dozen special lines the specialist may have been his colaborator; still is the building his; who conceived the idea of it and under whose direction it took form.

The foregoing has been written with the endeavor to express the writer's belief that architecture is the art of creating buildings; not merely the stamping of a building with a certain character or expression; that while buildings may exist which cannot seriously be regarded as works of architecture, nevertheless all all buildings into whose creation have gone thought and purpose and which are the result of a definite effort to fulfill certain requirements are works of architecture, be their purpose and character what they may; and that their relative merit as works of architecture is to be determined by the degree in which they measure up to the recognized standards of our art.

An endeavor to crystalize the thought of the foregoing discussion into a brief sentence has resulted in a definition that, while possessing faults, may at least prove comprehensive and in its general scope cover the ground of the subject and take account of all those broad principles which should find mention and recognition in such a definition and their union in all true architecture.

Architecture is the art that seeks to create buildings according to sound principles of construction, that will fulfill the requirements of utility and express their purpose in beautiful form.

ARTHUR FRANCIS BUYS.

THE CURRENT ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

The leading article in *The Brickbuilder* for March, contributed by Frederick G. Frost, is on the Planning of a Prison or Penitentiary. As stated by Mr. Frost, this is a somewhat unusual problem in planning. As there are so few examples in this country from which to draw precedent, and since, owing to different administrative methods those abroad are not applicable to this country, considerable independent study and thought is demanded. The subject has been well treated and the article has educational value.

With its usual adherence to its exact field of exploitation, the article by R. Randolph Phillips, a continuation of a series on Some English Brickbuilders, is pertinent. It is very well illustrated.

The subjects selected for special illustration in this issue are a brick house in Chicago, by Pond & Pond; a somewhat hackneyed house in Philadelphia, Horace Trumbauer, architect, and Bath Houses at Detroit, Mich., Stratton & Baldwin, architects. The Brooklyn Public Baths, by Raymond F. Almirall, suggest many possible uses other than that of a bath house. In this instance at least the inscription on the exterior serves a real purpose.

St. John's Church, West Hartford, Conn. Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, Architects

(From *The New York Architect*)

Residence for Mr. William Maxwell, Rockville, Conn. Charles A. Platt, Architect
(From *The Architectural Review*)

Residence at Duluth, Minn. Clarence H. Johnson, Architect
(From *The Western Architect*)

The Union Boat Club, Boston, by Parker, Thomas & Rice, the Harvard Lampoon Building at Cambridge, Mass., Wheelwright & Haven, architects, together with Some Philadelphia City Houses, by Charles Barton Keen, complete the illustrations.

Architects, as authors, are a *rara avis*. The exactions of professional work leave them but few spare moments, and these they quite naturally want to devote to recreations that will keep them fit.

The Architectural Review is therefore to be congratulated on being able to secure from Mr. Magonigle a series of articles, the first of which appears in the December, 1909, issue, just at hand, on The Preparation of Working Drawings. Mr. Magonigle's point of view is of course the practical one, and, as he states, is based on a high standard of draughtsmanship in the office;—"not for the sake of draughtsmanship itself, but *because it is easier to build from a clear, well made, and correct set of drawings than from a sloppy one.*"

This series of articles should be of material assistance to the student and draughtsman as well as to the man in practice.

The illustrations comprise a house at Los Angeles, Maginnis & Walsh, architects. This is a particularly well-designed piece of work and is interesting as illustrating what can be accomplished by men who use material with the same knowledge of its possibilities as an artist does with the colors on his palette.

A dignified country residence at Rockville, Conn., by Charles A. Platt, very thoroughly illustrated, a high school at Norfolk, Va., by Neff & Thompson, and some recent examples of domestic architecture in England, complete an issue of considerable interest and value.

The February and March issues of *The New York Architect* were both received in April. The February issue illustrates recent work of Benjamin Wistar Morris, architect, with particular reference to the Morgan Memorial at Hartford, Conn., and the Colt Gallery, Wadsworth Atheneum, also at Hartford. Both these subjects are familiar by repeated illustration in the technical press, but lose nothing in their repetition. The text is a resumé of the proceedings of the convention of the A. I. A., held in Washington last December, and its publication at this late date cannot be regarded as of much value.

By far the best issue in the history of this publication is that for March. It illustrates some current church architecture, by Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson. It is probably superfluous to state that the subjects illustrated display those rare qualities in plan and design that characterize the ecclesiastical work of this firm. The reproductions are well executed and the accompanying text, which is in the nature of an "appreciation," is well written.

A new feature of this publication is the addition of several sheets of building details prepared by C. L. Lockhart, architect. Material of this description is always helpful to the architect, but its relative value naturally depends on the subjects selected and the thoroughness with which they are presented. In the present instance we feel that it will not be found of more than elementary importance.

Under the new department of "Architectural Engineering," conducted by Col. J. Hollis Wells, appears an article on caisson foundations in New York. No

The Harvard Lampoon, Cambridge, Mass. Wheelwright & Haven, Architects
(From *The Brickbuilder*)

U. S. Military Academy, West Point, N. Y. Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, Architects
(From *The New York Architect*)

doubt the article will be read with appreciation. On the whole, the March *New York Architect* is a commendable issue.

The most important subject illustrated in *The Western Architect* for April is an office building at Portland, Ore., designed by Benjamin Wistar Morris. Some residence work at Duluth, Minn., Clarence H. Johnson, architect, and Charles W. Leavitt, landscape architect, would seem to indicate that the designer in seeking a foreign prototype as a subject for inspiration had failed in some measure to grasp all the essentials of the problem. Other subjects in this issue will be found in our index to current periodicals.

The leading article in the text is a reprint of an address by Mr. John M. Carrere, entitled "City Improvement from the Artist's Standpoint."

The leading article in *The International Studio* for April is a description of "Fairacres, and Some Other Recent Country Houses," by Wilson Eyre, Architect.

Mr. Eyre's houses are always interesting, and his method of working out his ideas by well-executed preliminary color sketches, makes their presentation in an art magazine of particular interest. "Fairacres" was most thoroughly illustrated in THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT, issue of April 1, 1908.

The very valuable series of articles on "Recent Designs in Domestic Architecture" is continued in this number.

It is a healthy sign of the awakening of the house owner in New York to a higher sense of artistic appreciation to note the remodeling of house fronts. The monotonous expanse of brownstone fronts, erected in the '70s and early '80s, are losing much of the sameness of their appearance by the remodeling of façades that is constantly going forward. A timely article, entitled "The Passing of the Brownstone Front," illustrated by several new designs, by Messrs. Albro & Lindeberg, Architects, will be read with satisfaction, as marking a better and more artistic city. An article descriptive of a small formal garden, illustrated to some extent with views and plan of a garden at Elkins Park, Pa., Mr. Lawrence Visscher Boyd, Architect, completes the material of particular interest to architects shown in this issue.

The issues of *The Architectural Record* that have appeared this year seem to alternate between the technical and the popular. While this may be calculated to cater to a wider field of readers it has, perhaps, the same element of stability as the man who tries to stand on two stools, well separated, at one and the same time.

The April issue describes the transmutation of a residence street, and the changes that have taken place on Michigan Boulevard, the "Automobile Row" of Chicago.

While the buildings as units have some measure of architectural excellence to commend them, their grouping as a mass does not appeal to us as particularly satisfactory. This apparently is another example of wasted opportunity, so frequent in America. What might have become an architectural feature is negatived by the independent course pursued by different property owners.

(*Continued on page 192*)

St. John's Church, West Hartford, Conn. Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, Architects
(From *The New York Architect*)

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ILLUSTRATIONS: First National Bank, Hoboken, N. J.—Some recent work by Charles Barton Keen.—A house at Mt. Kisco, N. Y.—Student Work, Society of Beaux-Arts Architects.
Frontispiece: Wrought iron work, Florence, Italy.

DURING the recent trial at Harrisburg of Joseph M. Huston, Architect of the Pennsylvania State Capitol, who was convicted under indictment of conspiracy to cheat and defraud the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, five architects appeared on the stand and gave testimony on behalf of the defense, their testimony, as published, being to the effect that architects do not customarily have any responsibility for the quantities and amounts mentioned in certificates signed by them and issued to contractors for payment if a Clerk of the Works or a Superintendent of Construction is employed by the owner. This evidence gave rise to considerable comment, and it was intimated to the prosecuting attorney, the Attorney-General, that the testimony, if correctly reported, did not accurately represent the understanding of the profession as to the duties and responsibilities of architects and was calculated to create a wrong impression as to the care and fidelity expected of and ordinarily given by architects. Upon receipt of this suggestion the Attorney-General immediately requested a number of prominent architects to meet him in conference at his office in Philadelphia the following morning, in order that he might make inquiry of them as to the custom of the profession with regard to certification. The conference was held and the subject fully discussed, and, as a result, the Attorney-General requested five witnesses to go to Harrisburg and testify in rebuttal of the evidence given for the defense in this action. The architects stated in response to this request that while the duty was unpleasant, the number he desired would serve if regularly subpœnaed, but they would not volunteer nor would they accept any fee as expert witnesses. It was made plain that the architects did not wish to be in the position of making an attack on Mr. Huston, but felt that the testimony, as it related to the customs of the profession, should be made clear, entirely irrespective of the innocence or guilt of the defendant. Consequently, five architects were subpœnaed and went to Harrisburg, headed by John H. Rankin, of Rankin, Kellogg & Crane, Philadelphia, President of the Southern Pennsylvania Chapter of the A. I. A., Harrisburg being in the territory of that Chapter. The others were David Knickerbocker Boyd, Philadelphia, President of the Pennsylvania State Association of Architects; M. B. Medary, Jr., Philadelphia, President of the T-Square Club; John Molitor, of Thomas, Churchman & Molitor, Philadelphia, and C. A. Ziegler, of Duhring, Okie & Ziegler, Philadelphia. Their testimony to the effect that an architect's certificate is his professional opinion as to the statements it contains, and that unless the certificate is qualified, the architect is responsible to the extent of his professional responsibility for the correctness of what the certificate sets forth, whether or not any Clerk of Works is employed by the owner, was positive and unshaken on cross-examination.

OF course the necessity for the action of these men is deplored by all, but the fact that they did, when need for such action arose, endure, without protest or attempt at evasion, the unpleasant ordeal of testifying in the interest of truth and the profession which they represent, not only commends them far above the self-centered, even though capable type of professional men, but it augurs well for the future of the organizations to which they belong. It is comparatively easy and not unpleasant to write on academic subjects affecting the theory and practice of architecture, or to address a company of professional brethren on subjects of mutual concern, but it is the men of action, who, without announcement or proclamation, step forward when the necessity for doing so becomes apparent and refute damaging statements of the character referred to, even at the expense of disagreeable experiences and regardless of private interests or convenience, who render greatest service. While appearing as a witness in this case might easily have been avoided, it is perfectly obvious that in the absence of any authoritative statement to the contrary such testimony as was adduced by the defendant would be generally accepted by the public, with the result that incalculable injury would be done to the professional reputation of architects wherever the history of this trial became known.

IN all probability there is no maxim of common law more generally recognized than that of responsibility for one's acts. Particularly must responsibility be accepted when an assumption of special knowledge concerning a given subject leads to employment and the payment of a fee. Even a physician or lawyer, who through neglect, whether by reason of carelessness or incapacity, allows his patient or client to suffer, is liable for damages. An architect's responsibility is not less clear. If he assumes and leads the owner to believe he possesses the requisite knowledge and ability to perform certain services, and in pursuance of such representation undertakes or pretends to render such services, he can scarcely escape responsibility for the results following his acts.

(*Continued from page 190*)

William Luther Mowll contributes an article on "Thought and Expression in Architecture."

An article entitled "A Contemporary German Architect," by A. C. David, describes and illustrates the work of Rudolph Zahn.

We fear we are not sufficiently in sympathy with the ponderosity of thought and feeling evidenced all through this style of work to venture on a criticism that would be unbiased.

A continuation of the Series on Recent European Architecture, which repeats much that has been published in the foreign architectural press, and other articles, listed in our classification of the current architectural press, completes the issue.

Country Home near Burnham. R. F. Johnston, Architect
(From *The International Studio*)

CLASSIC OR GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE FOR CHURCHES

The *Architectural Association Journal* contains the report of a discussion on this subject at the Architectural Association Debating Society, the classic side being upheld by Mr. A. E. Bullock, and the Gothic by Mr. W. G. B. Lewis. On a vote being taken at the close there was a majority of four on the side of Gothic. In the light of present-day views of architecture as the art of free expression in building, rather than of archæological reproducing of ancient types, it seems almost a question whether such a point should be debated at all. A church is a church, and there does not seem any innate necessity that it should be either Classic or Gothic. Admitting, moreover, that an architectural tradition should be followed, it may be pointed out that the Classic tradition for church-building is much older than the Gothic. It is almost impossible to discuss the subject without touching on questions outside of architecture. It is odd to find a well-known church architect, in the discussion, arguing that Gothic was more suitable for churches, "because that particular style is the product of the Christian religion." Surely Mr. Fellowes-Prynne had curiously forgotten history. The Basilica church was the product of Christianity, and that was to all intents and purposes a Classic form of building. The Gothic church is the product, not of Christianity, but of the version of it accepted by the mediæval church, the feeling of which is in reality perfectly different from that of early Christianity. The mysticism of the mediæval church is well expressed in the Gothic building; and that mysticism was a beautiful thing in itself, and was specially valuable in an age of rapine and violence, when people felt the church (both spiritual and material) to be a refuge from the violence and squalor of actual life.

But there was no such element of mysticism in early Christianity; the mysticism was a mediæval growth over Christianity; and Gothic is only a church style, not a Christian style in the larger historic sense of the word. At the same time, we should agree that an interior like St. Paul's, for instance, is somewhat cold and realistic in effect as a building for religious worship. It is partly a question of plan, too. The Byzantine type of plan, with its wide central area, is really more suited for congregational worship than the mediæval plan, which is essentially a processional plan; and the richness of Byzantine detail seems to present something more sympathetic with Christian worship than the comparative coldness and precision of Classic detail. We suggest that the ideal modern church architecture might be found, not in either Classic or Gothic tradition, but in an evolution from the Byzantine type, with a detail and decoration permeated with Christian (not mediæval) symbolism.—*The Architect's and Builder's Journal.*

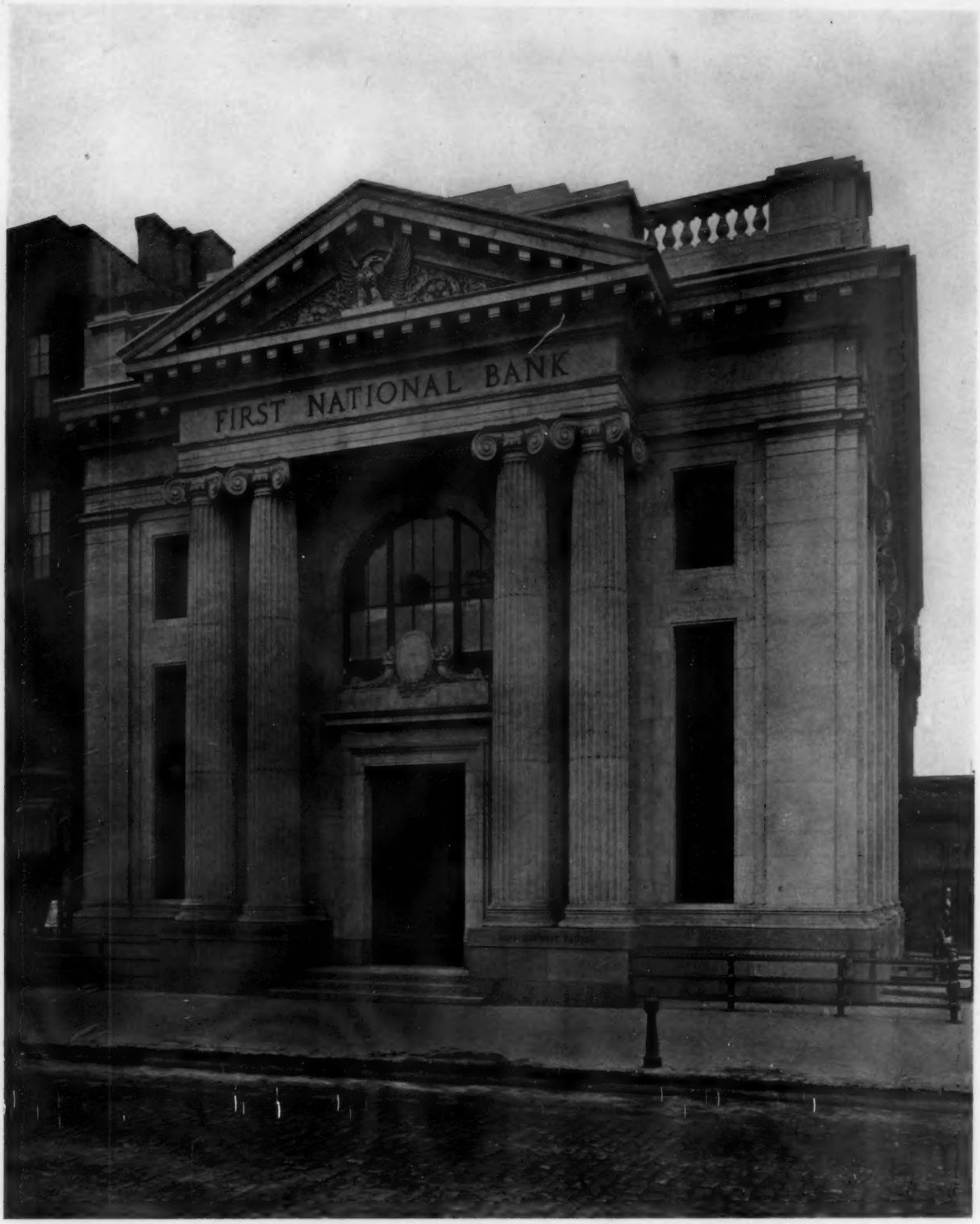
RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

BREACH OF CONDITION OF SURETY BOND.

In an action to recover damages for breach of the conditions of a surety or indemnity bond, conditioned to save the owner harmless from any loss for breach of contract, a breach of condition was held to be clearly shown by proof of the satisfaction of a judgment recovered against the plaintiff's property, and the burden was on the defendant to show payment or performance the same as in any other case.—Helmer vs. Title Guaranty & Surety Co. of Scranton, Pa. (Supreme Court of Washington), 104 Pacific, 783.

WHERE CONTRACT NOT FORFEITED BY FAILURE TO FURNISH BOND

A building contract required the contractor to give bond, the premium to be paid by the owner. The owner applied for a bond, agreeing to pay the premium. The agent of the bonding company made out an application and sent it to the contractor, who returned it because it provided that he should pay the premium. A second application was sent to the contractor, with a statement that the owner would pay the expense thereof. The contractor signed the application, and returned it to the agent, who took it to the owner, the latter filling out answers to the questions. The bonding ocmpany required the owner to sign an agreement that it would pay the premium before the bond was issued, and this the owner refused to do. Negotiations were then entered into by the owner with another agent. The court held that the failure to furnish a bond was not by the fault of the contractor, and a forfeiture of the contract could not be based thereon.—Schillinger Bros. & Co. vs. Bosch-Ryan Grain Co. (Supreme Court of Iowa), 122 Northwestern, 961.



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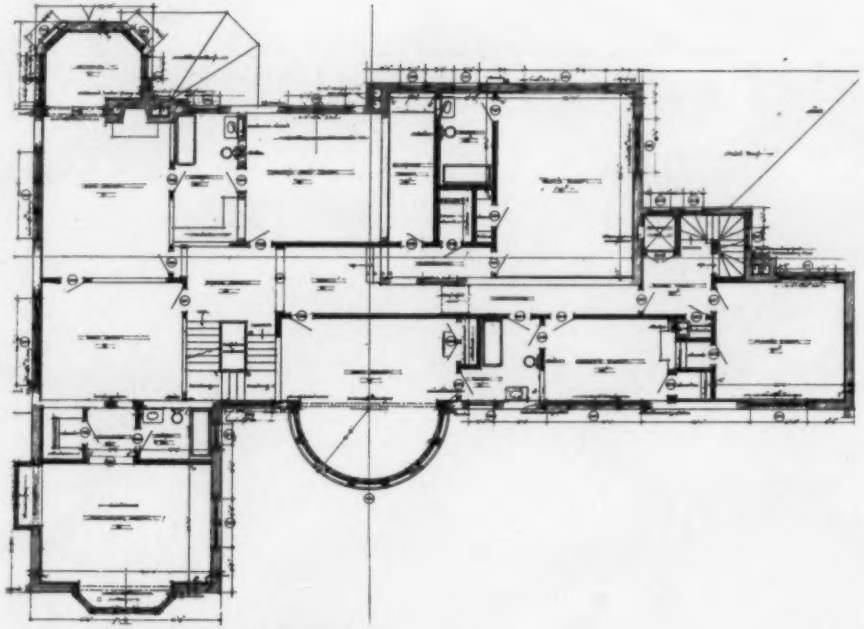

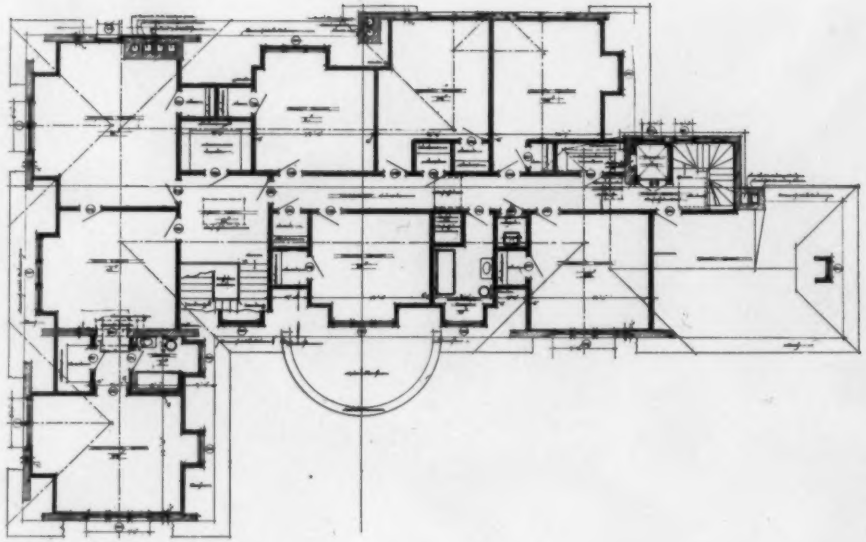

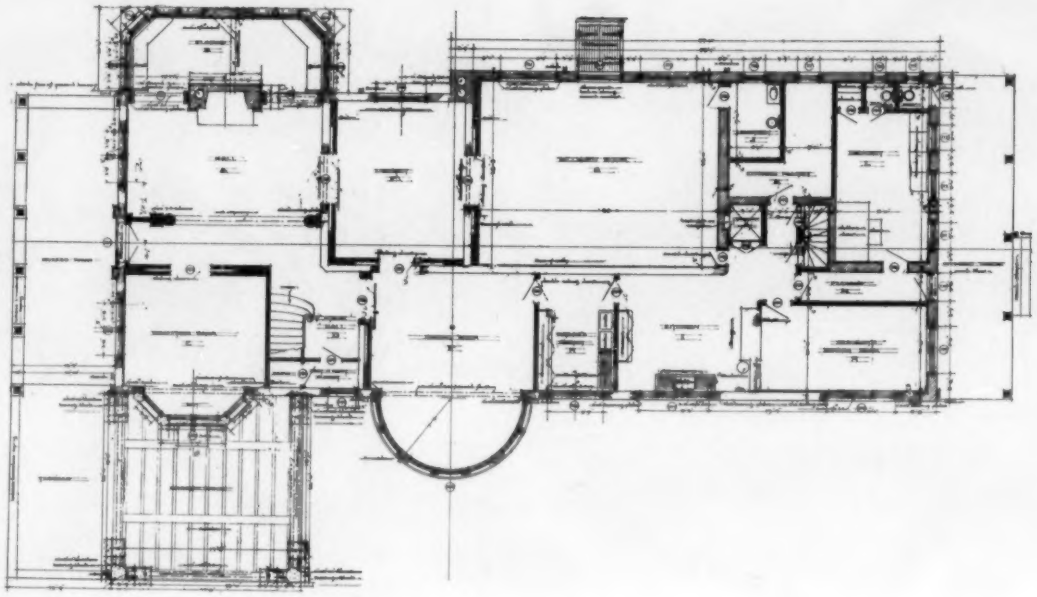

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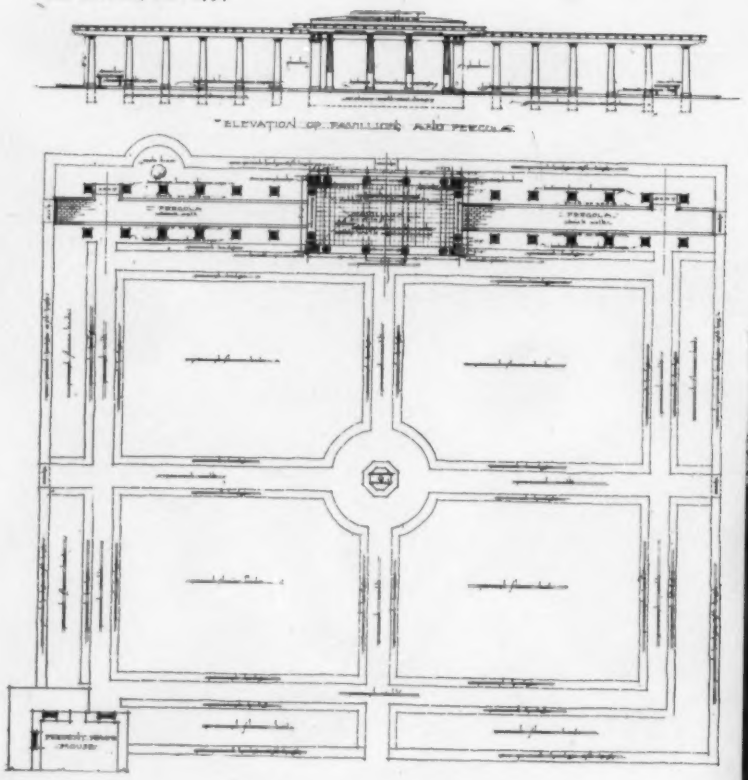

PERGOLA AT WALNUT GROVE

NEAR BRISTOL, PA.

CHARLES BARTON KEEN

ARCHITECT

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A HOUSE AT LANGHORNE, PA. CHARLES BARTON KEEN, ARCHITECT

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PERGOLA AT WALNUT GROVE
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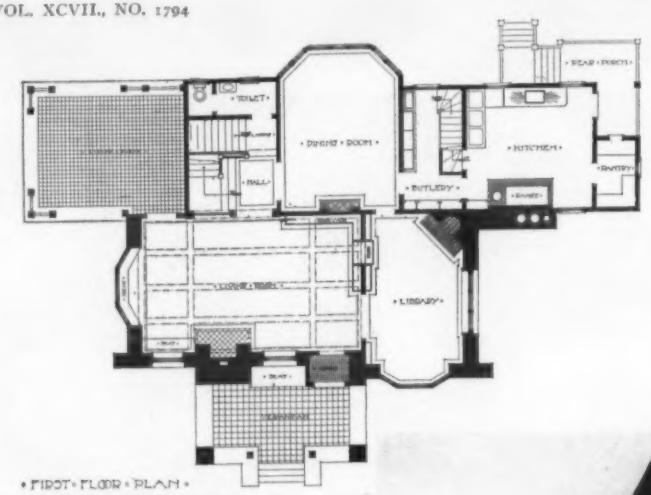

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

HOUSE AT MT. KISCO, N. Y.

W. S. PHILLIPS

ARCHITECT

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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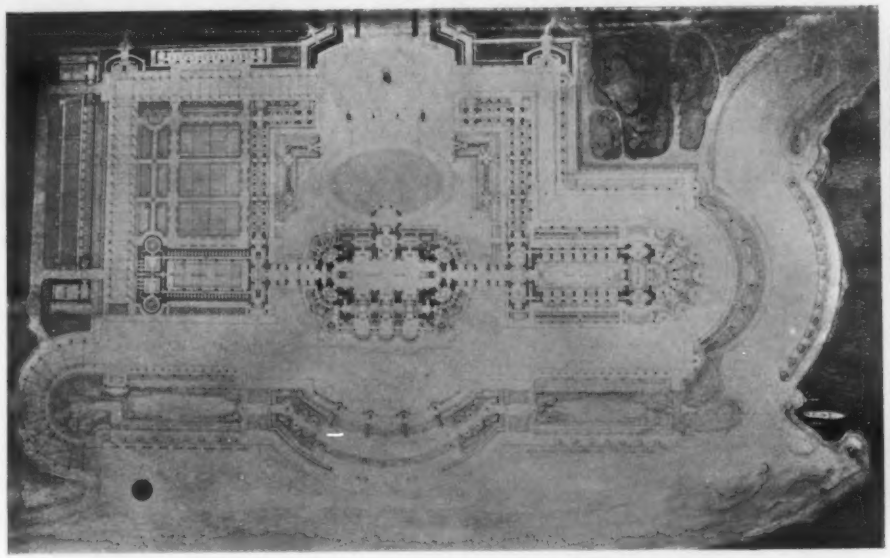

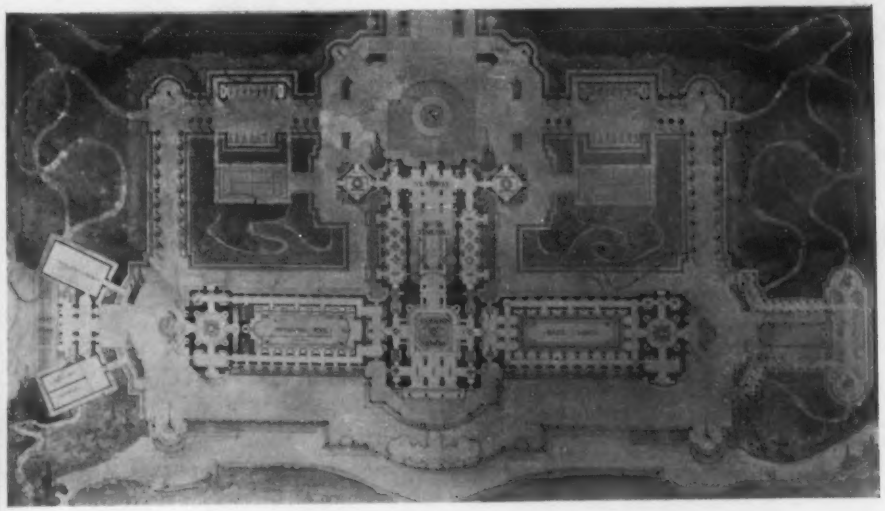

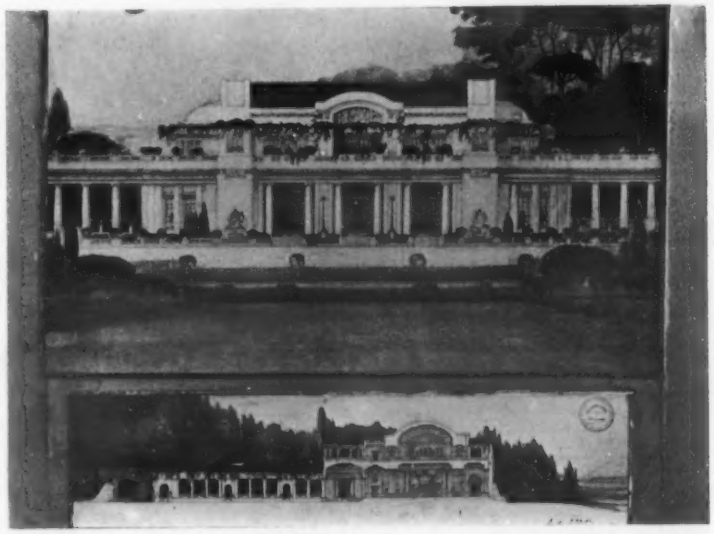

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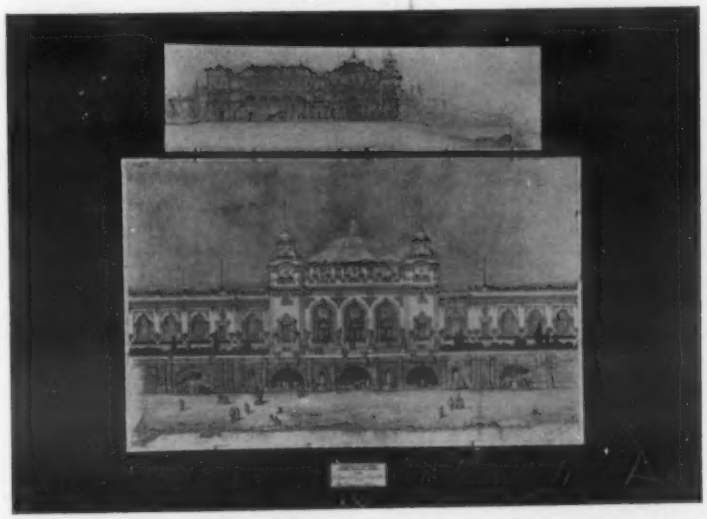

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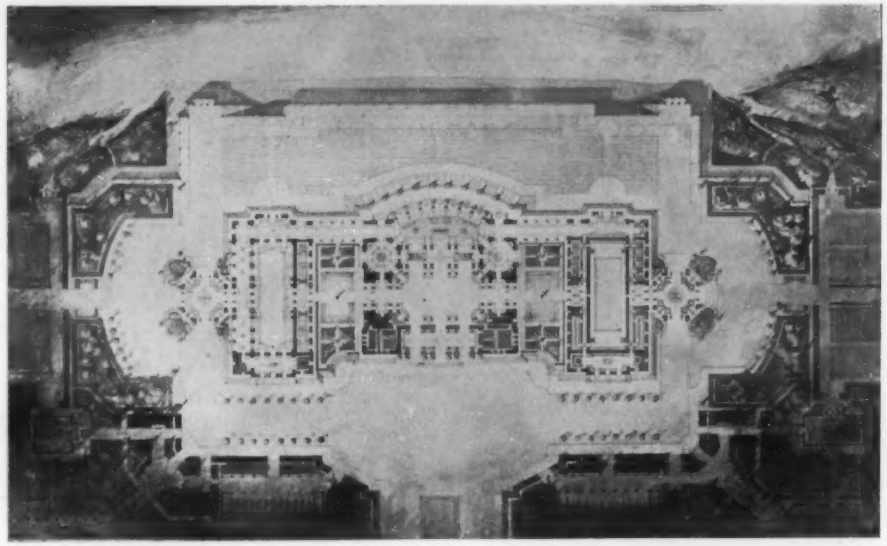

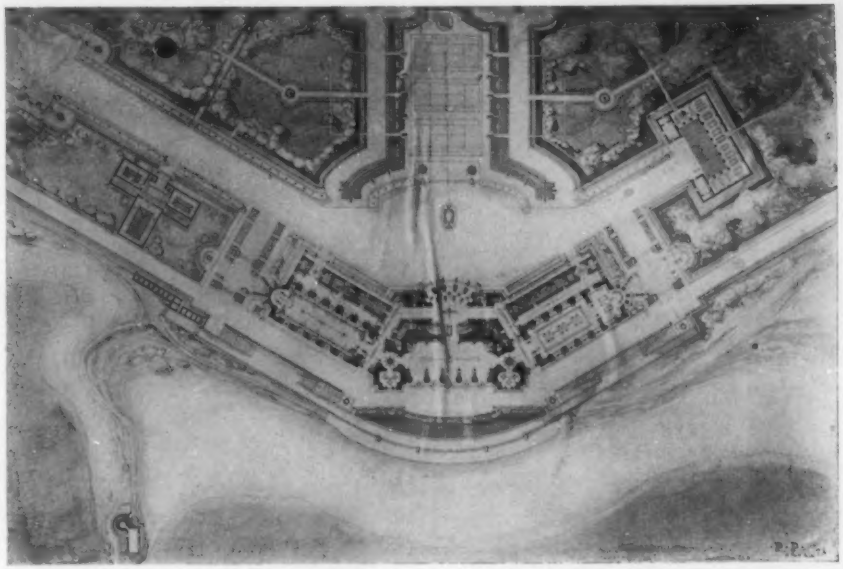

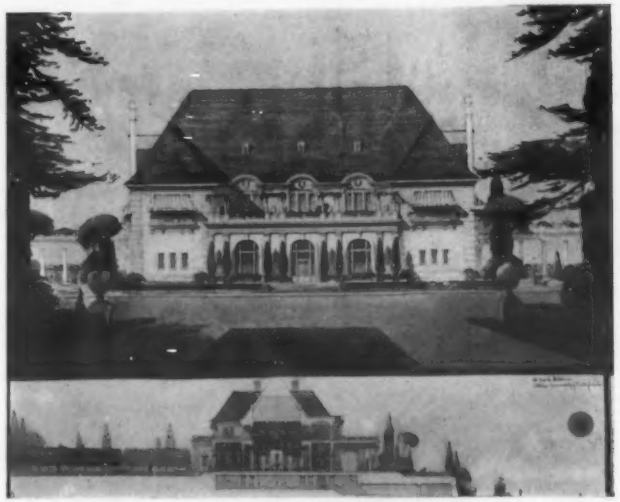

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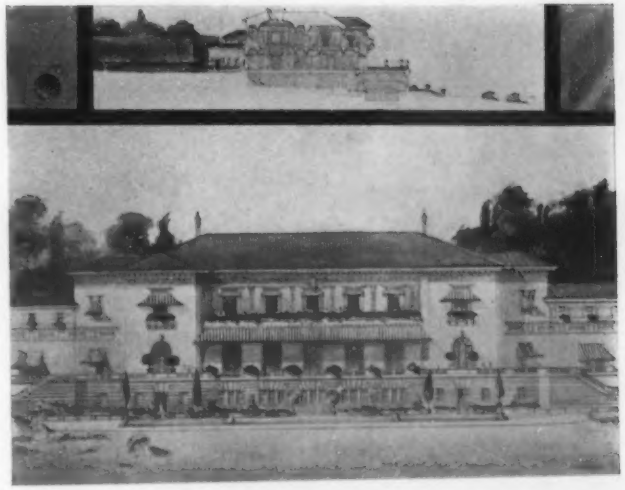

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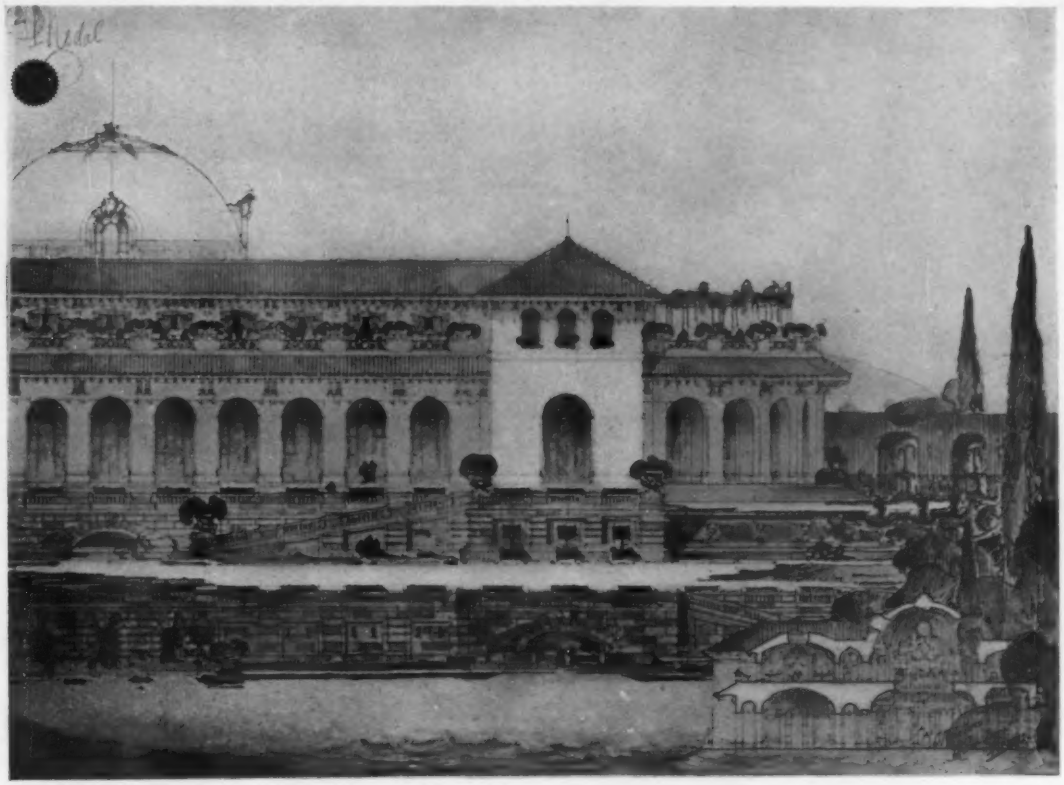

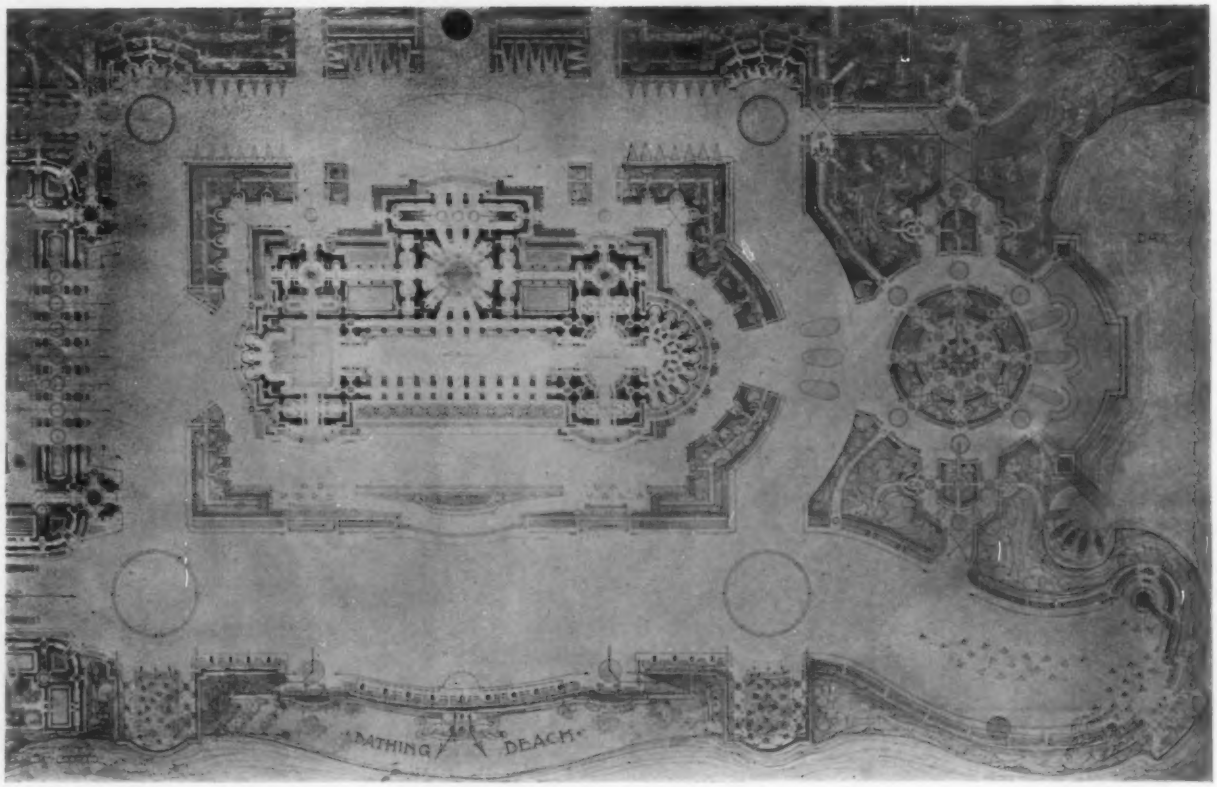

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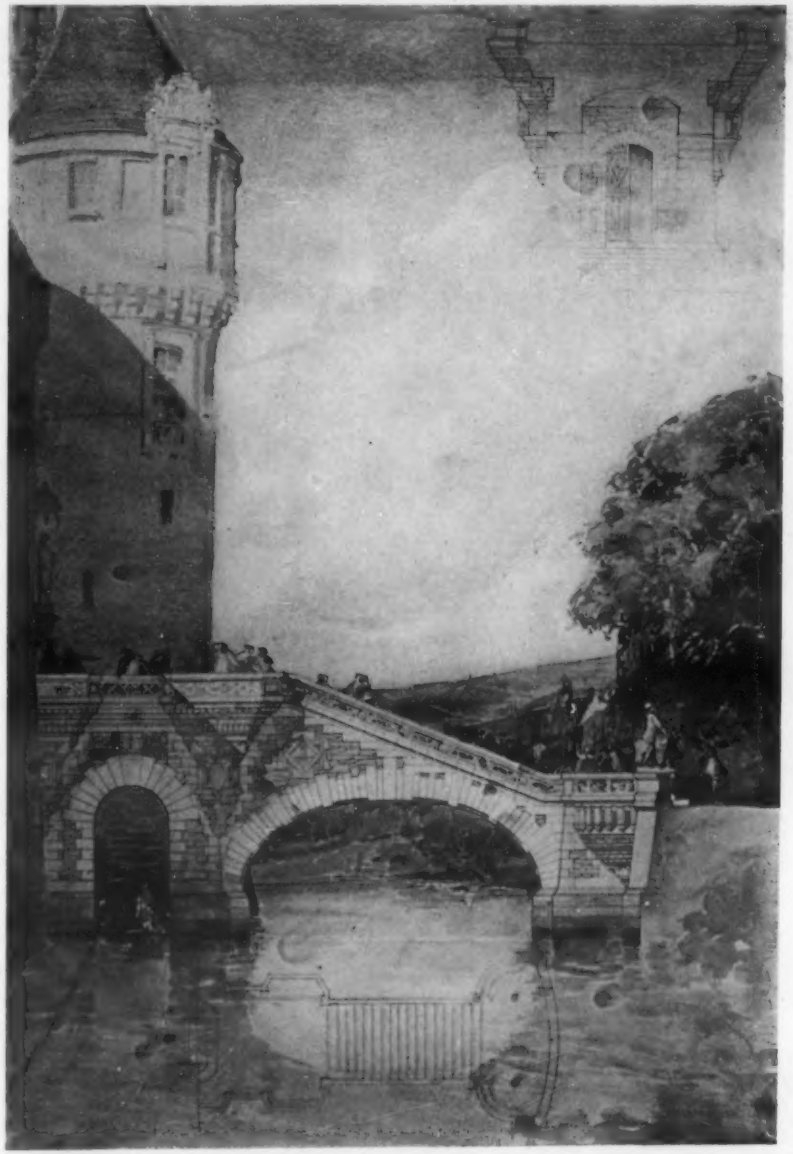

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