

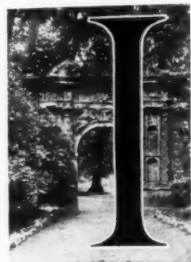
THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

VOL. C.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1911

No. 1866

THE ORATORY OF S. BERNARDINO IN PERUGIA



IT was in the designing of oratories and small churches that the architect-sculptors of the Renaissance attained conspicuous success; for naturally the façade of such an edifice would present fewer structural limitations to the sculptor than would a great cathedral. Save for the necessary doorway, he could claim the whole surface for his field, and it is not surprising, therefore, to find delightful products of decorative fancy on the fronts of these smaller places of worship.

The little oratory of San Bernardino in Perugia is just such a product. It is in marble and terra cotta. Aside from its very considerable sculptural merits, the way in which the artist filled the space at his command is admirable. Equally so the way in which he kept all his reliefs illusively flat in order that the four salient spots on the outer edges might seem to frame them in. These spots—statues in pedimented niches, are helped in their work of

holding the decoration together by the dark underside of the cornice. This matter of putting a boundary, so to speak, to the decorative treatment looks very simple but in reality had to be carefully devised on a façade where none of the ornament was structural, but simply a series of panels clamped to the plain wall behind them.

The construction of the oratorio was decided upon in 1450 by the magistrates of Perugia, in honor of their famous preacher Bernardino, canonized that year by Pope Nicholas V. Architecturally there

is little to say of the façade; one sees at a glance that it is simply a large arch, a tympanum and a far-projecting roof — this last-mentioned to protect the work of the Florentine sculptor who, all innocent of any intention of ranking with a miracle-working saint, was to transform the unpretentious little church into as much of a monument to himself as to the good priest Bernardino.

This man was Agostino Ducci. Some write it Gucci, while Vassari describes him as Agostino della Robbia, son or



DETAIL, S. BERNARDINO, PERUGIA

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brother of Lucca and Andrea. This consanguinity has never been proven—certainly Ducci's masterpieces, at Perugia and Rimini, show no relationship to the great Floren-



MUSIC, DETAIL OF CHURCH OF S. BERNARDINO, PERUGIA

tine faience makers. It was in 1456 that Agostino came from Rimini (where he had just completed the beautiful palace and church of the Malatesti) to the scene of his new labors. This was outside Perugia's walls close by the convent of San Francesco al Prato. This site was chosen for the simple reason that Bernardino had been a Franciscan. It still lies remote from Perugian daily life, except that the convent has become a technical school, where rather small boys armed with large T squares and rolls of paper try daily, and with desperate effort, to do some of the things that Agostino and the other *Quattro-centists* did so easily.

Agostino on arriving decided on the charming pink marble of the neighborhood as the wall background for his figure panels in warm-hued terra cotta and his creamy white marble bands of fruit and garlands. With this delicate color scheme even a brutally minded sculptor must have

approached the matter gently. But Agostino was by nature gentle—so much so that even the inevitable griffins on the façade have almost a lamb-like aspect. Five centuries of winter weather (and anyone who knows the hill towns knows how biting a Perugian winter is) have unified both color and texture of the several materials used into a sort of homogeneous glow. Surrounded by so much that is grim and gray and mediæval, to come suddenly on this building affects one like a rare smile illuminating an over-serious face.

The great arch, some eighteen feet across, is impressively rich. Its soffit adheres to the Gothic manner of having the inner radius smaller than the outer. This is no attempt to picture perspective, for this trick was not developed till later; it is done simply to expose an ornamented reveal, the ornament being in this case angel heads against wings. Outlining the arch, the egg and tongue and the dentil, though minor enrichments, are cut with unusual depth, in sharp contrast to the shallow relief of



EXTERIOR DETAIL, CHURCH OF S. BERNARDINO, PERUGIA

the panels—particularly of the flat lunette of the arch, where a large portrait of the saint is surrounded by flying angels. In this portrait Bernardino's spiritual nature is affectionately emphasized, while the smaller panels represent episodes in his strenuous life and the miracles he performed in sight of his beloved Perugians. One of the most interesting scenes, as a story, is where he has induced them to burn their trinkets, playing cards, and heretical books, the nature of which is quaintly manifested



EXTERIOR DETAIL CHURCH OF S. BERNARDINO

by demons arising from the flames. The composition and execution of all the scenes is excellent; but for sculptural qualities, pure and simple, one is most delighted with the "Six Virtues"—Mercy, Holiness, Poverty, Religion, Mortification and Patience—three on either side of the entrance door in the arch reveal. These figures, in terra cotta, are as light and airy as those Botticelli painted into his famous *Spring*—but such spontaneity is easier to catch on canvas. Painted or carved, it is all the familiar old trick, known and practiced by



DETAIL, CHURCH OF S. BERNARDINO

sculptor and painter alike, of arranging draperies that spread to the full limit of the given space at the top and narrowing at the bottom. With this arrangement, any figure seems to fly; but Agostino's "Virtues" have more merit than simply that of lightness; they are charming in every way—of festive aspect and utterly without a rigid or conventional pose. They



ALLEGORICAL FIGURE, CHURCH OF S. BERNARDINO, PERUGIA

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have been the confessed inspiration of painters and sculptors ever since (our own Elihu Vedder among moderns). The little capitals on the pilasters framing these panels, the bands following around the door, and the festoons along the ledge that forms the usual seat at the base of the building, are all of unsurpassed delicacy; while the musician angels—Nereid-like figures that border on the arch—have an exquisite primitiveness about them that in some ways excels Donatello at his best.

In these days of standardized work we see about us much embellishment that lacks personality—stone and wood cut to stereotyped patterns. From this an architect is glad to turn to terra-cotta, for it alone, even after burning, retains the artist's

touch. Every terra-cotta panel on the Perugian oratory proclaims the hand of Agostino Ducci just as forcibly as does the famous *Spring* canvas proclaim Botticelli.

Inside, the little church is plain. In fact, in all these noted chapels and oratories, the inside is plainer than the exterior would lead one to suspect; but with a façade that is one of the unique things in Italian art, one can hardly ask more of the sculptor. Ducci finished the oratory in five years, and produced meanwhile some other masterpieces for Perugia. These include the Gate of San Pietro, the Altar in the church of San Domenico, and a Madonna and Child for a niche in the Franciscan Convent next to San Bernardino.

THE CURRENT ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

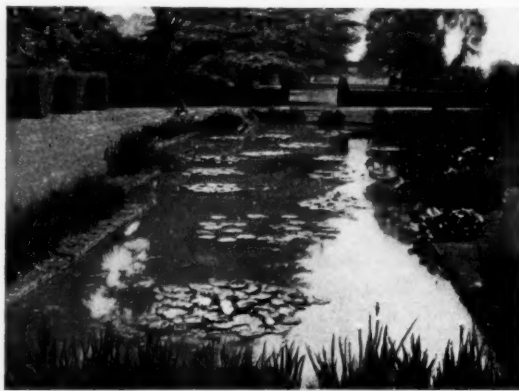
THE *BRICKBUILDER* for August, 1911, is chiefly devoted to the illustration of recently erected Y. M. C. A. buildings and has for its leading article a presentation of the fundamental principles governing the design of buildings of this character. This article is contributed by Mr. Walter Mabie Wood, General Secretary of the Y. M. C. A. of Philadelphia. Quite naturally, a man of wide experience such as Mr. Wood has enjoyed has acquired a vast fund of information as to practical requirements and this information he has frankly placed at the disposal of the profession. It seems unfortunate that the selection of plans for prominent illustrations, from the mass of material availed of, was not made more nearly in accordance with standards fixed by this article. A study of the various subjects more or less completely presented, makes

such a selection appear entirely possible.

Other illustrations of this issue are of recently constructed brick churches, all interesting examples of the modern method of handling brick and the application of terra-cotta ornament.

In addition to the article already referred to, the August issue contains Part II of "Legal Hints for Architects" with the usual editorial comment and summary.

The Architectural Record for September is a Pittsburgh number and has for its leading articles, "The Terrain and Rivers of Pittsburgh," by Montgomery Schuyler, "Pittsburgh as a Civic Center," and Part IV of the "Modern Auditorium Church." These articles are all profusely illustrated reviews of recent architectural effort in the city of Pittsburgh and the issue will no doubt be well received by the members of



THE WATER GARDEN AT SUTTON PLACE, SURREY
(From *The International Studio*)

(Continued on page 123)

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

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FRONTISPIECE:—

THE TOWN GATE, DELFT, HOLLAND.

A BETTER OUTLOOK

PROBABLY the degree of activity existing in architects' offices throughout the country at a given time constitutes as accurate a barometer of business conditions in the building field as any that could be devised. Of course, activity in the draughting room and the field are not necessarily coexistent, but the former is ordinarily quickly followed if not accompanied by the latter. As a result of profiting by the opportunities afforded an architectural journal to make note of the reading of this barometer we are strongly of opinion that the building outlook is steadily improving in this country, and no longer justifies, even if it once did, the apprehension that has been expressed in some quarters as to the future. Within a fortnight we have had written assurance from no less than a dozen architects' offices that their draughting rooms were working at high pressure and

utmost capacity in an effort to complete plans with sufficient promptness to meet the demands of owners who were anxious to avail of present favorable conditions for making building improvements. Such a situation can only be explained by the fact that an abundance of available money, labor conditions no worse than usual and prices of building materials at a substantial reduction from the normal have attracted the investor and home-builder alike and changed what promised to be a dull season to one that is bringing forth at least an average volume of work. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed since the revival began for the changed conditions to become really apparent in the amount of work under construction, but that stage must follow the present one of plan-making as inevitably as harvest follows seeding time.

COMMENDABLE GOVERNMENT WORK

THERE is every indication that the investigation carried on by the Department of Agriculture during 1910 in conjunction with the lumber manufacturers in the South, to determine the saving that might be effected by utilizing odd lengths of lumber as well as even, will result in benefit to the owners of standing timber, the manufacturers and the consumers.

Architects and builders, as well as lumbermen, have long deplored the waste made necessary by the custom of manufacturing lumber in even lengths only. It is probable that fully as many logs present a maximum usable length in an odd number of feet as do in an even number, with the result that any amount from approximately one to twenty-three inches in the length of the log has heretofore been wasted in sawing. If odd lengths were generally adopted this waste would always be something less than one foot. Again the length of studding is as likely to be nine feet or eleven feet and the length of joist an odd number of feet as to be an even number, if only the requirements of design are considered. The waste that results from the necessity of utilizing timber a foot or more longer than required, simply because the market does not afford the lengths desired, must amount to a very considerable sum.

Under present conditions, with fast dis-

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appearing forests, and the necessity of conserving our supply of timber apparent to everyone, this movement should receive the general support of manufacturers and users,

even if the more immediate result of lessening the cost of construction to the owners of buildings appeals only to those whose interests follow that of the manufacturer.

A WRITER in *The Builder*, of London, referring to the rapid growth of the ocean passenger steamship and the fact that its interior design and plan is along the lines of the modern hotel, states:—"They (steam-ships) are the material embodiment of an age whose god is the god of Transit, whose temple is naturally the hotel."

The modern passenger ship has lost all resemblance in its interior to the conception of the word ship. Its interior arrangements when the ship is at her dock suggest in every way the hotel, and when at sea, owing to the many devices to maintain stability and steadiness, the resemblance is but little lessened.

The ships now projected and on the stocks are designed for seven salon decks, which, with imposing stairways, drawing rooms, private dining rooms and all the details of the modern hotel, bear little resemblance to the "seven-day ships" of 10 years ago, which were supposed to represent the highest possible development of ocean travel.

The tendency to-day which admits afloat much of the architectural treatment that is adapted to the dry land affords the architect an opportunity to plan and design our modern ships and presents a field that should be an attractive one.

The feeling once prevalent that in designing ship interiors the motive should suggest the sea has passed. In fact the decorative treatment of the large ships of recent construction is so purely along lines used in the modern hotel structures that one finds no suggestion of the voyage that is before him and his transition from life ashore to that afloat is so slight as to attract but little attention.

In modern naval construction flat floors and lack of curves, not present in the lines of earlier ships, permit the same principles of design that dominate the four-square structures ashore.

The traveller knows that the present

decorative treatments employed on ships ordinarily result in a lack of necessary architectural background to insure a high degree of success. It is therefore hoped that in designing the interiors of future ships the architect ashore will be invited to extend his activities and lend his skill and experience to the interior design of the modern ship.

A RECENT LEGAL DECISION

VALIDITY OF COVENANT NOT TO PRACTICE AS ARCHITECT WITHIN CERTAIN LIMITS

By a deed of apprenticeship an infant bound himself apprentice to an architect and surveyor for four years, the deed providing for the payment of a premium by the father of £25. It also contained a covenant by the apprentice not to carry on within ten years after the expiration of the term the business of an architect or surveyor within ten miles of the town where the master resided. This town was a small one and contained only two architects. Both of them stated in their evidence, in an action by the architect to enjoin the apprentice after the expiry of the apprenticeship, from practicing in the town, that they would not take an apprentice except upon the terms of his entering into a similar restrictive covenant. That was their price, or part of their price, for the instruction to be given by them. The English King's Bench Division holds that having regard to the impossibility of the defendant obtaining instruction in the town except upon the terms of entering into the restrictive covenant, the covenant was reasonable. It was part of the premium or price of the teaching and as such might be enforced, in the same way as the agreement to pay a pecuniary premium might be.

Gadd v. Thompson, (1911) 1 K. B. (J. S.)

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT



ENTRANCE, GRAND CENTRAL PALACE, LEXINGTON AVENUE AND 46TH STREET, NEW YORK
REED & STEM AND WARREN & WETMORE, ARCHITECTS
(From *Architecture*)

THE CURRENT ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

(Continued from page 120)

the profession whose work is included.

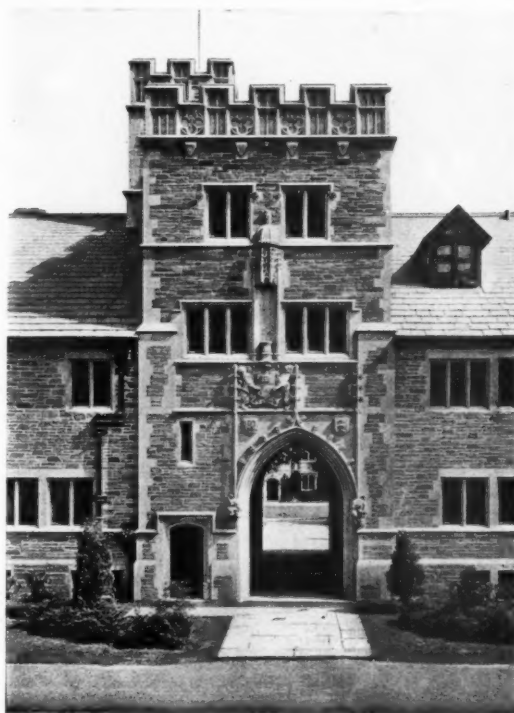
The second installment of the "Intimate Letters of Stanford White" will confirm to the reader the impression gained on reading the first installment of these letters,



MOHAMMED TEMPLE, PEORIA, ILL.
HERBERT EDMUND HEWITT AND HEWITT & EMERSON, ARCHITECTS
(From *The Brickbuilder*)

viz.—that they might very well have been omitted as they are in no sense a guide to the artistic temperament of their author and are so intimate in their allusions as to have very little interest outside of the one person to whom they were addressed. We are at a loss to understand the sentiment which controlled their publication.

The International Studio for September has along with the usual excellent illustration of current art, an illustration of



ENTRANCE, CAMPBELL HALL, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

CRAM, GOODHUE & FERGUSON, ARCHITECTS
(From *Architecture*)

"Some Artistic Arrangements in Rock and Water Gardens," from photographs by H. N. King. These well-taken pictures are of considerable suggestive value to the architect. Another article which we believe will be read by members of the profession is one on "Old Danish Carved Furniture" by Georg Bröchner. The devout spirit of the middle ages that lavished on everything that went into the interior of the church some measure of decorative treatment has made the churches of Den-

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MANOR-HOUSE CABINET FROM EGESKOR IN FUH-NEN. DATE ABOUT 1610-1620
(From *The International Studio*)

mark veritable storehouses of art, which unlike some other countries, have been preserved in situ, and not removed, vandal-like, to enrich collections of private individuals or to adorn the rooms of public museums. The very beautiful examples illustrated in this issue indicate the high artistic plane that had been attained by the wood carver in Denmark during the middle ages and the accompanying article is an interesting explanation and guide to work that was accomplished.

In *The Western Architect* for September, we have under the head of "Contemporary Architects and Their Work," an illustrated description of the work of Mr. E. J. Eckel of St. Joseph, Mo. Mr. Eckel's work is familiar to the readers of *The American Architect*, by reason of recent illustration of some late examples. Much of the material presented in this issue of *The Western Architect* is, however, purely tentative and is therefore lacking the confirmatory quality that always attaches to executed work.

Architecture for August has a varied lot of illustrations. The most important probably is some recent work at Princeton, by Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, and the Grand Central Palace on Lexington Avenue, New York, by Messrs. Reed & Stem and Warren & Wetmore. Other illustrations in this issue are some country houses by Messrs. George B. Post & Sons

and the Competitive Designs and Plans for the Post Office at New Haven, Conn.

The text is confined to the usual "Architectural Criticism," and a reprint of part of Mr. F. M. Andrews' address on "American Architecture," before the Royal Society of Arts, London, delivered some months ago and familiar by reason of its having many times been reprinted in this country and abroad.



LINDEN BAPTIST CHURCH, CAMDEN, N. J.
ARTHUR TRUSCOTT AND ARNOLD H. MOSES, ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS
(From *The Brickbuilder*)

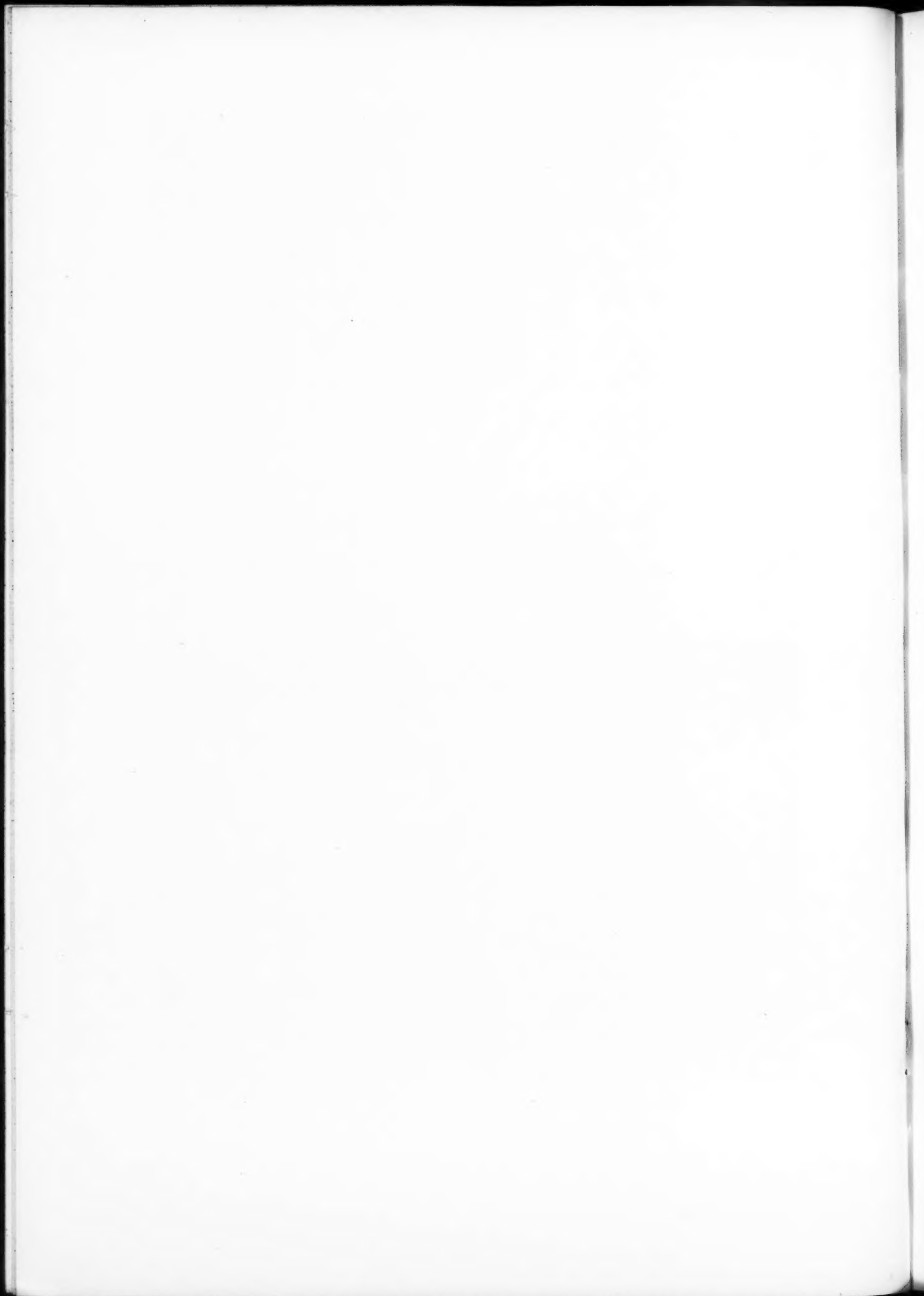
THE REPLANNING OF PARIS

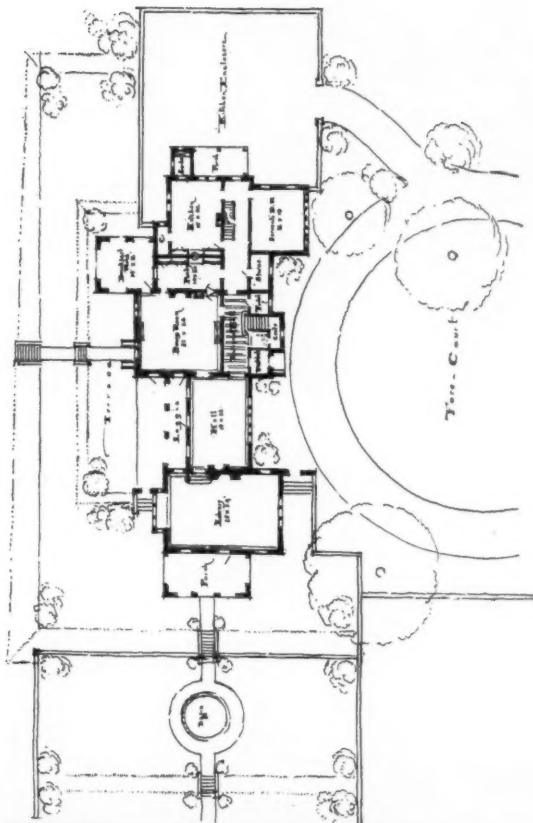
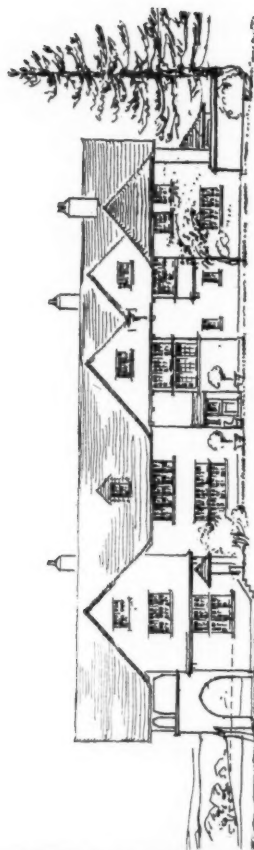
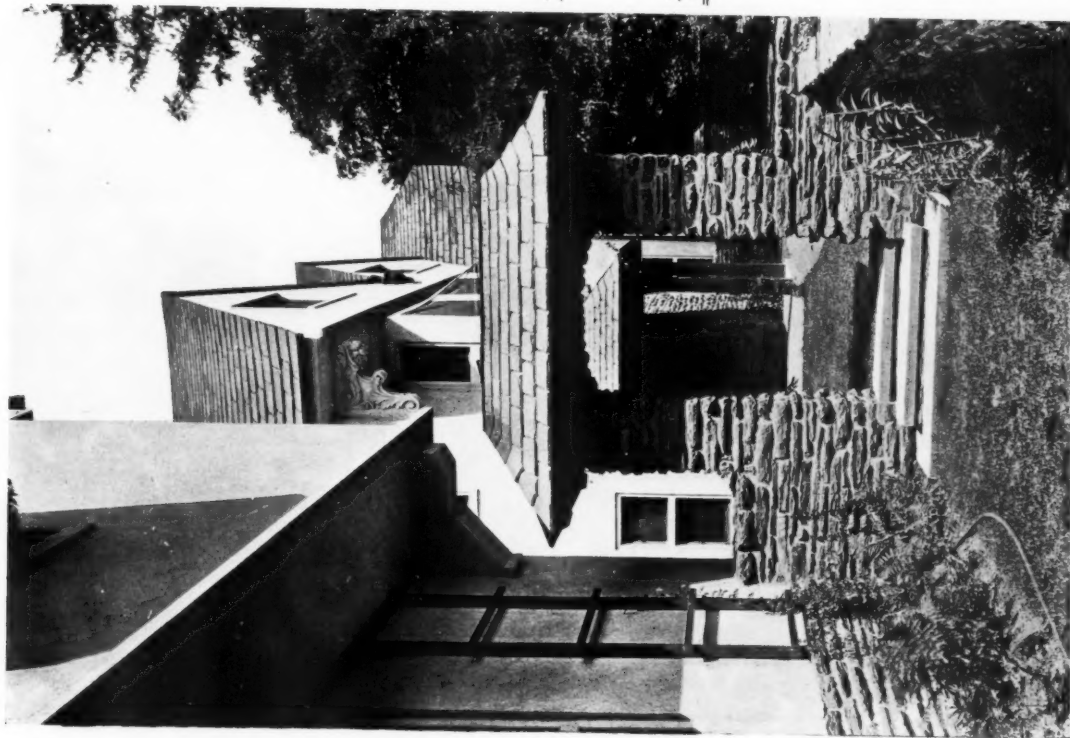
IN reassembling after the vacation, the Conseil Municipal of Paris will have under consideration the great project for demolishing the fortifications and converting their sites into open spaces. Insular ignorance had assumed that this matter was already settled, and that the great town-planning scheme on which France is prepared to spend the equivalent of thirty millions sterling had been definitely decided upon. It now appears that this is not the actual fact, as the subject is yet debatable by the Conseil Municipal. Nevertheless, there is every reason to suppose that the proceedings will be merely formal, and that the full and final acceptance of the proposal is a foregone conclusion. Paris is not likely to delay, still less to reject, this splendid opportunity of linking up and extending her already enviable large area of parks, gardens and open spaces, and of girdling herself with a green belt. Paris will gain greatly in grace, and will not suffer much loss of dignity, when smiling greenswards are substituted for frowning fortresses.—*The Architect & Builder's Journal*.



COUNTRY HOUSE OF JAY COOKE, III, ESQ., CHESTNUT HILL, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

WILSON EYRE, ARCHITECT

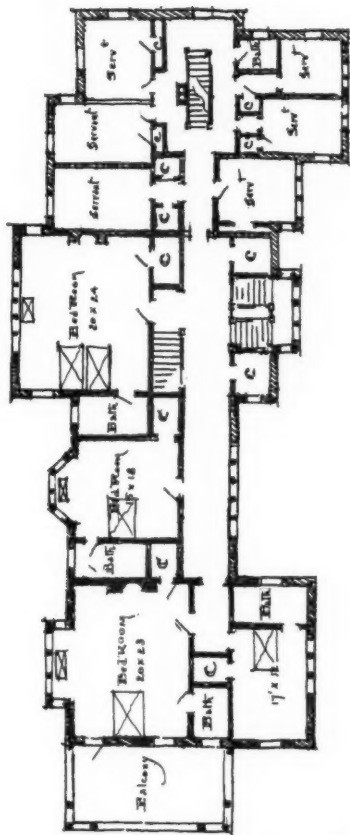
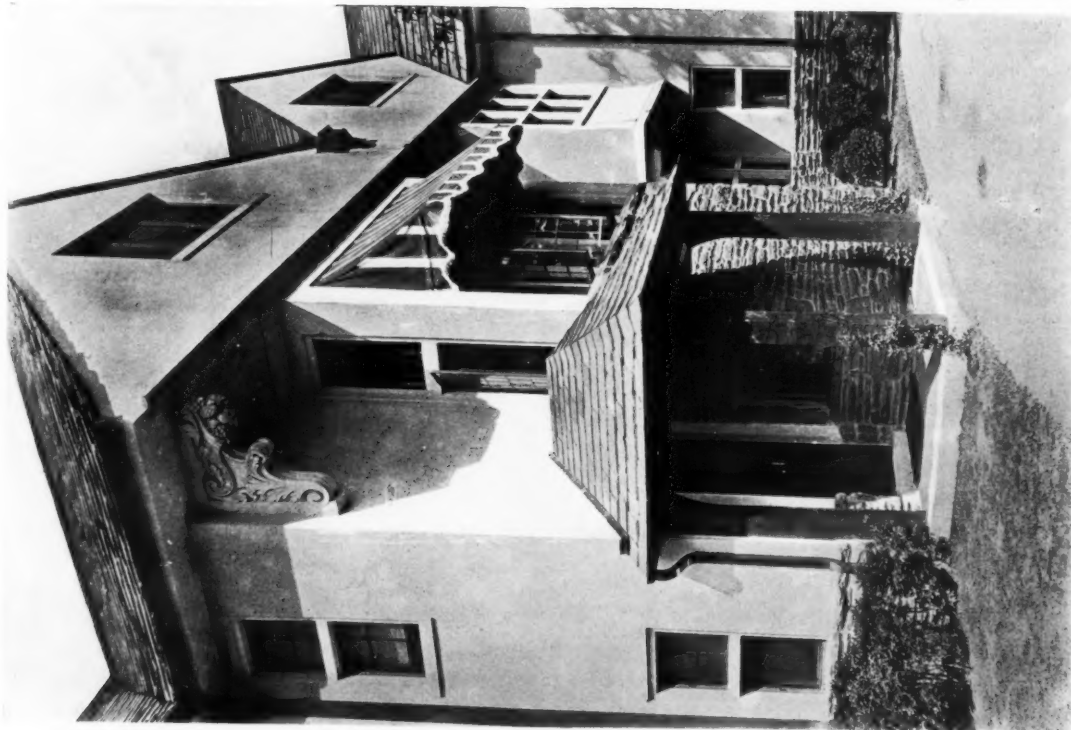




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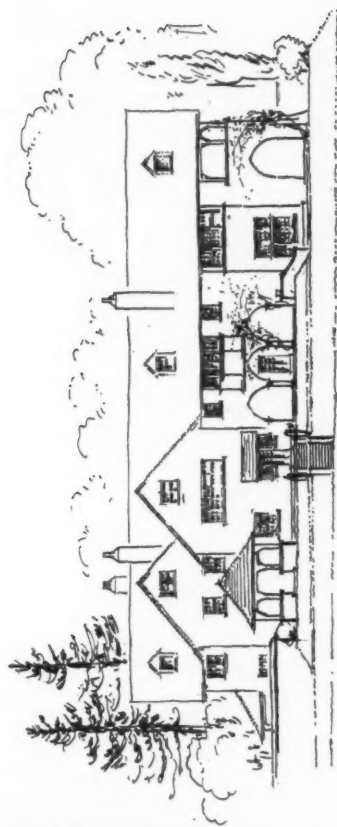
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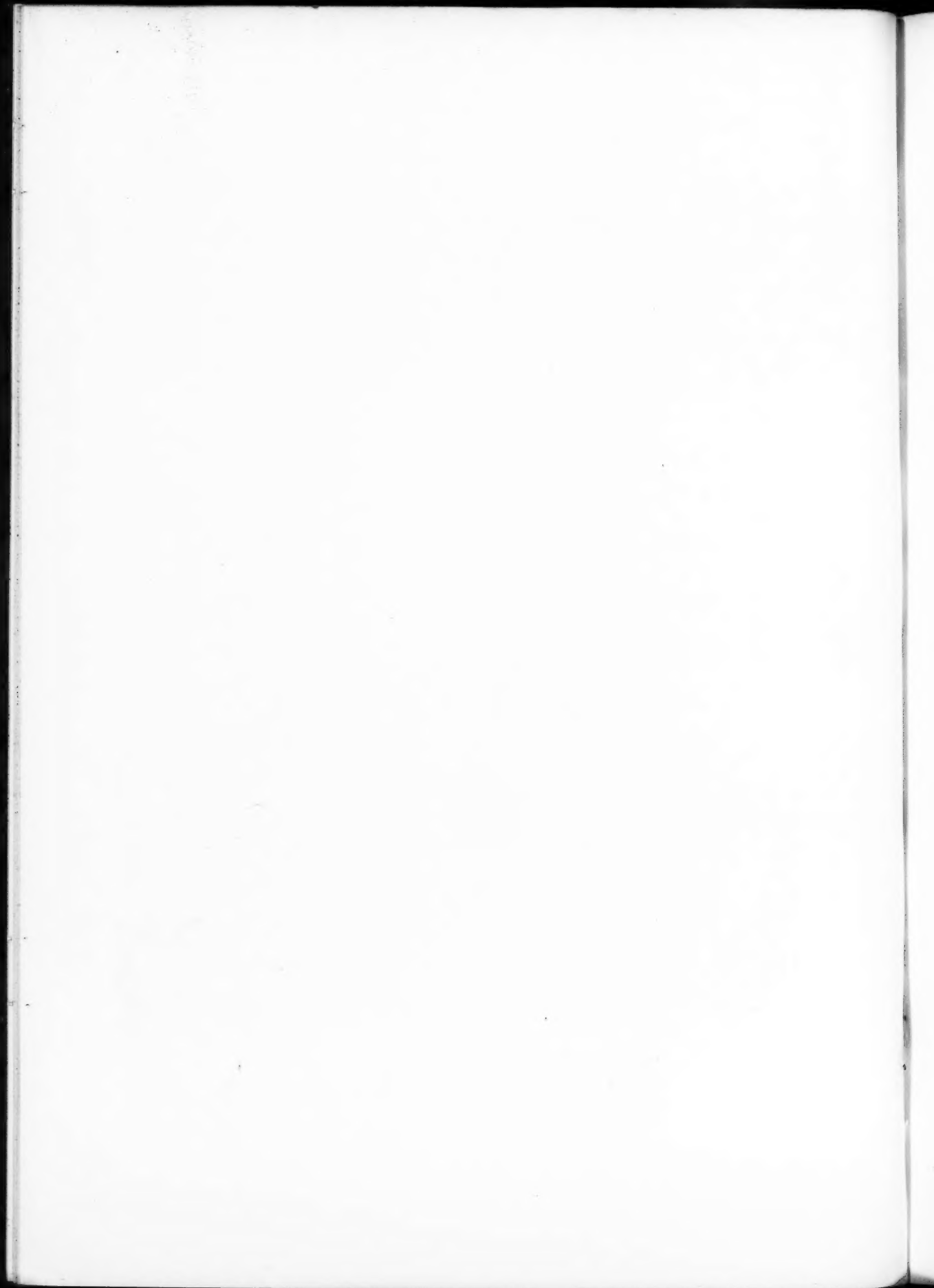




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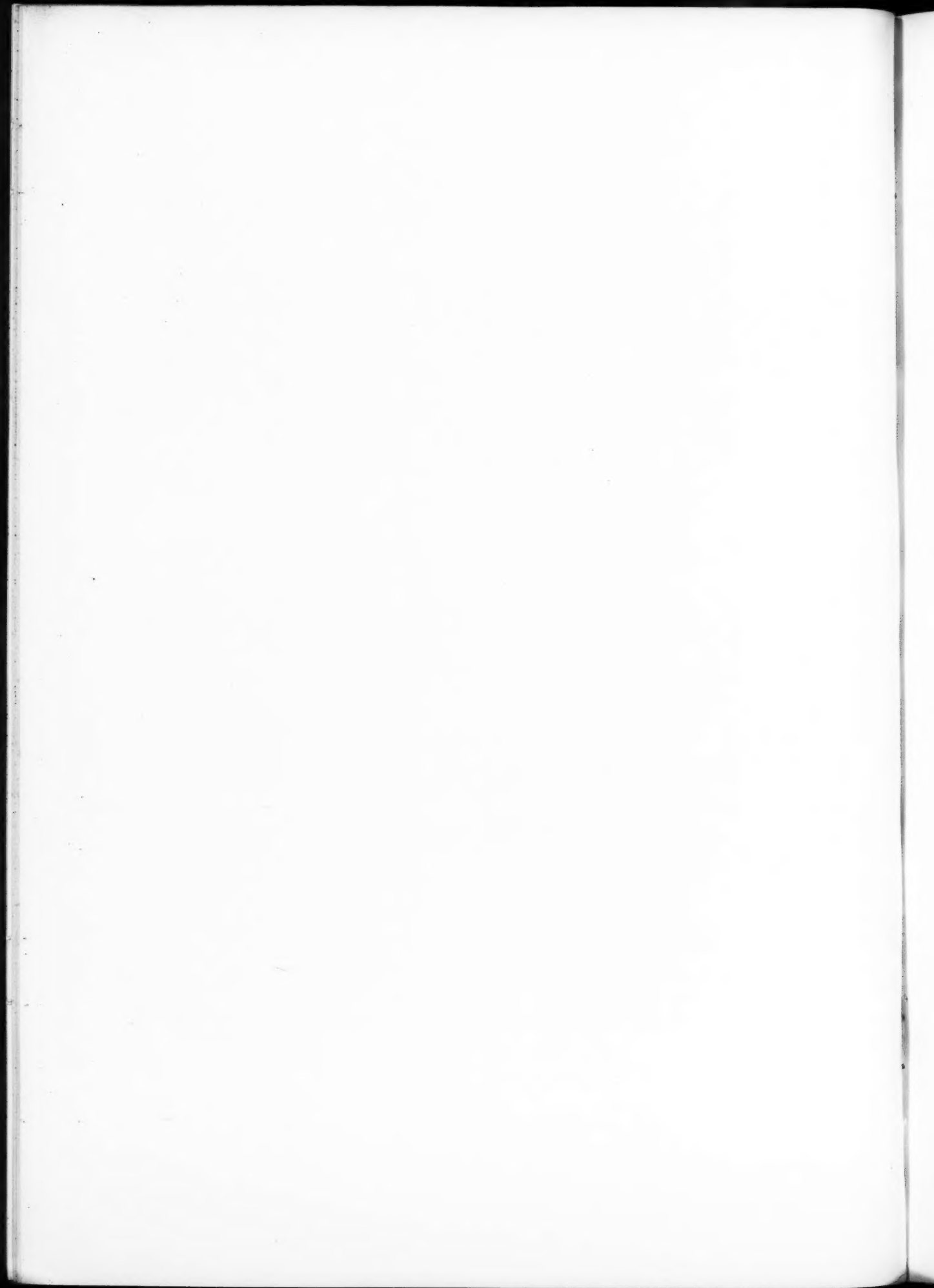


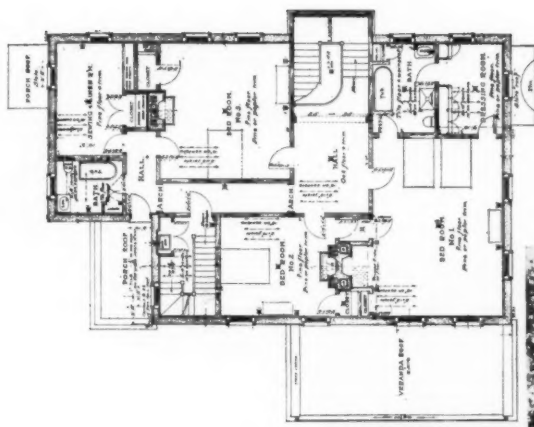
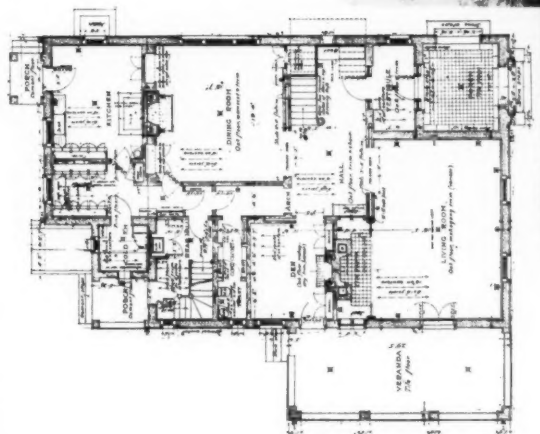




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HOUSE OF W. G. KRANZ, ESQ.,
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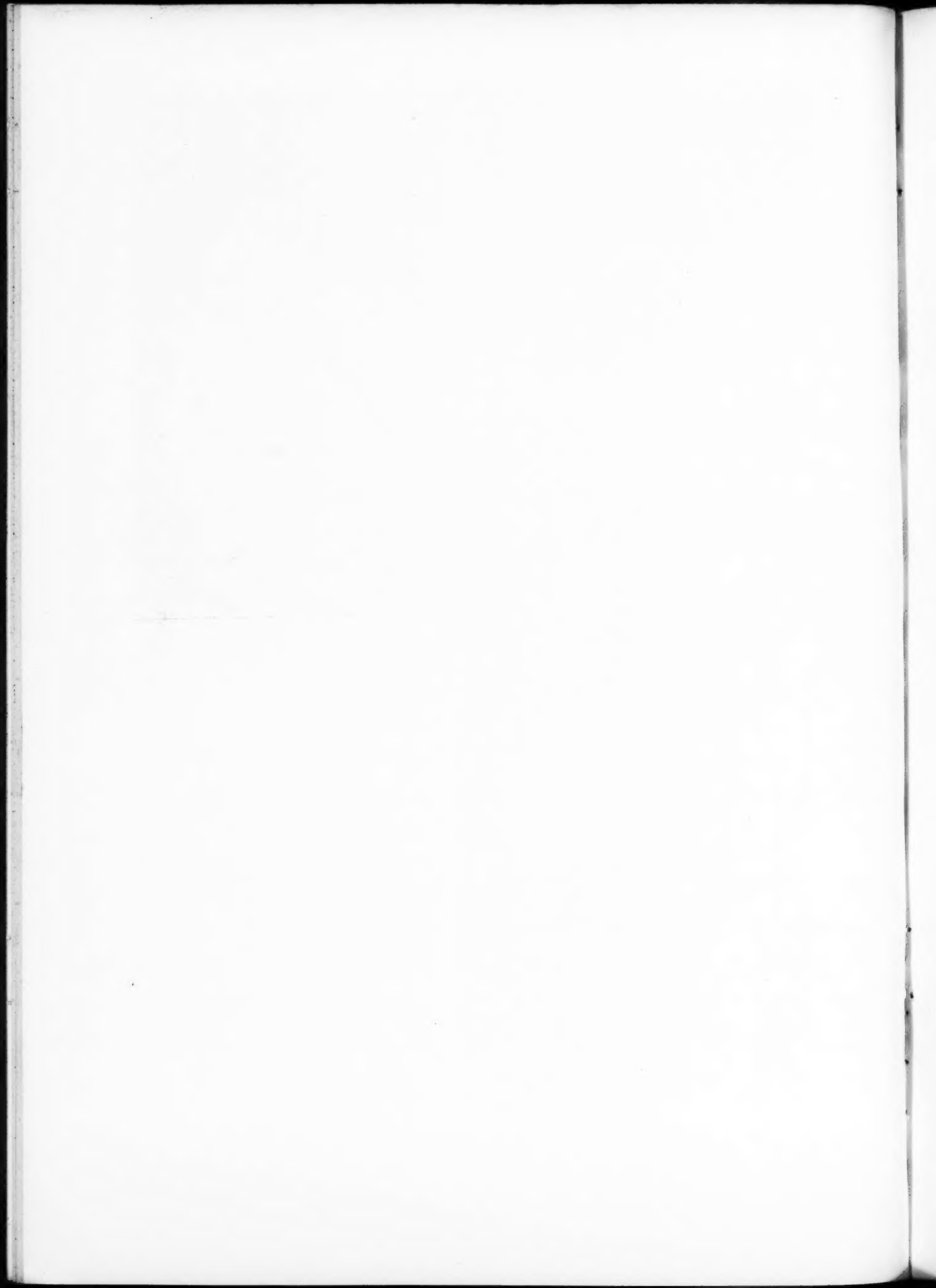
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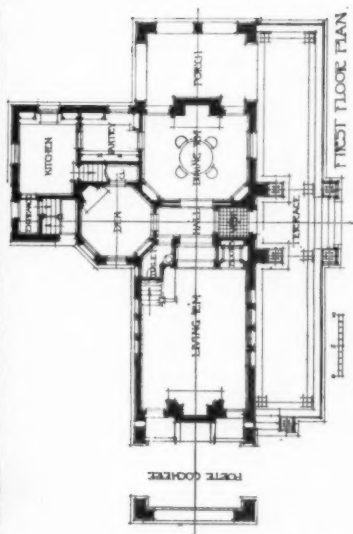
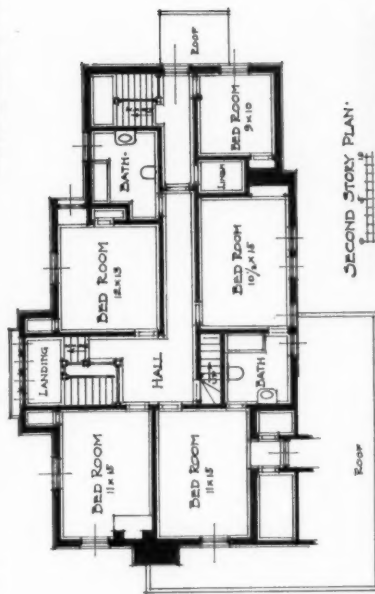




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RAVENNA, OHIO

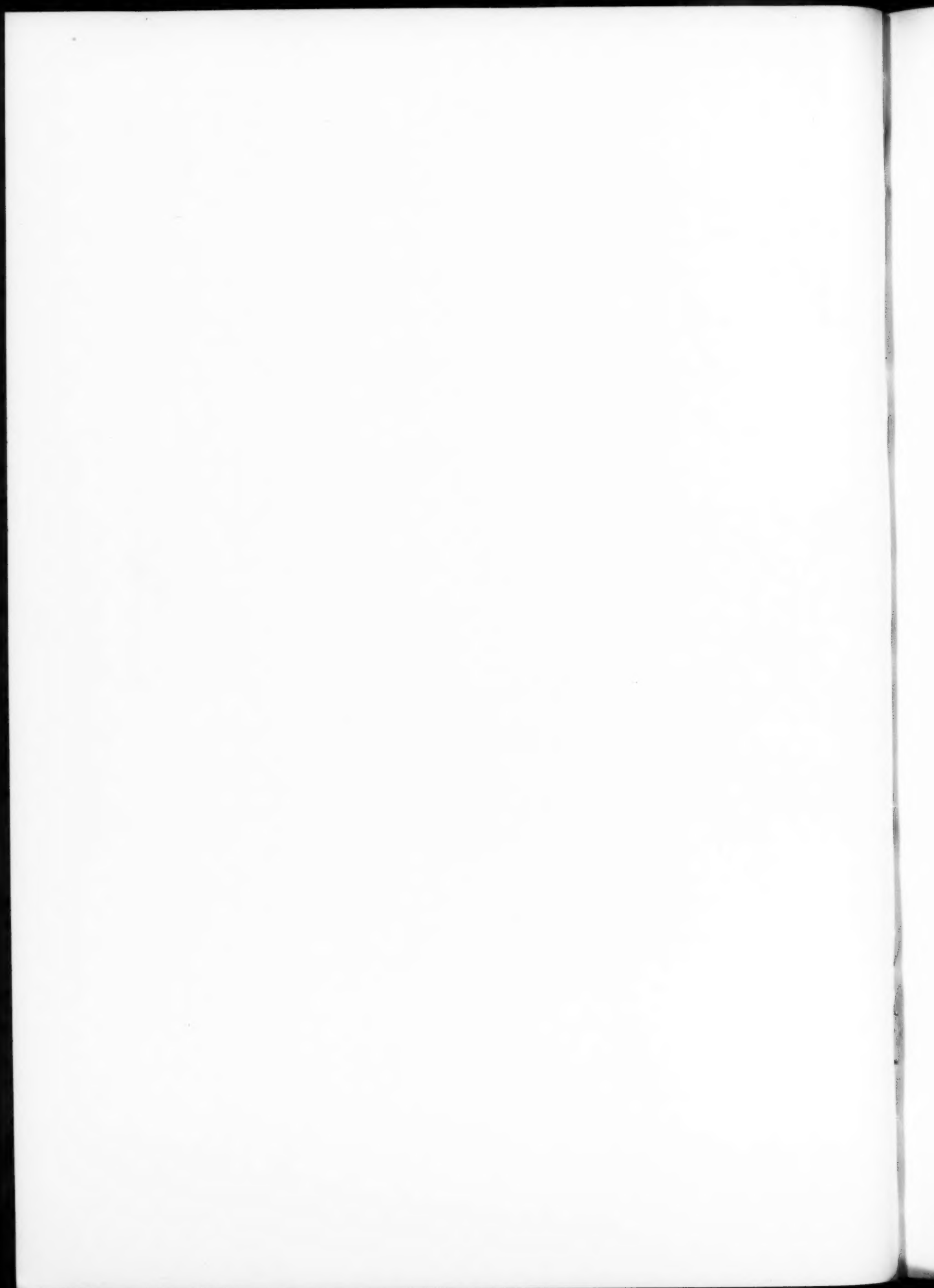
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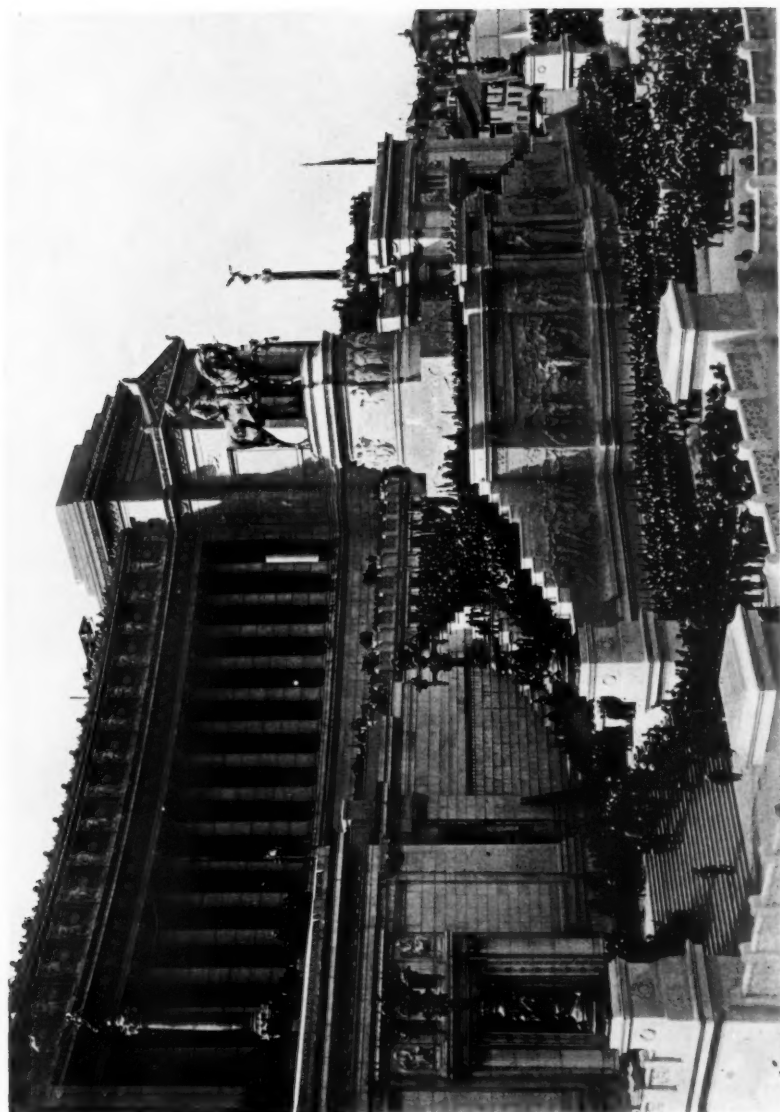


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MONUMENT TO VICTOR, EMANUEL II
(AS IT APPEARED ON INAUGURATION DAY, JUNE 4, 1911)