JUN 3 1910

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
JUN 3 1910
PERIODICAL DIV.

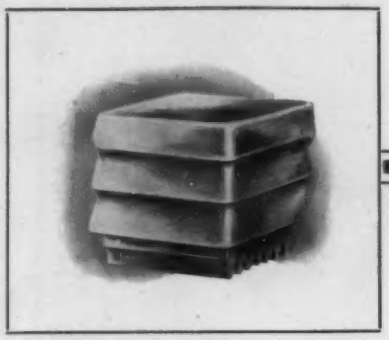
THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY IN NEW YORK

WITH THIS PUBLICATION
IS MERGED
THE INLAND ARCHITECT

VOLUME XCVII | JUNE 1, 1910 | NUMBER 1797

·TWO·THIRTY·NINE·WEST·THIRTY·NINTH·STREET·



DAYLIGHT

The Basement

If for storage, it should be lighted. If for salesroom, it *MUST* be lighted.

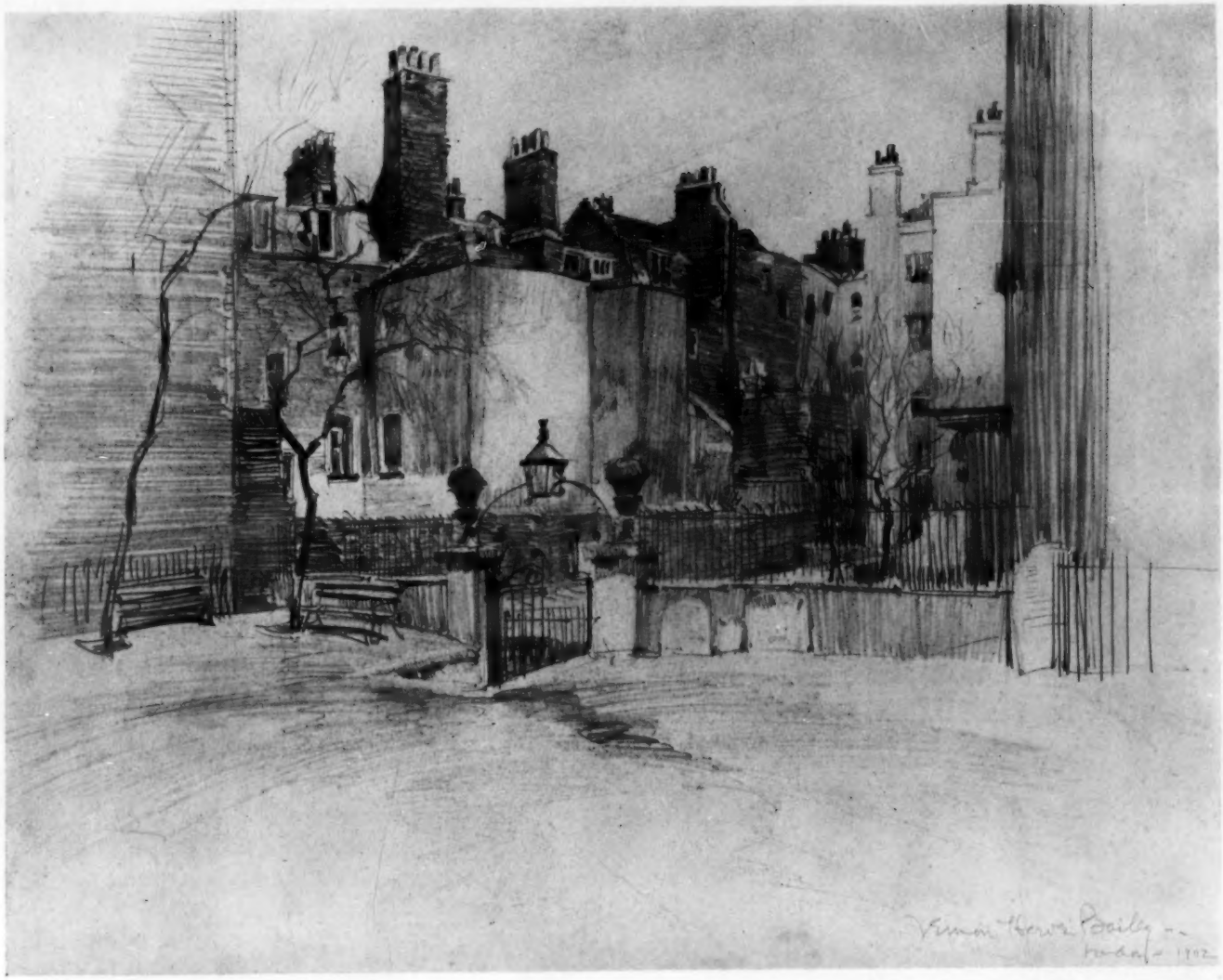
Artificial light has marred the success of more basements than perhaps any other problem connected with their operation.

Then why not specify *Luxfer* and *Daylight it?* The best results can be secured *only* by the use of *Luxfer* and the knowledge *how to use it.* Specify *Luxfer*—insist on *Luxfer*—and see that you get *Luxfer.*

AMERICAN LUXFER PRISM COMPANY

OFFICES:

CHICAGO, 1605 Heyworth Bldg.
BOSTON, 49 Federal St.
CLEVELAND, 406 Garfield Bldg.
CINCINNATI, Box 5, Builders' Exchange.
DULUTH, 106 W. Michigan St.
INDIANAPOLIS, 7 E. Market St.
KANSAS CITY, 948 N.Y. Life Bldg.
MILWAUKEE, 1300 Majestic Bldg.
NEW YORK, 507 W. Broadway.
NEW ORLEANS, 904 Hennen Bldg.
PITTSBURGH, 1022 Fulton Bldg.
PHILADELPHIA, 807 Chestnut St.
ROCHESTER, 38 Exchange St.
ST. PAUL, 615 Ryan Bldg.
SAN FRANCISCO, 151 Tehama St.
SEATTLE, 425 Henry Bldg.
DALLAS, Builders' Exchange.



From the original sketch by Vernon Howe Bailey.

Copyright, 1910, by the Swetland Publishing Co.

A GLIMPSE OF AN OLD LONDON CHURCHYARD.

Vernon Howe Bailey Series, No. 7.

B 211167

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Vol. XCVII WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1910 No. 1797

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF FURNITURE*

PART II

BY M. STAPLEY

IN its capitals at Persepolis and Susa, Persia had a wonderful art, not merely borrowed from the two great preceding civilizations, but adapted and made into original forms. Their large, light palace halls unearthed by recent archæologists may be said to stand midway between the heavy grandeur of the Egyptian and Assyrian, and the perfect proportions of the Greek. Indeed these original people may be considered the prototypes of the Greeks. In the matter of furniture, however, no actual traces have been found, and their sculptures, representing only scenes of war, throw but little light on the subject. The masses are supposed to have sat on cushions or very low stools, while the chair, like the one illustrated, was only for royalty.

The Jews, too, we learn from the Talmud, compiled between the fifth and third centuries before Christ, had considerable furniture; in architecture they had the Temple of Solomon and his palace, about one thousand years before Christ. But these were borrowed in design from the Egyptians and the Assyrians, and were made mostly by foreign workmen. In the temple were figured the "Cherubim" or winged figures borrowed from the Assyrians. In fact, the very word, meaning to-day an angel, is Assyrian, and has passed into Hebrew and thence into all modern languages; and the winged figure it originally signified, whether of man or animal, still holds an important place in decoration.

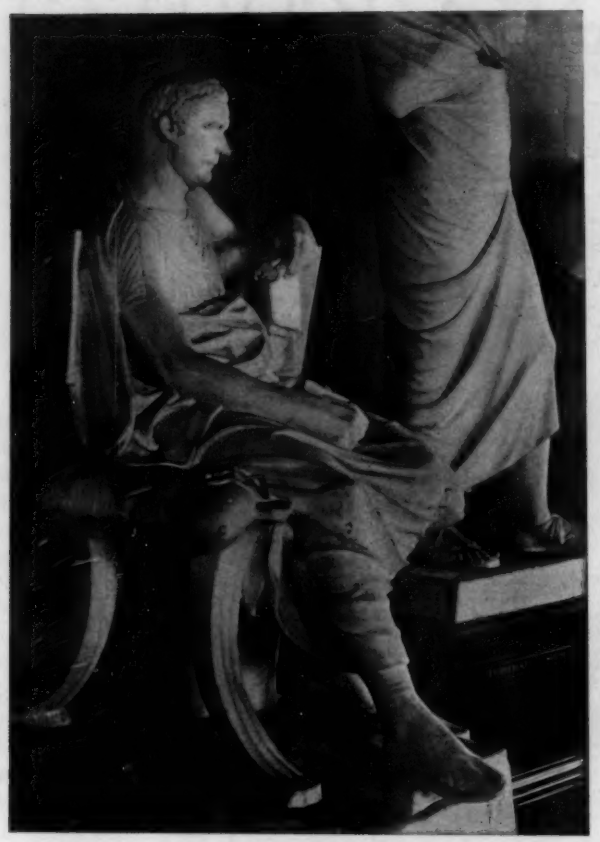
PORTRAITS OF DEMETRIA AND PAMPHILE. SEPULCHRAL RELIEF FROM THE DIPYLON CEMETERY, ATHENS. FIFTH CENTURY B. C.

Other civilizations had their day more or less brief in Asia, but so far as really ancient art is concerned there were but three great schools—the Egyptian, the Assyrian, and the Persian. Then came the wonderful efflorescence of the Greek genius that was to realize the ideal of beauty. India and China to be sure began in the sixteenth century, A. D., to influence European decoration, but India's art did not exist until after the epoch of Alexander the Great; while the Chinese did not produce their masterpieces until Europe was well into the Middle Ages, and are supposed to have been influenced by a debased version of Greek that had traveled by way of the Black Sea into Siberia and Central Asia. An instance of this is the portion of a wooden chair illustrated, and now in the British Museum, which was found in Chinese Turkestan. It was carved in the third century, A. D.

Following the progress of Asiatic civilization across the Mediterranean, we come to the two great European nations of antiquity—"the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome." Between their history and that of the ancient Oriental empires is a marked contrast. The earlier story is one of dynasties tyrannizing over the masses; the later is the story of peoples asserting themselves in separate, self-governing states. The

*(All rights reserved.)

Copyright, 1910, by The Swetland Publishing Company.



PORTRAIT OF MENANDER, GREEK POET. THIRD CENTURY, B. C. PLASTER CAST IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Asiatic civilization, fixing its people in castes was stationary, the European progressive.

It was probably about two thousand years before Christ that hordes of close kin to the Persians crossed from Asia Minor and overran what is now Greece and Italy. But authentic Grecian history does not begin till about one thousand years before Christ. Though a high civilization had been attained by the time of the Persian Wars, 500 B. C., it is not until after that great victory that the national spirit expressed itself in the "Golden Age of Pericles." Two centuries later Greece, rent by dissensions, was subjected by Alexander's father, Philip of Macedon, and in 146 B. C. became a Roman province.

In the Homeric legends dealing with the epoch about one thousand years before Christ, tapestries, carpets, folding-chairs, tables, couches, are all mentioned as belonging to the Greek leaders, but then and for centuries afterward, the simplicity and severe discipline in private life would hardly have encouraged any great number of such articles in the average home.

Very few if any actual examples of early Greek furniture exist, but the vases from tombs of the remoter ages show armchairs, folding-stools, couches and tables, square and round. The Greeks having been continuously in touch with the Asiatic powers, as rivals or allies, and having planted so many vigorous colonies in Asia Minor, these delineations are already somewhat familiar to us in the Asiatic carvings. From the "Harpy" Tomb of Xanthus, Asia Minor, are reliefs of chairs quite Assyrian; and that on which Demetria is seated in the relief from Dipylon (the Athenian cemetery of the "Double Gate") is not very unlike Xerxes' throne. In the so-called Syrian reliefs in the British Museum, the sixth century chairs shown are of the same general pattern, but the mortises and tenons are accurately marked in the marble and all horizontal bars pass through the upright ones.

But by the fourth and third century we learn from the carvings that new and original forms had been designed. In addition to the earlier straight-backed chairs, are the *klismos* and the substantial *thronos*. The first, combining comfort with elegance, has for its back a deep concave horizontal rail upheld by two side supports, while its two front legs curve forward and its others backward. It is such a chair, cushioned, that the sculptor used for his statute (illustrated) of Menander, the great comic poet of the third century. In it we recognize the model for the French "Empire" chairs of the early nineteenth century. The *thronos,* usually of marble, had an upright back and highly ornamental arms and was placed in the temples, courts and theaters for the use of distinguished people. It was generally made more imposing by a high seat that necessitated a footstool. When used in the home, in the later luxurious times, the throne was of wood.

Beds and couches may be regarded as extensions of the throne or of the small stools and this latter variety of couch could be folded like the modern cot. At meal times guests reclined on them, and at night slept on them. Metal was often used in the making of couches.

As men reclined on couches for meals, the tables were low. When square-topped they had four legs; when round or oval they had three or else a single central column branching out into three claw feet, a form we are familiar with in our own mahogany colonial. Many of the Greek tables and the smaller tripods used in the temples were of bronze.

A ROMAN CHAIR IN THE BOSCOREALE FRESCO. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

ANCIENT ROMAN TABLE NOW IN CHURCH OF S. GREGORIO, ROME

Chests held the clothes and linen just as in Europe centuries later; and boxes decorated with flowers and figures were used for toilet articles, jewels, etc. Pausanius, the Greek traveler who in 175 A. D. published a "Guide-book to Greece," and who was a great admirer of fifth and fourth century art, describes a chest large and solid and most delicately carved with mythological and legendary scenes, in which all the figures have the characteristic Greek beauty. This was the chest or *kypsele* in which the child Cypselus, later Tyrant of Corinth, was hidden by his mother to save him from his enemies. There were many works for Pausanius to admire in wealthy Corinth, whose bronze was famous and prized like gold. Yet the excavations of 1896 by the American school at Athens have brought to light no furniture.

Besides carving, other methods of furniture decoration were painting, turning, inlaying with ivory, pearl or metals (the style revived with such exuberance by Boulle for Louis XIV), and likewise incrusting with precious substances. But as has been said it was a long time before there was any general demand for such ornate furniture. Popular feeling was against it and the general Pausanius, who defeated the Persians at Platea in 479 B. C., was later rebuked by the tribunal for assuming Persian dress and introducing Asiatic luxuries into his home. But when, shortly after, such luxury became general, whatever articles the Greeks adopted they stamped with their own individual character. Style was the essential thing, style as only the Greeks understood the word, and this understanding marks whatever the hand of the Greek workman undertook.

The Latin branch of the Italian race is supposed to have founded Rome about seven hundred and fifty years before Christ; but until the city became a republic a century and a half later, its story is merely legend. From then on it is a story of prosperity in spite of unceasing struggles, until it had absorbed all the other nations of antiquity, had outlived them, and found itself at the beginning of the Christian Era a great imperial power, master of the whole world. The Romans had long been the pupils of the Greeks, but now they welcomed every foreign art and artisan that could add to the magnificence and luxury of their own private life. Yet before this splendor was arrived at, the Romans were an austere, abstemious people. Though well aware of the magnificence of the Oriental nations they had continued their simple life until the Carthaginian armies about 150 B. C. brought a wave of luxury into Italy that could never be checked.

In the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, destroyed 77 A. D., we see what this luxury must have been. Besides the actual furniture found in the buried cities and mostly in the Museum at Naples, we have copious records written, painted, carved, as to the interior of a Roman house.

Houses that had two or more courtyards surrounded by colonnades from which branched off numerous apartments, with marble or mosaic pavements, with wooden ceilings painted, gilt, or inlaid with mosaics, with door posts carved or inlaid with tortoise-shell—such houses would naturally have held rich furniture. Besides tables similar to those of the Greeks, there were small stands of ivory, marble, gold, silver, bronze, all enriched by carving, inlaying, and the other processes

long known. Veneer is mentioned and was used, not for economy, but for decorative effect. Tables used for meals were low, as the diners reclined and their couches

PORTION OF "HARPY" TOMB. FROM XANTHOS, ASIATIC GREEK, ABOUT 550, B. C.

set at three sides of the table, leaving the fourth open to facilitate the service, gave the term *triclinium* to the Roman dining-room. The beautiful tripods found at Pompeii are well known, with their winged sphinxes, fauns, leopards' or lions' legs and columns for supports. Some had merely rims for tops and were made to hold vases with rounded or pointed bases—the same sort of stand that, made of painted wood, was used by the Egyptians.

In chairs there was also great diversity. The *curule*, used by the judges and marking the dignity of their office had a square seat but no back, and was supported on curved legs, the front and back pairs being crossed as we know them to-day in the Florentine chair in which Savonarola sat. The *thronus* of the Greeks was much used, and the *bisellium* or seat for two. A chair somewhat resembling the Greek *klismos* was also popular and so was the bench—of plain wood for the poor, and of richly decorated marbles for baths and gardens. Wicker chairs were common.

There was a more marked difference between the Roman couch and the bed than the Greeks observed. The Roman bed had a head-board and sometimes a foot-board also, and in time grew so high as to need steps; while generally of carved wood, opulence did not stop short of plating the entire surface with gold or silver.

Roman babies were rocked in cradles. Sideboards for the display of silver, and cupboards for hanging clothes, were used. Boxes for holding books (rolls of papyrus), for jewels, for incense, for dice, were common and were made of wood and costlier substances. On these as on the furniture the subjects of the carving were the mythological legends adopted from the Greeks; for small surfaces masks, heads of heroes, animals, and the leaves of the acanthus conventionally treated are constantly met.

Cedar, pine, elm, ash, beech, were the woods for carpentry and for the cheaper furniture; while the better sort were of cedar and bird's-eye maple. For veneering and marquetry, olive, box, ebony, were used amongst the woods, and tortoise-shell, horn and ivory amongst other substances. Martial, the famous satirist of the first century A. D., says that Amenus adorned his house, which was in sad need of repair, with exquisite furniture in the hope of inducing some purchaser to give him a higher price than ever it could have brought empty. "Your house," says Martial, "is hidden by rich furniture. Couches gemmed with tortoise-shell and valuable solid furniture of citron wood from Africa glitter at the entrance. Silver and gold vases are supported on a delphic sideboard of extraordinary beauty."

The Roman chair in the Boscoreale frescoes at the Metropolitan Museum seems sober after reading of such magnifience, for it is of red wood, decorated with a simple painted fret and circles and depends for its attractiveness on its comfortable and sensible dimensions. These, it will be seen, correspond to the Greek chair from the Dipylon Gate; and if the decoration of the Pompeian example is commonplace, we must remember that the Greek workmen that went to Rome and her possessions did so when their own native art was far past its zenith. For instance, the early Greek fresco called the "Aldobrandian Marriage" in the Vatican shows a far higher talent than do the Pompeian or the Boscoreale frescoes executed much later either by

STATUE OF CHARES. GREEK, VI CENTURY, B. C. (IN BRITISH MUSEUM)

Greeks from Alexandria or perhaps by Roman artists who, directly or indirectly, had not only Greek models as an inspiration, but also the spoils of conquest and the

CHAIR OF CARVED WOOD FROM SAND-BURIED RESIDENCE IN ANCIENT SITE BEYOND NIYA, IN CHINESE TURKESTAN. MIDDLE OF THIRD CENTURY, A. D. (IN BRITISH MUSEUM)

fruits of the most extensive foreign trade the world had yet known. It is easy to understand how, in furniture, they produced the gorgeous and ostentatious such as Martial described, and forgot the exquisite restrained sense of beauty that was the unique possession of the period of Pericles.

LIABILITY OF AN ARCHITECT FOR THE ACCURACY OF PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES. BY HOWARD C. LAKE

Members of the profession are often asked to submit plans for a structure not to exceed a certain amount. There are cases of record where plans have been accepted on condition that the structure provided for by them can be erected for a specified sum. Without considering the ethical points involved in such cases, which are matters perhaps best discussed and determined by members of the profession, it is still of considerable interest to examine decisions which have been rendered, and thus view the consequences of the course pursued in each instance.

The general rule is that the architect cannot recover for the plans furnished unless the structure can be erected for the specified amount.

Two Western courts have adjudicated this question. In Ada St. Church versus Garnsey (66 Ill. 132) plans were asked for a church edifice to cost a certain sum. Garnsey's plans were accepted provided they could be carried out for a certain specified sum of money. When it was ascertained that they could not be, all the plans submitted were rejected. The architect lost his case on appeal because the court was unable to discover from the evidence that the plans of plaintiff were ever accepted unconditionally.

An association invited architects to submit plans for a building to cost not more than $400,000. Seven of the submitted designs were selected and the architects were invited to explain the plans. Each of these were to be accepted, according to the terms of the offer, and awarded $500 each and from these the final selection was to be made, the designer of which was to be engaged as architect and superintendent. Walsh, an architect, offered his bond that his plan would not cost more than the sum named. The directors resolved to select the favorite plan by ballot with "the understanding that the plans shall be so modified or changed as to suit the wishes of this board and to cost not to exceed $400,000." Walsh's plans were selected and he was chosen as architect, to become so in fact when his amended plans and "the contract and bond under which this building is to be erected" were approved by the board. The alterations desired added to the cost of the building and Walsh demanded that $25,000 be added to the fixed limit. Negotiations followed and he finally gave notice that, unless this concession was made, he would not make the proposed contract. Another architect was then employed.

This case of Walsh versus St. Louis Exposition, etc., Association (14 S. W. 722) resulted in a decision that the selection of plaintiff's plans was conditional only, that he was not entitled to be employed as the architect and that he had waived his right to have a selection made in accordance with the terms on which competition was invited. The association having offered Walsh the award of $500, became the owner of his plans and entitled to use them, and evidence of similarity between the building erected and Walsh's design was held of no value.

These two cases, so far as we can find, are the only decisions in point in the courts of this country. They seem correctly decided in principle and lay down the law with clearness and fairness.

The actual cost of the building must be reasonably near the estimated cost. Unless this proves to be the case, the architect is without redress for plans submitted. In the English case of Moneypenny versus Hartland (1 C. & P. 352) a surveyor made an estimate which proved grossly inaccurate because he did not examine the ground and it was held he could recover nothing for his plans and specifications.

In another English case (Nelson versus Spencer, 2 F. & F. 613) an architect drew plans for a school building. The trustees had only a certain specified amount to pay for it. After drawing the plans the architect estimated the cost at nearly two hundred pounds more than the trustees had. He asserted that his buildings "never exceeded the contracts" unless the owners interfered. Later he suggested alterations which he thought could be included in the estimated price. The lowest building bid was over seven hundred pounds more than the trustees had on hand and they refused to act. The drawings were sent back to the architect. In his suit for compensation, it was held that it was a question of fact for the jury to determine, whether the estimates were reasonably near the actual cost. The jury disagreed.

But one other point remains to be considered with regard to the general question of cost limitations. Are the architect's fees a part of the estimate? It was held not in Smith versus Dickey (11 S. W. 1049) where a building was to cost "about $100,000," and an architect

submitted estimates of a building to cost $102,000, exclusive of architect's and superintendent's fees, the latter of which, according to the architect's testimony, would have been five per cent. if he had superintended the building. The architect won his case, the Texas court holding that he had sufficiently complied with the contract, saying that it did not "regard the architect's fees as a part of the estimate, but, if they are to be so regarded, we think the gross sum was about one hundred thousand dollars and a compliance with the contract, as testified to by the appellee" (architect).

To summarize the law generally it may be said that an architect cannot recover if the building can not be erected for the specified sum, or if the actual cost is not reasonably near the estimated cost, and that the fees of the architect are not a part of the estimate.

Whether the architect should furnish an estimate which it seems the courts construe as in some measure a guarantee is a matter for him to decide, or if the owner after an estimate is given insists on expensive additions or changes, the architect would do well to protect his estimate at time changes involving increase in cost are ordered.

The Architect as an Autocrat

If there is to be such a thing as a millenium in architecture would it not appear that we are first approaching that period by way of England? The time when the architect might reign all supreme over his work, when he might rule with all the despotism of an absolute monarch seems to be foreshadowed by the following so-called arbitration clause which has been introduced into a contract drawn up to cover the erection of some stables for the Town Council, of Shrewsbury, England.

It gives the architect the most autocratic power, and as an effective means of smoothing disputes, we doubt if it can be improved on, and we further doubt if the architect in this country could induce any contractors to accept a commission when this clause appeared in the agreement.

The *Architect and Builders' Journal*, of London, from which this clipping is taken, naively heads it "Quaint Contract Conditions."

The terms of the contract, as referred to above, are as follows. The italics are ours.

"In order that there shall be no dispute or difference, and that none can arise between the architect and contractor at any time during the progress of the works, or after the completion of the same, the architect shall be sole judge of, and shall determine all matters and questions arising on the construction of the contract, or in reference to, or arising out of, or in any way connected with the contract, and as to the determination, abandonment, breach of forfeiture of the contract by either of the parties; and as to the rights of the parties under the contract; and the architect's decision or valuation thereunder made in writing shall be conclusive, final and binding upon both parties. *The architect shall not, in making any such decision or valuation, be required in any case to hear either or both of the parties upon nor to inquire into any of the aforesaid matters or questions; nor shall the architect act judicially or in any way as an arbitrator between the parties, but he shall act in every case solely upon his own judgment.*"

The Cultivation of Taste

Apropos of the cultivation of taste, Wilhelm Michel has some interesting remarks to make. Not only artists but tradesmen cry out constantly against the bad taste of the public, and the question always follows: How may the public taste be improved? The matter is generally looked upon as hopeless, though as a matter of fact the situation is not by any means as bad as it looks at the first glance.

The first question is: How the bad taste of which the public is accused first came to be formed? Why is it that we all prefer certain things to others? Presumably because some have points to recommend them which others have not. It is nearly always possible to find a logical excuse or justification for public taste. The only thing that really influences public taste is custom. The ways the public really admires are those it has grown accustomed to, and though it may seek reasons for its tastes and preferences, it really has none. In fact, having grown accustomed to a certain thing, it proceeds to invent a reason for liking it. Each new style, each new idea is viewed at first with mistrust, and very often with ridicule, and it is only when it has grown familiar that discovery is made of its merits. Having arrived at this truth, it is not hard to realize that the only way by which public taste (politely so-called) may be improved, is by withholding from it everything inartistic. It is not the essays and articles that may be written on the subject that can bring about the desired result; it is the perpetual effort to place before the eyes of the people the best and most beautiful in every branch of Art. This is at any rate one of the chief uses of exhibitions—they serve to bring home to their visitors all that is being done in the various fields of Art and Craft.—*The Decorative Furnisher.*

An Historic Bell

Few persons suspect that in the cathedral church of Notre Dame is a bell contemporaneous with Joan of Arc—"the blessed bell which sounded the tocsin when the maid of Lorraine appeared in August, 1429, and Paris was besieged by the English." This historic bell, referred to by Victor Hugo in his "Notre Dame de Paris," was given to the cathedral in 1400 by Jean de Montaigne. It was refounded in 1686, and then rebaptized under the name of Emanuel Louise Therese, in honor of Louis XIV. and Marie Therese of Austria. So if this bell is not the same bell which the heroine of Domremy heard, nevertheless the same metal vibrates to-day at the great religious ceremonies of the metropolitan church. In view of later events it seems rather more than a coincidence that when all the other bells of Notre Dame were destroyed by the revolutionists Joan's bell should have been spared.

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY THE

SWETLAND PUBLISHING COMPANY

239 West 39th Street, New York

H. M. SWETLAND, *President*, M. J. SWETLAND, *Treasurer*, E. J. ROSENCRANS, *Secretary*, G. E. SLY, *Advertising Manager*.

E. J. ROSENCRANS, *Editor*.
WILLIAM H. CROCKER, *Associate Editor*.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

United States and possessions, Mexico, Cuba - - $10.00 per year
All other countries - - - - - - $12.00 per year

To insure the accuracy of our mailing lists, subscribers are requested to notify us promptly of any change of address, stating at the same time the address to which the paper was formerly sent. Our Subscription Department should also be notified if, for any reason, copies are not received promptly.

Entered at the Post-office, New York, as Second-class Matter.

June 1, 1910 Vol. XCVII., No. 1797

CONTENTS

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF FURNITURE (PART II).. 209
LIABILITY OF AN ARCHITECT FOR THE ACCURACY OF PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES 213
EDITORIAL COMMENT 215
Civic Improvement in New York.
Construction and Design in Speculative Building.
THE ARCHITECT AS AN ARTIST..... 216
ILLUSTRATIONS:
Country Houses by Wilson Eyre.
Frontispiece:
A Glimpse of an Old London Churchyard.

IF Mayor Gaynor of New York hopes to make a record for civic improvement for his administration we are of the opinion that his latest proposal to create a new avenue parallel to and between Fifth and Sixth Avenues from Eighth to Fifty-ninth Streets, will not help him. It is no harm, of course, to constantly call attention to the congestion of traffic on Manhattan Island, but the means he suggests of relieving this condition in the mid-town business district does not make a successful appeal as the conclusion of a well-considered plan. The advocates of a better and more convenient city will, in our opinion, find objections to it of the greatest importance. The *New York Times* of May 25th takes a commendable stand in the matter by arguing that the initial expense of acquiring the land for such an avenue and the protracted effect on a busy section of the city do not warrant its execution. It rightly comments that there are alternative methods of relieving the congestion of that section of the city and the suggestion is made of building a subway under Sixth Avenue, removing the elevated structure from that thoroughfare and thereby gaining much space which is now obstructed by columns. This would seem a pertinent suggestion involving less expense and equal relief. The avenue contemplated by the Mayor would, in effect, terminate in a street where the traffic is now as heavy as it can stand. We already have, in Madison and Seventh Avenues, thoroughfares of this kind which need extending, and the new avenue would simply bring with it another such problem and would eventually lead to the bisection of Central Park, the only large public reservation on the island. It appears to us, moreover, that an avenue such as Mr. Gaynor suggests would afford only temporary relief and would not prove a permanent remedy. It were wiser to execute, at this time, some of the extensions of existing avenues, recently advocated by the City Beautiful Commission, which provide effective remedies for the future,—rather than create a new one fraught with so many difficulties and recommended by so questionable a reward.

THERE has been talk, every now and then, of overproduction in certain fields of speculative building in this country. While much of this discussion is not to be taken seriously there is in it some foundation for alarm, especially in the City of New York where the rapid march of business has, in the past five years, displaced many residential districts by creating new economic conditions and sharp increases in land values. The crowding out of dwelling-house sections together with the natural growth of the city's resident population has offered extraordinary opportunities to the speculative builder of non-fireproof apartment houses for the middle class, which the exodus to the country and suburbs has not yet seriously curtailed. During the past year over seventy millions worth of apartment buildings were erected in the Metropolis. Here might seem to be a clear case of overproduction were it not for the fact that the operators who are responsible for this enormous output are still active. A brisk demand for their wares continues to exist. In another sense, however, there is overproduction. The large scale of these operations has, in many cases, created fictitious land values which cannot be maintained. Moreover, the houses themselves are of such a character that they maintain their maximum intrinsic value for a comparatively short time. The result is that they are continually becoming less attractive for permanent investment and in cases where subsequent changes in the neighborhood have made them materially less desirable for tenants losses have resulted to their owners. In this sense there has been a great overproduction in apartments which constitutes a serious economic menace.

THE unprecedented activity in loft construction in New York begins to give rise to similar expressions of alarm, but we fail to see the danger, except in isolated cases where bad judgment has dictated palpably unwise operations. In the long run, a loft building in New York, which is almost invariably of substantial construction, cannot be as precarious a speculation as the non-fireproof type of apartment. The planning of the former is usually of such a nature as to admit of adaptation, without disproportionate expense, to some commercial purpose, if that is necessitated or favored by altered business conditions in the locality—and the deterioration is a minimum, so that, ultimately, the element of financial risk is greatly reduced. Vacancies are, of course, vexatious, but they are really serious only when due to bad planning, insufficient lighting or to some other inherent defect; the loss of revenue from most other causes is likely to be only temporary and the building in the meantime remains a marketable security.

From the standpoint of architectural merit the bulk of the apartment and loft work in our large cities is still poor. There appears to be no consistent effort to enforce and preserve the fitness of things. The vision of the guiding mind in such undertakings, while clear in

attaining its immediate object, is amazingly short in perceiving its relation to the outer world. In the apartments the outcome is poor construction with often extravagant and almost invariably irrelevant external and internal elaboration and in the business work where good construction is dictated by law, general inefficiency in planning and designing. As yet, comparatively few owners of these two classes of buildings have had properly placed before them the intrinsic value of good construction in the one instance and of efficient planning and designing in the other. If there is to be improvement they must be made to see that competent architectural services are at the bottom of a good paying investment.

The Architect as an Artist

In modern practice the path of the architect is beset with obstacles which combine to make it difficult for him to maintain his identity as an artist. But there is one department of American architecture which is open to all designers who care to enter it—domestic work—where there are comparatively few restrictions of a troublesome nature. It is naturally in this kind of work that we count the greatest number of artistic successes. There is no reason why an architect cannot be an artist in whatever he undertakes, but he knows that his greatest opportunities lie in certain directions and, consequently, he equips himself to follow along certain more or less restricted lines. He is never so free to develop his artistic powers as when he has to make a home with the requirements of which he must acquaint himself, the character of the surroundings which he must avail himself of, and the materials which are his means of expression. Here the result is as truly personal as possible.

The two houses of Wilson Eyre shown on following pages are examples of the sort of work referred to. Outside of the bald requirements of their owners these houses are the artistic pictures of their architect executed in the colors and textures of the materials most harmonious with their surroundings. In these pictures the designer paints what he sees in the locality, using as his vehicle the local materials which best lend themselves to his purpose. He accepts the materials that he finds at hand and loves, and uses them in such a way that the spectator feels the pleasure the designer has taken in their handling. The result, consequently, is not a task performed in consideration of so many dollars and according to the strict academic laws of some architectural text book. There can be no hard and fast rules for designing in the way that is here contemplated, yet to any given designer there is but one way which entirely satisfies him, the way revealed to him through his mind's eye. He studies his problem until he sees his image clearly, then the rest is simple enough for him. He knows that the effect he is seeking calls, for instance, for ruggedness of lower walls; he therefore takes the field stone as it comes and leaves it alone, he uses his timbers so that they remain timbers and do not simulate something foreign to the case. He recognizes the fact that he is creating an episode in a picturesque landscape of the most naive kind. Consequently, the masses of his composition are simple and large and their relation perfectly apparent while his constructural features are equally frank and unpretentious, likewise the colors of all painted portions of the woodwork. In short, everything is conceived in the same harmonious key to which the surroundings and the purpose of the structure give the clue.

Communication

To the Editor of the American Architect:

Mr. E. J. Dixon, A.R.I.B.A., recently wrote a paper which was read before the Guild of Architects' Assistants, London, entitled: "Art, Architecture and the Assistant." The unsatisfactory relations between architects and their assistants are called to mind and the remedy is suggested of an organization that shall unite its members professionally as well as socially. Such an organization should, in Mr. Dixon's opinion, take up, as was suggested by Mr. Cave's paper some time ago, the questions of salaries, office hours, office conditions, recognition of an assistant's work where possible, legal assistance, employment bureaux, insurance and education. The identical suggestion, it seems to the writer, might be made with equal value for American conditions. In this country the draughtsman struggling to win himself a future place as a practicing architect receives little more encouragement than his English brother. Even if he possess a technical training he is subject to the same office discipline as the stenographer and the bookkeeper. He is an employee and as such gets his salary, which is not alluring; his hours are long and afford him little chance to promote his future business welfare. His work, often of the most important character, receives no recognition unless it be an occasional increase in salary when business is especially brisk. When business is dull he is dismissed and must depend chiefly on his friends to direct him to another situation. In the matter of education he is much better provided for and encouraged by practising members of the profession.

The value of the thoroughly disinterested work of the Society of Beaux Arts Architects cannot be overestimated, but even that but partially fills the needs of those ambitious young men who, from one cause or another, are unable to avail themselves of the regular architectural curriculum. The work of these handicapped and earnest seekers after light can but make draughtsmen of them. It operates to give them a commercial value in the shortest time; its cultural value is not sufficient and draughtsmen will be glad to see the work of this society carried to the point where a student may obtain, if he be so minded, a liberal art education.

There is no intention, on the writer's part, to censure the architect in practice, but merely to commend to his serious attention one of the unsatisfactory conditions of the pursuit of architecture as a livelihood by those who are in position to feel its effects.

Architectural Draughtsman.

Copyright, 1910, by the Swetland Publishing Co.

VIEW FROM FORECOURT

A COUNTRY HOUSE AT
CAMP HILL, PA.

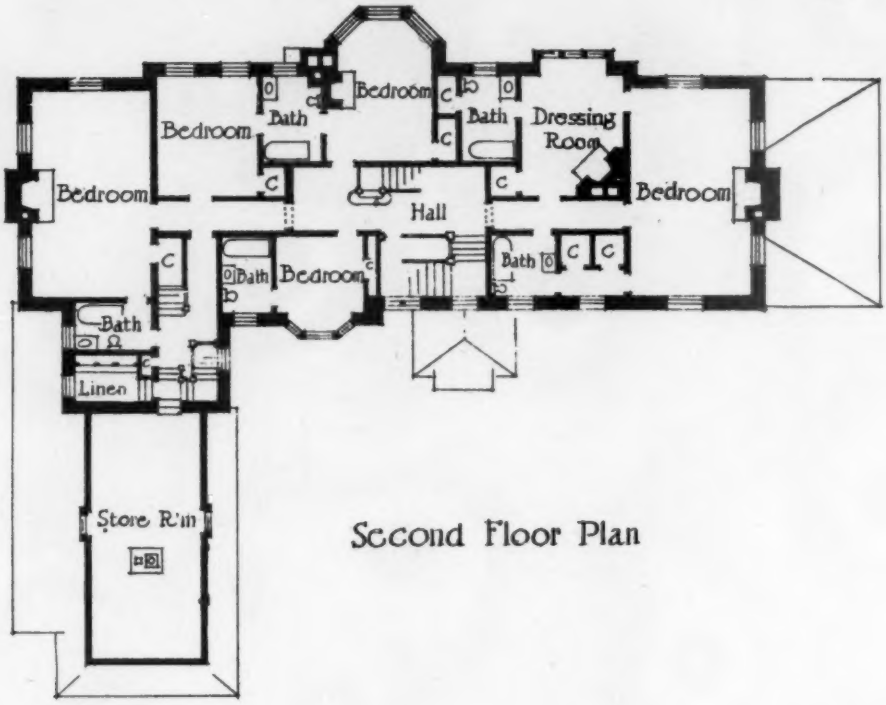
WILSON EYRE
ARCHITECT

Copyright, 1910, by the Swetland Publishing Co.

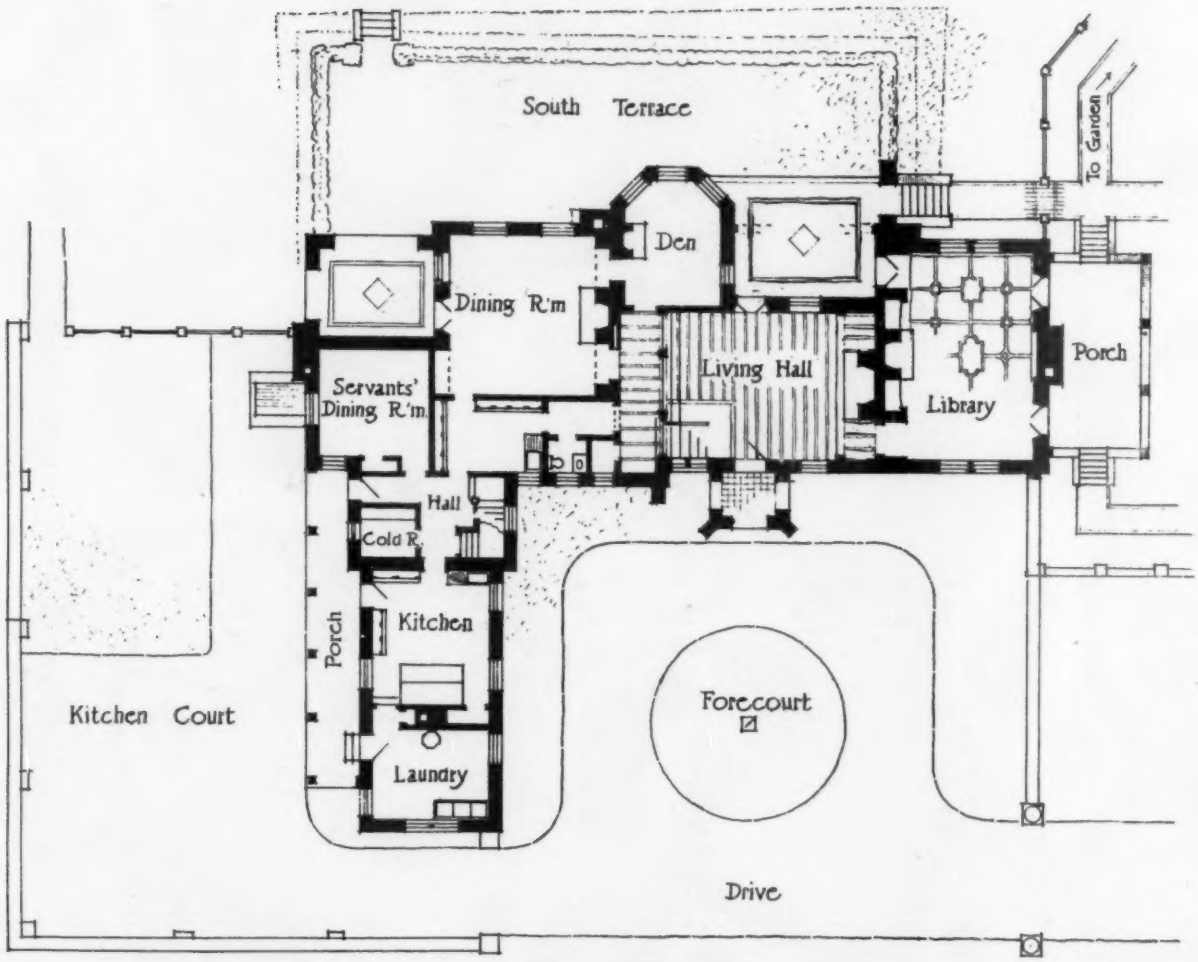
VIEW FROM SOUTH TERRACE

A COUNTRY HOUSE AT
CAMP HILL, PA.

WILSON EYRE
ARCHITECT



Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

Copyright, 1910, by the Swetland Publishing Co.

A COUNTRY HOUSE AT
CAMP HILL, PA.

WILSON EYRE
ARCHITECT

Copyright, 1910, by the Swet'and Publishing Co.

A COUNTRY HOUSE AT
CAMP HILL, PA.

WILSON EYRE
ARCHITECT

Copyright, 1910, by the Swetland Publishing Co.

A COUNTRY HOUSE AT CAMP HILL, PA.

WILSON EYRE, ARCHITECT

Copyright, 1910, by the Swetland Publishing Co.

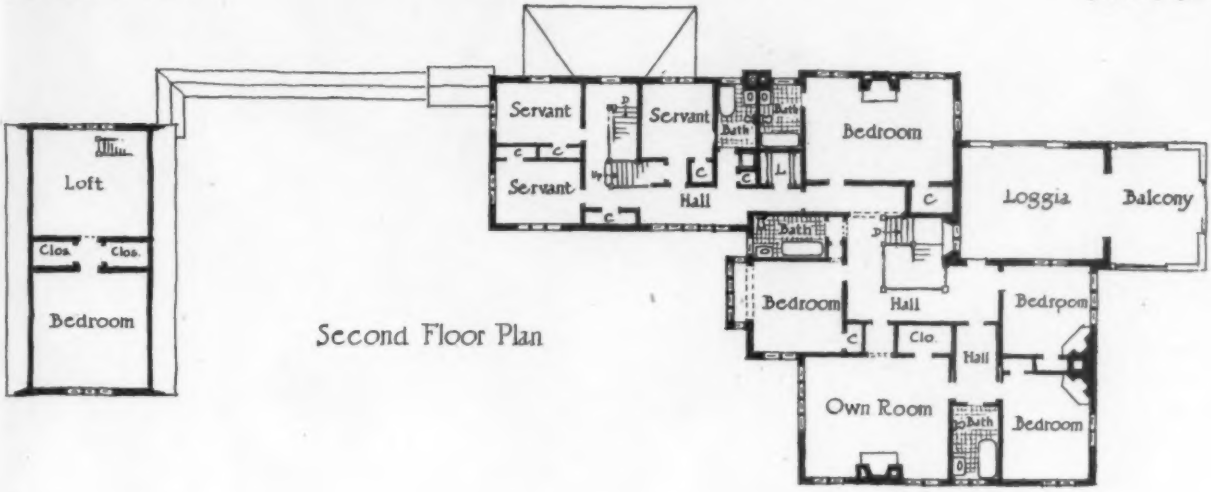
COUNTRY HOUSE NEAR
MEDIA, PA.

WILSON EYRE
ARCHITECT

Copyright, 1910, by the Swetland Publishing Co.

COUNTRY HOUSE NEAR
MEDIA, PA.

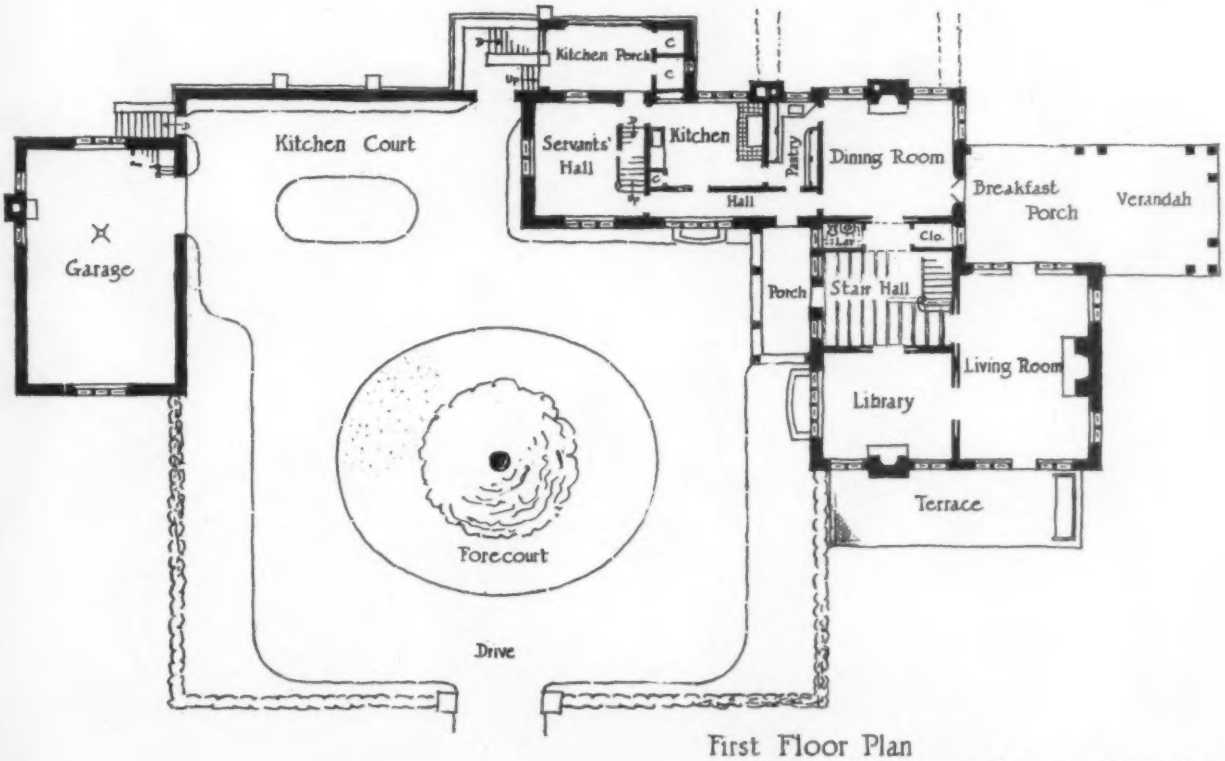
WILSON EYRE
ARCHITECT



Second Floor Plan

Country House
Dr. Edward Martin
near Media, Pa.

Wilson Eyre, ~ Architect
1003 Spruce St., Phila., Penna.
41. East. 30th. St., New York, N.Y.



First Floor Plan

Copyright, 1910, by the Swetland Publishing Co.