

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

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No. 1908

EUROPEAN SKETCHING CENTERS

BRUSSELS

BY G. A. T. MIDDLETON, A.R.I.B.A., PAST VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS, ENGLAND

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS AND SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR

THE principal church in Brussels is St. Gudule; it has often been called the Cathedral, but this it has never been. It stands on the top of a steep hill, which gives an exaggerated impression of height to the twin western towers. The lower portion of the front belongs to the period when the church was commenced, that is to the middle of the thirteenth century; but the west window may be somewhat later, and certainly the upper stages of the tower and the elaborate central gable cannot have been added till at any rate the 14th century was well advanced. The interior most clearly indicates the early foundation of the edifice, the stilted arches of the transept arcade and the plate tracery in the sharply pointed triforium over being unusual, and not entirely beautiful. In fact, the cylindrical main shafts in the tri-

forium are clumsy as compared with the clustered shafts which would have been employed for a certainty in England and probably in France at the same date. This is, however, compensated for by the grace of the clerestory windows above,

filled with geometric tracery, while those in the apse, apparently introduced in the 14th century, are delicately light, forming a beautiful termination to the dark nave vista. Externally the apse is heavily buttressed, the flying arches being adorned with unduly obtrusive crockets, while the external buttresses are narrow, but deeply projecting, forming separation walls between the chapels round the ambulatory. These have windows of plate tracery in semicircular heads.

The south aisle and porch have every appearance of being late 14th century additions, the extremely bold



THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

hood moulding of the doorway being eminently characteristic of that period, and its well carved foliage crockets also. The way in which the great projection of the hood is utilized to give an impression of depth to the doorway, which in reality is scarcely recessed in the wall at all, displays genius on the part of its designer, for the cause of the really rich effect produced is by no means obvious at first sight. There is something German in the



NORTH PORCH, ST. GUDULE, BRUSSELS

feeling of this doorway, as there also is in the use of a separate gable, filled with blind tracery, to each bay of the south aisle, a feature to be noticed in some of the other old churches of Brussels, and also in Malines Cathedral, but otherwise rare in this part of Europe.

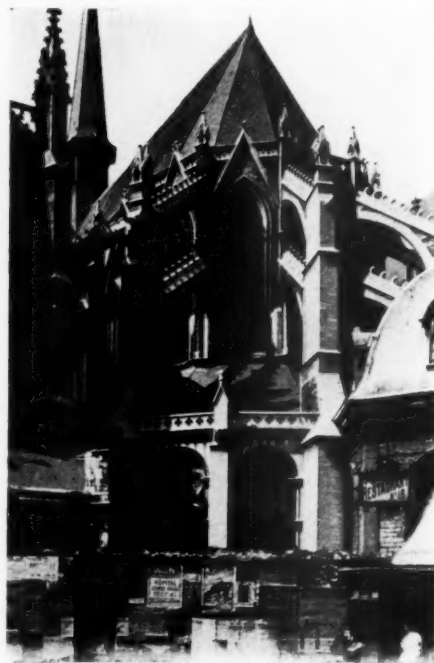
The north and south transept windows are alike; the north porch is of later date, an almost pure example of French "Flamboyant," lacelike and almost wiry, but with this latter characteristic not carried to excess. Like all the rest of the



INTERIOR (LOOKING EAST), ST. GUDULE, BRUSSELS

church it has been conscientiously restored within living memory.

Though there are several new churches in Brussels, most of which are glaring examples of bad taste, the old ones are few,



THE APSE, ST. GUDULE, BRUSSELS

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

and have been or are being very completely "restored"—and, it must be confessed, improved. That of Nôtre Dame de Sablon, for instance, was a few years ago in the dilapidated condition indicated in the accompanying sketch, when what is barely indicated was not shown in any detail simply because the detail had ceased to exist, though there had evidently once been plenty



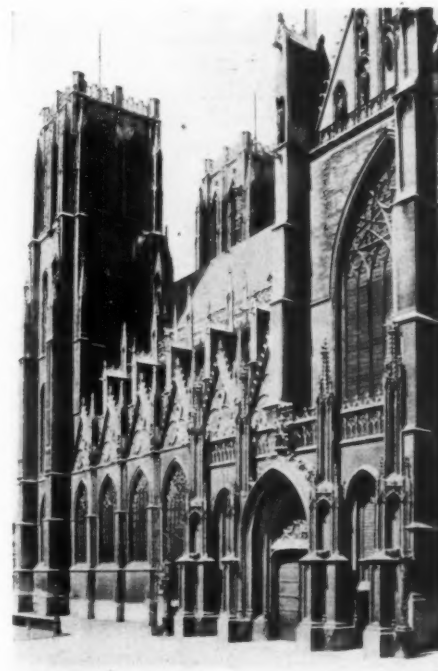
NÔTRE DAME DE LA CHAPPELLE, BRUSSELS

of it. It has now been almost entirely rebuilt, for the second time in its history, having undergone the same process in the 15th and 16th centuries; it was founded by the Guild of Crossbowmen as Nôtre Dame des Victoires in 1304. It now has gables to the aisles, like those of St. Gudule, with ornate buttress pinnacles between them, and the whole is a richly decorated edifice in white stone—or will be by the time these words are printed, when the scaffolding will have been removed. The characteristics of the period of the last rebuilding have been preserved, and in the course of a few years,



THE BOURSE, BRUSSELS

when the stone has again become discolored and weatherworn, it will be difficult to recognize that it is not entirely mediæval structure. Facing it there is a delightful little modern garden, known as the Place du Petit Sablon, having a series of 48 small bronze figures as terminals to the railing piers. Realism is carried just far enough without going too far for artistic repose. They represent the artistic and industrial Guilds of Brussels in the 16th century.



SOUTH PORCH, ST. GUDULE, BRUSSELS



PALAIS DE JUSTICE, BRUSSELS

Close by, on steeply falling ground, is another and even older church, Nôtre Dame de la Chappelle. It is known to have been commenced before 1216, and its south porch contains (restored) evidence of having been Romanesque in character. The aisles still have their original series of gables, of the better part of the 15th century, while the tower is a grotesque timber structure of about 1680, when a great deal of similar work was done throughout the Netherlands, from the sea to the Ardennes and from the borders of France to those of Denmark. Almost all evidence of the existence of old domestic work within the city of any period earlier than that of the Guild Houses has now disappeared, the last piece remaining being a stone oriel in the Rue Terarken, whose side walls are supported by moulded corbels and the front by an arch abutting upon these — a method of construction only to be justified by the fact that it did its work for some four cen-

turies. It belongs to the Ravenstein Mansion, built in the middle of the 15th century for Count Adolph of Cleve, and now occupied by the Société Générale d'Archæologie.

One of the town gates, the Porte de Hal, still remains, but it is more picturesque in a sketch than in the harshness of its modern restoration. It has three large vaulted chambers one above another, which served at one time as Alva's political prison during that time when Spain was attempting to crush the rebellion against its rule. Probably, in spite of subsequent alterations, it differs little from the original structure built in 1381.

Of comparatively modern buildings, displaying markedly the influence of the Parisian Ecole des Beaux Arts, of which there are many, the most prominent are the Bourse and the Palais de Justice. The former of these, designed by Mons. Suys, and built in 1873, is somewhat theatrical in its treatment, but though it is a noble building it does not compare with the great Palais de Justice, one of the largest and most important edifices erected in Europe in the 19th century. Designed by Mons. J. Poelaert, who died during its construction, it took seventeen years to build — from 1866 to 1883. It is a huge rectangular mass surmounted by a well-proportioned dome; and



PALAIS DE JUSTICE, FROM THE SOUTH STATION

it is placed, on the edge of a declivity toward both west and south, so that it dominates a great part of the modern city, besides facing the long and hilly Rue de la Regeme, whence an insignificant view of it is obtained. Unfortunately its lavish detail proves, upon close examination, to be coarse, and it comes as a considerable shock to

meet obvious falsities within it, such as stuccoed columns with brickwork showing through cracks in the plaster, and architraves of greater span than ever a stone was found to compass, built up in voussoirs whose joints are discernible. It is a grand achievement, only money being lacking for the carrying out of Mons. Polaert's dream.

A CONTEST IN CITY PLANNING

WITH the hope and the intention of clearing the minds not only of professed city planners, including of course architects and landscape architects, but also of the public in general, as to what city planning really comprises, the National Conference on City Planning, at its recent annual meeting in Boston, opened the way for a competition in planning a portion of a city. Perhaps it might better and more fairly be described as a non-competitive competition, for no prizes are to reward the participants, but competition or not it should nevertheless arouse the keen interest of all those who are endeavoring in the face of both opposition and indifference to advance the city planning movement in this country.

At the business meeting of the National Conference, the members heard and adopted unanimously a report of a committee composed of Messrs. John Nolen, Benjamin Antrim Haldeman and George B. Ford, which was appointed by the Executive Committee to prepare a program for a co-operative or competitive study in the planning of a tract of land located in the outskirts of a growing municipality.

The report provides for the planning of a hypothetical tract of about 500 acres of land relative to which certain conditions are assumed to exist. The committee considered carefully the various advantages and limitations of a hypothetical tract and a real tract or a number of real tracts, and finally determined, in the words of the report, "that a hypothetical case based upon an assumed topography will prove, on the whole, more interesting and profitable, and permit of a more ready and accu-

rate comparison of the results and ideas contained in the various plans." The committee stated that, in its opinion, a well organized hypothetical city plan, dealing even in a skeletonized manner with all of the more important elements that should be included in a city plan, would do more than any other one thing open to the National Conference on City Planning towards clearing the minds of its own members and of the public as to what city planning actually is, what it comprises, and it would tend to set a standard for those actually engaged with the concrete problems of city and town planning.

The plans prepared by those who enter the competition are to be presented at the next annual meeting of the National Conference and a committee to be appointed for the purpose will report upon the merits of the plans. It is proposed that the plans shall be confined to a general plan drawn at a scale of 200 feet to the inch, and street cross-sections drawn at sixteen feet to the inch. The plans are not to bear the name or mark of the designer. The general plan must be presented as a blueprint or a black line print; if it is in the form of a black line print it may be rendered in flat wash in color. Among other things the general plan and the report to accompany it should include the following: the lay-out of streets and proposed public properties; such desirable control over the developments on the private lands as could properly be exercised by ordinance or statute under the most favorable existing constitutional limits in the United States, it being assumed that differentiated building regulations are constitutional; such con-

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

trol as might reasonably be expected to be exercised by enlightened and public-spirited land companies through restrictions in the deeds of lots with a view to increasing the salable value of the tract as a whole.

The 500-acre tract to be planned is supposed to be located within the corporate limits, but in the outskirts, of a growing city with a present population of 500,000 inhabitants. It is further supposed to be so situated that certain facts can be assumed upon which the recommendations and predictions of the competing plans are to be based. The rate and direction of growth of the city is assumed to be such that the tract of land, when fully developed with streets, public places and so forth, will be absorbed by the demand for building lots within a reasonably short period and at prices sufficient to repay the investment in the land of \$3,000 an acre together with the cost of development, interest, taxes—fifteen mills of assessed valuation at full value—selling cost and a fair profit, and that within ten years it will be built up almost to the full extent contemplated by the plan. It is assumed further that the streets will be dedicated without cost to the city and that such street improvements as are usually charged against the property, with the exception of grading and sewers, should be charged against abutting property at the actual cost of the work in front of each property, for half the width of the street. The cost of the work in the roadway at intersections is to be distributed pro rata throughout the adjacent blocks. The cost of grading is to be distributed pro rata throughout all the street frontage and the cost of both main and branch sewers in each drainage area is to be distributed pro rata throughout all the frontage within the area.

The demand is assumed to be mainly for the erection of dwellings and for such other purposes as are normally incidental to such a development, as retail stores, local places of amusement, schools and churches. Approximately half of the population is assumed to be engaged in or dependent upon work in nearby factories. The majority of the families, it is assumed, will occupy dwellings commercially rentable at from \$15 to \$30 per month, while

there must also be provision for some families who cannot afford to pay \$15 a month and for a considerable minority who will demand residences rentable at from \$30 to \$100 a month or occasionally even higher.

It is proposed to assume, in order to avoid confusing discrepancies in the legal conditions which the various plans are devised to meet, that unless otherwise stated developments on private property in each tract are to be governed by the requirements defined in the building code approved by the National Board of Fire Underwriters and in the New York State Tenement House Act. A topographic map of the property will be provided.

In concluding its report the committee said it did not recommend an award of prizes nor did it wish to emphasize the study as a competition in the ordinary sense. "It is of the opinion," said the report, "that the interest in city planning is just now of such a character that better results will follow from studies which are undertaken more in the spirit of co-operation than of competition. In other words, it wishes mainly to focus attention more definitely upon the scope and nature of some of the more important problems of modern American city planning and through the studies proposed to afford a convenient and useful clearing-house for the best ideas and methods."

Of the members of the committee which prepared the report, Mr. Nolen, the chairman, is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and a practical city planner. Mr. Haldeman is assistant engineer in charge of city planning of the Bureau of Surveys, of Philadelphia, Pa. He read an excellent paper on the zoning system in Germany at the Boston Conference. Mr. Ford is an architect of New York City.

The success of the competition will depend in part on the number who enter, the enthusiasm they put into their work and the variety of practical ideas presented in the reports and plans. It seems as though it might be profitable for a number of men to co-operate in the working out of a plan because of the different problems involved; for instance, a landscape architect,

(Continued on page 24)

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VOL. CII JULY 17, 1912 No. 1908

CONTENTS

EUROPEAN SKETCHING CENTERS	- -	18
A CONTEST IN CITY PLANNING	- -	21
EDITORIAL COMMENT	- - - -	23

ILLUSTRATIONS:

COUNTRY AND SUBURBAN HOUSES BY JAMES
PURDON, W. B. STRATTON, A. RAYMOND ELLIS,
FRED M. TRUEN AND E. M. STRATTON

THE LATE DANIEL H. BURNHAM

AN editorial in a recent issue of *Collier's*, commenting on the life and work of the late Daniel H. Burnham, shows a deep appreciation of those traits of character which combined in one man invariably produce a personality that easily stands above the average both in private and professional life. Mr. Burnham's ability to "comprehend" and "formulate" has probably seldom, if ever, been equaled. The position which he has occupied in the development of this country is indicated by the record of work accomplished and by his public utterances and well-known attitude toward the larger problems that confront the profession. In the article referred to above it is suggested that a sentiment given expression by Mr. Burnham not long since might well serve as his epitaph. It reads as follows:

"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that will stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty."

Of course the thought is not new. It has in various forms found expression among men high in professional practice and is even part of the education of students sent out from many architectural schools. However, with Mr. Burnham's acceptance of the thought and the magic of his personality behind such doctrine, it takes on new force and meaning for most of us.

POSEURS IN ARCHITECTURE

ARGHITECTURE, like every other profession, numbers among its members certain types or *poseurs* whose habit, to quote a writer in the *Architects' and Builders' Journal* of London, is "to effect one of two things: Either he puts himself forward with no lack of self-confidence as a tremendously important person, or he adopts a languid, expiring attitude toward the Art he ostensibly practises." In fact, by injecting an effeminate personality into everything he does, he causes the casual observer to regard the profession as being of much the same character as the man. Fortunately, this anæmic individual who endeavors to hide in a mass of mannerisms a woeful lack of professional knowledge is fast disappearing. Men who appreciate the dignities of their work, who realize that it is by accomplishment alone that they can succeed, are supplanting them and now occupy the highest positions in the profession. To quote further from the article in the *Architects' and Builders' Journal*—"Architecture, after all, is a matter-of-fact work of design, and it needs to be regarded as such in a sane, straightforward, vigorous way. Enthusiasm, certainly, and imagination to raise it from the dead level of the commonplace: but let us have done with all pose in regard to it. There is indeed a good deal of cant associated with Art, which is very damaging to artists and their work, and the sooner it is got rid of the better for all concerned."

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

A CONTEST IN CITY PLANNING

(Continued from page 22)

a building architect, an engineer and a housing expert.

The various plans, combined finally in one volume, should prove of genuine benefit to many communities through the ideas they will suggest, and should prove also a powerful "campaign document." They certainly should be a leading feature of the program of the 1913 Conference, which, it is understood, will develop a complete scheme for securing a plan in any community.

EARL F. GATES.

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

SUFFICIENCY OF NOTICE BY OWNER OF TERMINATION OF BUILDING CONTRACT

A building contract provided that, if the architect should certify to the neglect of the contractor to prosecute the work, the owner might, after notice, provide labor and materials, and deduct the cost thereof from any money due or to become due to the contractor and that, if the architect should certify that the neglect was sufficient ground for such action, the owner might terminate the employment of the contractor and complete the work under the contract. Such a stipulation gives the owner the option, on the contractor's default, either to terminate the contract and stand on his legal rights, or to terminate the employment of the contractor and complete the work. The contractor abandoned the work without legal cause. The owner gave notice to the contractor that he terminated the employment and would enter upon the premises and complete the work, enclosing and referring to the architect's certificate of the contractor's default. It was held that this notice did not amount to a termination of the contract, but merely to a termination of the plaintiff's employment under the contract, and that the contractor could recover the contract price, less the amount of installments paid and the owner's expenditure in completing the work.

Steiger v. London, New York Appellate Division, 126 N. Y. Supp. 256.

SUB-CONTRACTOR'S LIEN — NOTICE TO OWNER NOT SUFFICIENT

The Florida statute requires for the creation of a materialman's and laborer's lien the service of "a written notice that the contractor or other person for whom the labor has been performed or the materials furnished is indebted to" the complainant. A notice by sub-contractors for the electric lighting of a building addressed to the owners of the building, stated that "this is to notify you that under our contract for electric light and annunciator on your new building, amounting to \$490, and extras as approved, \$100, making in all for wiring to outlets, \$590, \$300 has been paid, and we are looking to you to protect the remainder of the contract price." This was held insufficient to create a lien under the statute, the sub-contract not being with the owners.

De Soto Nat. Bank v. Arcadia Electric Light, Ice & Telephone Co., Supreme Court of Florida, 52 So. 612.

EFFECT OF PROVISION FOR LIQUIDATED DAMAGES FOR DELAY

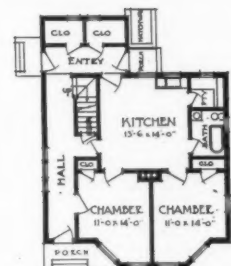
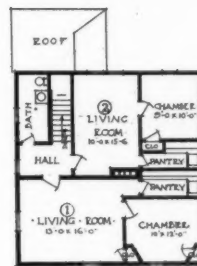
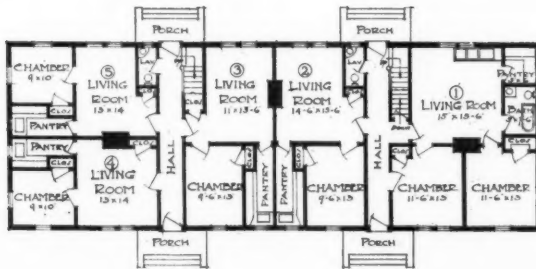
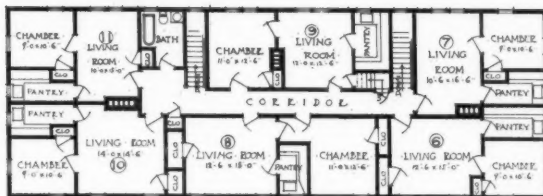
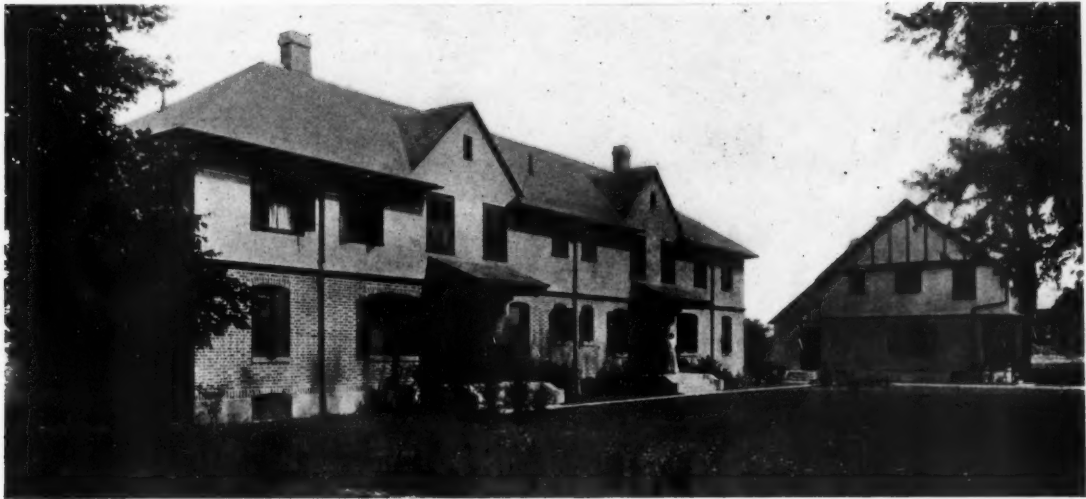
In an action to recover a balance on a building contract providing for liquidated damages for non-completion within the time limit it was held that the fact that the contractor did not complete the work by the stipulated time did not necessarily show that the contract had not been performed. It could be held that the provision for liquidated damages contemplated completion at a later date than the stipulated period.

Schulze v. Farrell, New York Appellate Division, 126 N. Y. Supp. 678.

MATERIALMAN'S REMEDY

A materialman who furnishes materials to a sub-contractor is primarily a creditor of the sub-contractor. When he does not avail himself of the mechanic's lien statute, he must assert and work out his rights to share in the fund due from the principal contractor to the sub-contractor independently of the statute.

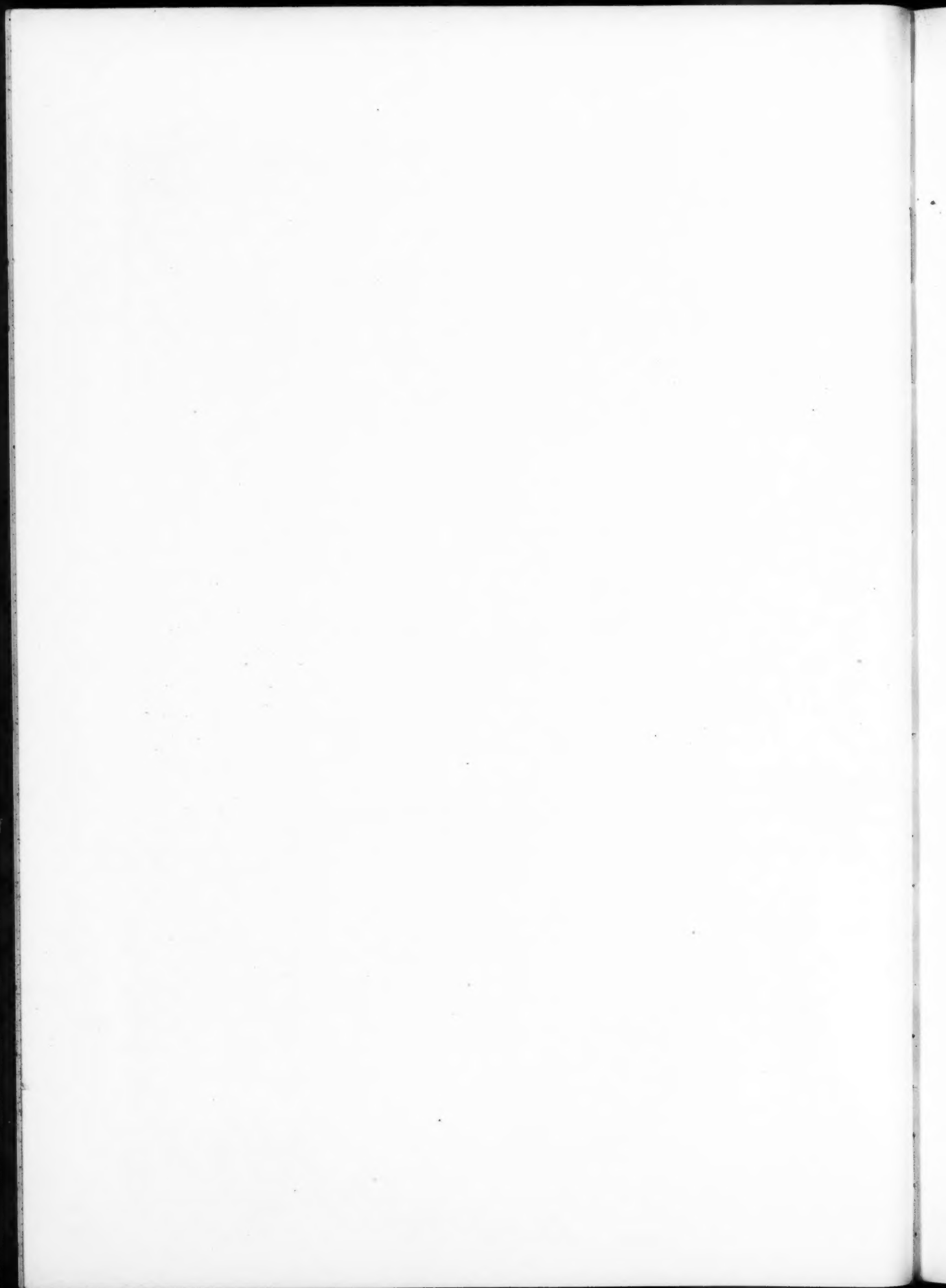
Hall v. Jones, North Carolina Supreme Court, 66 S. E. 350.



THE GEORGE BEACH HOME AND
KELSEY MEMORIAL COTTAGE,
HARTFORD, CONN.

MR. A. RAYMOND ELLIS, ARCHITECT

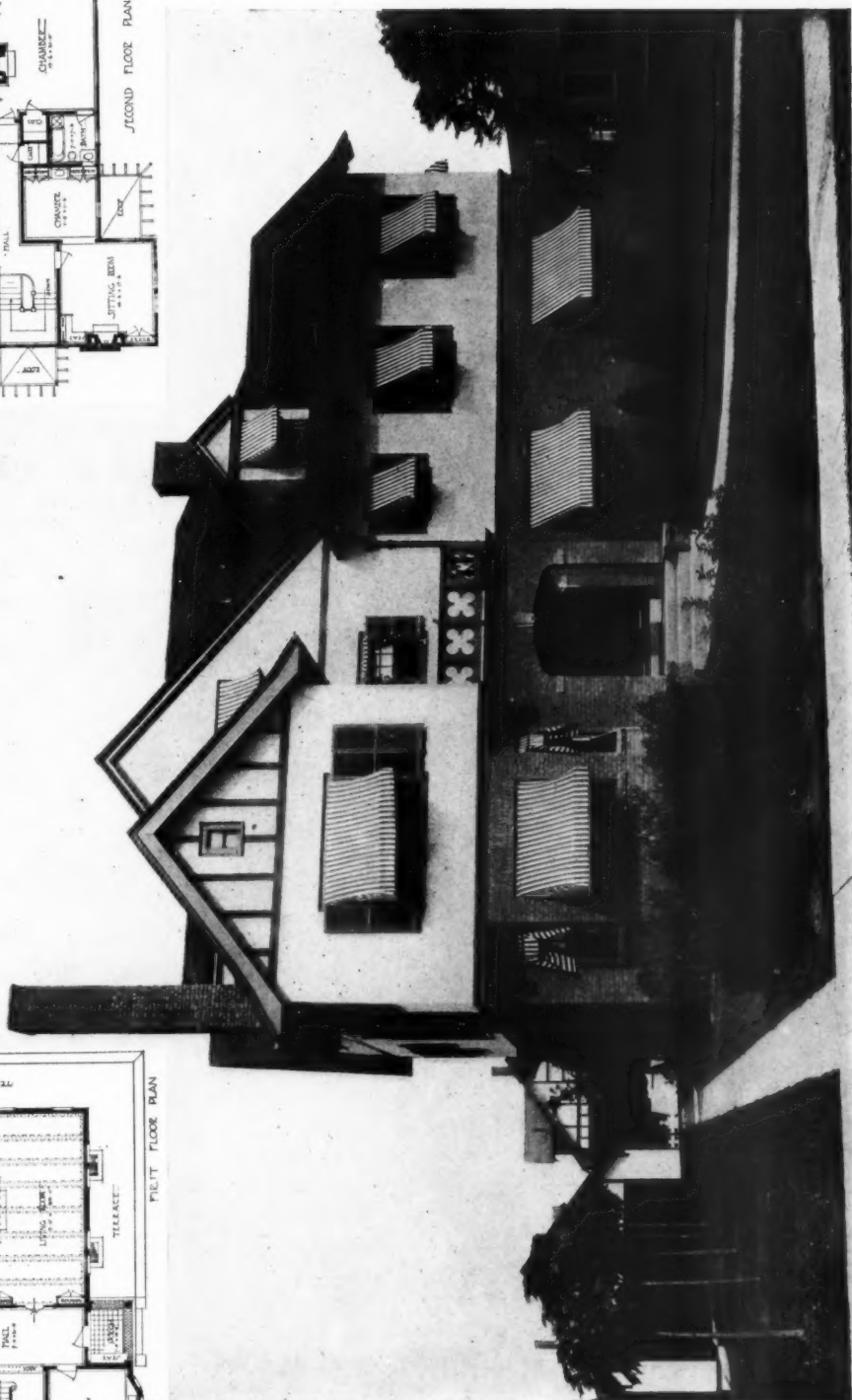


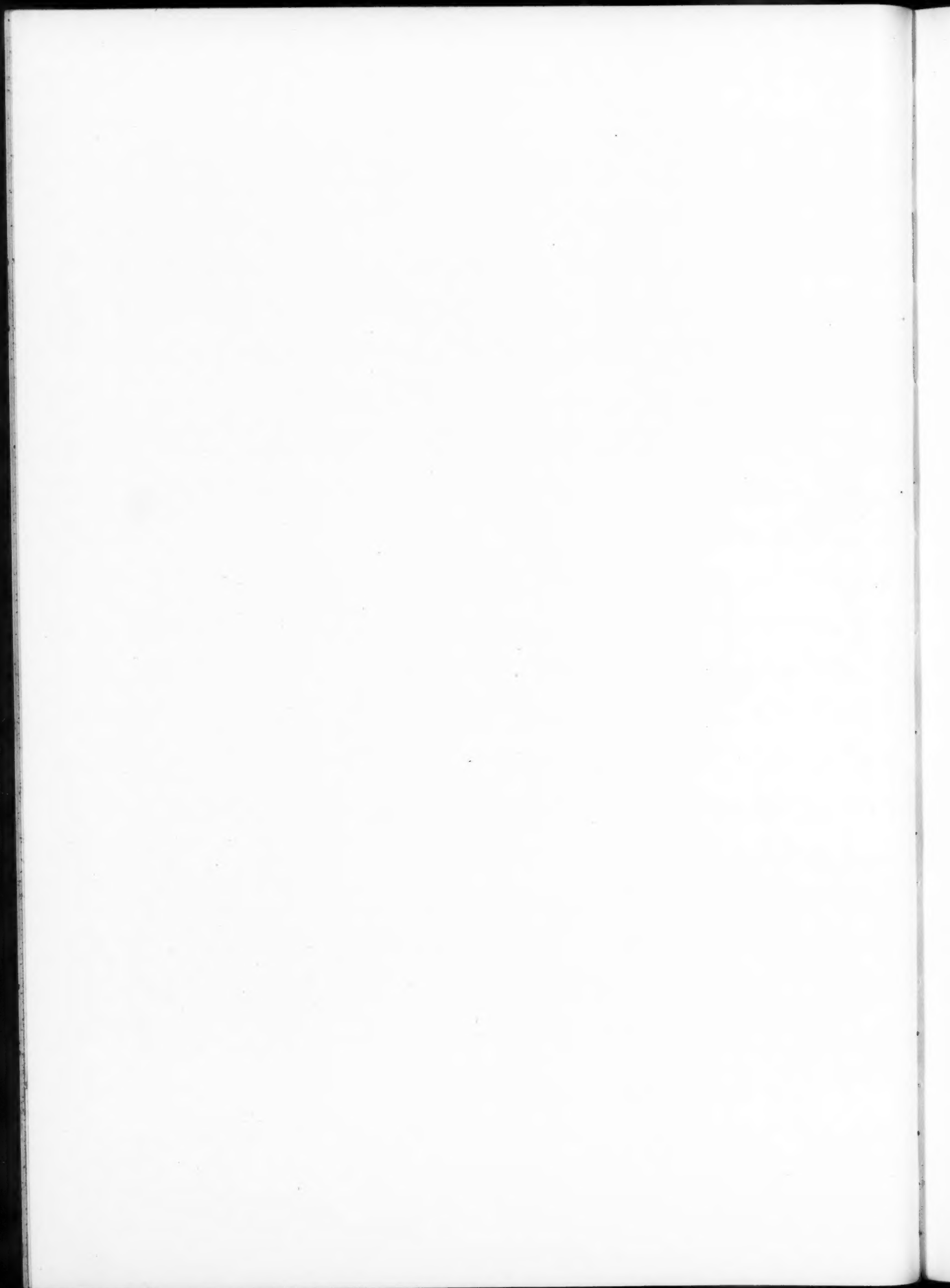


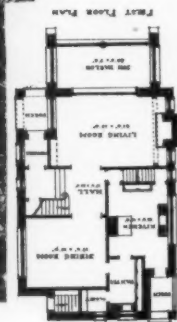
THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

JULY 17, 1912

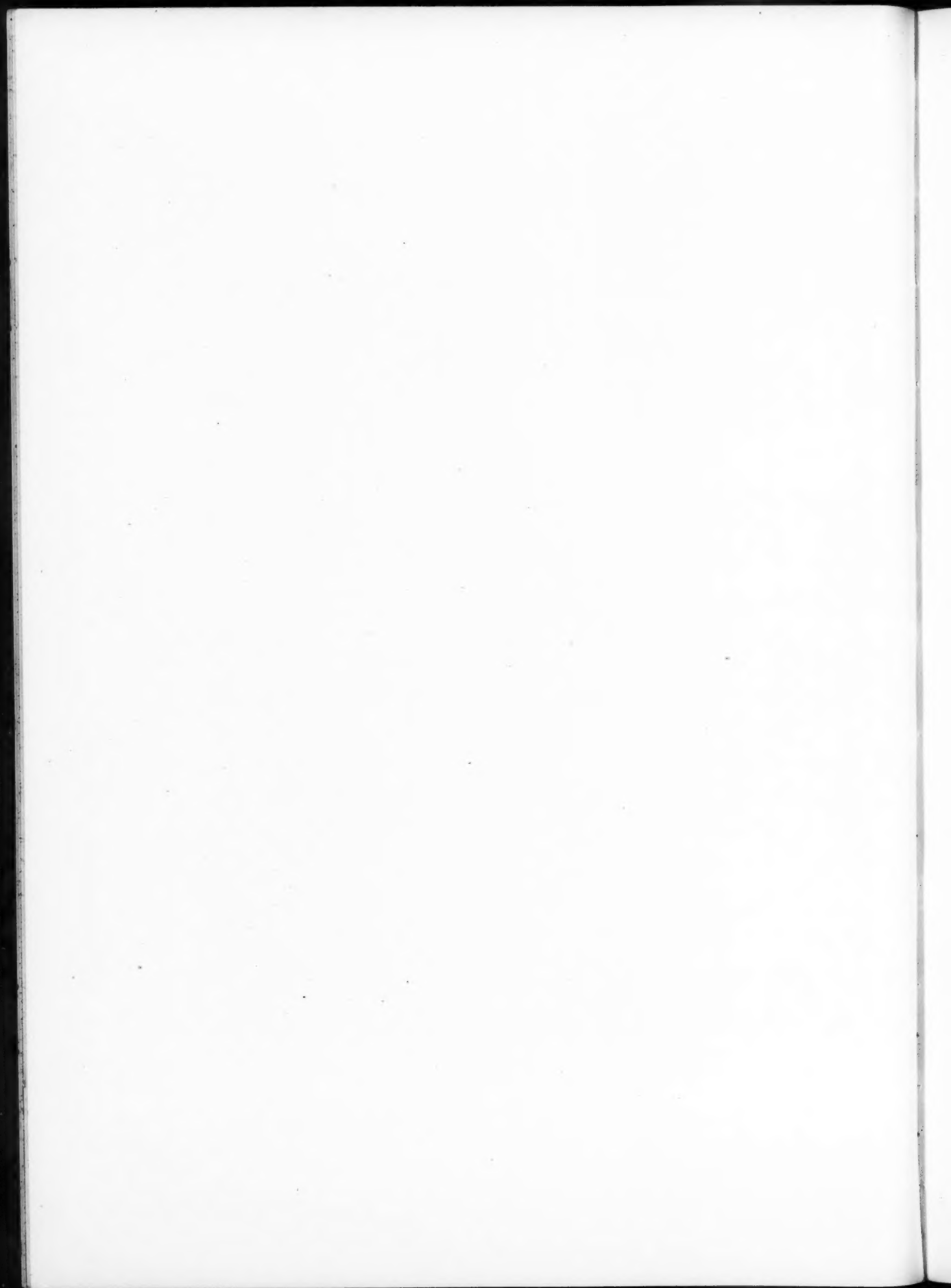
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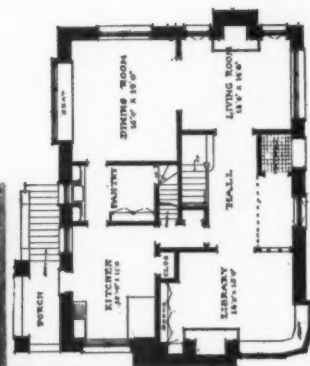
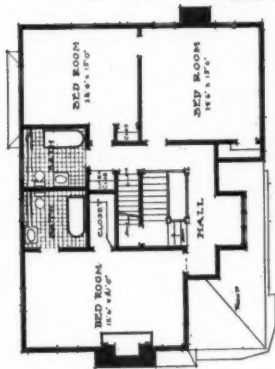




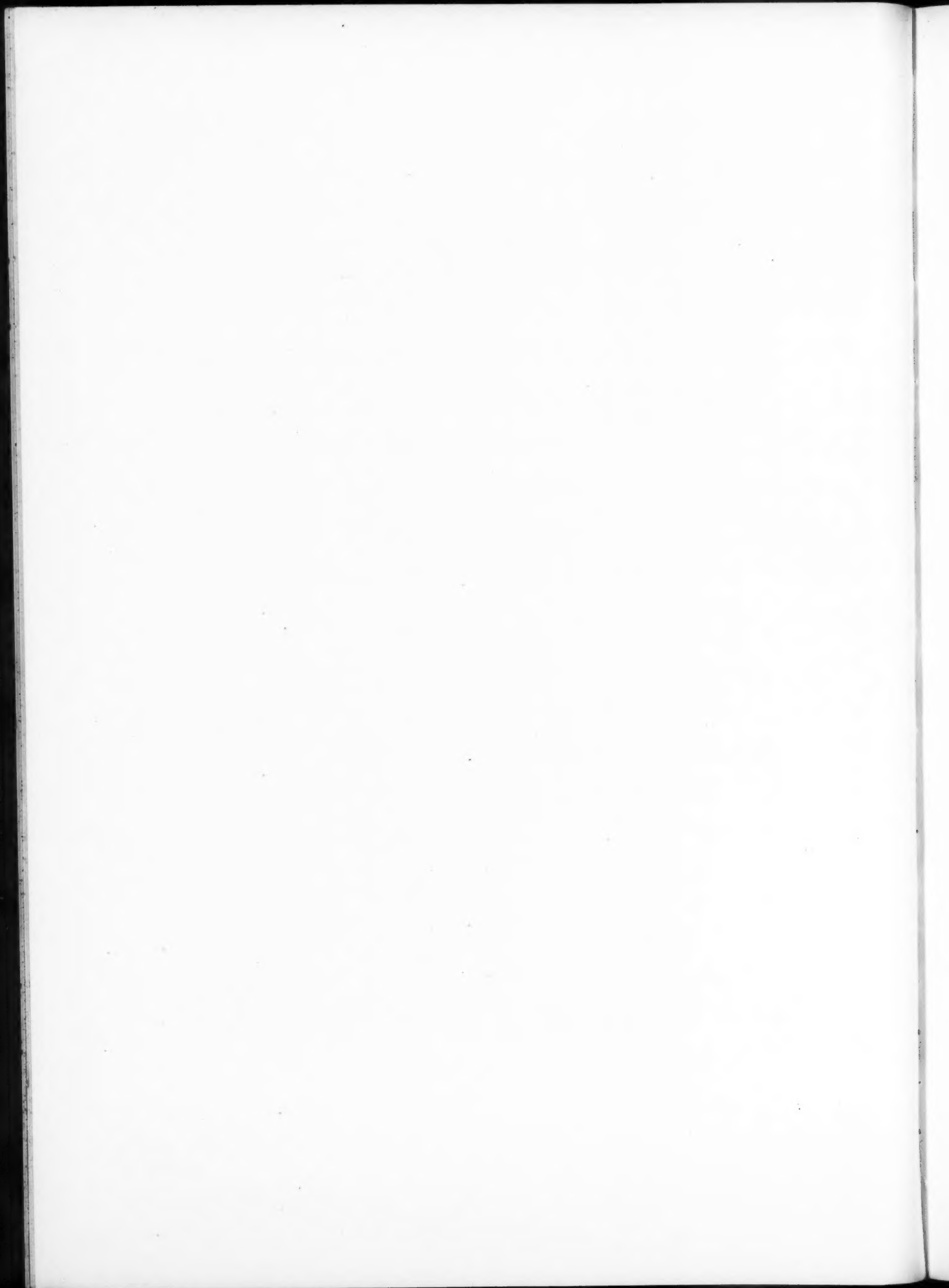


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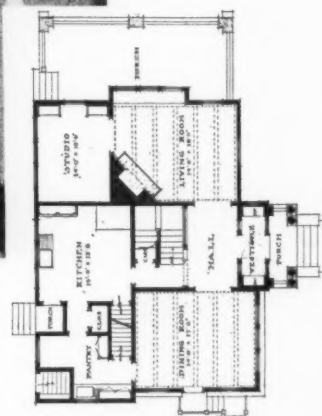
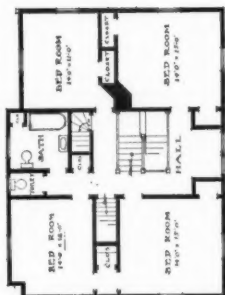
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THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

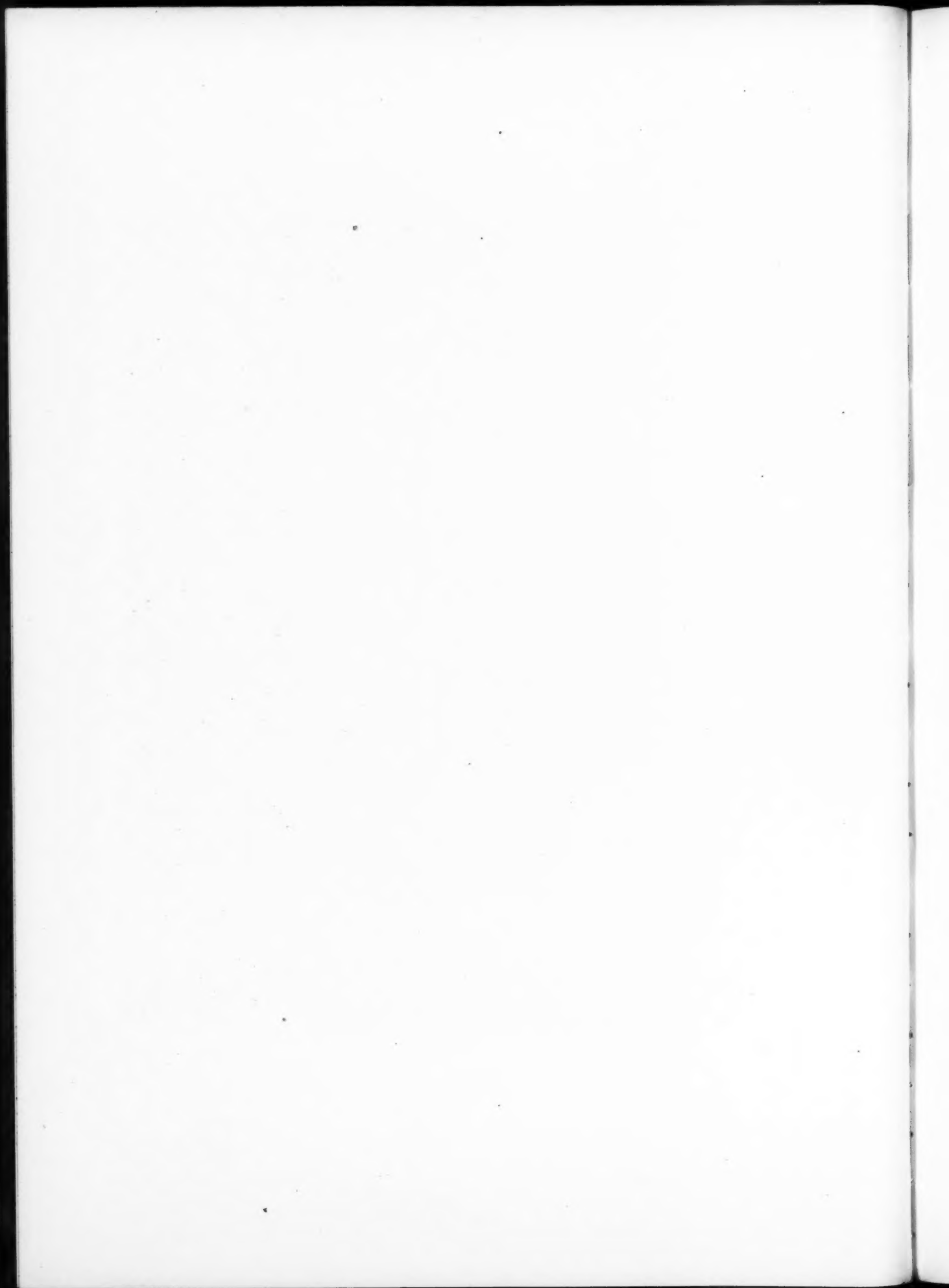
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VOL. CII, NO. 1908



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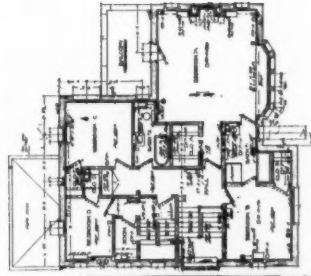
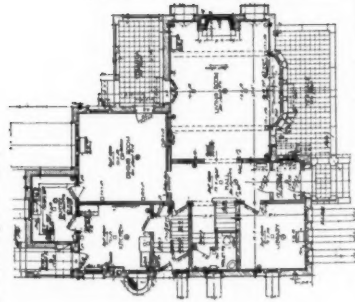
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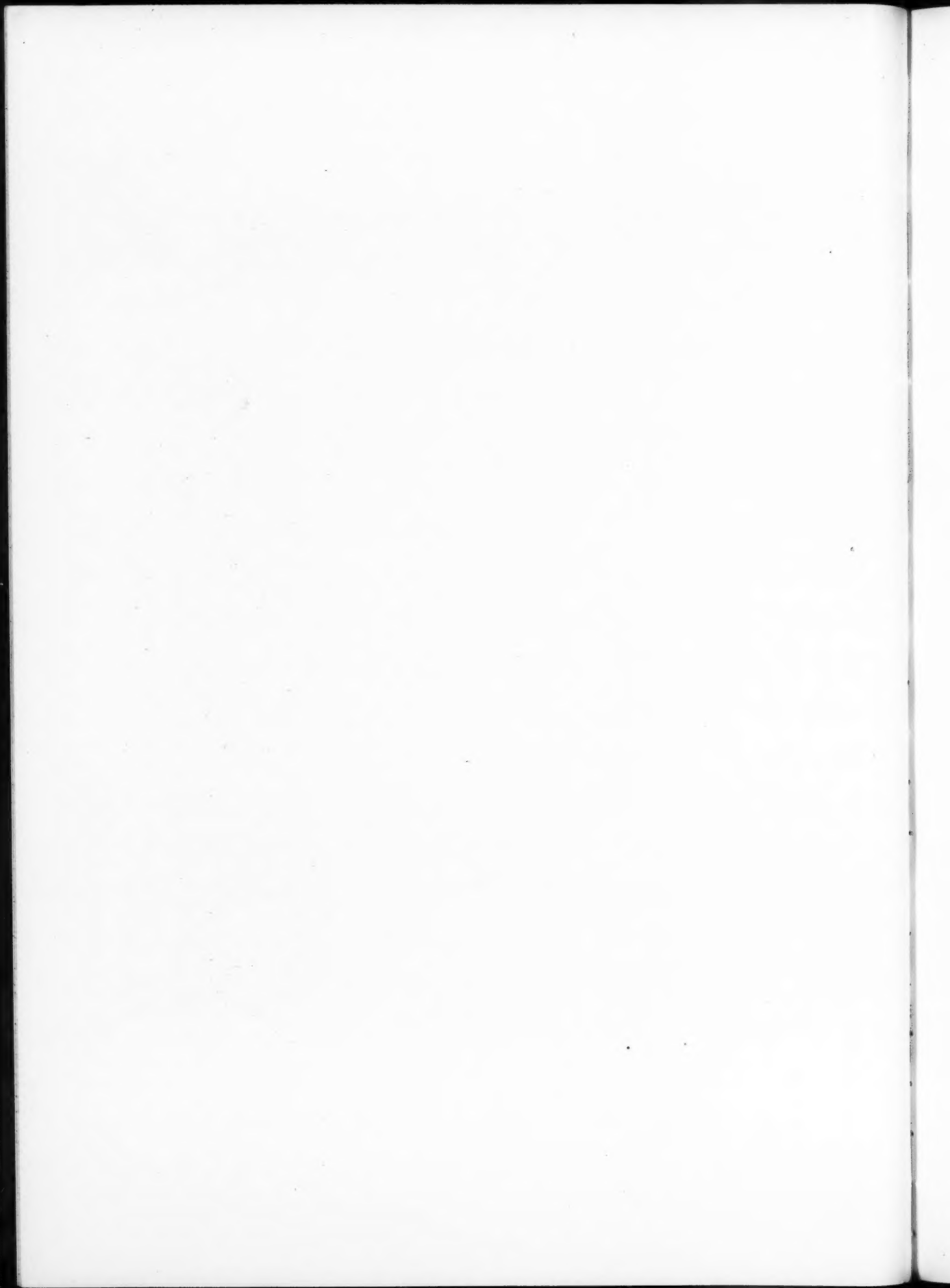
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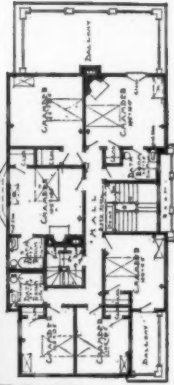
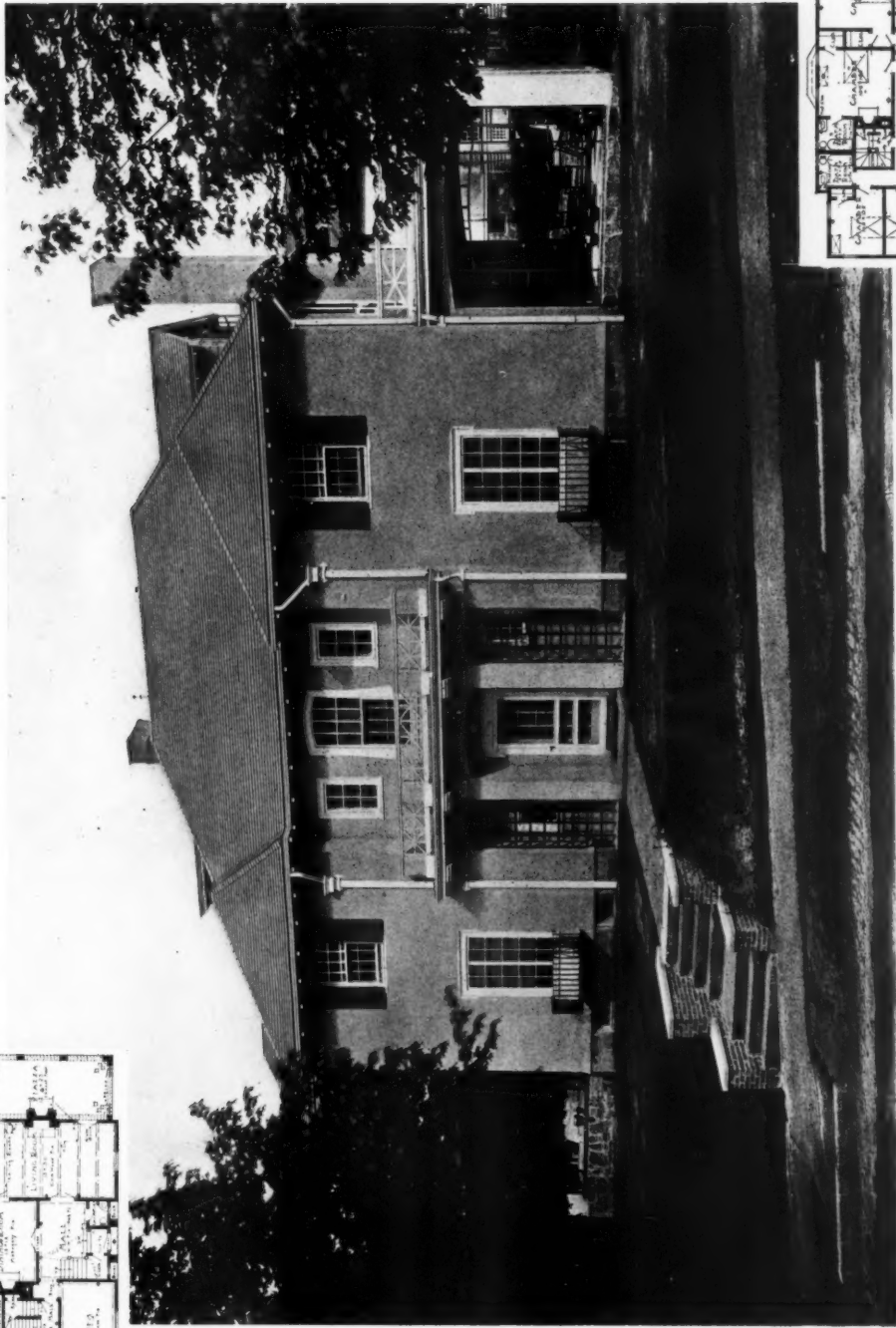
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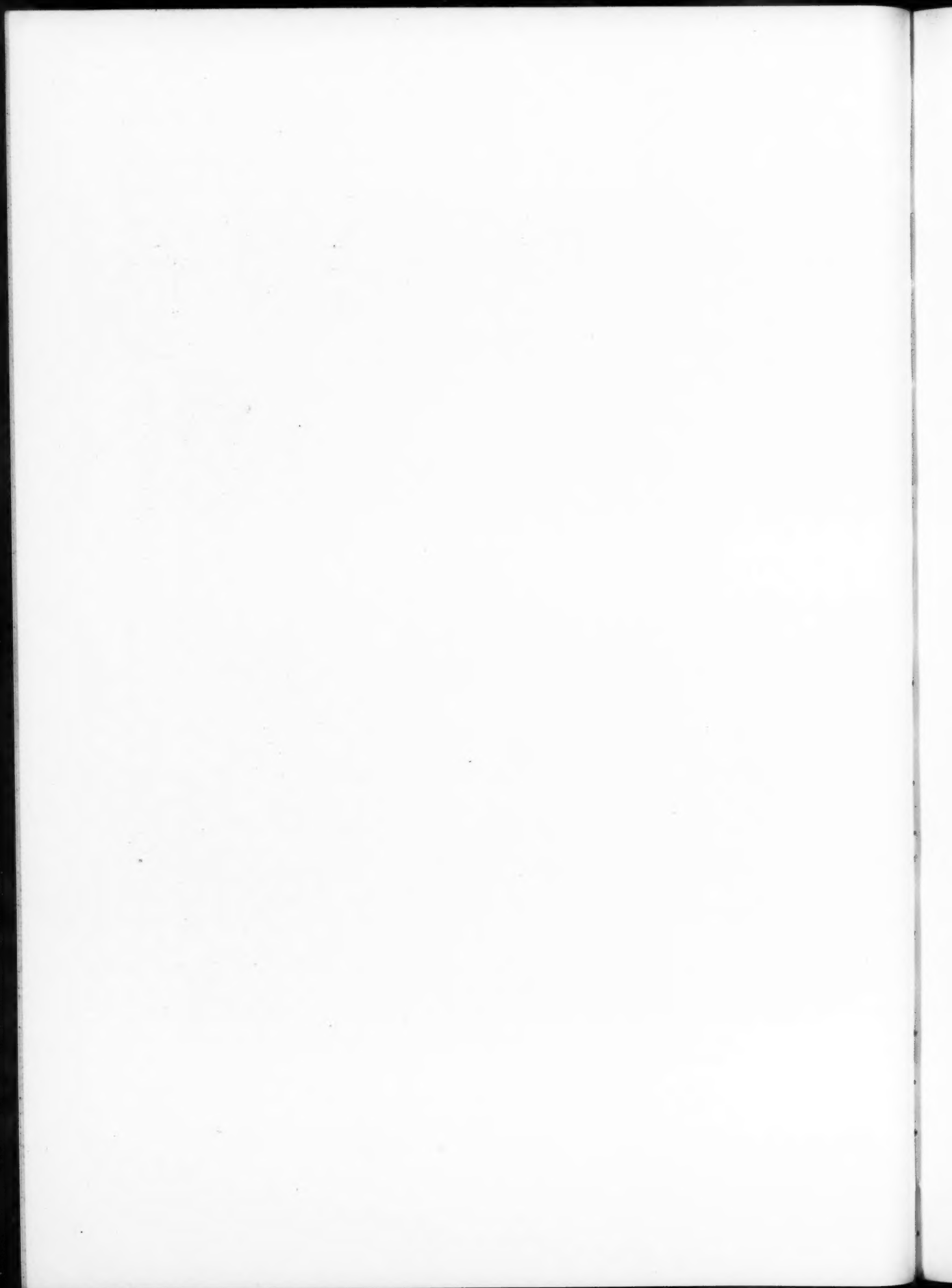


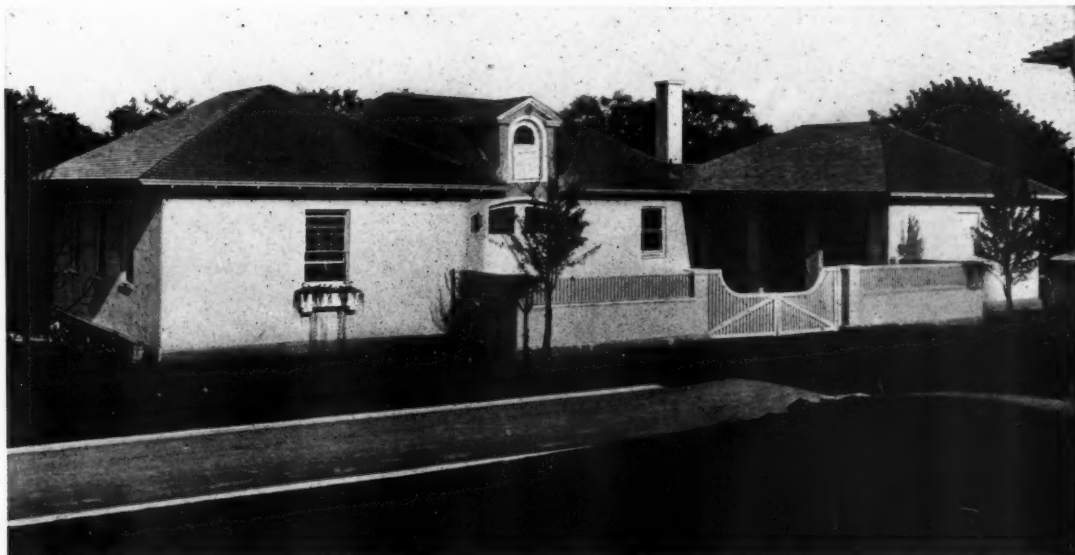
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HOUSE OF H. B. CRAM, ESQ., CHESHAM ROAD, BROOKLINE, MASS.
MR. E. M. STRATTON, ARCHITECT

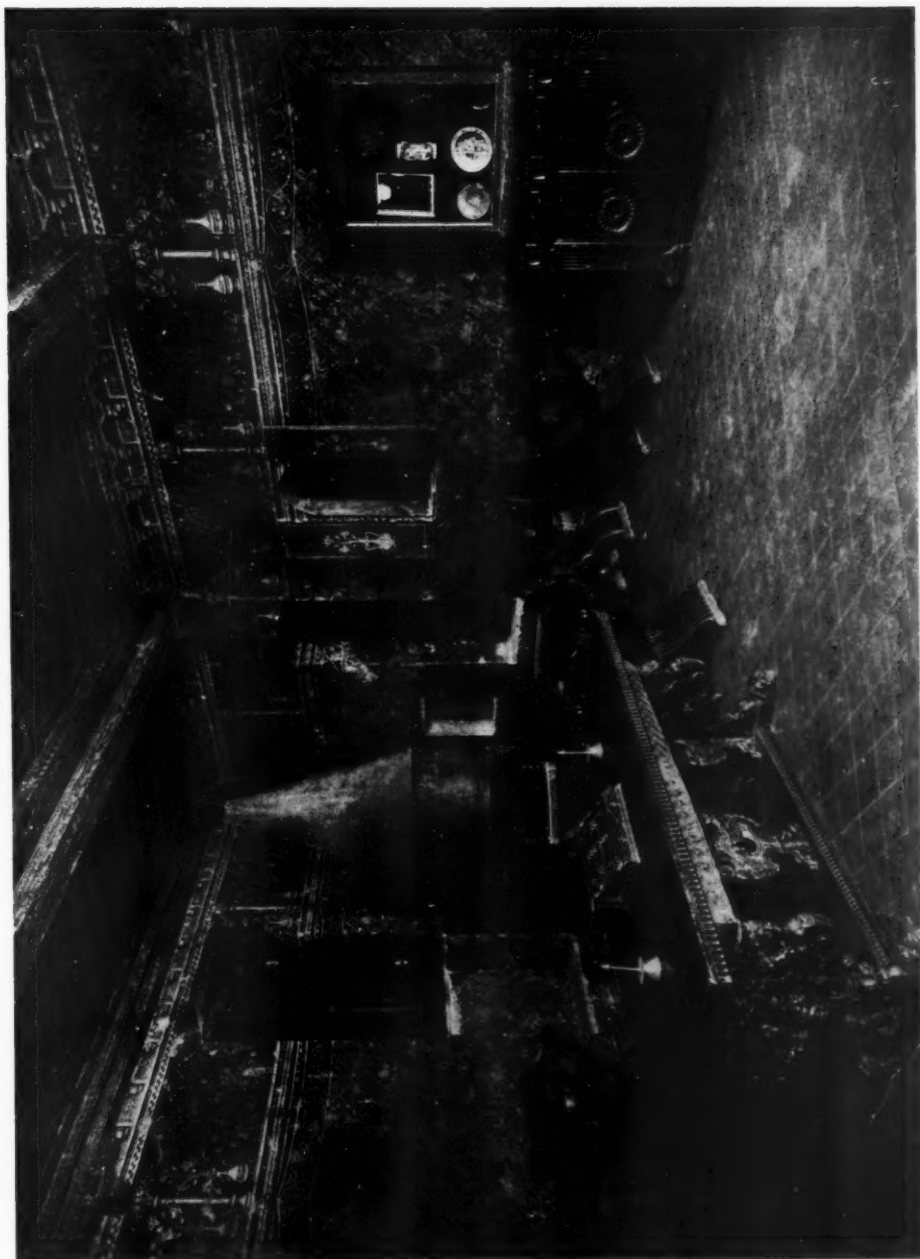




ESTATE OF STEDMAN BUTTRICK, ESQ. CONCORD, MASS.
MR. JAMES PURDON, ARCHITECT

BELOW, COACHMAN'S COTTAGE. WALLS OF HOLLOW TERRA COTTA TILE, CEMENT STUCCOED
ABOVE, GARAGE, STABLE AND SQUASH COURT. SAME CONSTRUCTION AS THE COTTAGE

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT



SMALL APARTMENT, THIRD FLOOR

THE DAVANZATI PALACE, FLORENCE, ITALY—I