

SEP 9 1910

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THE  
AMERICAN  
ARCHITECT  
PUBLISHED  
EVERY WEDNESDAY  
IN NEW YORK



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IS MERGED  
THE INLAND ARCHITECT

VOLUME  
XCVIII

SEPTEMBER 7, 1910

NUMBER  
1811

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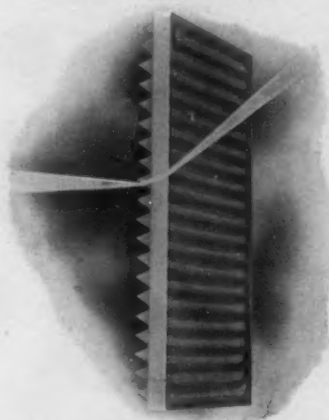


PLATE I. This illustration shows how light rays are bent by means of prism angles.

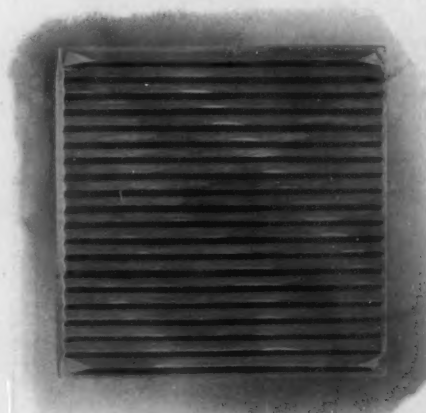


PLATE II. This illustration shows appearance of simple prism square. Note angles on surface.

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DETAIL OF THE APSE OF A CHURCH AT RIOUX, FRANCE

# THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

VOL. XCVIII

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1910

No. 1811

## THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF FURNITURE\*

BY M. STAPLEY, PART V

THE eighteenth century marked many changes in the furniture world both in France and in England. Opening on the Renaissance and introducing into its last days all sorts of Oriental borrowings, it closed on a classic revival severe yet highly ornamented. In the number and form of the articles made the change was almost a revolution; for the simple elementary articles of earlier days were outgrown and replaced by present-day complex household equipment. In material, also, there was a new fashion, increased commerce ringing the death knell of home-grown woods.

France commenced the century by a strong reaction from the seriousness of Louis XIV. The young new king was exuberant and full of vitality; furniture to please him had to be gay and capricious. The straight line that makes for solidity was broken up and the curve pushed to its utmost limit. To the anthemion and acanthus that characterized Louis XIV furniture carving was added flowing ribbons, festooned flowers, shells and hanging baskets. It all made up the florid rococo, and though the word is to the lover of pure classic synonymous with bad taste it must be admitted that no period ever brought a more delicate feeling into wood-carving or produced more refined metal work as a furniture accessory.

Both Chinese and Japanese art exercised a powerful influence in decoration. But the French used it with no appreciation of its really profound principles—like everything else of the age it was superficial and applied whimsically. The Chinese monkey, pagoda or cascade was painted on a panel or woven into a tapestry chair-back in juxtaposition to ladies and gentlemen, shepherd-

clad and leading beribboned sheep—for such were the Arcadian affectations of the day, and as acceptable on furniture as on canvas by Watteau or Boucher.

Many were the struggles of French cabinet workers to produce a varnish that would make a lacquer equal to the Chinese. In this the Martin brothers had the greatest success; but excellent though their lacquer was it could not compare with the Oriental for durability, so that to-day a specimen of *Vernis-Martin* is a rare find.

The Chinese rage passed—both its varnish and its decorative motifs—yet it left behind for many years a subtle influence on French and English design. This is detected in the free rendering of flowers and fruits and in the general adoption of flowing ornament.

But for all the strange mingling of forms, Louis XV furniture is in its way exquisite. Manual dexterity reached perfection and woods of every known kind could be made to succumb to the most seductive curves irrespective of their grain. Everywhere, even on things that might better have been quiet and restful, a profusion of skilled labor was spent by such consummate ar-

tisans as Cressent, Caffieri, Eben, Riesener, Ollivier, etc., whose works are treasured in every great collection.

After the extravagance and ribaldry of Louis XV.'s reign his studious son and cultivated daughter-in-law ushered in the refined style known as Louis XVI. Curves straightened themselves out again till furniture-legs suggested columns with capitals, the principal ornament of this return to classic simplicity being dainty florals. But it was only short-lived, however; for when this monarch had paid with his unoffending head for the evil-doings of his ancestors royalty was so unpopular



A CABINET AT FONTAINEBLEAU DECORATED AND INLAID WITH METAL

\*All rights reserved.



CONSOLE, WITH DEER'S FEET

FROM FONTAINEBLEAU

that furniture designers tried to get as far as possible from previous styles; that is why between the downfall of the kingdom and the downfall of Napoleon's empire a distinctly new style was developed. This new style, while in line with Louis XVI's revolt against wanton Renaissance, was an adaptation rather than an adoption of classic. David, painter and official costume designer, was at the head of the movement.

Forms, needless to say, became ultra-simple; and Pompeii having been unearthed, their decoration was largely Pompeian. Then to commemorate Napoleon's Egyptian conquests Egyptian art was studied and resulted in the reappearance of animal legs on tables and chairs, and metal sphinx-heads to crown columns. The victor's laurel wreath, popular in the days of the Roman Empire, was adopted by the French—not carved, but in metal appliqué, for carving had gone out of fashion and woodworking was, one might say, almost secondary to upholstery and other accessories.

Other decorative motifs were the bee, the crown surmounting the letter *N*, winged figures emblematic of liberty, and antique vases. The Empire style was indeed all heroics, without the grace and tenderness with



CONSOLE

PERIOD OF LOUIS XV

which Sheraton and the Adam brothers interpreted the same movement in England.

Across the channel the same century opened with Queen Anne's reign and owing to the continuance of the close ties that had existed between England and Holland in William and Mary's day the so-called Queen Anne style of furniture is nothing more than an extension of the preceding reign with, of course, some modifications. At this time both the English and Dutch East India Companies were very flourishing and were pouring Oriental art (and worthy commercial art) into their respective capitals, so that Queen Anne furniture reflects this influence.

It was made mostly of walnut as it had been in the



ARM CHAIR

CHIPPENDALE TYPE

days of Anne's sister Mary. For by the end of the seventeenth century the walnut trees planted so extensively in Elizabeth's reign had reached maturity and rapidly replaced oak. The earlier walnut is, in spite of the Chinese rage, still restrained enough to be as dignified as many a piece of earlier oak. But it soon grew ornate and was even in some instances buried under a coat of *Vernis-Martin*. For commoner furniture beech, holly, yew and birch were used.

All sorts of small articles—tabourets, flower-stands, hanging shelves, candle-screens, tea-tables—intruded into the English room that once had but a few massive oak pieces. And yet while the craze for hybrid furniture was raging the sober work of Sir Christopher Wren in architecture was inaugurating the classic revival

which, culminating in the reign of George III, produced the Georgian furniture that determined our own Colonial.

But for fifty years preceding this culmination a sort of artistic chaos reigned in English furniture owing to the fact that the cabinet makers did not, for commercial reasons, fall in with the dignified movements of Wren and his associates. Instead, they continued the Dutch of the last two Stuarts along with the Chinese, revived dead Gothic, borrowed from the French, especially the Roman-French, that followed the discovery of Herculaneum in 1709.

All the new fancies were worked out mostly in one wood, mahogany. About 1720 William Gibbons, a London physician with fashionable practice, was presented by his brother, master of a West India ship, with some logs of wood brought over as ballast. This wood was mahogany and the physician handed it over to the carpenters who were building his new house. They refused it as too hard (it being the San Domingo variety), so he had a chest of drawers made of it, and the beautiful color attracting the Duchess of Buckingham she ordered a duplicate. Mahogany straightway became the rage, and the wealthy cleared their homes of walnut and still more honored oak, selling it for a mere song to the laboring classes.

Thus, as the story goes, did mahogany become the furniture wood of the Georgian period. Mahogany, of course, had been discovered by Sir Walter Raleigh in the West Indies in 1579, though it was not generally used till about the date given, yet there are records of English mahogany pieces as early as 1700 and of pieces in this country as early as 1708. It never obtained to any extent on the continent. How commercial were even the most distinguished furniture makers of the day is proven by Chippendale's own introduction to his book of designs published in 1754. "The main object is to induce the gentleman to buy. If his taste runs to the Chinese now so much in vogue, there is an assortment of frets to select from; if Gothic, here are a few examples of window traceries. If he likes florid carving, here is a storehouse of suggestions conveyed from the French Renaissance."

In work that was avowedly done to suit all sorts of a public it is needless to look for any characteristic



"EAR-TIPPED" CHAIR

CHIPPENDALE TYPE

details; though certain Chippendale productions were so much more popular and therefore long-lived than others that they are to-day accepted as being characteristically Chippendale. This is true of our "ribbioned" backed chair, graceful in outline in spite of the necessity of making the seat wide enough to accommodate the hoop-skirt of his day. In fact he always showed an appreciation of a beautiful outline, a sense of the fitness of the object to its purpose, that carried through even in his worst jumble of designs. Chippendale was more over a thoroughly honest constructionist and besides an excellent wood carver. Because of this gift he never had to resort to appliqué and inlay for ornamentation, but with a true carver's eye saw in the actual material before him both the form and the ornament he desired. As for the showy gilding that came over from France or the japanning used by the Chinese he had little sympathy with them, though a few such pieces are attributed to him. To prevent his work from cracking he invariably used a three-ply veneer even where the simplest fret was to be carved. Thus much of his work (but not quite as much as the dealers claim) is in existence to-day, proving, as Mr. Augustine Birrell amusingly remarks in his essay on actors, that "Chippendale the cabinetmaker is a greater man than Garrick the actor; for the latter is but a memory while the chairs of the former still make rest impossible in many a modern home."

The transitional or mixed style may be said to have closed with the Adam period, inaugurated by the



COMMODOE WITH ORMOLU MOUNTS

PERIOD OF LOUIS XIV



A LATE TYPE OF CHIPPENDALE CHAIR

brothers James and Robert Adam. While Chippendale was bringing out his book Robert Adam, afterward architect to George III, was in Italy studying every thing that was Roman, including the buried cities, so that when he and his brother started furniture-making it bore the influence of deep classic research. Roman and Grecian vases and all the festoons, figures, medallions, fawns and other forms, as well as the polychrome treatment, typical of Pompeian, ornament the severely simple classic forms of their furniture and mantels. In other words the Adams were purists, and though they brought English furniture and decoration to a standard of unification never reached before, it lacked the imagination and personality that enabled Chippendale to combine the best features of half a dozen schools into a homogeneous and distinctly English whole.

Above the many lesser lights working in the late eighteenth century must be mentioned Sheraton and Hepplewhite. The former was at first noted for his marvelous inlaying—sometimes no more than a hair's breadth—and this along with the extreme slenderness of his furniture legs makes a piece of Sheraton easily recognizable. But in his later days he took to the painting, gilding and varnishing, the delicate satinwood painted with wreaths, cornucopias, lyres, etc., that distinguished his famous contemporary. Thomas Hope was another noted cabinetmaker and the one who carried the Georgian period over into the nineteenth century, by which time, however, all sorts of license was taken with the severe form and pure decoration of the brothers Adam.

Much of this eighteenth century furniture was imported into the American colonies and served as models for what was made here, but this in a limited sense only, for though in the larger towns of the colonies were many excellent furniture makers, they did not attempt the more difficult arts of inlaying, gilding and painted work. Much of the furniture was made of maple. Instead they kept almost entirely to carving, and in the application of this surpassed their tutors. Mouldings and geometrical forms of ornament were brought to the greatest nicety of conception and execution, and later, in commemoration of the great event of the century, eagle's shields, arrows and stars were added and made the style more pronouncedly American. While home-made furniture was mostly fashioned after the sturdy early Chippendale, the mantelpiece, for instance, showed a sense of fineness and originality that might well have been the envy of the more sophisticated English workers.

With the beginning of the eighteenth century there was considerable wealth in America which was spent on handsomely furnished homes, especially in Maryland and Virginia. Williamsburg, Annapolis and Charlestown were the homes of many British officers who brought with them rich and costly furnishings that the natives strove to copy. Rich Oriental rugs were frequently used, wall papers introduced about the middle of the century became very popular and also wall hangings of India printed muslins. With these as a background for the best imported furniture it may be readily seen that to think of a colonial room as an assemblage of rag carpets and mahogany sofas covered with horse hair is to ignore its real richness and variety.

The revolutionary period and the poverty immediately following it naturally affected the production of good furniture, but when the more prosperous nineteenth century opened, when the empire held sway in France and was being introduced into England by Thomas Hope, the movement was naturally reflected in this country. Latrobe, the architect of the capitol at Washington, was its chief exponent, and found a ready sympathizer in Thomas Jefferson. We are all familiar with the furniture of this period; sofas where huge decadent scrolls form the outline are particularly common.



CHIPPENDALE DOUBLE CHAIR

and even though they date as late as 1825 or 1830 are termed colonial.

After this came the age of cheap machine-made furniture—for a long time its mechanical qualities, its unvarying accuracy of line, its constant repetitions of forms and ornament, its perfection of varnished surface destroyed all memory of what individuality and good taste really meant. But happily the reaction against this unæsthetic epoch came and was evidenced by the recent turning of our manufacturers to the best that has been done in the past and their willingness to adopt those elemental principles of furniture designing which have been approved since the earliest civilization.



AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SETTEE

## THE PROPER TREATMENT FOR A NEW MEANS OF CONSTRUCTION

Whatever some architects may think—men of the old school who do not move with the times, and who seem to consider that the forms of architecture and construction were immutably established by the means they are familiar with—the progress of reinforced concrete is continuous and irresistible. First objections and illogical prejudices against the new material have long since been ridden down by proof in actual building, and the architects whose practice includes important work of a civic or business character have not hesitated to adopt reinforced concrete for the skeletons of their fabrics. The attempts, however, which have been made to give some architectural expression and decorative effect to the exterior of buildings constructed with the new material have not often been successful, chiefly because they have been mostly founded on forms of treatment which originated in stone architecture. It is, of course, exceedingly difficult to shake off the effect of long habit and tradition in architectural design, but it is necessary to do so in order to evolve forms suitable to a new material which has no traditional architectural style connected with it. Gothic tradition means the employment of arches and of heavy sections of moulding, both of which are unsuitable to reinforced concrete. Arches, in masonry, are introduced to bridge over openings which are too wide to be covered by single stones used as lintels. In masonry, therefore, the arch is a form of strength peculiarly suited to the material. But the

arched form adds nothing to the strength of reinforced concrete, and is even inconvenient as breaking the lines of the steel reinforcement, while the depth and forcible expression of Gothic mouldings arises from the practice of building with stones set in receding rings—a method entirely due to the use of comparatively small stones, and therefore quite at variance with a material which is set up in the mass and not in small pieces. Evidently therefore Gothic will not help us; there is no affinity between its structural methods and those proper to reinforced concrete. More can be said for the possibility of some suggestions from Classic styles. In these the traditional form of the openings (if we exclude the Roman rather unlawful marriage of the column and the arch) is suitable to reinforced concrete. The use of the pilaster with its carved capital as a means of giving architectural expression to an exterior could hardly be adopted in its Classic form; but projections of pilaster-like form, marking the interior arrangement, or the points where extra strength is desirable, would come into the program well enough, and might have some decorative finish or different shape and material from the carved stone capital. Any imitation of the built-up projecting cornice of the Classic building would be out of place; the cornice should be treated rather as a decorative band with an enriched surface, and not much projection. And, of course, when we come to speak of roofing, the dome is a form that can very well be carried out in reinforced concrete. But for exterior architecture in the new material it seems probable that the best inspiration might be drawn, not from either Gothic or Classic, but from some forms of Oriental architecture. Here we find flat walls with little moulding, yet susceptible of being treated in color, either applied or inlaid. There is a large field for decoration of this kind, by marble, terra-cotta, or tiles, in the exterior surface of reinforced concrete buildings. And a good deal of effect might be produced also by the employment of that rather neglected process, sgraffito—a mode of decoration which seems almost as if made for reinforced concrete, and which admits of every kind of design and any degree of elaboration, combined with entire freedom of line. These are some indications of the direction in which the architectural or decorative treatment of reinforced concrete may be attempted with most chance of success.—*The Architectural Review (London)*.

## WATERPROOFING BUILDINGS

It is sometimes necessary to apply waterproofing to concrete and other materials not in themselves quite impervious to water, and this is done by the application of various substances to the interior or exterior surfaces of walls, etc. The matter was brought forward by Mr. Myson H. Lewis in a paper read before the municipal engineers of the City of New York. The author classes all the methods of waterproofing in use under three heads: (1) Bituminous shields or membranes, including all the processes in which the structure is surrounded by an external shield or membrane. (2) The integral

method, by which is meant making the concrete or masonry itself impermeable, or using a waterproof cement coating. This is termed the "rigid" method, in distinction to the "elastic," or bituminous.

The third method is that in which the waterproofing is applied to the surface of the structure, but not as cement, as in case 1. By adopting any of these methods, according to circumstances, it is maintained that, with thorough investigation, correct design, and suitable materials, structures can be waterproofed with as much certainty, and as permanently, as it is possible to expect. The effects of variations of temperature must be carefully guarded against, a fact which will perhaps be more readily appreciated when we state that in the case of plaster there is, for a difference of 100 degrees Fahr., an increase or decrease of 2.7 cubic feet in a 10-foot cube. The range in other materials is not so great but it has, nevertheless, to be considered. In neat cement it is 1.8 cubic feet in a 10-foot cube, and in concrete 0.4 cubic foot in a 10-foot cube.

In using membranous waterproofing, one of the chief considerations is to have a good surface on which to apply the material. It must not be too ragged nor yet too smooth. The surface must also be clean and dry. In the integral method, the chief point of importance is the elimination of all voids in the concrete. The impermeability of the mass may also be assisted by the incorporation of some waterproofing compound, such as solutions of chloride of lime or sulphate of aluminium, added to the cement, and Sylvester soap or alum mixtures, as well as hydrated lime and metallic stearites. The author, however, points out that the effect of none of these compounds has been tested by time. Metallic stearites appear to be most in favor at the present time.

With regard to surface coatings, the most permanent of these is hot paraffin injected into the pores of the surface, but it is necessary that the paraffin should be a specially hard kind. It is rather an expensive method, but the results seem to justify it. The Sylvester method of alum and soap is much in use, but it requires a larger number of coats than in the case of paraffin, and is quite as expensive, while it is no more permanent. Linseed oil should not be used, as it is an unstable compound and produces a soap upon coming in contact with the alkali in cement, and soon washes off. Included in the paper is a very useful diagram for determining the dimensions and the cost (in the United States) of reinforced concrete floors subjected to external hydrostatic pressure. This is intended for use when designing floors that have to be waterproofed in deep basements, and where it is important to guard against the cracking of the floors.—*Architects' and Builders' Journal*.

#### Representatives of the United States to the International Town Planning Conference

Charles Mulford Robinson, member of the Rochester Park Board, is to be one of the two representatives of the United States at an International Town Planning Conference, to be held in London in October. D. H. Burnham, of Chicago, is the other American representative at the conference which is under the auspices of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

## THE PROFESSIONAL ADVISER

In view of the constantly recurring discussion of American architectural competitions in their various phases it is interesting to observe that the matter does not appear to be so completely settled even in a country where the architect's position in the popular and governmental mind is much higher than is yet the case in this country. In England, as here, the matter of the professional adviser is considered of the greatest importance to the competitors as well as for the quality of the product. An article in a recent issue of the *Architects' and Builders' Journal* (London) discusses in a frank manner the necessary qualifications and duties of the professional adviser, who is known in England by the name of assessor. The article says in part:

"There has been evident of late years a partial reaction in the profession against the method of deciding a competition by the verdict of an individual, who may, perhaps, quite honestly and reasonably, have a prejudice in favor of a particular style of architecture; or who, in the case of a building for a special purpose, may have a fixed idea in favor of one special principle in planning, and be consequently inclined to rule out—again quite honestly—any plans which do not conform to his pet ideal. He may very likely be right in his judgment, but it is possible that he may not be; and in any case, say the objectors, one does not want to see a particular style or a particular form of plan stereotyped as the only right one.

"We may say at once that we consider it quite unquestionable that the appointment of a professional assessor in the majority of competitions, and the insistence upon this course by the Institute of Architects, has been of immense benefit both to the profession and indirectly to architecture. The younger generation of architects can hardly have an idea of the preposterous selections which were sometimes made in the pre-assessor days, and of the high-handed manner in which competitors were victimized. Those who frequent exhibitions of competition designs know the figure of the intelligent Town Councillor who shakes his head over the assessor's choice, and buttonholes you to show you the design he would have selected—something in which tawdry commonplaces of architecture are set out in the glories of a captivating draughtsman's style. The assessor has delivered us from the intelligent Town Councillor at all events.

"On the other side of the question, there are two opposite tendencies—we will not necessarily call them weaknesses—to which assessors are liable, and which are apt to give a rather one-sided effect to their decisions. There is the assessor who is an architectural enthusiast, and who is inclined to fix his choice on the best and most effective piece of architectural design, content if the plan will do fairly well for the intended purpose, without being the best possible or the best of the plans sent in; who will recommend a design in a swimming-bath competition as a fine piece of architecture that will be a credit to the district, without con-

(Continued on page 84)

# 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*.  
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| All other countries                         | \$12.00 per year |

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

September 7, 1910

Vol. XCVIII, No. 1811

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Recent Tendencies in Californian Residence Work.  
Light and Air in Country Houses.  
Vacuum Cleaning.

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

Recent Work of Alden & Harlow, Architects.

### Frontispiece:

Detail of Apse of a Church at Rioux, France.

SOME months ago we had occasion to remark in these columns that while improved transportation facilities have exercised, in some respects, a stimulating influence on building operations the country over, this influence has not always resulted for the good of the architectural standard of a community. A striking instance which would bear out this theory is to be found in recent Californian residence work. If there is a section of the United States which possesses a style in its residential work that section is undisputably the Southern coast of California. Its distinctive manner of building and designing has a legitimate origin in the Spanish traditions of the old local missions and was developed therefrom in accordance with climatic and topographical conditions and modern needs and improvements. The materials employed were those readily obtainable near the site and the methods of handling these grew naturally out of their characteristics. The result, therefore, was faithful to local tendencies and was distinguished by honesty of construction and by simplicity of design and decorative treatment. The materials naturally employed were wood, which has a long life under the mild and uniform climate and exists in abundance and of excellent quality, brick covered with stucco and stucco applied to a wooden framework.

In recent years there has been a great influx from the East into the residential colonies of California, and many of the features and materials which have heretofore been typical of the homes on the Pacific Coast have apparently given way to new ideas of Eastern clients with whom a local architect has either not had sufficient authority or an Eastern architect was employed who was himself not sufficiently in touch with conditions to perpetuate what is best in the Californian traditions.

Accordingly, we now see in the Coast resorts residences of foreign origins that would look more in place in almost any other environment. The bulk of important recent residence work, however, which adheres to local traditions holds out the prospect that the extraneous influences are only temporary and will, in time, be forgotten in the total achievement of Californian residence architecture as a distinctive expression of one of the most delightful phases of American life.

AN English architect well versed in designing the smaller and less expensive suburban and country houses writes in a current journal on the importance of the height of rooms, the proper placing of windows and simplification of finish. The subject is decidedly live from a practical standpoint when so much is being said about better sanitary dwelling conditions. Only an architect who has given much thought to the designing of houses of modest cost can appreciate the difficulty of adjusting his cubical contents to the money available in a way that gives him a chance to say something architecturally. He knows that if he can persuade a client that it is a mistake to require ten-foot ceilings when a nine-foot height will save ten per cent of the cubical content for some other feature in which it is usable to greater advantage, and when the lower room is more easily heated and certainly better ventilated and will look equally well and sometimes better—his chances for giving him a comfortable house are greatly increased. Again when the means are limited and much effect must be got at a small expenditure both practically and artistically such questions as the placing of windows high up near the ceiling and the intelligent omission of much moulded finish both on exterior and interior may be considered to great advantage. It is to be hoped that the conditions surrounding the building of the small house, representing a very considerable portion of our total building activity, will be so improved that, in the near future, that degree of attention will be directed towards solving its architectural problems that prevails notably in England and Germany.

CLEANING by suction or exhaust air has reached a stage in its development which promises, in the near future, to place it in a class with such modern improvements as sanitary plumbing and electric lighting. Its hygienic and economic advantages have been recognized. To be able to clean house by turning on a valve or switch and having only to guide a tool over the surface not only appeals to the modern sense of expediency, but, by its sure performance, makes an appeal which can be called forth only by an improvement of universal application. The fact that it performs a service which the advance of civilization demands and for which no other equally good solution has yet been found is sufficient to place it in a position of economic importance. When the public shall have comprehended just what vacuum cleaning means for health, happiness and economy, the demand for it will stop only where any necessity would be limited for lack of the means to provide it. In the meantime it has attained a vogue with the more progressive element of the building public which promises that its general adoption is not far off.

(Continued from page 82)

sidering whether its arrangements as a swimming-bath are the best. There is so much commonplace architecture turned out in these days of restless building and rebuilding that one cannot but feel a great deal of sympathy with this type of assessor; but it must be admitted that the position is hardly a sound one. He is making a selection of what other people have to pay for, and he has hardly a right to select what does not suit their practical purposes because it approves itself to his architectural perceptions. But this class of assessor is in the minority. On the whole, architectural assessors seem at present to be for the most part honestly endeavoring to select the best plans among competition designs, and the danger is rather the other way; that somewhat commonplace architecture will be erected because the plan is satisfactory. And on the whole, this tendency to lean too much to the utilitarian side is the more common weakness with assessors, if it is to be considered a weakness. Conscientious and scrupulous assessors, passing judgment on other people's property, like to be on the safe side. Those who have paid much attention to competitions, or have competed much, will probably agree that it is of little use to submit in a competition anything that is architecturally very original. The *juste milieu* is always the safest. And that possibly is an inherent defect in the whole competition system. Competition, as a rule, is not the way to get original architecture. Competitors go in to win, and originality is too risky.

"The conditions referred to at the outset, under which the assessor system may have the effect of rather stereotyping architectural style and plan, are when one distinguished architect gets rather a name for acting as an assessor, and is engaged right and left in that capacity by public bodies, and thus has practically the selection of the architecture of the principal new public buildings in his own hands. That actually was the case for some years in the days when Waterhouse was invited to fill the post of assessor for one competition after another. He was an admirable assessor, with a keen eye for the main points of a plan and design, and made some excellent selections; but there certainly was a feeling that the selection of designs in competition was becoming too much of a personal matter; and there is a strong feeling at the present time among many of the younger competing members of the profession that there is a tendency to repeat that state of things. Whatever the eminence of a universal assessor, and whatever respect may be felt for his character and acquirements, it is not well that the choice of the architecture for the majority of our important new buildings should be ruled by one individual will; and the position, we have reason to know, does not satisfy those who are in the habit of competing. The proper course would be for all public bodies to apply to the Institute to appoint assessors. They have a long list of members competent to act as assessors, and could make appointments, according to the importance of the occasion, so as to bring as many minds as possible to bear on the subject, which is a better condition of things.

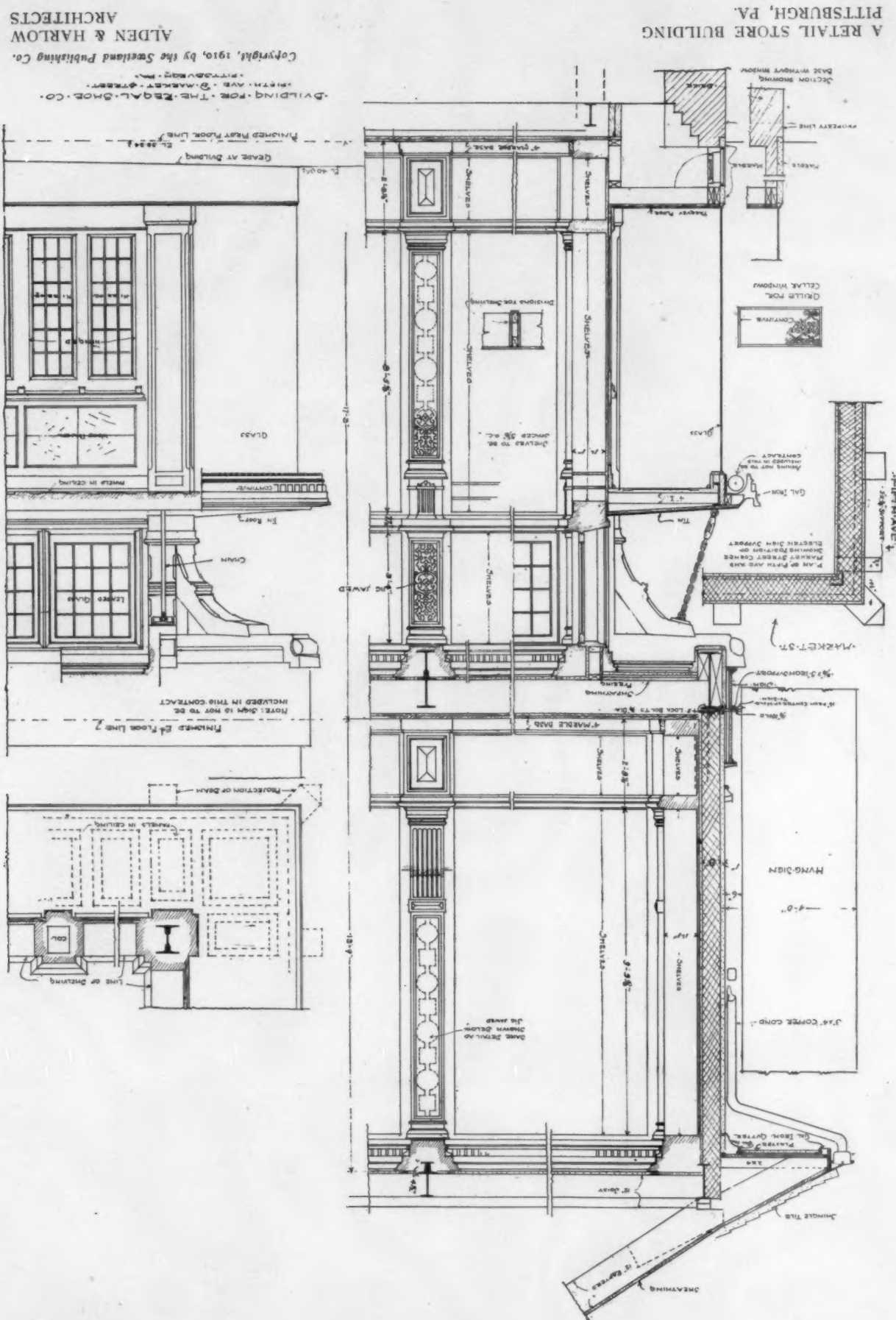
"There are cases in which what we may call sub-as-

sessors ought to be appointed to assess the assessor. In the case of such a thing as a swimming-bath, for instance, already referred to, the architectural assessor would judge of the style and the general planning of the building, but he ought to have joined with him an adviser conversant with the engineering provisions of a swimming-bath, which are special and complicated. In the case of the Usher Hall, as was pointed out in a signed article recently, the second premium was awarded to a form of plan which is radically bad for a concert-room, and the third to one in which the organ is placed in a position which would at once be condemned by every conductor. In the case of all concert-rooms a musical expert should be joined with the assessor, to advise him on such points. Even the most eminent architect cannot be expected to know everything. Theaters are, unfortunately, seldom the subjects of competition, or we might perhaps have some better theater architecture than we have; they are generally 'jobs'; but in the case of a theater competition any architectural assessor ought undoubtedly to be sub-assessed by an experienced stage manager. The principle applies to all buildings which include some provision quite apart from ordinary problems of planning and construction.

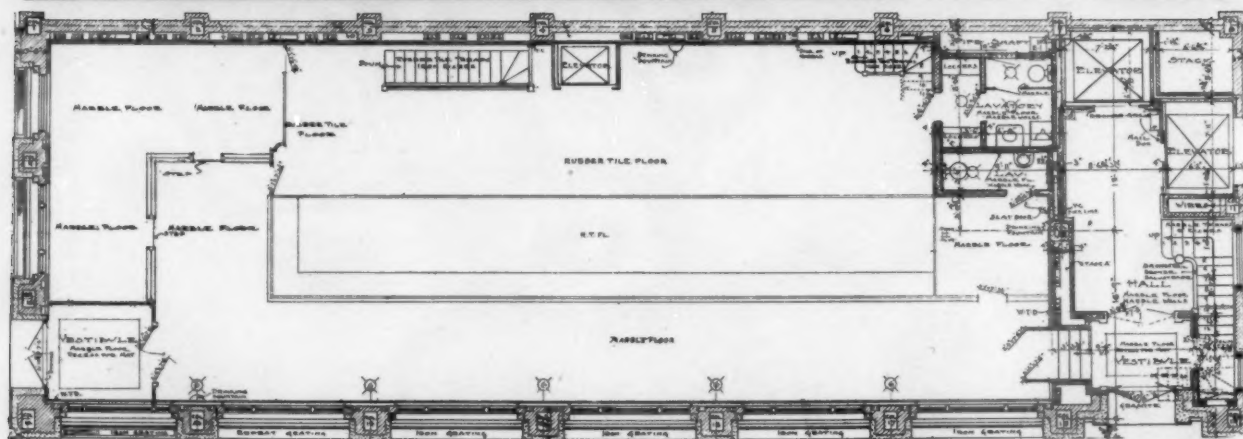
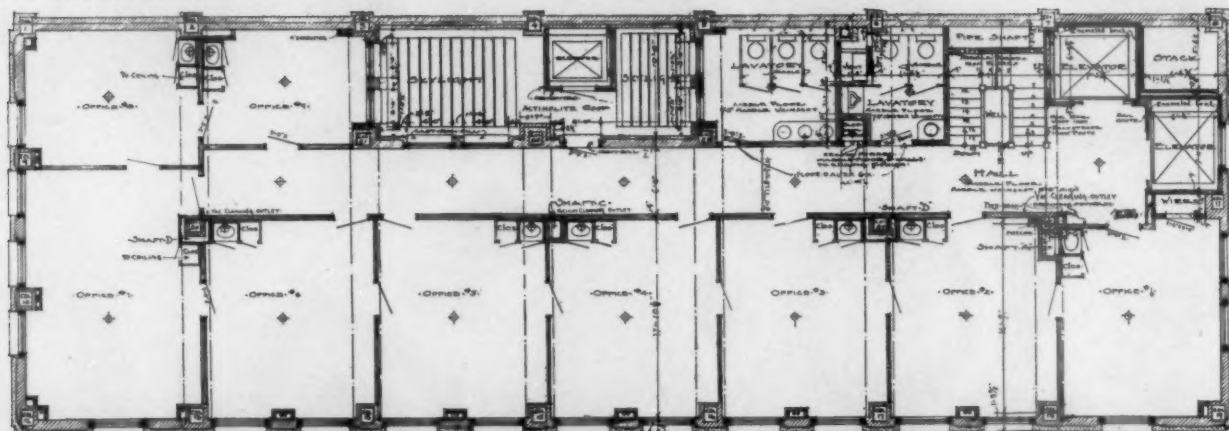
"The question is still undecided in many minds whether an assessor is an arbitrator or an adviser. The Institute, in its regulations, takes the line that he is an arbitrator, and is to impose a choice on the committee. That he should impose his choice on the committee is quite desirable; but there are different ways of doing it. In a court of law an 'assessor,' when appointed, is certainly not an arbitrator; he is a person to assist the judge by his special knowledge; and that is what the word 'assessor' means. We cannot help thinking that the profession would be in a better position with the public if that meaning of the word 'assessor' had been recognized and acted on from the first; that he is a person not ostensibly to impose a choice on a committee, but to advise them in a right choice. Committees would welcome him much more heartily on that footing. If it is urged that then there would be no certainty of the right choice being made, our reply would be that any man with a thorough understanding of the subject and a power of explaining its points clearly and persuasively would carry a committee with him; and that if he could not do so he would not be suited for the position. The tendency of committees to give a wrong award is much more often the result of ignorance than of bad faith. The majority of them would wish to do right if they were shown the way. It is the assessor's business to show it them.

"It should be added that it is of the greatest importance that an assessor should be quite decided in his own conclusions as to the respective merits of designs, and should express them in a clear and definite manner. We can recall one instance in which an assessor was thrown over by his committee because he was vacillating in his expressions and did not seem to know his own mind, and the committee (excusably) declined to pay further attention to him: an unfortunate result in every respect."









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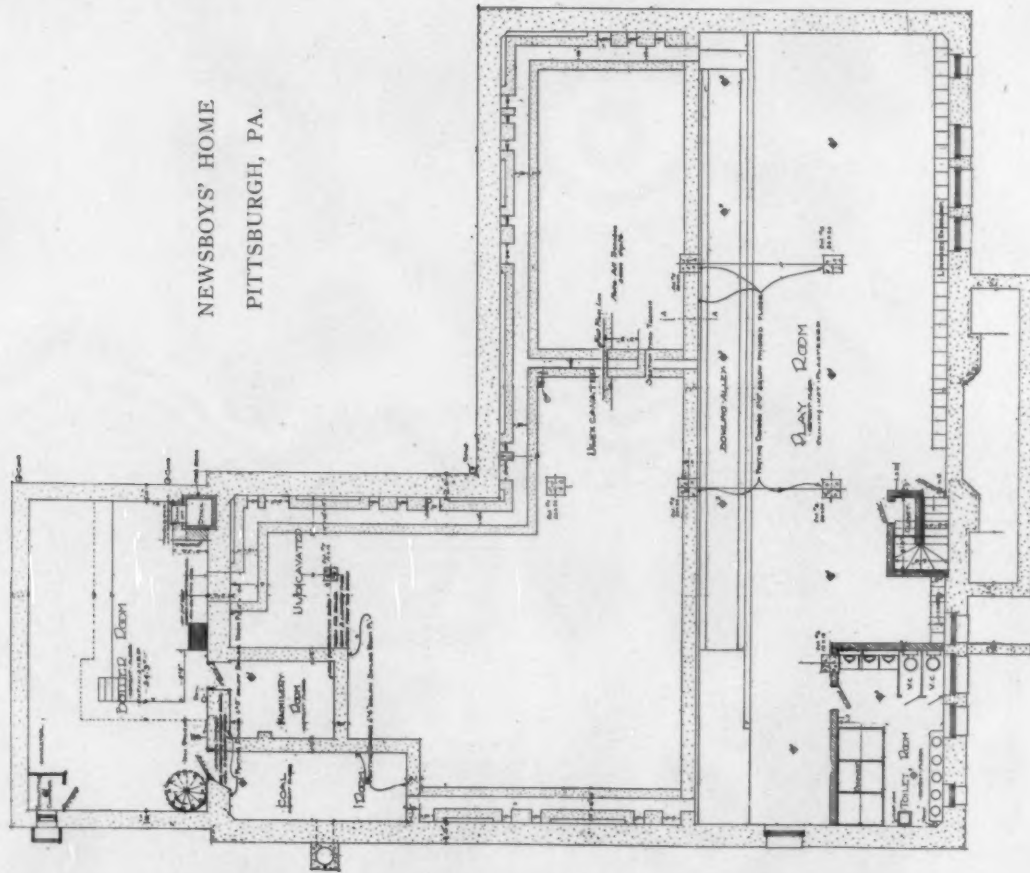
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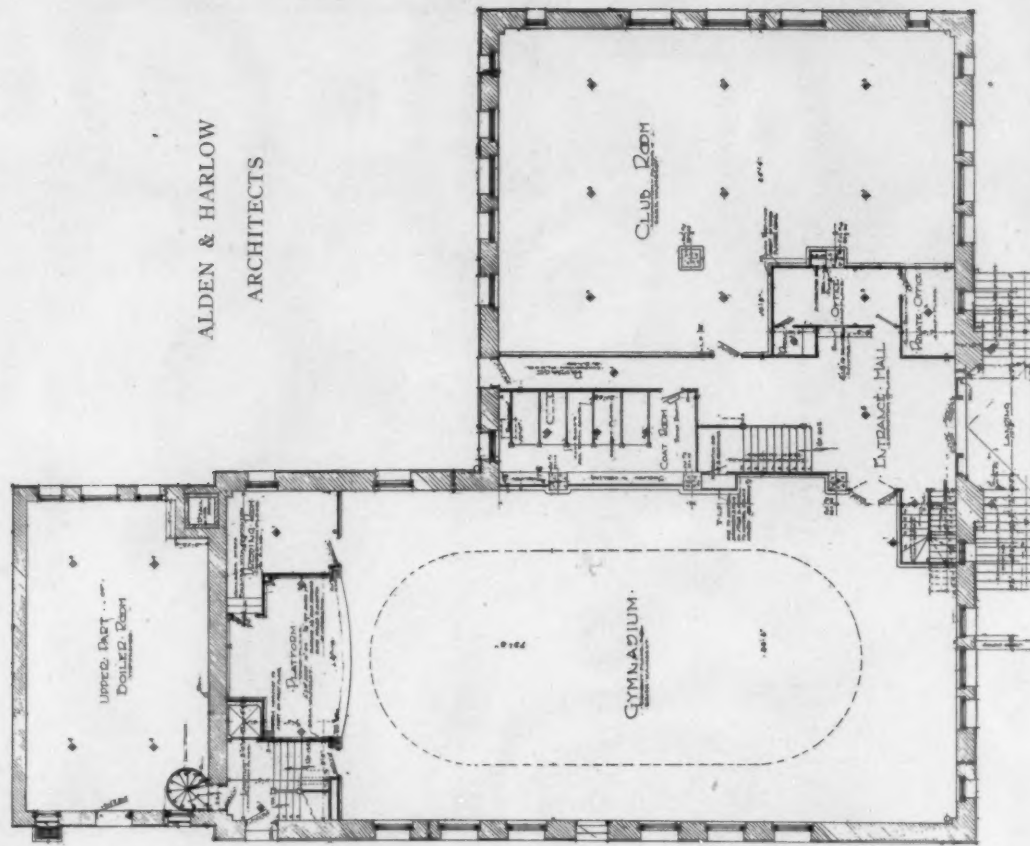
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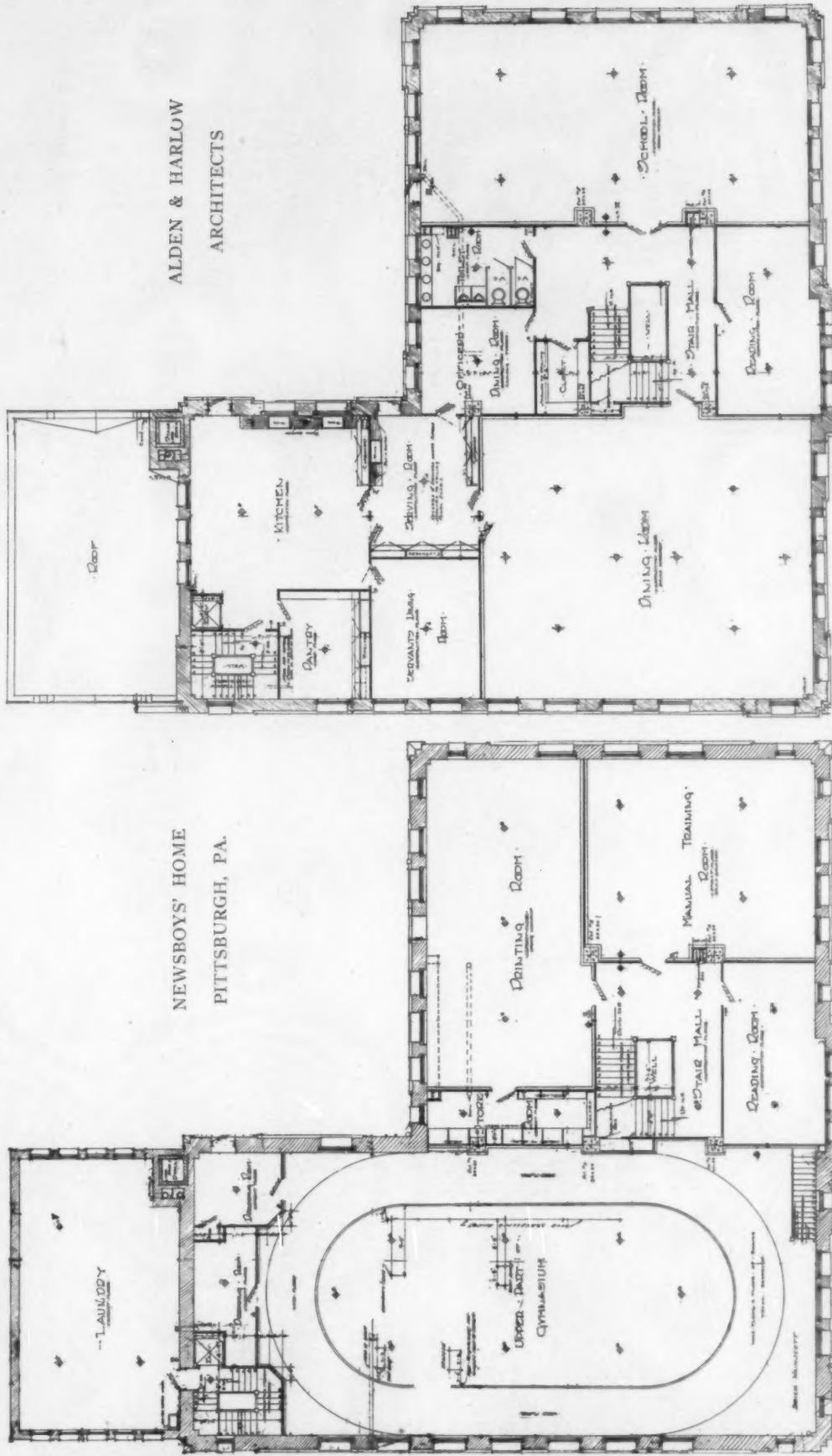
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VOL. XCVIII, NO. 1811

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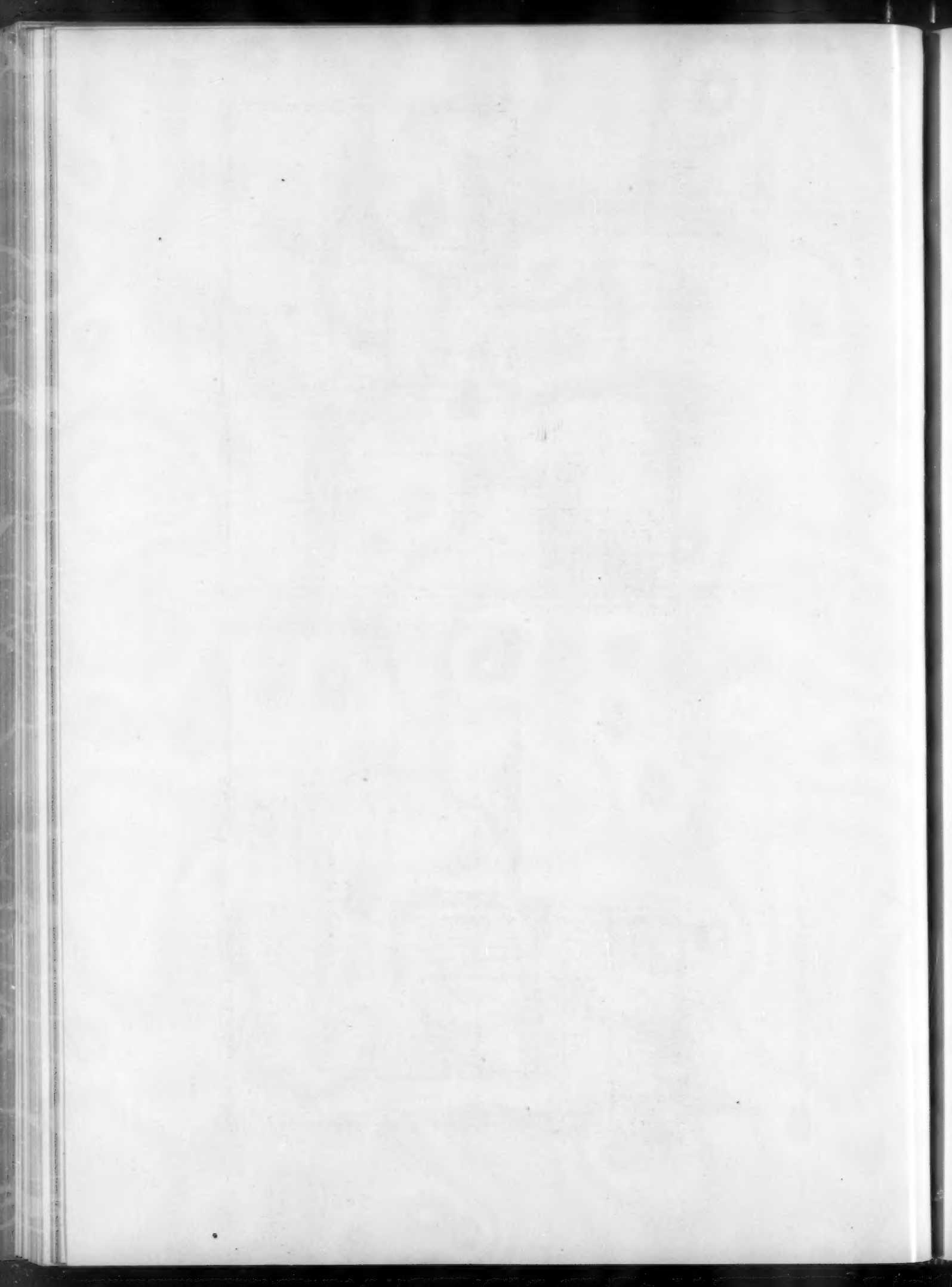
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SECOND FLOOR

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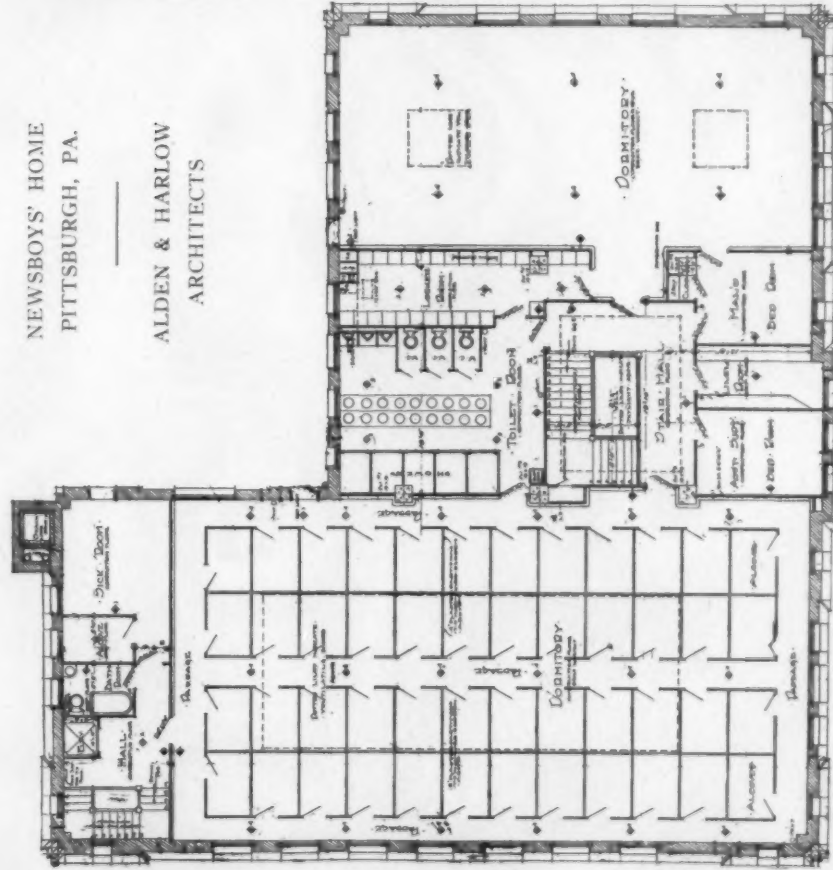
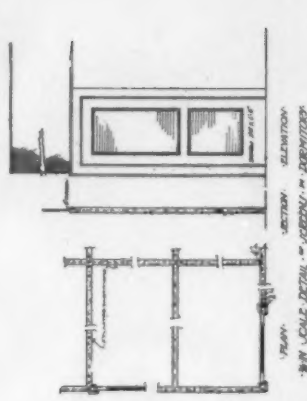


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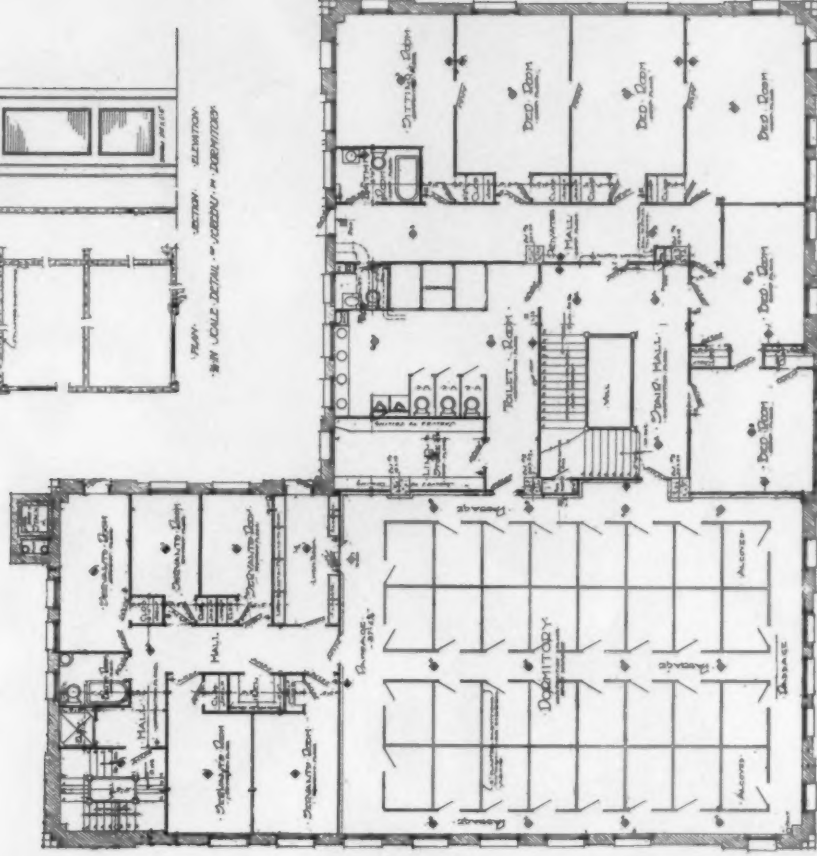
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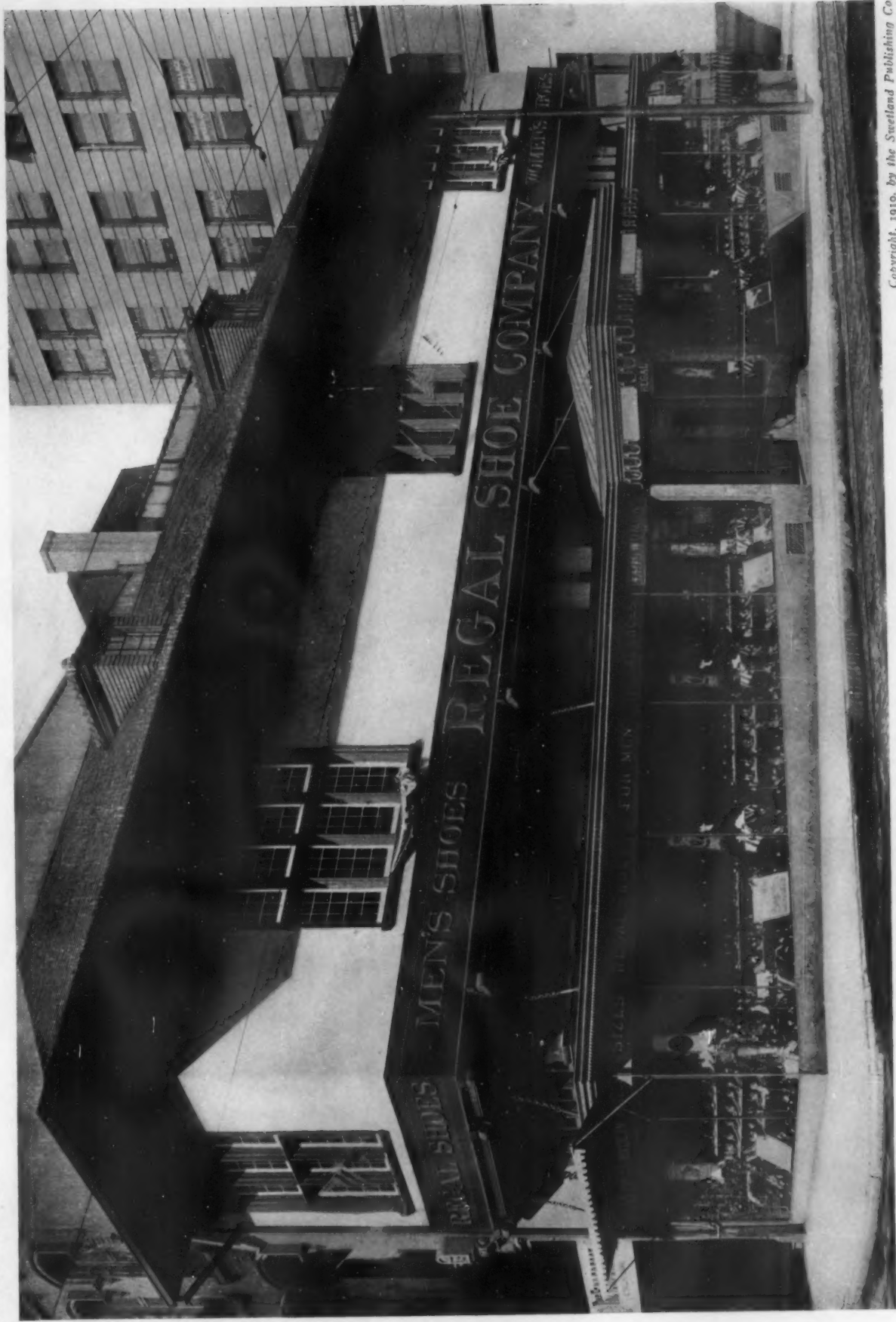
FOURTH FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

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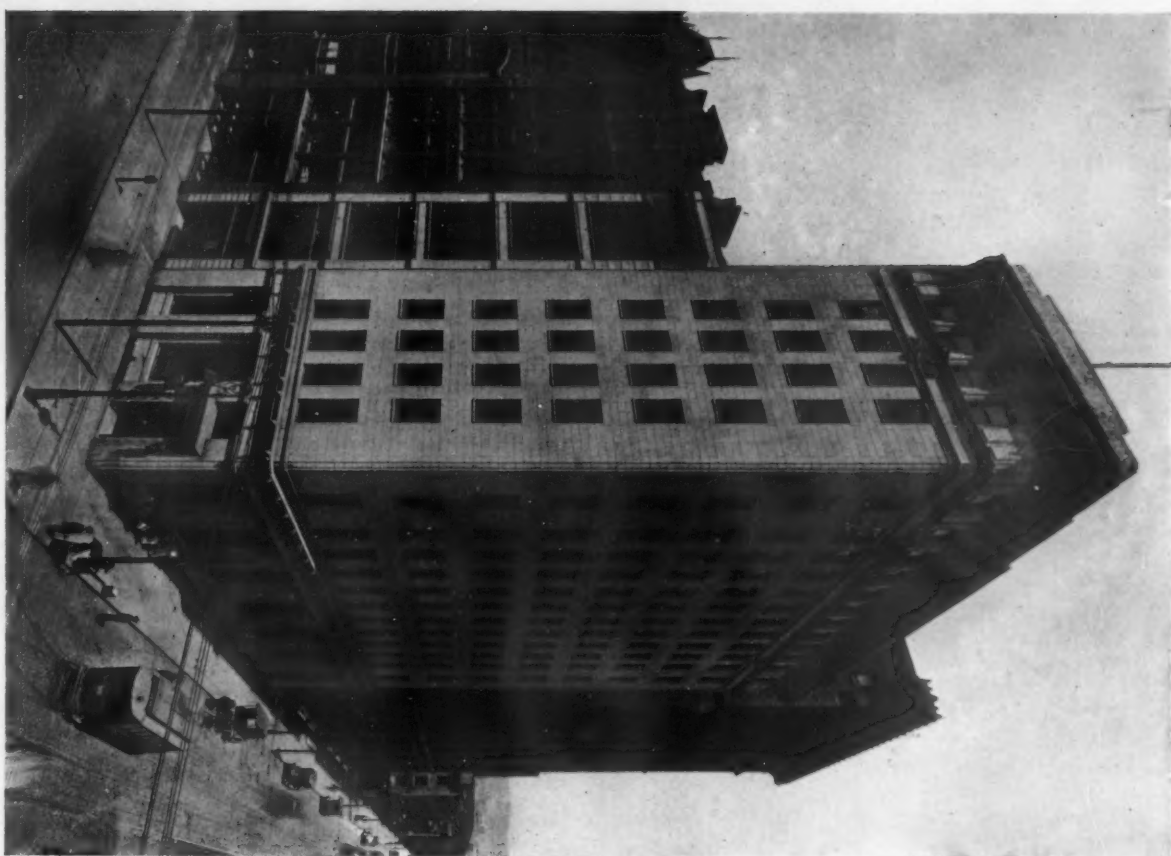
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