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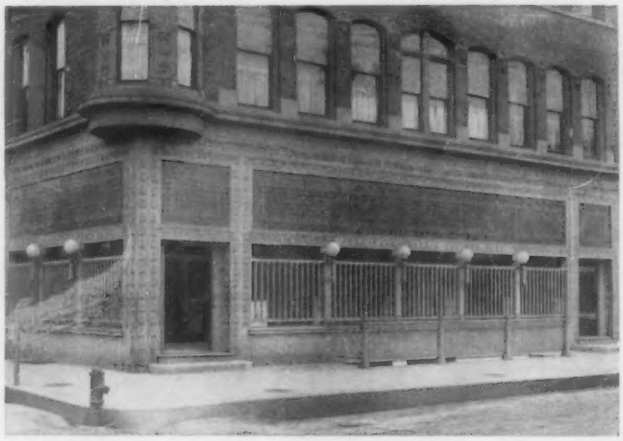
THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY IN NEW YORK

THIS ISSUE CONTAINS

AN INTERESTING LETTER DESCRIBING AN ARCHITECT'S SKETCHING TOUR ABROAD—NEW QUARTERS OF THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS, LONDON—HALF-BREED HOUSES IN THE PHILIPPINES AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF RECENT WORK IN DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE BY JAMES PURDON

VOLUME XCVIII NOVEMBER 30, 1910 NUMBER 1823



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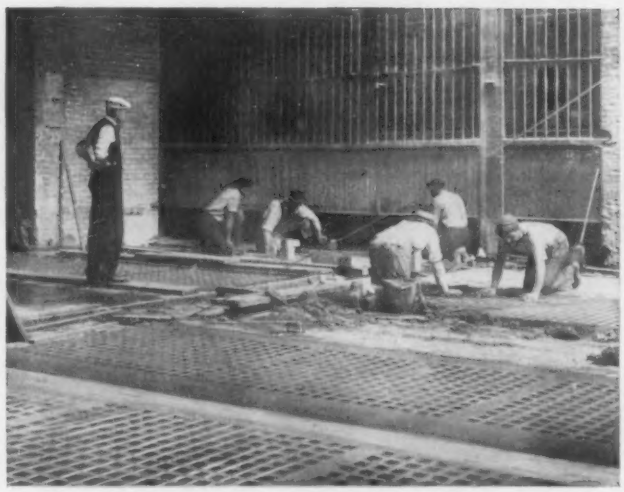

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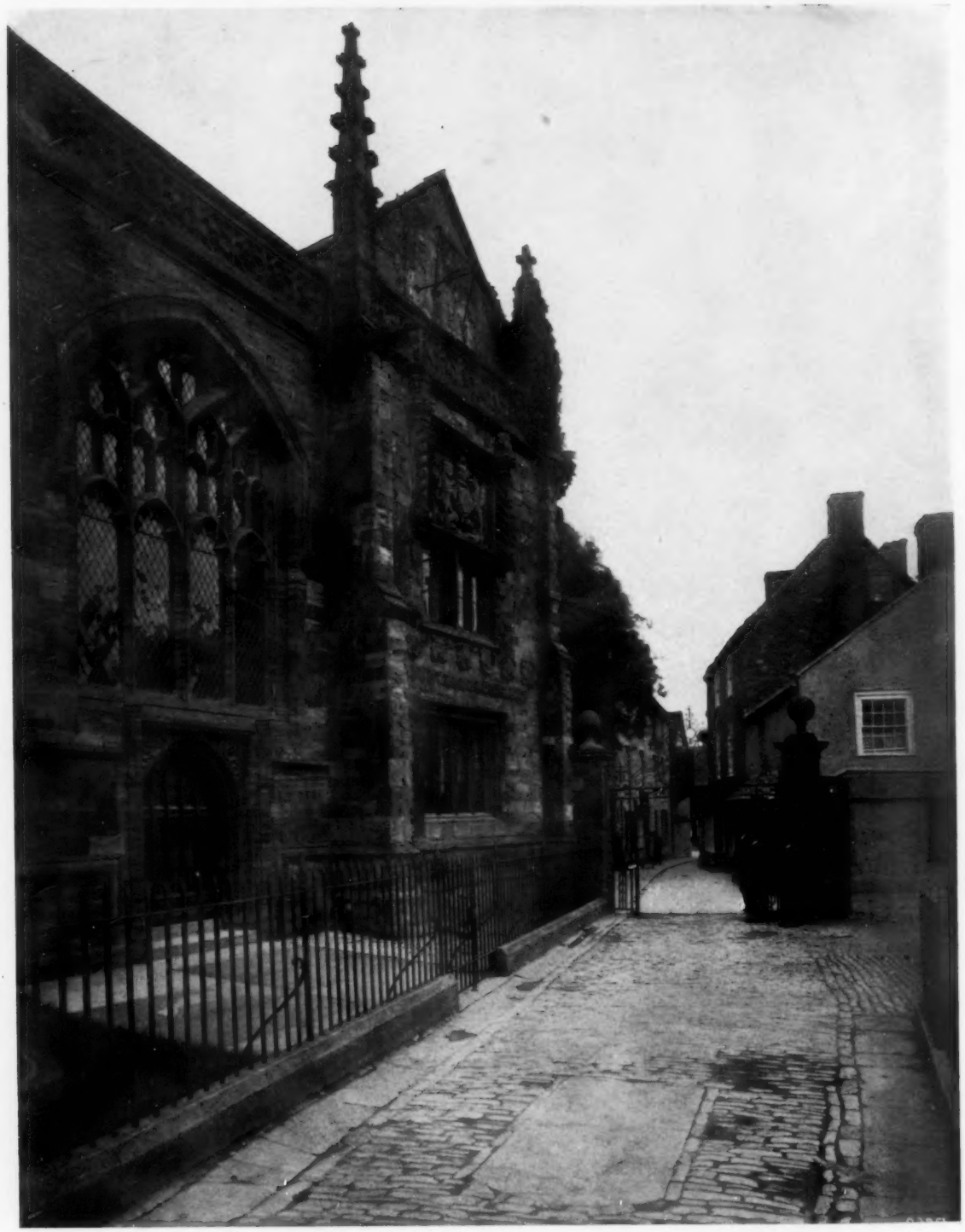

LADY CHAPEL AND GATE LEADING TO CLOSE, SHERBOURNE MINSTER

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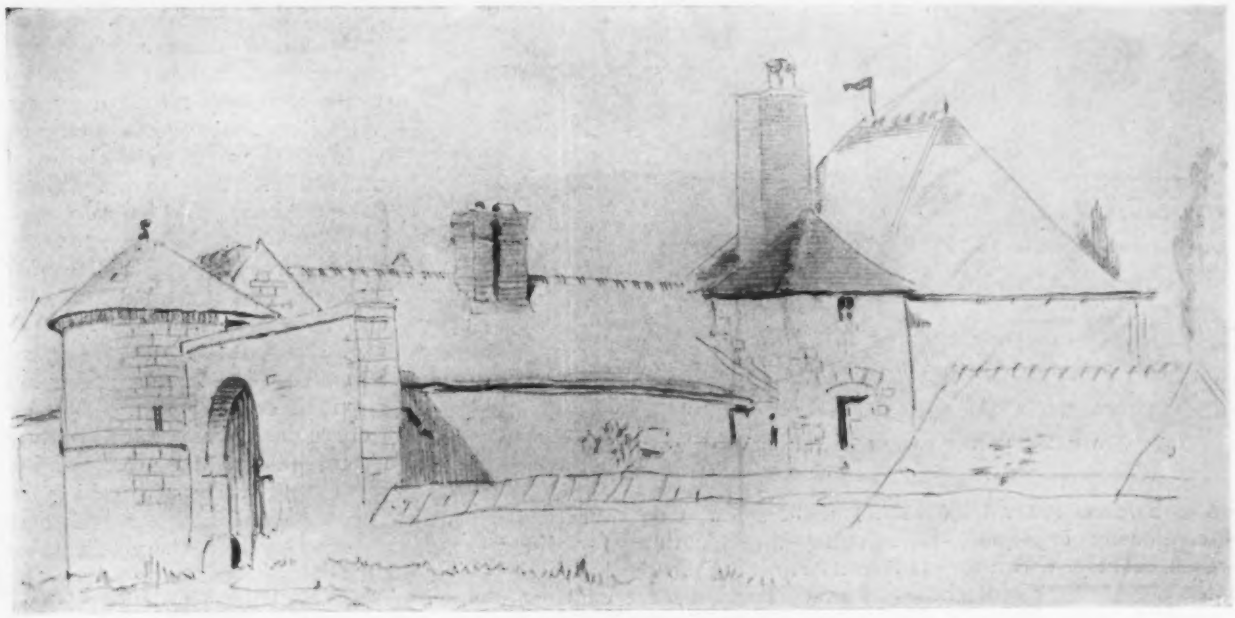
THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Vol. XCVIII WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1910 No. 1823



FARM BUILDINGS AT RIEUX

LETTERS TO C.R.E., ARCHITECT, ABOUT A LITTLE JOURNEY IN THE OISE VALLEY—II*

By WILLIAM WELLES BOSWORTH. Illustrated by sketches from the notebook of the writer

IN my last letter I brought you with me as far as Villers St. Paul. There, the church was delightful, especially in the quality of its details. It was just the character of Romanesque that Mr. H. H. Richardson used in the best of his work. A transept and tower had been added at a later epoch, which not only made it a picturesque group but enhanced the beauty of the earlier detail by contrast. The capitals along the nave were very quaint and full of individuality, suggesting in their broad forms relationship with the famous ones at Moissac, though much less elaborate. In the presence of a little church like this, where the touch of everything is so full of temperament and charm, one cannot help a feeling of astonishment at the wave of absorption in the pre-Reformation English Gothic that has taken possession of the architects in ecclesiastical work here at home.

The hard outlines of its buttresses and shafting are no doubt easily adapted to terra cotta and artificial stone; but in most modern cases they certainly suggest some such mechanical process.

The color of these old French churches is also an important element of their beauty. They are always warm in tone, whereas our buildings, as a rule, are cold. Their walls are built of mellow greys and drabs, while ours are, in nine cases out of ten, cold greys or steely local stone. Their roofs are soft red tile, of course beautified by centuries of moss and mould, whereas our roofs are either covered with cold hard slate or else with tiles so red and so garish that they shriek at everything in the landscape. Was it not one of the best indications of Mr. McKim's appreciation when he had the tiles of the roof of the Boston Public Library spattered all over with green paint?

At Brenouille we passed a little fortified church. It was built on a rectangular plot of ground, raised above the common level and enclosed in a high stone wall. The church at Rieux offered a pretty grouping of octagonal tower and gables galleries. Rieux also had a picturesque group of farm buildings with a gate forti-

*The first letter of this series was published in issue No. 1762, September 29, 1909.

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PAVILLION IN THE GARDEN OF THE CHATEAU AT MELLO

fied by a round tower with lookout at the sides. One is continually impressed, in traveling through this French country, with the wonderful instinct they had in the old days for roof outlines. Every few miles is accented by some picturesque or romantic structure, all through this region, indicating wide sympathy with the art of building. Flamboyant Gothic huddled up beside early Renaissance, as in the church at Pont St. Maxence, or early Romanesque with fourteenth century Gothic, as at Villers St. Paul; always combined, however heterogeneous, by this unerring instinct, into picturesque and harmonious *ensembles*.

Adaptability still characterizes the French. At the railroad station, where we went to have some money changed, the ticket agent gave us a bad piece, thinking that, being foreigners, we should not notice it. We did, however, and handed it back in protest. He willingly changed it, saying, "I know that it's bad, but it's not *too* bad. It's easily passed, that one there."

A most unexpected treat was in store for us at Mello. We came to it at nightfall through a deep wood of evergreens, and were charmed at the almost stage-like effect that the little old houses with timber fronts and gables made, as they toppled along the village street, with never a shop window, and only here and there a light in an upper story.

There was not a soul to be seen in the street, which grew more like a scene from a Shakespearean play the farther one went.

The square before the church was made even more like a picture by an important drinking fountain in the center. Farther on, the street bridged over a stream which was dammed below, and the falling water refreshed the Summer air. We followed along to an open gateway, which proved to be the inn of the village. The inn was all and more than one could have expected in such a town. We were received at the door by a most friendly young landlord, who presented us to his even more prepossessing wife. We were shown through the courtyard into what seemed like anything but a public establishment. But we were quite overcome upon being ushered into a small private dining room with walls and ceiling of carved oak paneling, with homard and lapin chasseur for dinner; and all at no greater charge than we had been paying for the common everyday fare. The explanation was, as we found out later, that visitors were a rare occurrence in the town, causing no little interest to the community. So, when any came, they made much of them to keep them longer.

DETAIL OF THE CHURCH AT RIEUX

LODGE IN GROUNDS OF CHATEAU, MELLO

This worked well with us, for from not having expected to stay more than over night we lingered on a fortnight, and became very fond of the landlord and his wife. Each day she would drive us in her smart little trap to some interesting spot in the neighborhood to show us an old *ferme*, or a curious church, such as the one at Rousseloy, or to visit the greenhouses and park of the chateau on the hill. Mello itself abounds in interesting subjects for sketching. It was curious to see no indications of commercial activity in a town of its size. Each little house had its walled garden in the rear, and women would come out to sit before the doors with their knitting at the close of the day. When we asked our landlord what the people lived on, he said with pride, "We all live on our incomes in Mello."

Office Windows

Experience shows a wide diversity in the requirements of tenants. For example, the matter of window frontage. One wants north light, as it is best for the eyes and less fluctuating. Another desires south or east exposure, as he enjoys the morning sunlight. Yet another wants marine view, and is willing to pay as much for the top floor space as his neighbor does for second floor frontage where he can more distinctly hear the roar of traffic and attract the great eye of the public to his signs. The dentist and specialist in surgery want special plumbing and compressed air. Some prefer court space, providing it is light, so that their assistants and operatives can work in quietness and where there are no outside activities to attract their attention from their work.—*Building Management.*

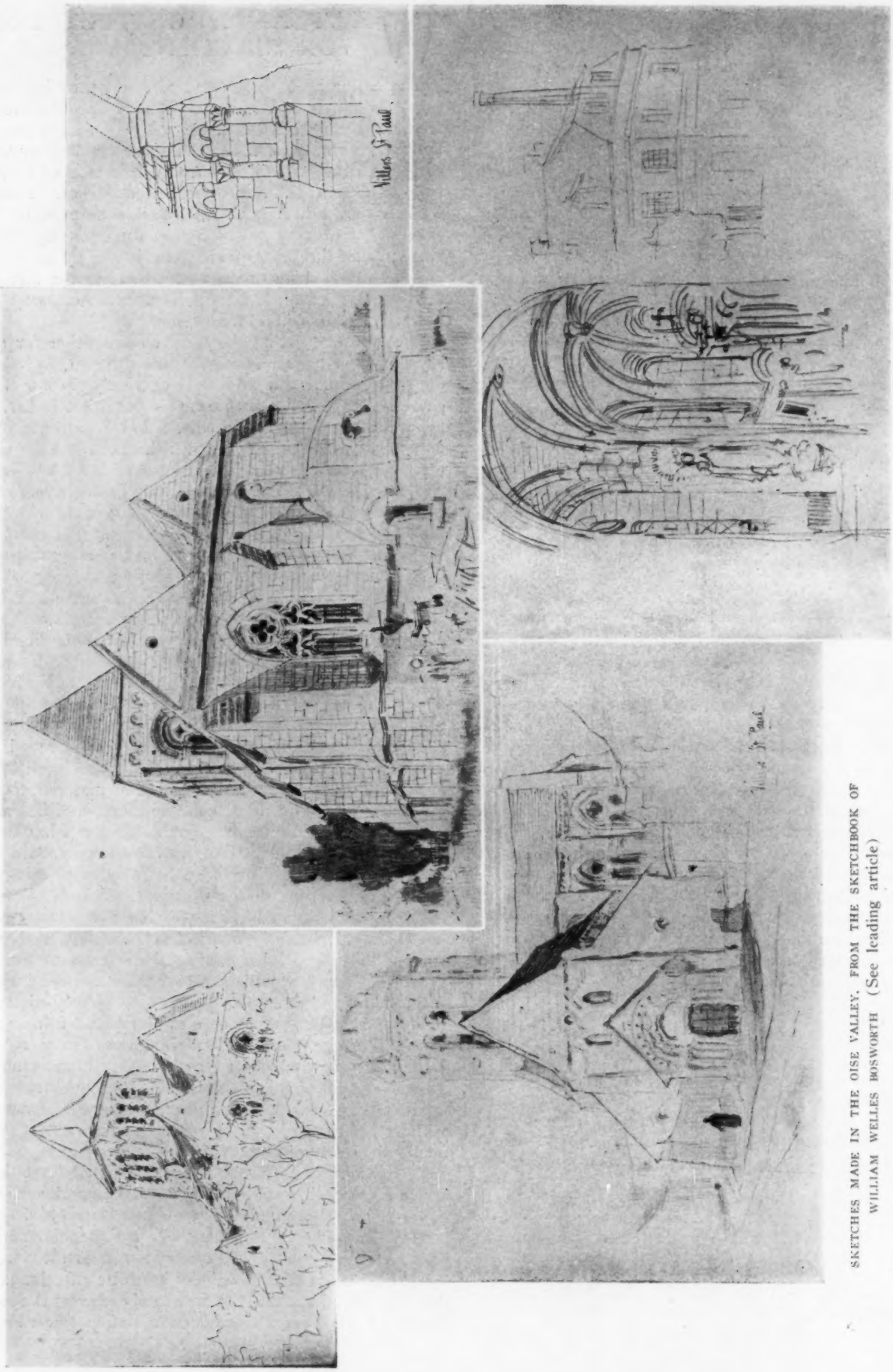
WHAT AN ARCHITECT DOES FOR HIS CLIENT

The editor of THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT has been good enough to invite me to set down some more or less elementary considerations relating to the art of building, with a view to providing the practitioner with the basis of an argument when he is compelled to justify to his clients his professional existence. I must confess that I hear with considerable surprise of the necessity for doing this thing at this late day but I am told that the professional millenium is by no means fully established in America and that, in the remoter districts, especially, it is still sometimes necessary for the architect to defend his calling.

It seems to me that the basic consideration for any such argument must be established through a preliminary definition. An architect, obviously, is one who professes to practise architecture—but what is "architecture"? Engineers, as a rule, I find, regard architecture as a sort of engineering which deals with the simpler problems of construction as applied to buildings, and which adds to the fundamental construction forms certain decorative additions much in the sense in which the icing is applied to the wedding cake. But there is, under modern conditions, a profound and fundamental distinction between architecture and engineering which can be best explained by a concrete illustration. When the engineer designs, let us say, a dam, to be built far from the busy thoroughfares of the day, in the heart of the wilderness, on the upper reaches of a river, his profiles in plan and section are determined wholly or chiefly by considerations of pure utility. The weight of the impounded water, the specific gravity of his material, the impact of the spring freshet when the stream is in full flood, the storage capacity of the reservoir, all these elements are paramount. His choice of material, too, is determined by economical considerations, and he cares little about color or texture, but much about hardness, about price, about adaptability to foundation conditions. When his structure is completed it may be pleasing or not, but it must be, in every respect, efficient. Doubtless he would rather have it pleasing than displeasing, but he would not for a moment consider any modification of the lines of his dam in the interest of beauty of outline which would in the slightest degree impair its economy and strength. Sometimes, by way of architecture, he adds battlements to the tops of his gate towers, or he may even, in extreme cases, go so far as to add a balustrade here or there when opportunity offers. But all of this architecture is purely extraneous and might be wiped away with one sweep of the eraser without affecting, in the slightest particular, a single one of the essential lines of the structure.

Let us turn quite to the other side of the vast field which is covered by all building operations and consider the architect. Let us suppose he is called upon to design a purely monumental structure, like a Fulton Memorial or a Grant's Tomb. Such a composition in the purely "practical" sense of the engineer has little effective utility. Its chief function is to adequately express the sentiment of the commonwealth or a nation toward the

(*Continued on page* 182)



SKETCHES MADE IN THE OISE VALLEY, FROM THE SKETCHBOOK OF WILLIAM WELLES BOSWORTH (See leading article)

At top, the church at Brenouille, with detail of buttress treatment, below, the church at Villers St. Paul, and two sketches by the wayside

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CONVINCING A CLIENT

ARCHITECTS, who perfectly well understand the distinction themselves, are often at a loss for set terms in which to express the real meaning and value of their professional services to their clients.

It is especially in those communities which lie at some distance from urban activities and are not closely in touch with current achievement in architecture that the owner still has a lingering suspicion that "artistic" training has rendered the architect more rather than less incompetent and in many towns in America the architect's practice only grows when and as he is able to overcome this prejudice.

It is for the benefit of such men, and at the request of one of them, that the article on page 179 has been prepared by a very competent critic who, for reasons best appreciated by himself, prefers to conceal his identity under a pseudonym.

SCHOOLS IN PUBLIC PARKS

IF it is true, as stated in the public press, that the Finance Commission of Boston, Mass., has favored the building of a proposed public school in one of Boston's public parks, the suggestion, if carried out, would probably involve an interesting but costly experiment.

The arguments advanced by the Commission for the use of the city's parks for the purpose stated, while from an economic point of view sound and practical, are antagonistic to a sentiment largely increasing in all of our greater cities. The rapid growth and extension of building operations have threatened congestion in districts where ten years ago were areas of unimproved properties. This has, quite naturally, caused thoughtful people to object to any encroachment on present park areas, so necessary as recreative spots for a class of people who are unable to avail themselves of change of scene and air, and for the further reason as disfiguring the few sylvan spots in the cities' confines. The Commission is said to urge as a reason for the proposed site that there is a necessity for a school house in a section of the city where property values are excessively high, and where it is difficult to secure a convenient site. They therefore desire to set aside a plot of 12,000 square feet in Washington Park as a location for the school house. They advance the novel, and we believe untenable, theory that the location of the school house as proposed will attract a maximum number of children and promote the object of the park.

It is to be hoped that this innovation, even for so desirable a purpose, may be halted. Our parks are certainly intended for purposes of recreation. We are quite sure that in Boston and in all our large cities the taxpayers would much prefer to pay the excessive price indicated for a school site before they would consent to an invasion of the city's parks.

A SUBSCRIBER'S DUTY TO HIMSELF

WE venture to suggest that there may be among the subscribers to The American Architect a few who do not use this journal in a way to reap the fullest advantages from their subscriptions. A professional journal which goes, as does The American Architect, to the offices of practitioners throughout the North American continent, has a responsibility which is fully appreciated. To keep our readers fully informed on all matters relating to their profession, and both by precept and example to stir them to the doing of the best that is in them, is both a duty and a pleasure; but the fruit of such efforts is not completely developed when our readers do not make the fullest use of the information contained in every issue. To scrutinize the plates, carefully considering to what degree they offer suggestions for the betterment of one's own work, is well. It is also well to read the articles printed every week, which have been carefully inspired and written with a view to supplying a well balanced fund of information touching on practice, discussion of the theory of professional work in its varying phases, historical papers dealing with both past and present aspects of architecture in the world at large, and news items of current interest to every member of the profession.

But there is a body of very important and interesting information which lies beyond these limits, and that reader of The American Architect who does not carefully scrutinize our advertising pages lessens by so much his efficiency and his absolute value to his clients. Advertising is done for two reasons: to inform desired purchasers of goods they are certain to need and where they may be had, and to remind them of these facts. An advertisement which appears but once may be interesting and stimulate good resolutions in the prospective buyer, but to be effective it must be repeated. It is for precisely the same reason that the reader (and buyer) needs to make an examination of the advertising pages as much a part of his weekly inspection of The American Architect as his scrutiny of the plates and written articles. This constant watchfulness on his part will result not only in a well-informed mind regarding all that pertains to the erection and finishing of his buildings but an ability to advise his clients wisely on the spur of the moment.

(*Continued from page 179*)

man and his achievements, and to dignify both him and itself by an expression adequate to the occasion. Considerations of economy do not press when he considers material. Color and texture chiefly concern him and the world is all before him where to choose. His plan, his elevations, his profiles are determined solely by the consideration of giving adequate expression to the time, place and purpose of his monument and its setting. And so in all his work, whether its subject be a house, a church, a commercial building, a national capitol or a purely monumental composition, the final goal is expression. Beauty, if beauty be a suitable adjunct; dignity, if that quality be appropriate to the subject; always utility, and always good construction. But, whatever else, conscious expression of function.

Now the ability to give this quality to buildings is difficult to acquire. It comes of aptitude and special training. The engineer's training and practice lead him far away from this. He deals with the elemental forces of nature in their most tremendous scope. His whole mind and energy are directed to meeting them adequately and economically. The architect deals with comparatively mild applications of such force, and concerns himself chiefly with those types of building which, by common consent, demand an adequately agreeable presentation. When the engineers of the Pennsylvania Railroad Station in New York had reached Seventh avenue, and had to emerge above ground in the heart of a great city with a building large enough to take care of that tremendous passenger traffic which they had; at so much pains and with so much skill, brought to that final point, they called in one of the most distinguished architectural firms in America to design the station. Why? There were no constructive problems connected with the building of the station with which the engineers were not perfectly competent to deal, but they rightly felt that an adequate architectural expression of its plan and purpose was due the metropolis of America, and, the feeling they sought for being quite beyond their powers of expression and quite outside their experience, they placed the design of the great station in the hands of men who, by temperament and training, were able to impart such an expression to the visible structure.

In all smaller operations, though the skill of the trained architect has secured for the owner all that can be had of value in the particular case in hand, it is the architect's services as a constructor that are more easily comprehended by the layman while the building is in the rough. Utility, practical values of building materials, the trained architect knows from experience; but these are the media of expression, only. But the average owner, whose wants are not unusual, is more apt, during the erection of his building, to have his attention very unnecessarily distracted by minor details of construction about which he can have no opinion of importance. This is especially likely to occur when he is in the hands of an incompetent or dishonest contractor, and is, unwisely, much on the work himself, and listens to complaints about the architect as such a contractor views him. Such discussion is about as profitable as would be the trained nurse's opinion of the doctor's treatment of her patient.

I think we are justified, then, in the conclusion that the faculty which should distinguish the architect from all other men engaged in the field of building operations, and does so distinguish him, is the faculty of imparting to his structures through the attributes of form, color and texture such a consciously imparted expression as shall be not only indicative of function but appropriately and pleasingly so. Frank expression of function will take care of itself if the problem in hand is understood and frankly met, but expression of function alone is not necessarily agreeable. Beauty is an expression of refined feeling through the medium of whatever art. Architecture in this respect is closely comparable to literature, to painting or to sculpture, but with this difference: in architecture the media of expression are the building materials. This makes for complexity in the development of the particular problem in hand and demands a good degree of technical knowledge on the part of the designer. Moreover, buildings generally are devoted to very practical uses. The understanding of such uses and the meeting of these in the plan are indispensable. Hence the architect's work is vastly more complex than the sculptor's, for example, whose media of expression (plaster, wood, stone, metal, etc.) are of simple constitution.

The architect, indeed, has been defined as a modeller in building materials, but he is, in addition, a skilful adjuster of plan to use. Above all, one must be careful to remember that good design in architecture is not arrived at by the extraneous addition of decorative detail to walls and openings. Those qualities which make for good design are fundamental in the solution of the problem, and are manifested quite as much in the original choice of "scheme" or "solution in plan" as by any details of the elevation.

All of which preamble is a necessary prelude to an understanding of the answer which is to be given to the owner who demands a reason for the employment of an architect, which is: that the value of an architect's services is derived from the fact that, being a designer of buildings rather than a practical builder, he is, by training and experience, far better able to comprehend the full significance of any problem presented to him than can any man whose anxieties are wholly with constructive operations as a builder. He is familiar from long study and observation with the way such problems have been met in the past, and his more finely trained perceptions lead him more safely to the right solution at the present moment. No building but has some relation to its neighbors and to the community at large. The architect's training enables him to fully understand his responsibility and to meet it adequately as an artist. Finally, at this late day, it seems superfluous to point out the work being done everywhere by the architect, his leadership in municipal and national improvements, and his additions to the beauty and comfort of every community of importance, in respect to both its public and its private buildings. The architect is here to stay, safeguarding, as no other can, the "practical" interests of the owner as well as his æsthetic interests and, as I said at the beginning, it seems hardly worth while to defend the contrary proposition.

PASCAL.

THE NEW QUARTERS OF THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS, LONDON

By G. A. T. MIDDLETON, A. R. I. B. A.

The Society of Architects, a body having its headquarters in London and a membership of rather more than a thousand scattered all over the world, has recently signalized the twenty-sixth year of its existence by moving into premises of its own, which have been leased for a term of forty years from the Duke of Bedford, at 28 Bedford Square.

ENTRANCE, THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS, 28 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON

MEETING ROOM, SHOWING ORIGINAL ADAM CEILING AND XVII CENTURY OAK CHAIR

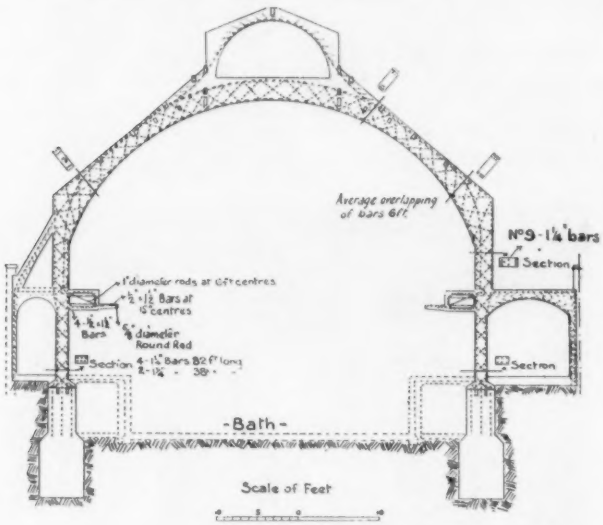
Hitherto, they have had to be content with a suite of rooms in a large office, but now they have occupied an entire house built by the Adam Brothers toward the end of the eighteenth century, and are able to house their secretary on the upper floors beside providing ample accommodation for secretarial offices, library, arbitration room and a meeting room. Before taking possession a considerable amount of repairs had to be undertaken, and the whole of the external walls underpinned, when it was found that these neither rested on concrete nor on stone slabs, but on sawn sections of timber with the bark on; these being the outsides of baulks from which the heartwood had been cut for floor beams. During the progress of the work a handsome marble mantelpiece was stolen from the first floor and has not been recovered, but one of a slightly less handsome character still remains in the secretary's room downstairs, of which, as also of the original plaster ceiling on the first floor with its delicate Adam enrichment, we are able to give photographs herewith. The exterior and also the ironwork of the staircase are practically as they were built about 120 years ago.

THE STAIRCASE

MANTELPIECE IN SECRETARY'S ROOM

Concrete Roof Trusses

A novel and interesting form of roof construction in reinforced concrete has just been completed in a London public bathhouse at Hammersmith.



Hammersmith Baths. Figs. F and G: Roof Construction.

The arched ribs shown in the section were taken as standing independently and were spaced 12 feet apart. The weight of the galleries was taken into consideration, but no allowance was made for them as stiffeners. Taking the arch ribs and purlins at 1 1-3 cwt. per cubic foot and the roof covering at 1-6 cwt. per square foot, the weight of half the arch was found to be equivalent to a vertical pressure of 18.9 T and a horizontal thrust of 14.2 T. The concrete was composed of gravel, sand and cement in the proportions of 4:2:1. The Kahn system of reinforcement was used throughout. The general type of construction is sufficiently indicated by the illustration, for which we are indebted to *The Builder*.

An Architectural Reform in France

M. Paul Boncour, financial adviser to the budget committee of the French Ministry of Fine Arts, was charged by that body to investigate and report on certain administrative reforms whose necessity seemed to have been indicated by recent events. M. Boncour presented his recommendations the other day, and has the following to say regarding the extensive architectural interests with which the committee is charged:

He advises that a very considerable reduction be made in the number of architects holding government appointments, as he regards the present staff as greatly in excess of any reasonable work that can be found for them to do. Their competence is unquestioned by M. Boncour, who hesitates to recommend individuals for dismissal, but he is emphatic in declaring that such a reduction of the force must be made, since present conditions are seriously affecting the efficiency with which government work is being prosecuted. He especially objects, further, to conditions which have insensibly grown up whereby the paradox is created of having architects inspect and report upon their own work. This latter condition has proved especially unfortunate in such cases as have to do with the conservation and restoration of historic monuments, where ill-judged work has, in many cases, progressed beyond the point of recall.

These drastic reforms have naturally attracted much attention in architectural circles in France, and have formed the subject of a recent interview with M. Boncour on the part of the *Temps* newspaper, which has been reported by *La Construction Moderne*, from which the foregoing summary of the situation is derived. It is not at all certain that the recommendations of M. Boncour will be fully concurred in by the administration.

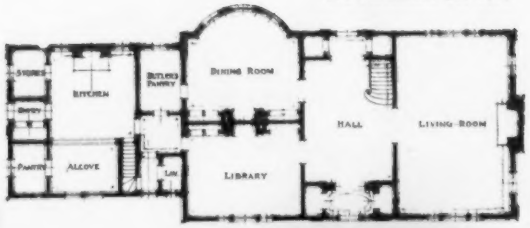
Half-Breed Houses in the Philippines

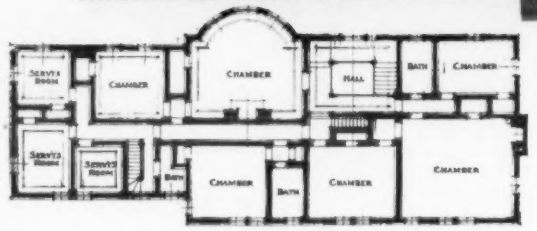
The favorite type of construction for residences of the better classes in the Philippines is known as the mestiza (the Spanish term for persons of mixed blood) style. The "strong-material" houses, so styled to distinguish them from the grass huts of the lower classes, are two-story affairs, the lower story being built of sandstone with stone floor, the upper of native hardwoods having highly polished floors. The windows of the lower portion are habitually screened by heavy iron bars to keep out night prowlers. The front is equipped with large double doors to permit the passage of the family carriage and team which are usually quartered

at the rear of the ground floor, directly beneath the kitchen. In the front parts of the lower floor a series of rooms are built along either side of the carriage driveway for the accommodation of the coachman and the house servants. This portion of the house is known as the *entresuelo*, and in addition to quartering servants some of the rooms, especially of houses in Manila, are rented out to the poorer classes. The windows of the upper story are usually of oyster shell, set in panes about four by four inches, some larger. At the bottom of these windows sliding doors reaching from the floors to the window sill are arranged, so that the entire opening from ceiling to floor may be opened on warm days. The picture shows a typical house of the mestiza type as described above.

HOUSE OF ALFRED CURTIS, ESQ., CONCORD, MASS.

JAMES PURDON, *Architect*





Walls, wide siding clapboards, painted white. Roof, moss green shingles. Blinds, green.

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DETAIL OF ENTRANCE FRONT

VIEW OF REAR, OR GARDEN SIDE

HOUSE OF ALFRED CURTIS, ESQ.,

CONCORD, MASS.

JAMES PURDON, *Architect*

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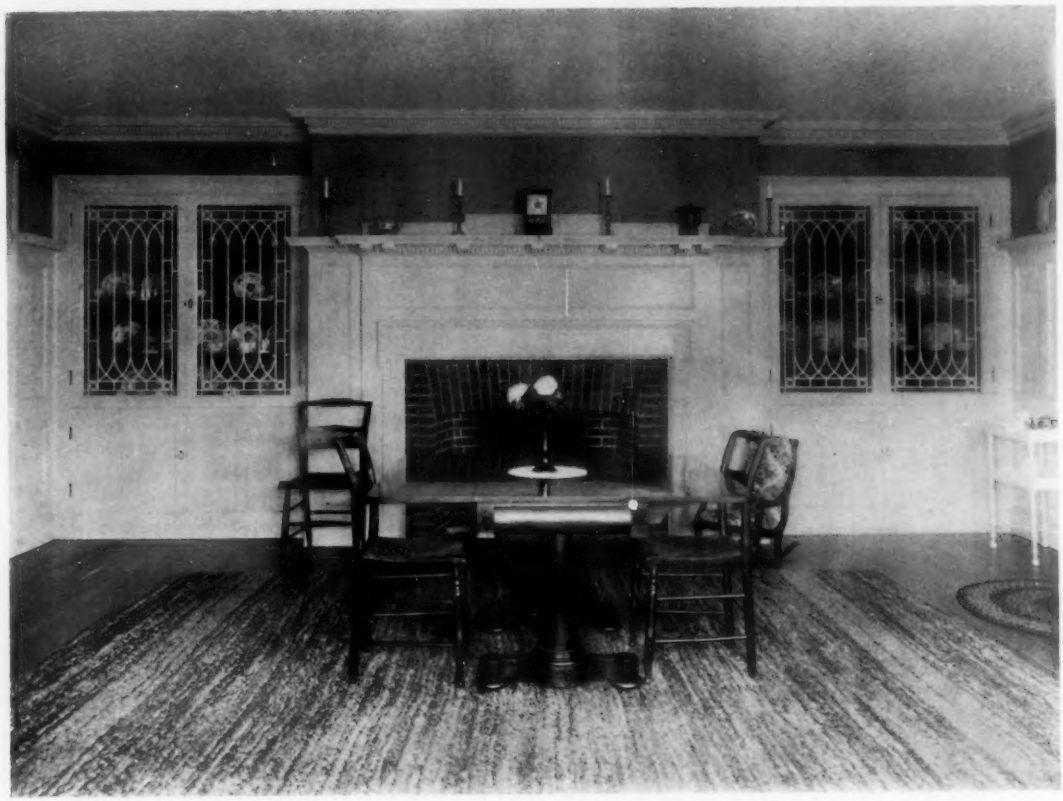
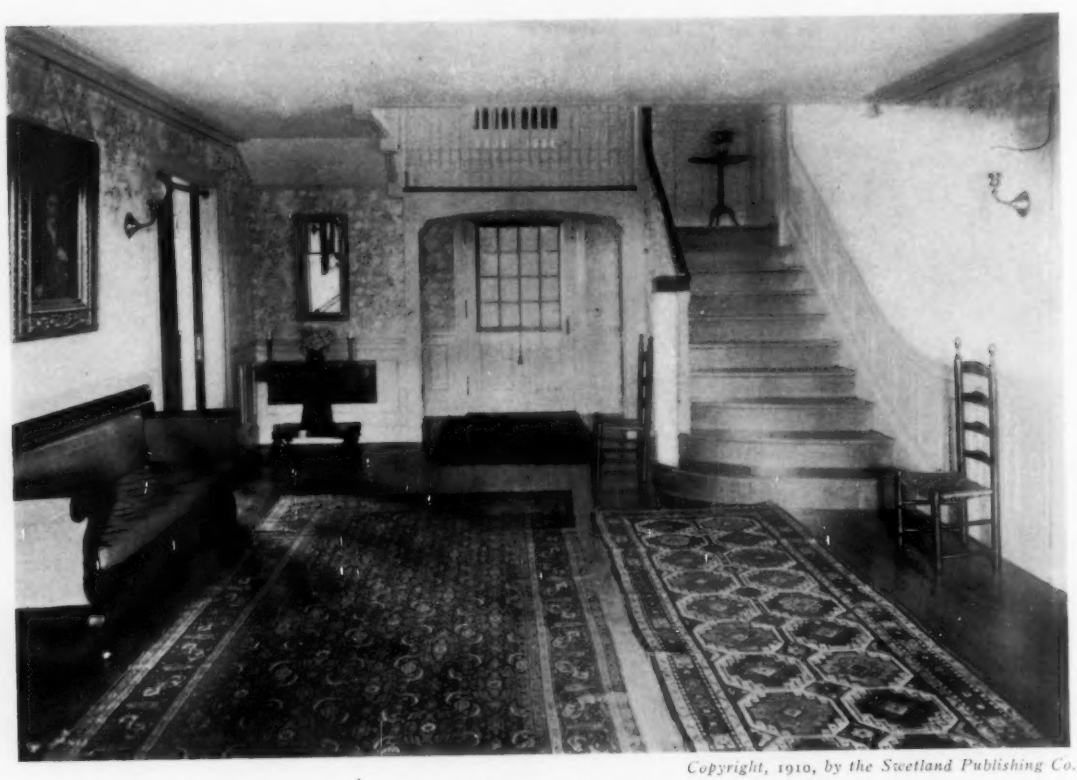


DINING ROOM

General color scheme, dull blue and Colonial buff. Mahogany furniture, leaded glass china cabinets. Woodwork, white enameled.



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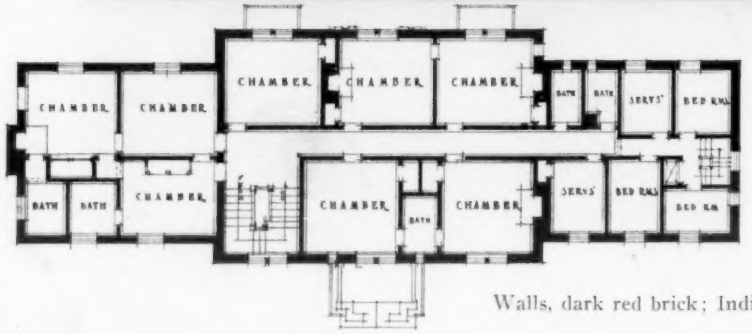
ENTRANCE HALL, LOOKING TOWARD STAIRS, AND DOOR LOOKING OUT TO GARDEN

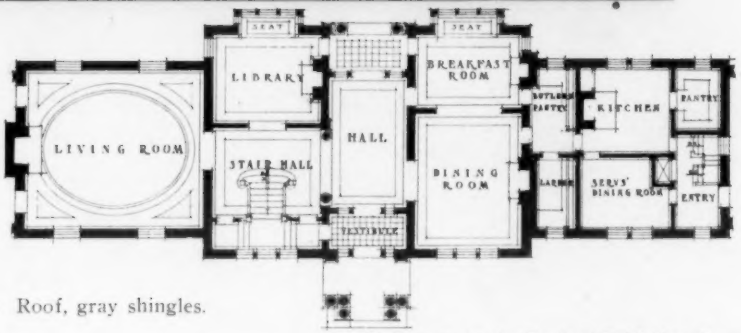
Woodwork, white enameled. Stair rail, mahogany. Wall paper, French gray designs. Furniture, mahogany of old Colonial type.

HOUSE OF ALFRED CURTIS, ESQ., CONCORD, MASS.

JAMES PURDON, *Architect*

ENTRANCE FRONT





Walls, dark red brick; Indiana limestone trimmings. Roof, gray shingles.

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HOUSE AT WELLESLEY, MASS.

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REAR OR TERRACE FRONT

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Above entrance hall, looking toward stairs and living room. Walls are paneled in soft French gray hangings. Woodwork is white enameled.

At left, detail of bay in breakfast room. Walls are paneled in ivory white. Frieze, blue and gold grasscloth. Furnishings, blue and buff colorings. Furniture, mahogany.

HOUSE AT WELLESLEY, MASS.

JAMES PURDON, *Architect*

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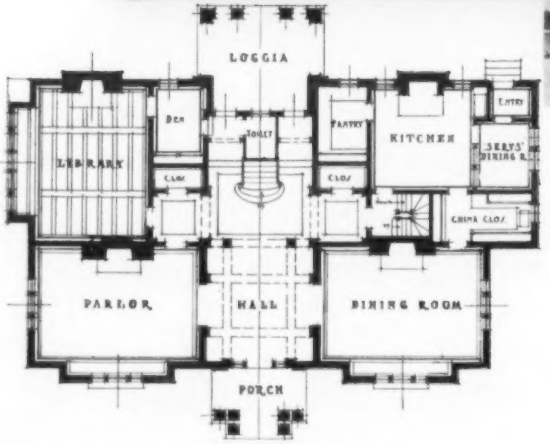

HOUSE OF GEORGE CROMPTON, ESQ.
WORCESTER, MASS.
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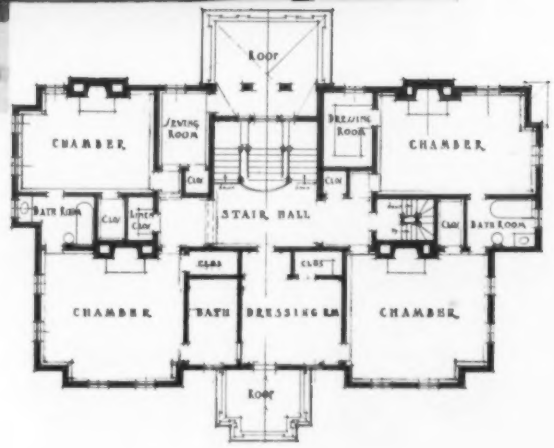

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