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VOLUME CVIII JULY 14, 1915 ✓ NUMBER 2064



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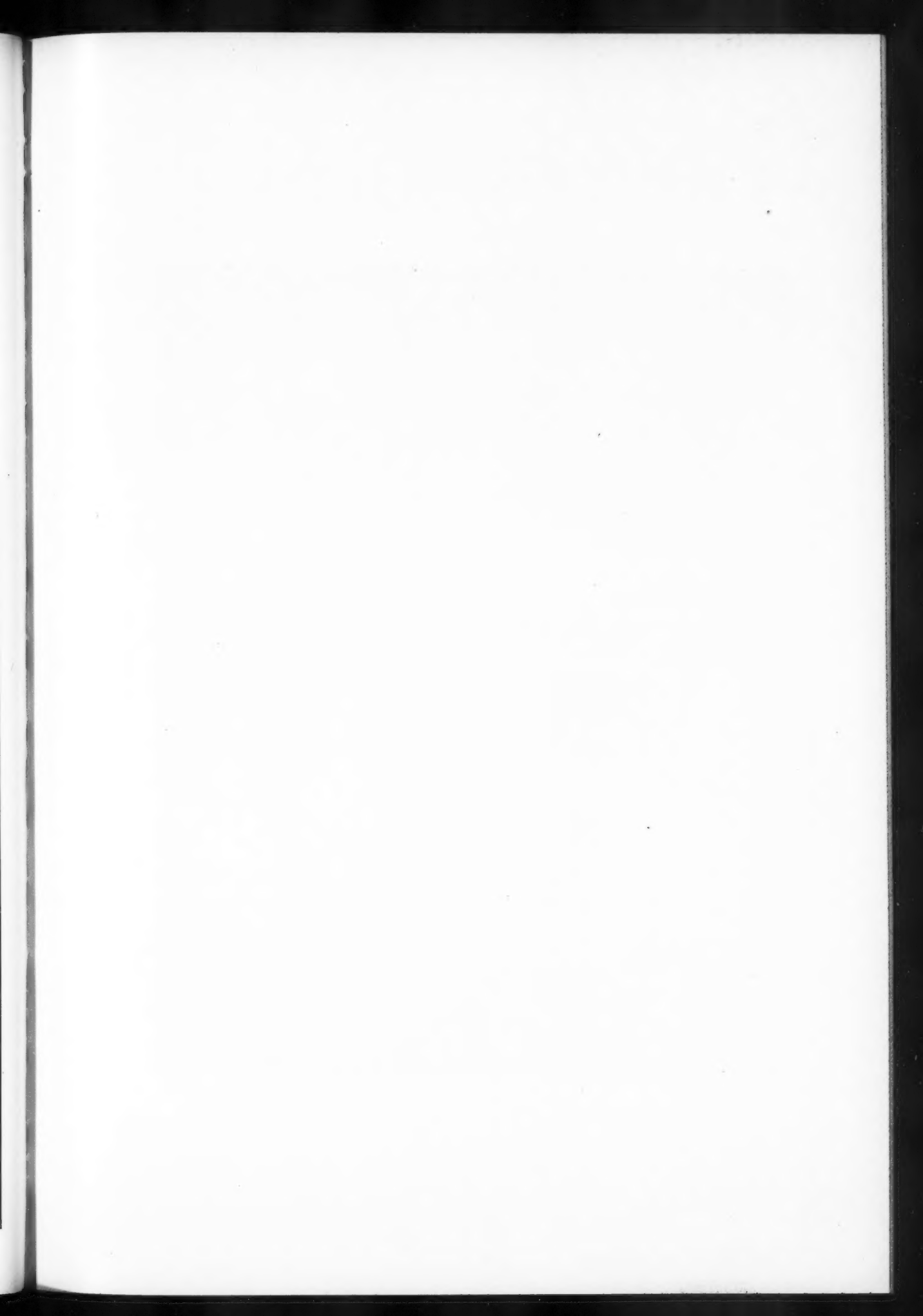
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THE COURT, VILLA PAPA GIULIO, ROME, ITALY
VIGNOLA (GIACOMO BAROZZI) ARCHITECT
The Villa of Pope Julius III (1550-1555)

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

VOL. CVIII

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 1915

NUMBER 2064

THE DETROIT ATHLETIC CLUB

MR. ALBERT KAHN, *Architect*

MR. ERNEST WILBY, *Associate*

THE strenuousness of our daily life never more insistently indicated the necessity for a sound mind in a sound body than it does to-day.

The average man of affairs finds that with each succeeding day he has taxed his vital energy to a greater extent than did his father under the more quiet habits of daily life obtaining fifty years ago.

To recuperate wasted energies and to be able to meet the rigors of our daily tasks it is necessary that we pursue in a logical manner some method of rebuilding processes.

The growth of the modern athletic club is the result of a demand for just the proper exercise that effects all the desired results.

The Detroit Athletic Club, illustrated in this issue, affords an opportunity to study in detail a building that provides opportunities for exercise and recreation that are essential to the maintenance of a sound mental and physical condition.

The modern athletic club, as here shown, is an architectural problem differing materially from that earlier type where only the physical side of the athletic question was considered. Authorities are in accord that exercise, simply as exercise, does not accomplish the results desired. It is generally conceded to be neces-

sary to combine with the athletic feature social and other recreative elements. The present club house is the result of most careful consideration of all the requirements as they are understood to-day. Its location is an ideal one, as it is in the very heart of the city of Detroit—near enough to the business section to be quickly reached, and equally accessible from the residence district.

It is bounded by streets on all sides, thus by its isolation permitting a good view of the excellence of its architectural features and the fulfilment of the intention of the architect to create a dignified structure that would indicate the praiseworthy civic pride of the building's projectors.

As will be noted by the plans, the building is rectangular in shape. Its frontage is one hundred and fifty feet, and it runs back to a depth of one hundred and twenty-four feet. It is provided with a structural steel frame, fireproofed with concrete. The floor construction is particularly interesting. It is of long spans of reinforced concrete beams and



DETAIL OF GRILL ROOM CEILING

girders with hollow tile and floor tile. The latter construction has in this instance been used to excellent advantage, some of the spans being as long as thirty-six feet in the clear without excessive depth of floors or the introduction of minor steel beams. The

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exterior of the building is faced with Bedford limestone, extending from grade up to and including the cornice. The entrance steps are of granite.

As to the general excellence of the design and the very satisfactory way it has "worked out," it is not necessary to dwell at length. The blank spaces inevitable in a building of this type have all been satisfactorily "accounted for," and the general result so good as to make extended comment unnecessary. In the matter of the interior,

carried forward with this matter constantly in mind. For example:—with the dining-room placed on the second floor, the elevator service is obviously less than by following the usual custom of placing this room on an upper floor.

In like manner, the location of the kitchen on this floor (the second), is also conducive to economy of operation.

The grouping of all athletic rooms together has been done in a similar effort to effect economical conditions.



LADIES' DINING-ROOM

its plan and general design are very thoroughly shown in the illustrations.

It may be well, however, to supplement this complete illustration with some brief description of the main features of grouping in plan, the color scheme and materials of the interior fittings and other details.

As one of the principal features to be considered in a structure designed for a club-house is economy in operating expenses, the development of the plan was

The major details of the interior are briefly as follows:—The entrance hall is wainscoted to the ceiling in American walnut of straight grain and finished light gray in tone. The floor is of Tennessee marble, also gray in tone, while the ceiling, of ornamental plaster, is painted and gilded.

The interesting mantel in the hall is after a fifteenth century Italian model, and is constructed of Hauteville marble touched with color. The mantel shown in the

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adjoining lounging-room is of similar marble.

The lounging-room is finished in walnut, the walls covered with a tapestry fabric, and the floors are of quartered oak parquetry.

The billiard-room, an important and much frequented room in a club-house, has a wainscot in quartered oak, of fine grain, the walls above and the ceiling being of moulded plaster. A feature in this room is that the billiard cues are kept concealed in cupboards back of the wainscot, the doors providing access being not easily discern-

balanced feature of the interior. The walls are faced with Botticino marble, the stair treads, and also the floor, of gray Tennessee marble. The well-designed stair rail is of wrought iron, polished and touched with dull gold.

In the ladies' entrance hall the walls are of Caen stone, the floor of marble, while the ladies' reception-room is paneled in plaster and painted in gray tones.

As will be noted, the predominating tone throughout this floor is gray, the limited



LADIES' RECEPTION ROOM

ible. The floor of this room is of rubber tile.

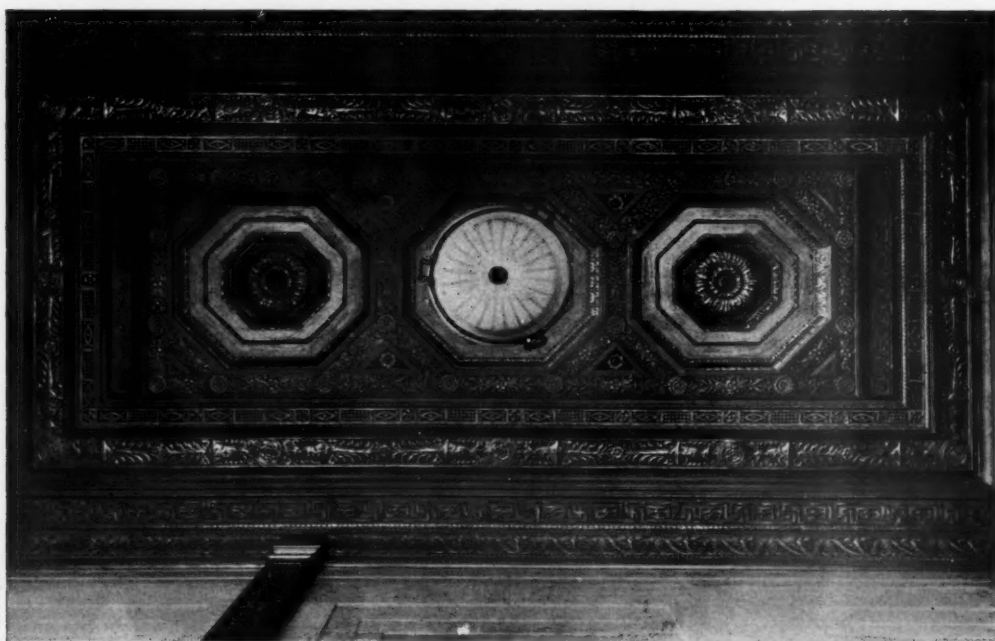
The grill-room was designed after an apartment in the Palazzo Vincigliata in Florence. The color decoration of the walls and ceiling has been very satisfactorily effected. The low wainscot is of quartered oak, gray in tone, while the floor is of dull red tile with occasional insets in other colors.

The stair-hall is a dignified and well

introduction of color having been effected with good taste and artistic restraint.

The main dining-room is wainscoted in brown oak, the wall above is of Caen stone and the ceiling is of painted plaster. The dining-room ceiling is skillfully done in the manner of Raphael and Giovanni da Udine. The floor of the dining-room is of marble, covered with carpet, which carpet may be removed during the summer months.

The ladies' dining-room has walls pan-



DETAIL OF CEILING OF STAIR HALL

eled and painted, the lower part is wainscoted in wood. Tones of gray are used in conjunction with the white woodwork. The floor is similar to that of the main dining-room.

Between the ladies' and main dining-room is the palmroom. Its walls are of Caen stone, the floor of Tennessee marble. The ceiling inspired from models in the Vatican and the Villa Madama is in cast plaster treated in white and color.

The musicians' gallery is concealed behind a screen which opens onto the corridor leading to the main dining-room.

To the arrangement and ventilation of the kitchen careful attention was paid. The walls are enameled, the floor is of red tile and ample space is provided below the floor to give access to all plumbing pipes.

The private dining-rooms on the next floor are treated with paneled walls. Collapsible doors make it possible to open the four rooms into one banquet room.

The locker rooms on this floor are designed with special reference to adequate light and ventilation. The lockers are sixteen inches square by seventy-two inches high. Toilets and showers open off the locker rooms.

In general, the walls and ceilings in the bath section are of vitreous materials. In division walls plate glass in bronze frames is used, the floors are of vitreous tile, the rubbing slabs of white marble. Ample daylight is provided in all rooms, and to retain the necessary heat double sash are used.

A private stairway connects the Turkish bath with the swimming pool on the floor above. This pool has a southern exposure and is flooded with sunshine most of the day. The walls of the room are wainscoted with marble and above are plastered and painted. The pool, which is 25 x 75 feet, with depths varying from 4 to 8 feet, is formed of a waterproof steel tank that rests on the structural frame. The steel tank is further waterproofed with felt. This is covered with reinforced concrete, which forms the base for the white vitreous tile lining. A cork tile curb forms a border around the pool and prevents slipping in diving. The floor of the space around the pool is of vitreous tile.

The gymnasium has pressed brick walls of light buff color, the floor is of maple. The running track is banked and is covered with cork carpet.

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The squash and hand-ball courts have walls plastered with cement mortar and maple floors. The artificial lighting of these is by means of reflectors let into the ceiling and flush with same on the under side. A visitors' gallery is located over the passage in back of the courts.

The athletic equipment of the building is available for women on certain days of the week. For this reason the plan has been arranged with private entrance and elevator so that by locking a minimum num-

ber of doors entire privacy and freedom from intrusion are assured.

The two upper floors contain 108 sleeping rooms with bathrooms. Part of the latter are equipped with tubs, the remainder with showers. The walls of the bedrooms are in part paneled and painted and partly papered. The floors are carpeted.

Serving rooms are provided on all floors and connected with each other and the kitchen by dumb-waiters and a service elevator.



ENTRANCE HALL

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

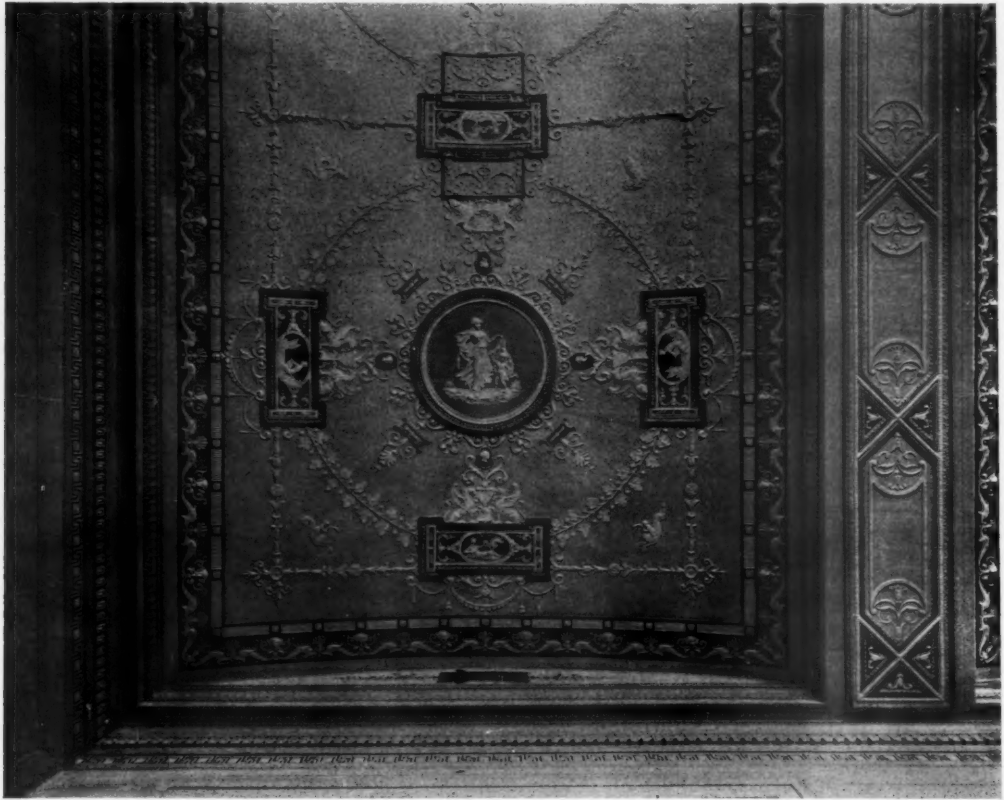
In the basement are provided a number of bowling alleys with locker and toilet rooms, a stunts-room, in addition to the help's locker and toilet rooms, carpenter shop, porters' and storage rooms and machinery-room, the latter so placed as to make the main rooms free from sound and vibration of machinery.

The building is heated by low pressure steam, and is mechanically ventilated. The ventilation system is composed of a number of individual units, arranged so as to make possible the ventilation of certain rooms without reference to others.

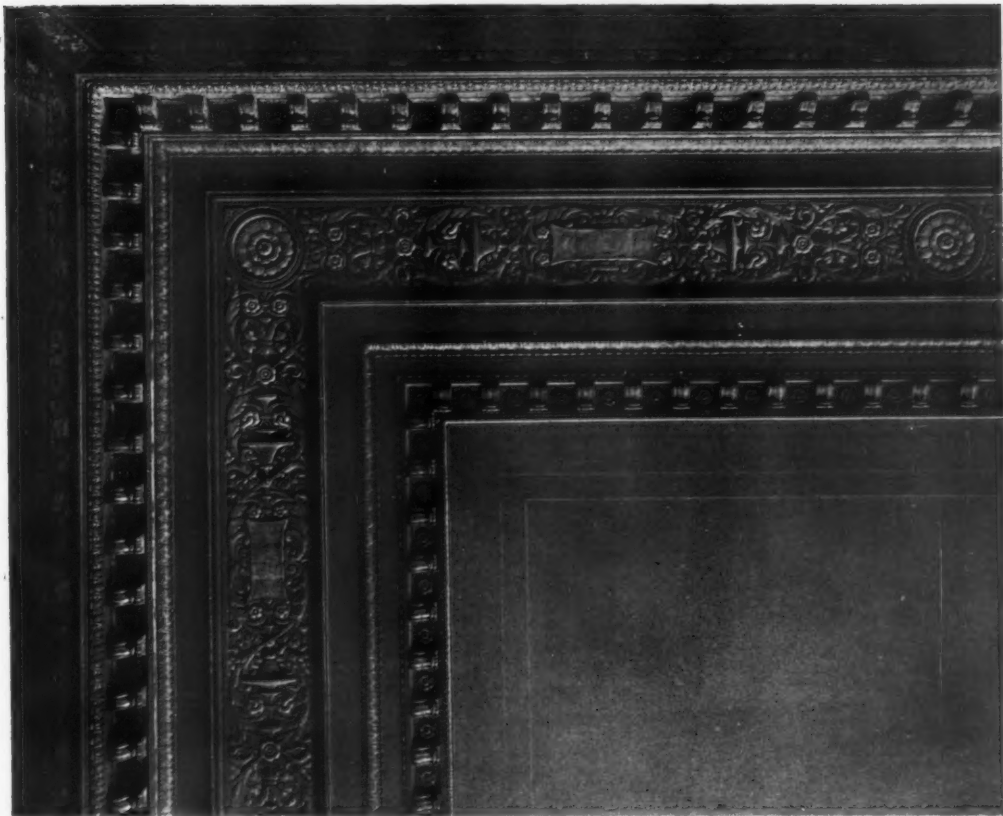
To solve the problem first of all from a thoroughly practical standpoint, to co-relate

the rooms so as to be convenient; also to arrange them so as to afford a maximum amount of revenue with a minimum amount of cost of operation, and then to make the building attractive; to give it the character of a fine private home, rather than that of a public hotel, has been the aim of the designers.

The project being managed by business men in a businesslike manner, the architects were made responsible from first to last, and full scope was given them in a manner which not often falls to their lot. The amount of money available, while not superabundant, was adequate for the results desired. To these facts may be attributed in some degree the successful outcome of the undertaking.



DETAIL OF PALM ROOM CEILING



DETAIL, LOUNGING ROOM CEILING, DETROIT ATHLETIC CLUB

THE CURRENT ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

THE June issue of *The Journal of the American Institute of Architects* is mainly devoted to city planning addresses, delivered by Flavel Shurtleff, Robert H. Whitten and B. Antrim Haldeman, at the National Conference in Detroit, June 7, 8, and 9, and given advance publication in this issue. The details as to topics will be found in the index to the current architectural press on another page.

An interesting feature of this number is the report of the recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the Institute.

In the department of the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, students' work, the awards in the judgment of April 27, and supplemental judgment of April 6, are pub-

lished, and a few of the prize winning designs are illustrated.

Chapter notes and other matters of interest to Institute members are presented as usual.

* * *

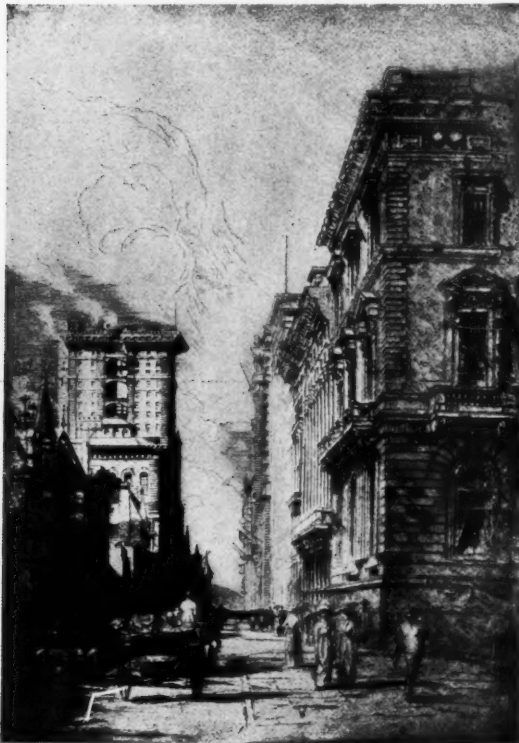
"New York, like a greater Venice, rises out of the sea," writes William Monk, one of England's greatest etchers, in an article published in *The International Studio* for June. Having been commissioned to visit America for the purpose of etching some plates of New York, Mr. Monk describes his first impression of the city and its architecture in the following words: "The wonderful mass and outline, faint and dim in the morning light—opal gray on the rim of the sea—is a sight that is not easily for-

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

gotten." "The American architect has great opportunities and makes wise use of them."

The illustrations of some of the etchings by Mr. Monk that accompany this article are very interesting. They are worthy of his high artistic ability and cause us to read with respect his well phrased recital of impression. One thing is, perhaps, noticeable in this series, and that is the unconscious tendency of an artist whose work has been heretofore confined to the older cities of

(From *The International Studio*)



"FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK"
ETCHING BY WILLIAM MONK, R.E.

Europe to impart to his delineation of scenes in more modern New York the aspect of age and the absence of the usual suggestion of modernity.

Mr. Monk's etchings are worthy of study by our American artists who are often inclined to accent this feature of newness.

The first of two articles on the San Diego and San Francisco expositions appears in this issue. It is by Dr. Brinton, and would perhaps be read with greater interest if the

subjects had not already been thoroughly presented in the magazines.

The exhibitions at the Brooklyn institute and that of the Allied Artists of America in New York are reviewed in this issue. With reference to the latter, one feature of unusual interest is referred to—the method of hanging the exhibits.

The walls were divided into certain spaces for which the artists drew lots. The result was coherency, absence of crowding of space and an effect expressive and satisfying.

The usual notes of exhibitions, studio gossip and mention of many things of interest to those laboring in the field of art make this issue of *The International Studio* an attractive one.

* * *

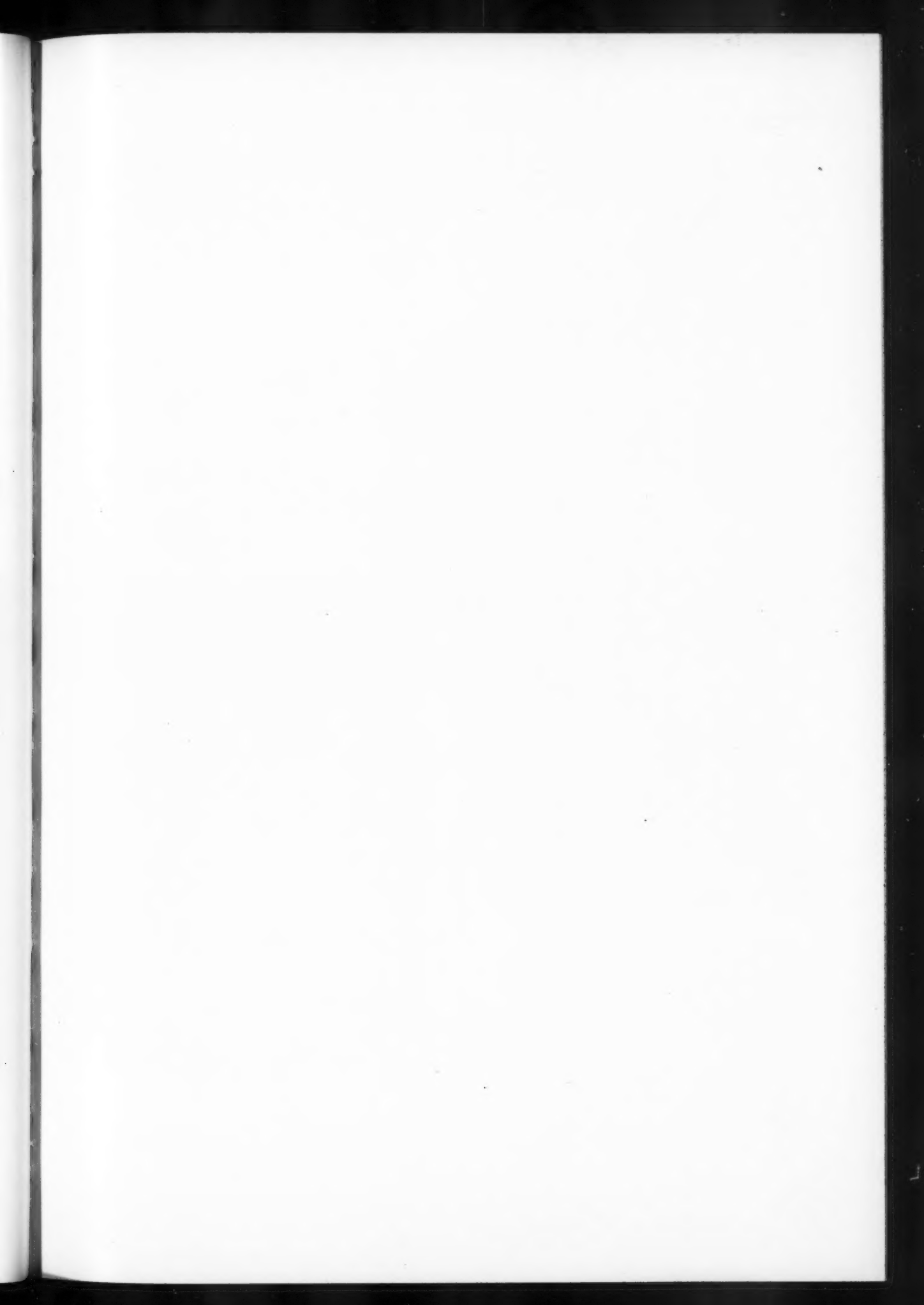
The leading article in *The Architectural Record* for June is on the new home of

(Continued on page 27)

(From *Good Furniture*)



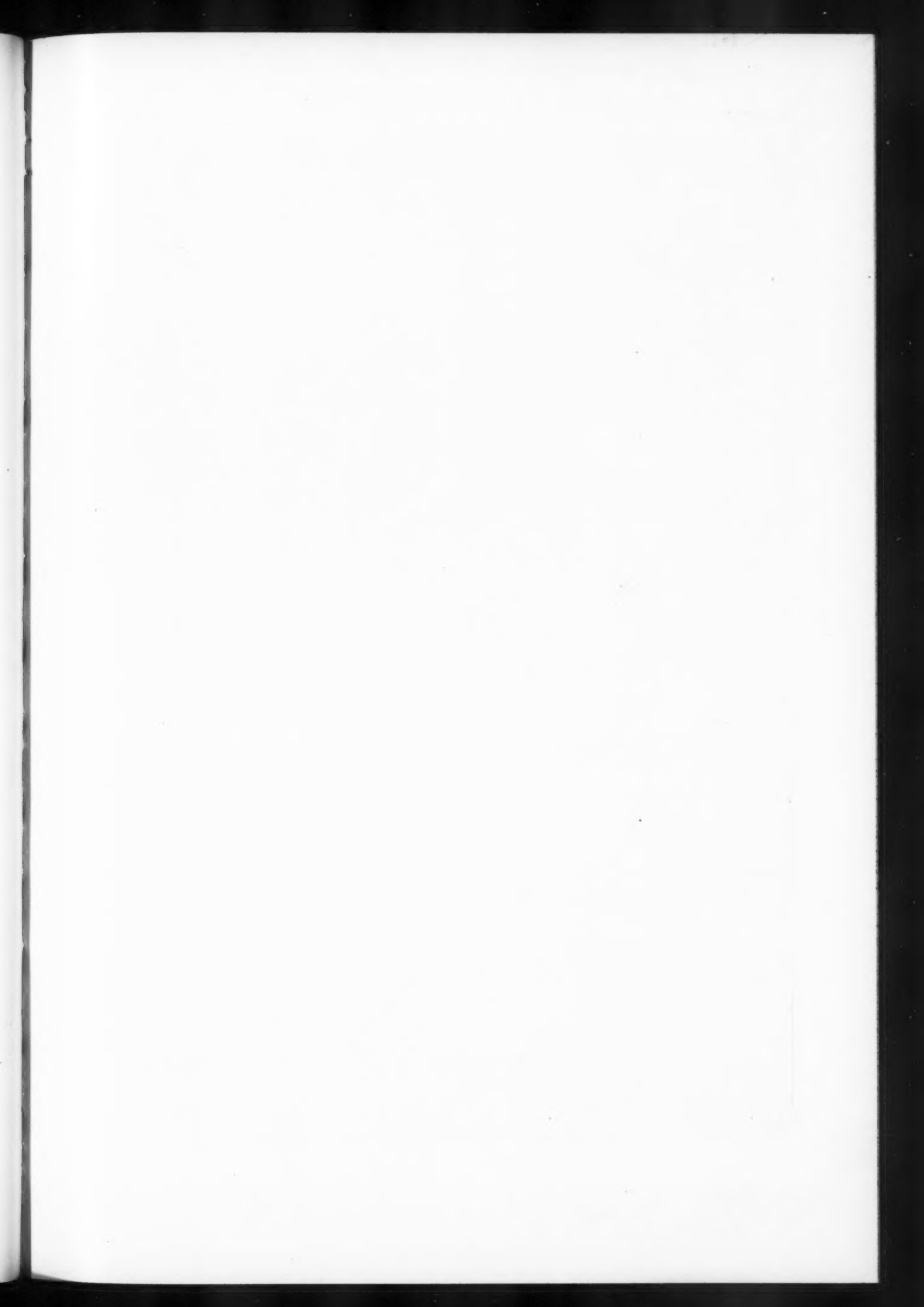
THE STONING OF ST. STEPHEN
CARVING BY GRINLING GIBBON, NOW IN THE
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM





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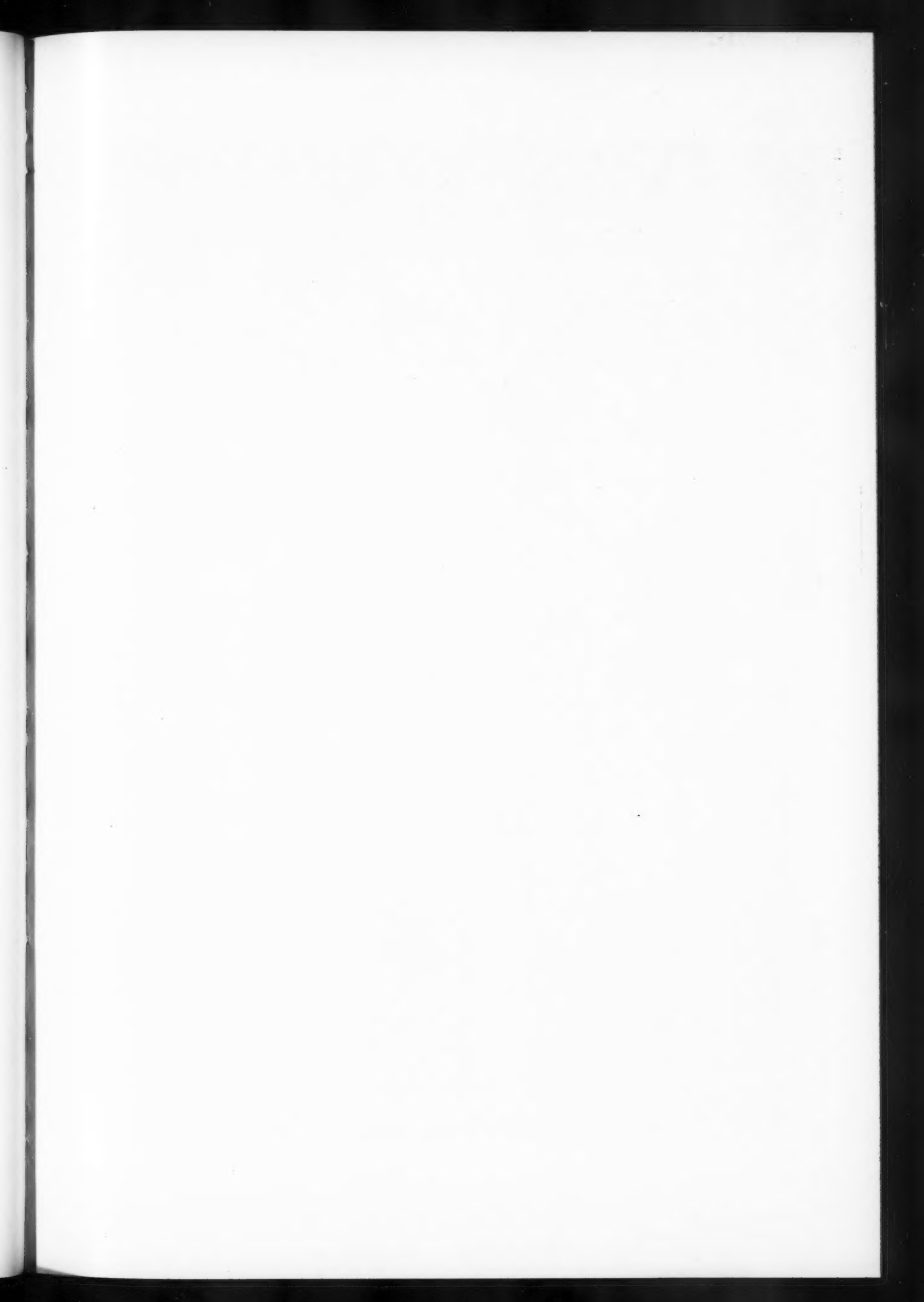


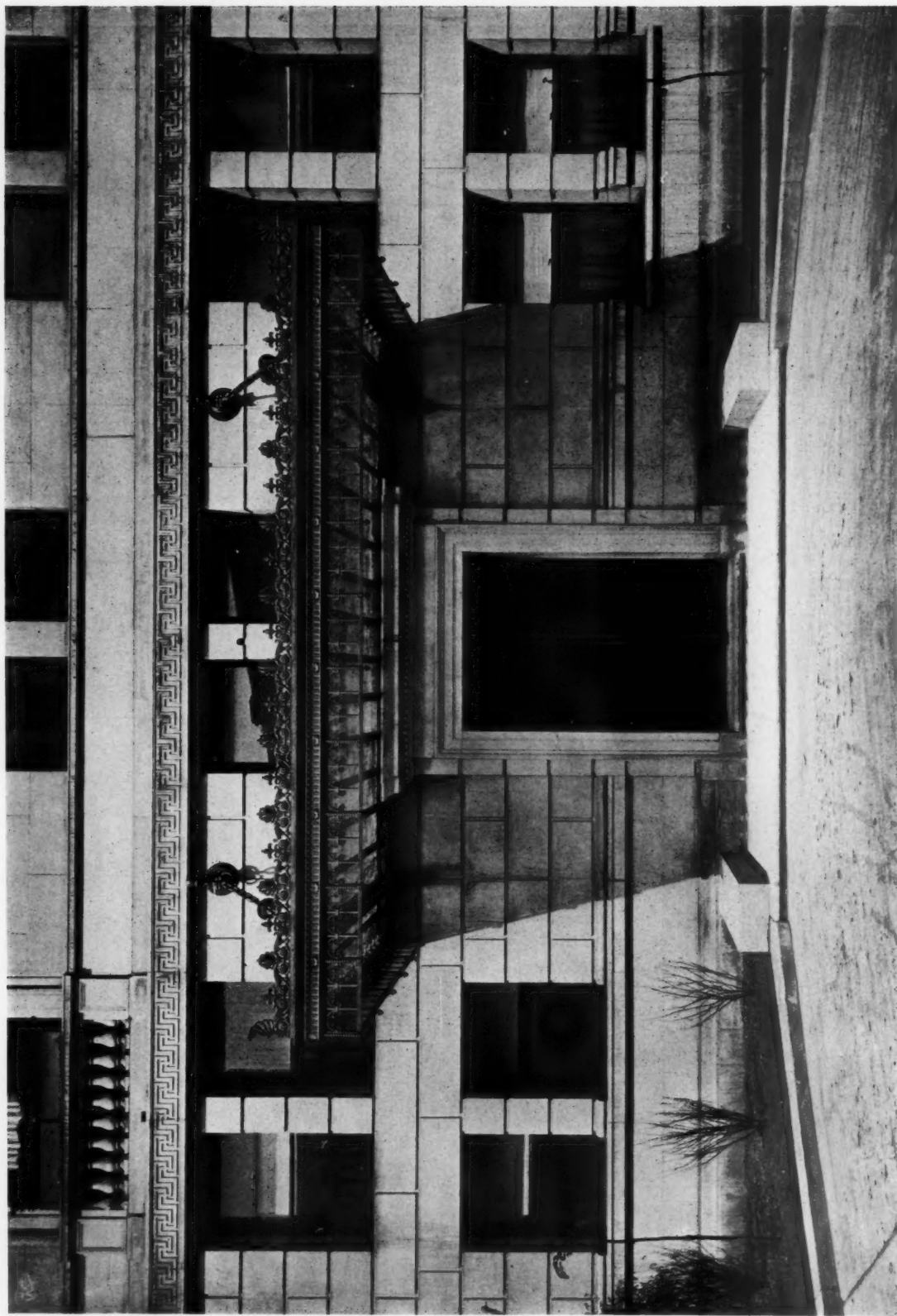


MAIN ENTRANCE AND DETAIL OF LOWER STORY

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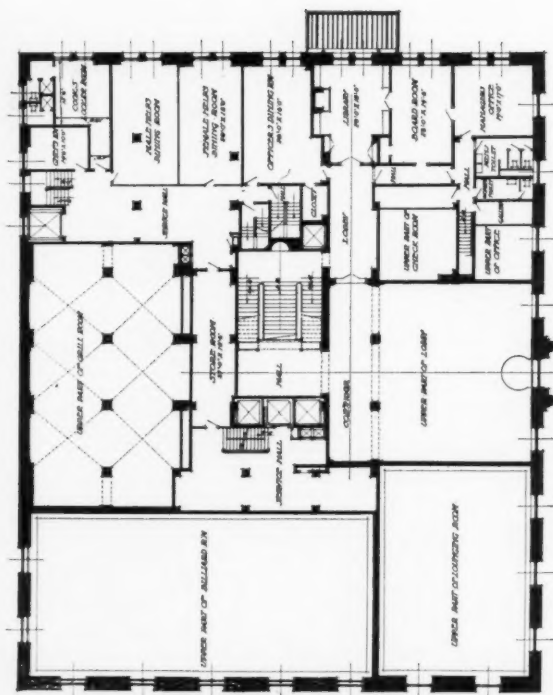
LADIES' ENTRANCE

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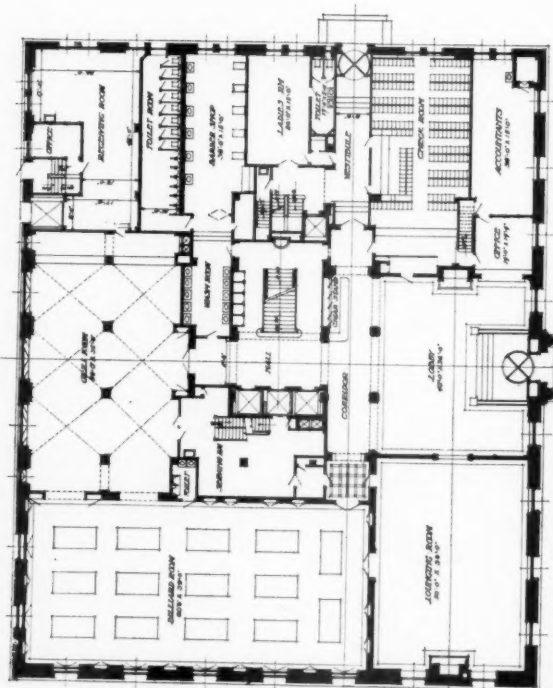
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FIRST FLOOR MEZZANINE

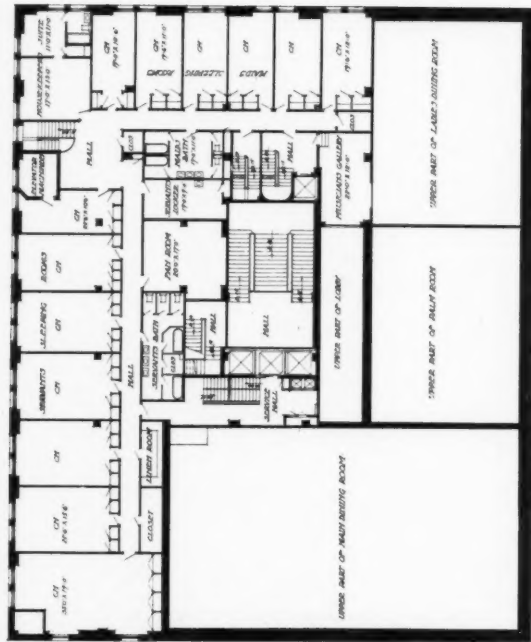


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

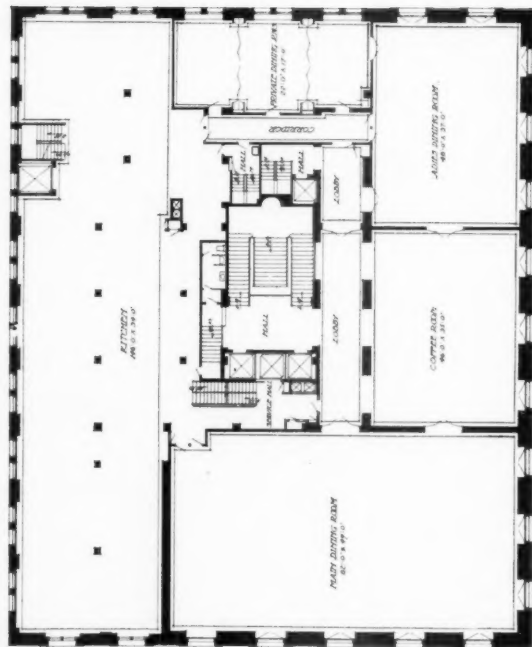


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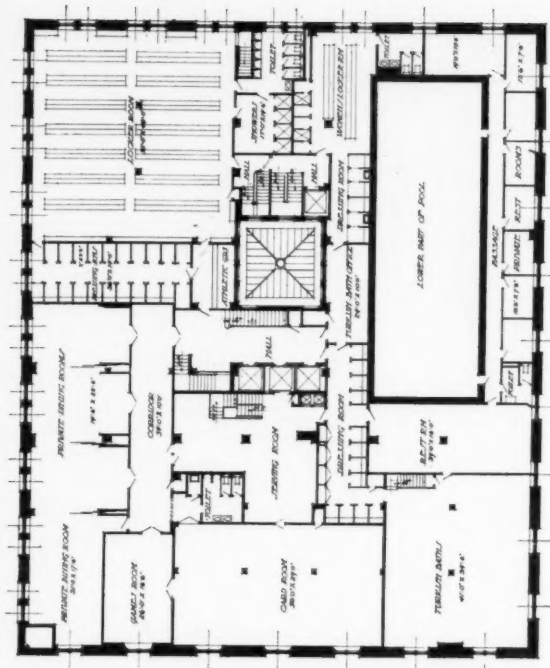
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SECOND FLOOR MEZZANINE



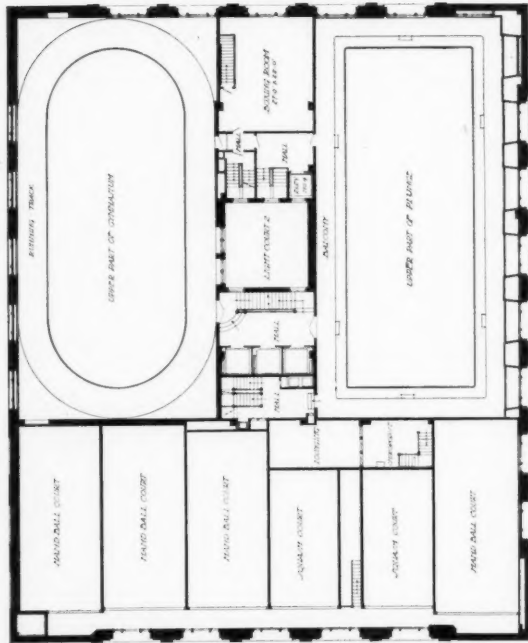
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



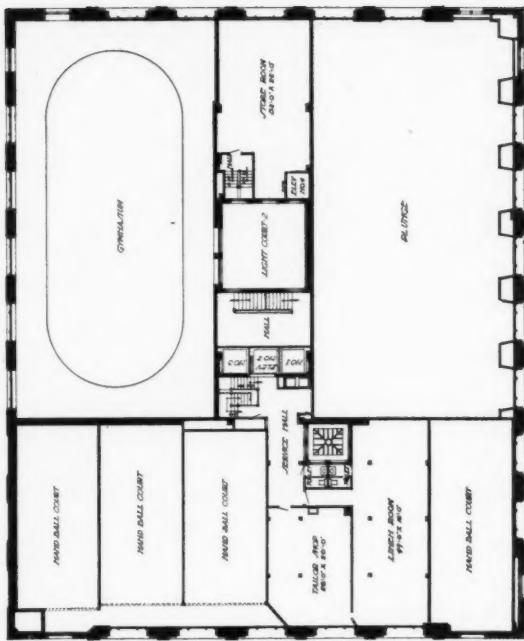
THIRD FLOOR PLAN

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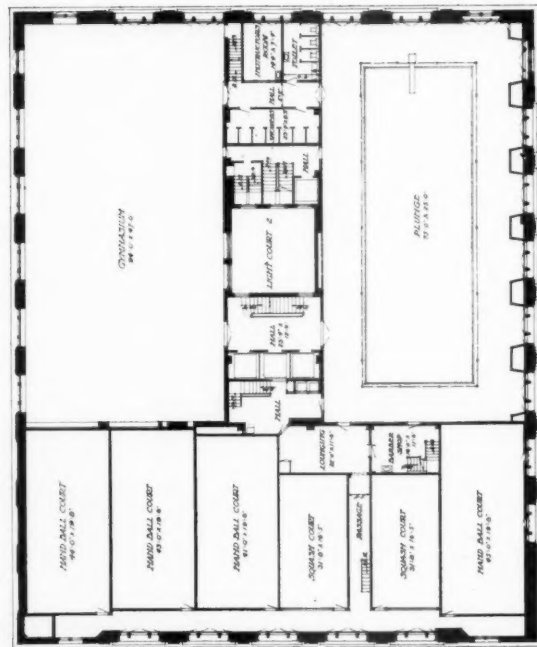
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FOURTH FLOOR FIRST MEZZANINE



FOURTH FLOOR SECOND MEZZANINE



FOURTH FLOOR

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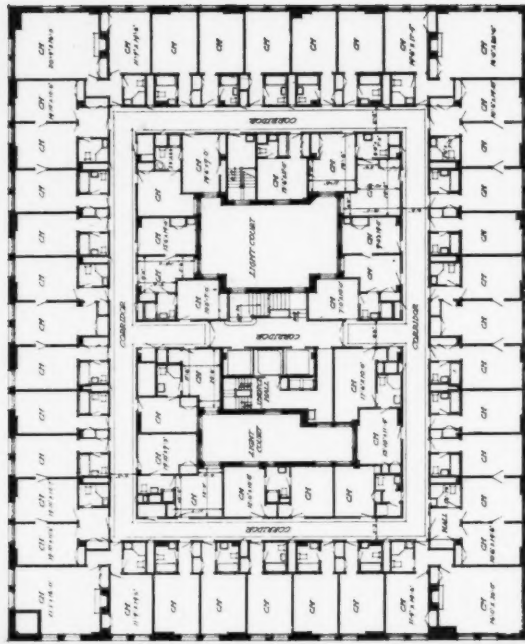
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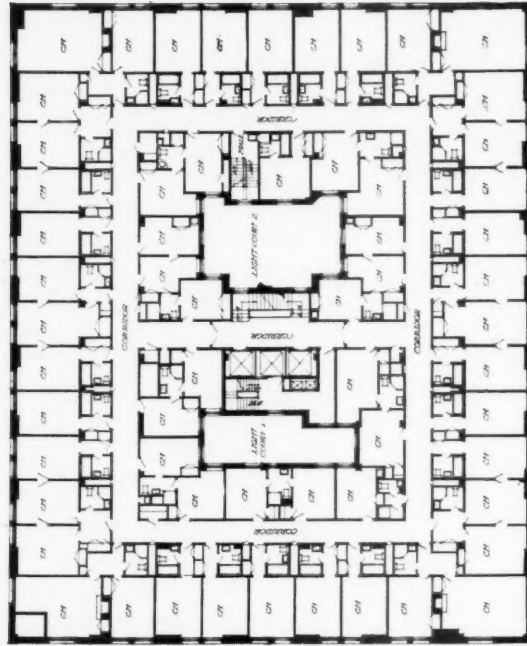
LOOKING INTO PALM ROOM

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SIXTH FLOOR



FIFTH FLOOR



ENTRANCE HALL

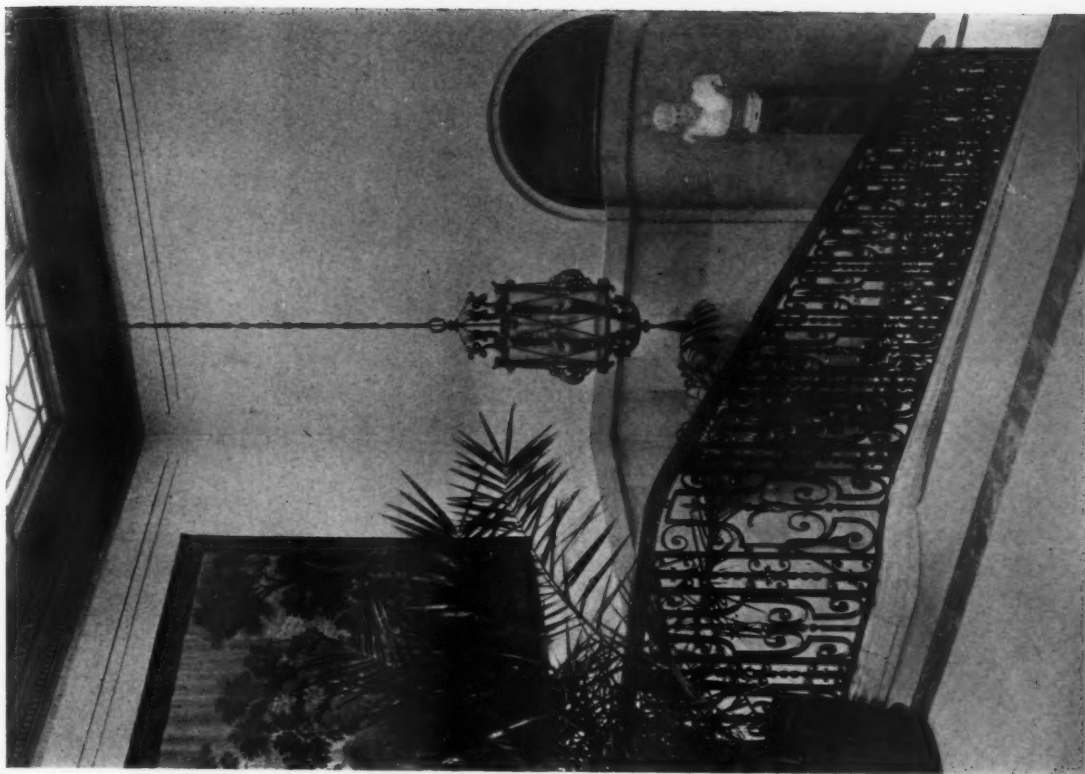
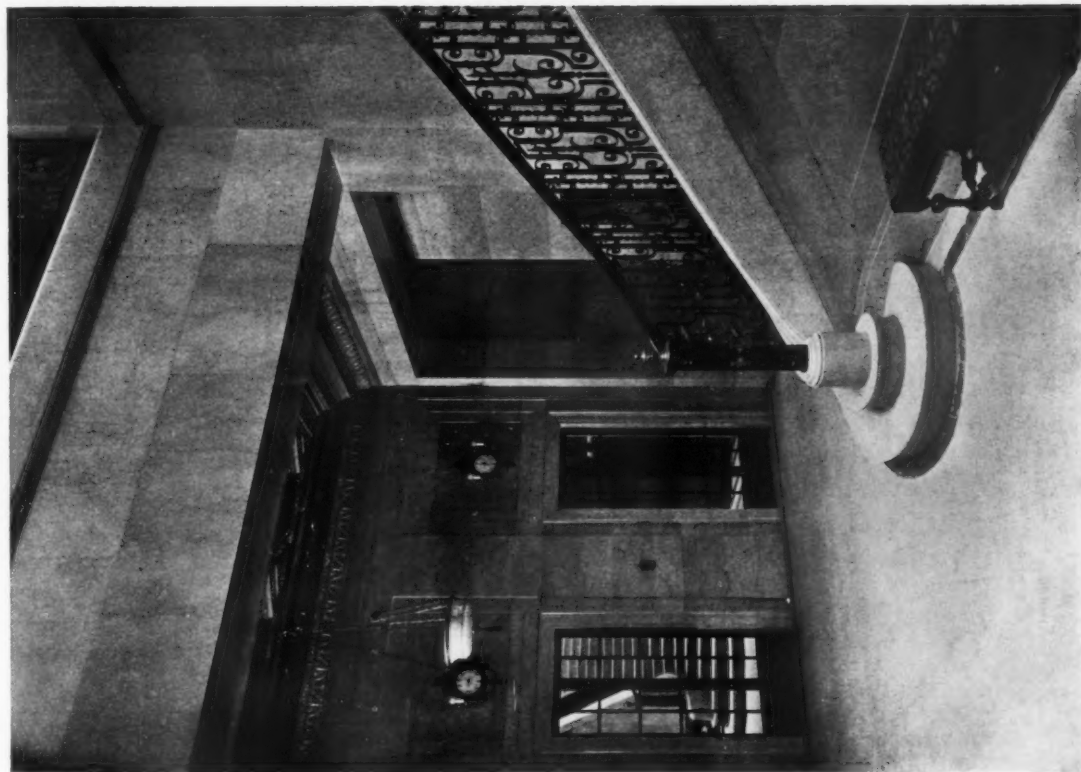
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VOL. CVIII, NO. 2064



THE STAIR HALL

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PALM ROOM

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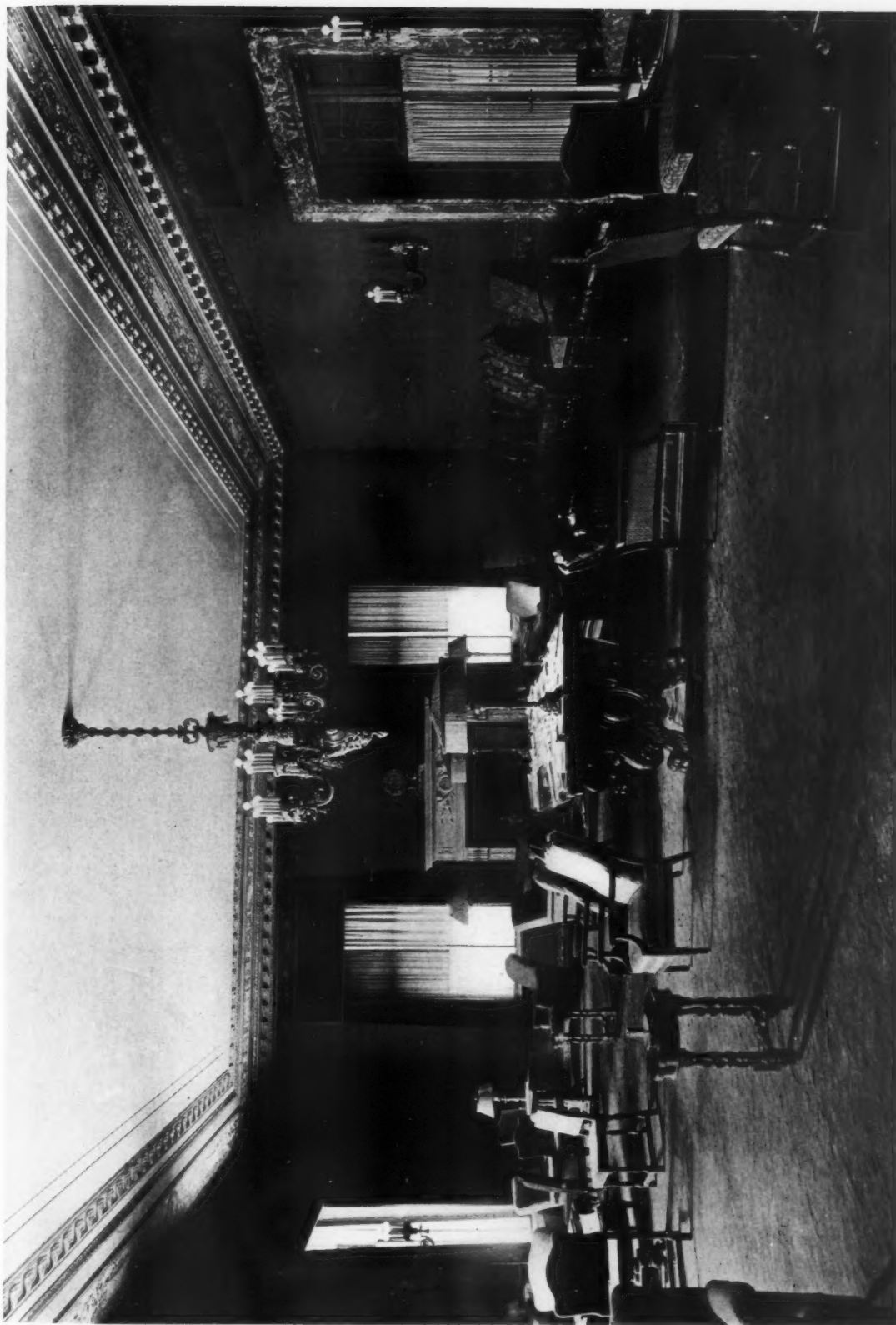




DETAIL OF PALM ROOM

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LOUNGING ROOM

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MANTEL IN LOUNGING ROOM

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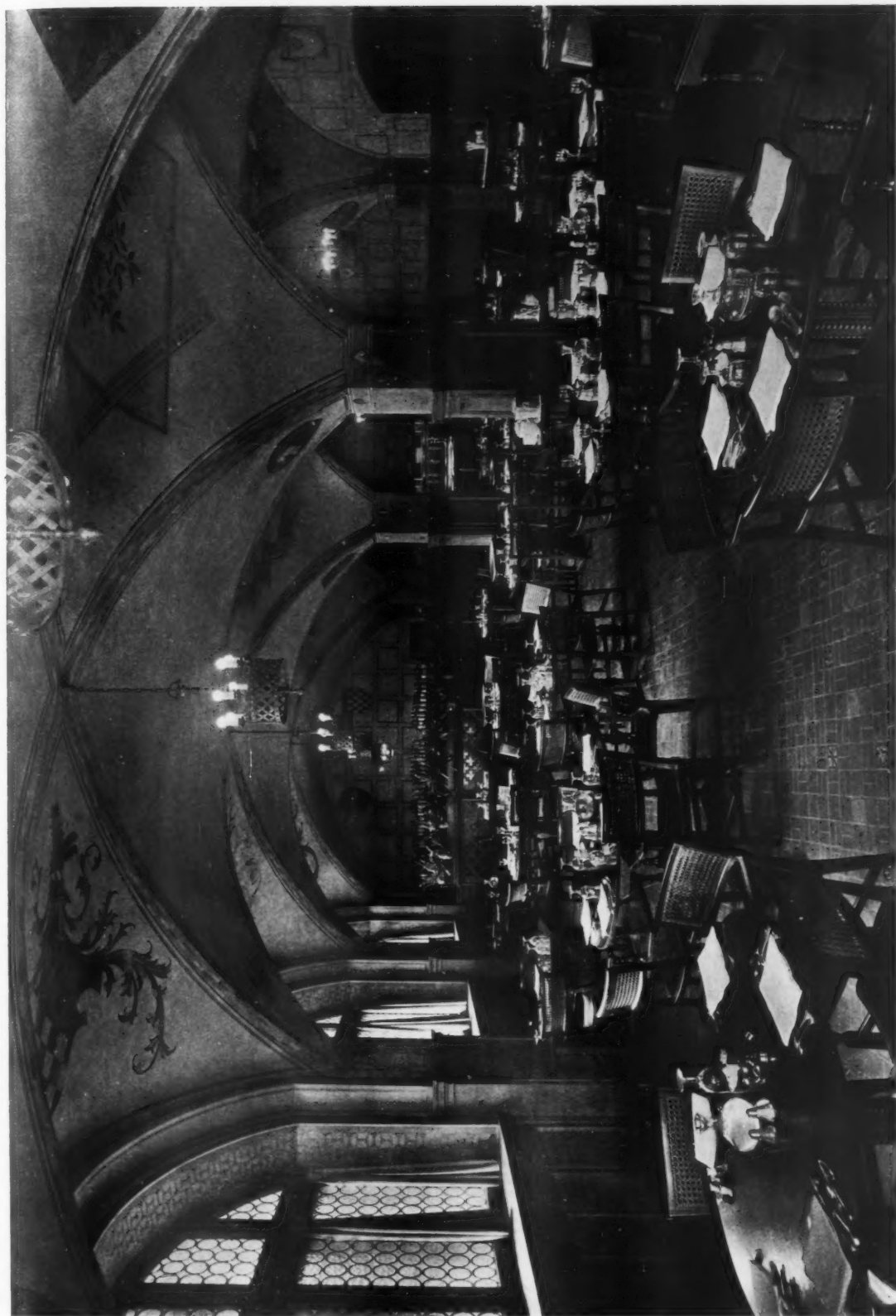
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MAIN DINING ROOM

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GRILL ROOM

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SWIMMING POOL

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THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Founded 1876

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT (INC.)

No. 50 Union Square, New York
(Fourth Avenue and 17th Street)

G. E. SLY, PRESIDENT

E. J. ROSENCRANS, SECRETARY AND TREASURER

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SINGLE COPIES (Regular Issues), 25 CENTS

CHICAGO OFFICE, *Insurance Exchange*

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

VOL. CVIII JULY 14, 1915 No. 2064

LACK OF LITERARY ABILITY AMONG ARCHITECTS

IT HAS long been noted among students of literature that the possession of ability as an architect seems to ordinarily carry with it a peculiar inability to write; or, in other words, literature and the art embraced in the practice of architecture seem to require talents seldom found in one and the same person. In the professions of law or medicine, where words are a constant and necessary medium of exchange of ideas, the training in writing obtained by constant practice has brought into notice many examples of marked literary ability. In architecture, however, it is not only impossible to name more than two or three practitioners in this country who have gained any reputation as literary artists, but the number of architects who are capable of writing concerning their own profession in a pleasing and lucid style is comparatively small.

A majority of our greatest architects have been and are men of few words, who seem to find positive embarrassment in either writing or public speaking. Others usually less capable of deeds have at times undertaken to write, but, as might be expected, they have

with rare exceptions found recourse in the gloss of generalities that conveyed few definite ideas. The constant training of architects to think in plastic terms, and their realization of the futility of attempting to translate these into the medium of words, has left architectural literature with little first-hand, clear and concise information concerning the feelings or impressions of the men who have accomplished great work. These must be obtained almost entirely from their designs and their completed work. For the layman unacquainted with the terms of architectural expression such a task is obviously impossible of complete performance.

The limited interest in architecture among laymen is probably due primarily to this inability to understand it unaided and the dearth of lucid explanations by the authors themselves. Painting and sculpture have an advantage in that they are in themselves more intelligible and hence more interesting to the lay mind. On the other hand, even the elemental aims of architecture involving proportion and mass demand a certain considerable education of the eye for their appreciation.

To fill in the gap thus left by a lack of architectural writers who are also great architects, have been gradually developed a host of lesser men, equipped with some knowledge and understanding of architecture and a tolerable command of English, who have managed to supply the demand of the magazines for writing to fill their pages. Some of the writers are men of fine perceptions and cultured tastes, with a thorough grounding in architecture: men who have come to be recognized as authorities on the phases of architecture concerning which they write, but, unfortunately, a large proportion are pure hack-writers with few qualifications for their task. Or else they represent architects whose professional practise has been so inconsequential that their work still leaves the professional man unconvinced. It is these latter types of writers that have brought the pages of the architectural magazines into literary disrepute.

It is questionable if there is any present remedy for this condition of affairs. The pecuniary return for magazine work is so small that it will seldom tempt the busy architect to neglect for it a more lucrative employment of his time. And there are prob-

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ably few who do not regard the practise of architecture as of more vital importance than writing about it, but there is unquestionably a wide and untilled field for the exceptional architects of literary ability; for men who have won the confidence of their profession in the production of a high standard of work and whose views on the different phases of architecture would be of consuming interest to every professional man. Such men must regard the service they are rendering to the public and to their art as of greater importance than any mere pecuniary gain before they will undertake the work, for, obviously, no publisher would be able to fully compensate a writer of the type contemplated.

POSSIBILITIES OF THE DECORATIVE FOUNTAIN NOT FULLY APPRECIATED

THE approaching completion of the new Pulitzer fountain in the Plaza at Fifty-ninth street and Fifth avenue, New York, should serve as a reminder to architects that American cities have long been unheeding of the utilitarian as well as artistic value of fountains. In conjunction with the obvious necessity for the extension of park systems, to provide recreation facilities for the city's life, fountains

might well play a more important part than they have heretofore. In all continental cities the use of fountains and the play of water has long been recognized as a means of rendering city life more attractive and healthful. In Rome particularly, the proximity of an abundant water supply long ago led its far-seeing Papal sovereigns to fill the city with innumerable gushing fountains that are now one of the city's chief attractions.

Psychologically the sound of falling water and the sight of jets and pools have a beneficial effect upon the tired and fagged brain comparable with that of parks and open spaces, and the fountain thus provides an economic means of enhancing the value of the small park where exorbitant land values prohibit the establishment of large park areas. Thirty or forty years ago, when the question of the water supply of American cities was still unsolved, the cost of maintenance might have been urged against the general employment of fountains as useful and decorative features in open spaces, but under present conditions with an abundance of water assured to most cities, this is an almost negligible factor. With the present movement for the beautifying of cities growing year by year, the possibilities of the well-designed fountain should receive the most careful consideration.



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The Current Architectural Press

(Continued from page 24)

Johns Hopkins University, near Baltimore. It describes the site and buildings already erected and contemplated. There are a number of well taken and interesting photographs. This new group is being erected from designs by Messrs. Parker, Thomas &

(From *Architecture*)



EQUITABLE BUILDING, NEW YORK

MESSRS. GRAHAM, BURNHAM & CO., ARCHITECTS

Rice, and is an elaboration of "Homewood," a dignified Georgian mansion that dominated the estate of some one hundred and fifty acres that now forms the new site of the college. The architects have evolved a scheme of grouping and general design that is commendable in the highest degree.

Part II, of Prof. A. D. F. Hamlin's series on "Roman Architecture and Its Critics," appears in this issue. The "indictment" handled in the first paper is now followed by the "argument for the defense."

Professor Hamlin is of opinion that reluctance to concede to Roman architecture

(From *The Western Architect*)



BISPEBJERG HOSPITAL, COPENHAGEN,
DENMARK

MARTIN NYROP, ARCHITECT

any of the higher qualities springs largely from a mere tradition of criticism.

Claiming that there exists to-day a better understanding of what architecture real-

(From *The Brickbuilder*)



THE ROGERS TENEMENTS, WEST 44TH STREET,
NEW YORK, N. Y.

MR. GROSVENOR ATTERBURY, ARCHITECT

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ly is than there was fifty years ago, the author asks if the time has not arrived when intelligent persons who write on architecture should open their minds to all this new light.

(From *International Studio*)



STADIUM OF THE COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF
NEW YORK

MR. ARNOLD W. BRUNNER, ARCHITECT

An appeal so direct will no doubt call forth a numerous reply, not only from the class of well informed critics, for whose opinion Mr. Hamlin acknowledges the greatest

(From *The Architectural Record*)



PORTICO AND CLOCK TOWER—ACADEMIC
BUILDING, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY,
BALTIMORE

PARKER, THOMAS & RICE, ARCHITECTS

(From *The Brickbuilder*)



HOUSE OF JAMES PARMELEE, ESQ.,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

MR. CHARLES A. PLATT, ARCHITECT

respect, but also that other class to whom this author paid his respects in the opening article. It will be of considerable interest to note their attitude toward what is, we believe, one of the most scholarly expositions of an architectural topic that has of recent years been presented in the architectural press.

Part III, of the "Series on Colonial Architecture in Connecticut," appears in this issue, and there is also an article on "Two Dental Buildings," one in Philadelphia, the other in Boston.

* * *

The Brickbuilder for May was received too late for review with the current publications of that month.

(From *The Journal of the A. I. A.*)



PROPOSED PLAN FOR PHILADELPHIA CIVIC
IMPROVEMENT

Probably the most interesting subject illustrated in it is a brick Georgian house in Washington, D. C., Mr. Charles A. Platt, architect. As will be inferred, this is a dignified example of our domestic architecture

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and affords an excellent opportunity for further study of Mr. Platt's work.

Brick apartment houses on Park avenue, New York, Messrs. Cross & Cross, architects, and the Rogers Tenements of brick on West Forty-fourth street, New York, by Mr. Grosvenor Atterbury, are shown to advantage.

The various serial articles running in *The Brick Builder* are continued — particulars may be found in the index.

Part I, of a new series by Mr. John T. Fallon, treats on "Stairways in Houses of Moderate Cost."

An editorial comment in this issue (received about June 1) on the licensing of architects, fails to take cognizance of the fact that a law passed in New York State and signed by the Governor, May 3, contains a majority of the provisions that are urged as requisite to a good licensing law.

Good Furniture for June presents an issue of considerable interest to architects. An article by Richard Franz Bach, on Grinling Gibbons, "England's foremost artisan," is illustrated by a number of inimitable examples of Gibbons' work as a wood carver. Another article, "A Study in Craftsmanship," is a series of notes on the design and construction of willow furniture. The illustrations show the newest forms and careful grouping of this artistic furniture.

The issue is replete with good illustrations of modern furniture, both in original

designs and replicas of early examples. These are mainly shown in interiors where they are intended to remain, and as a consequence afford opportunities to study the decorative possibilities of good furniture to the greatest advantage.

* * *

The May issue of *The Western Architect* has an article of considerable interest on the Bispebjerg Hospital, the new municipal hospital in Copenhagen, Denmark. The architect is Martin Nyrop. This hospital, planned for 1,278 beds, has cost approximately two and one-half million dollars. The article is thorough in its description and is well illustrated.

* * *

Part II of the series illustrating and commenting on the Charcoal Studies from the office of Mr. Charles A. Platt is the leading article in *Architecture* for June. Mr. De Witt Clinton Pond's series on Engineering for Architects is also continued.

The plate illustrations include the Astor Apartments, New York, Messrs. Tracy & Swartwout, architects. This is the design that won the New York Chapter A.I.A. prize for excellence of design for apartments not more than six stories high; a series of exterior and interior views of the Equitable Building, New York, Messrs. Graham, Burnham & Co., architects. Other subjects illustrated will be found in the index to the Current Architectural Press on another page of this issue.

(From *Good Furniture*)



WINDSOR CASTLE

Gibbons' carving, now in the throne room.

Lower Amazonian Hardwoods

THE greatest known source of wealth along the lower Amazon is the vast supply and splendid quality of the hardwoods growing practically throughout the region drained by the Amazon River, among them being crab wood, satin wood, violet wood, Jacaranda, courbaril, snake wood and sucupira, all of which are in great demand for a wide variety of uses. At the present time crab wood (*Carapa guianensis*) is probably the best known kind and has the greatest number of uses. It is used in large quantities locally, as well as in England and America for furniture, cabinet making, building, etc. It is a moderately hard, durable wood, with a beautiful grain often resembling mahogany, and, in fact, is sold as such in the United States. Crab wood is easy to work, takes a very fine polish, and can be finished in a great variety of colors, which makes it popular for household and office furniture.

Satin wood (*Euxylophora paraensis*) a light yellowish wood, was formerly much used locally, but recently has been introduced into the English and American markets as a substitute for the true satin wood (*Simaruba* sp.) of tropical America, which is becoming rather scarce and expensive. The wood is rather uniform in quality, and all of it exhibits beautifully marked surfaces when it is highly polished. It is eagerly sought for and sawed into veneer for use on the better grades of furniture. It is used in the solid state for flooring, interior trim and in cabinet work.

Violet wood (*Copaifera pubiflora*) as its name indicates, is a violet-colored wood and is closely allied to the purpleheart of commerce which comes chiefly from the Guianas and Venezuela. This wood is tough and durable, and is employed in its natural color locally or less extensively for making high priced furniture. The wood is occasionally shipped to France under the name Amarante or bois violet.

Jacaranda (*Machaerium firmum*) is produced in great quantities on the well-drained areas. Although the wood has been known to the trade for a good many years, it is now finding favor among users of rosewood for which it is largely substituted and, in

fact, in many ways is superior to rosewood. It is not expensive, and its beautiful reddish tint and the high finish which it can be given, is making it a rather popular wood.

Courbaril (*Hymenaea courbaril*) is one of the tree species that is widely distributed throughout tropical America, and the wood is highly esteemed for a great variety of purposes. Although the wood possesses a dark-reddish or often yellowish color, has a fine grain, and takes a beautiful polish, it is rarely used for making furniture, at least locally, because there is a demand for this wood for all purposes requiring strong and durable woods.

Snake wood (*Brosimum aubletii*) is one of the best known and most interesting woods in South America. It is also one of the most expensive timbers, but it is rare and the tree attains only small proportions. The principal use for this wood is for walking sticks, umbrella handles and small articles of turnery.

Sucupira (*Bowdichia virgilioides*) is a very hard, heavy, and durable wood and can be obtained in large quantities. The wood in its rough state appears to be very coarse, but with a little work it can be made to take an exceptionally fine polish, which it retains. Like a number of leguminous woods, it has alternating soft and hard layers of tissue, which make the wood, when polished, appear like that of a palm. Sucupira is rarely imported into this country, and then only in very small quantities. It is used also for walking sticks, but it could be employed successfully for flooring and construction purposes generally.

The moderate prices at which these woods can be obtained by American dealers, as compared with what the same woods of equal quality bring in other countries where they are available is one of the principal reasons why they should be obtained from the lower Amazon region. Practically all of the trees mentioned above attain their best development along the lower Amazon, and logs of the largest size and timbers of the best quality are obtainable here. Labor is cheaper and more reliable here than in any other part of the purely tropical region of South America.

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RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

DEFECT IN SOIL—LIABILITY

A BUILDING contract provided that the work and material should be furnished under the supervision of an architect empowered to change the specifications at his discretion, and that the architect and not the contractor should make the soil test. After making this test, he decided that the soil was sufficient, and refused to make changes in the wall, though notified by the contractor that the soil would not support it. In consequence of the soil being of insufficient solidity, the wall subsided. It was held that the contractor was entitled to recover from the owner the cost of rebuilding the wall with a wider base suitable to the soil. The rule of impossibility of completion, for which the contractor is not responsible, here applied. A provision of the building contract that the contractor should examine the specifications before signing, and that he would guarantee anything not objected to by him was held to be intended to apply to his work, and did not amount to a guaranty by him of the sufficiency of the soil to support the building.

William Miller & Sons Co. v. Homeopathic, etc., Dispensary, Pennsylvania Supreme Court, 90 Atl. 394.

LIABILITY OF ARCHITECT FOR PLANS AND SUPERINTENDENCE

While an architect is presumed to possess the skill and ability necessary to the practice of his profession, and is liable for damages occasioned by defective plans, yet he does not undertake that his plans will be absolutely perfect, and is liable only for a failure to exercise reasonable skill in the preparation of the plans. Furthermore, if he be employed to superintend the building, he is not liable at all hazards for every defect in its construction, but is only required to use reasonable care and diligence in seeing that the work is properly done. The mere fact, therefore, that some of the material is defective, or that some of the construction work is not done in a workmanlike manner, is not sufficient to establish as a matter of law that he has not fully performed his contract. Under such circumstances, the question whether or not he used reasonable

care and diligence in superintending the work is a question for the jury.

Kortz v. Kimberlin, Kentucky Court of Appeals, 165 S. W., 654.

ARCHITECT'S CERTIFICATE—FREEDOM TO CONTRACT THEREFOR

The Pennsylvania Act of June 1, 1907 (P. L. 381), declares that no provision in any contract that the award of an engineer, architect, or other person shall be conclusive or a condition precedent to a suit on a contract shall oust the jurisdiction of the courts. It was held, in an action by a subcontractor against a general contractor, that the statute is an unreasonable legislative interference with that right to contract which is guaranteed by the Constitution. The subcontract in the present case provided that the contract price should be paid by a general contractor on certificates of the architect, and all payments should be due when certificates were issued. The subcontractor presented no architect's certificate to the general contractor after doing the work, but brought an action on refusal of payment. It was held that he could not recover.

Adinolfi v. Hazlett, Pennsylvania Supreme Court, 88 Atl. 869.

LETTER OF ARCHITECT—CERTIFICATE OF DEFAULT

A building contract provided that the architect was clothed with authority to certify the fact that the contractor had failed to "prosecute the work with promptness and diligence." In an action on the contract it was held that a letter written by the architect to the president of the owner, giving information as to the fact that the contractor had stopped work, and had stated that he was not going to do anything about it, was a mere notification of the fact by the architect, and was inadmissible as an architect's certificate. It was not admissible against the contractor on the theory that the architect was the contractor's agent, since a foreman or superintendent of construction, in charge of a building for the resident contractor, has no implied power to bind his principal by admissions touching the general conduct of the work.

Congregation v. Hathaway, Massachusetts Supreme Court, 104 N. E. 379.

The Use of the Arch *

The arch as a means of covering a space opened up new possibilities to the Romans.

In the Pont du Gard we have the arch in the purest, crudest form as a constructional member. It supports the water-courses over a space with infinitely greater economy than could have been done with either a solid embankment or a beam-and-post construction. The Romans, ever quick to grasp anything which would assist them to achieve the desired result, immediately realized that if the stone at the springing be allowed to project, enormous economy could be effected in the temporary centering; hence the function of what in later examples becomes the moulded impost as employed in the arches of the Colosseum. Owing to centuries of tradition, the simple arch was, in common with most new features, looked upon as an engineering device, and hence the conventional orders had to be called in to satisfy the popular taste; but as they no longer form the chief means of support, their spacing becomes much more elastic, and their use more conventional. The desire for great space led the Romans to use the arch for all openings of such a width that a trabeated construction would be impracticable, and hence from the simple arched opening in a wall we find the principle extended to the whole ceiling, as is evidenced in the barrel vaults such as we see in the Temple of Diana. Even the paneling or coffering of the soffit possesses its function, for with a minimum of centering a succession of narrow arches could be built with the second course overlapping the first, and the cross-pieces are formed similarly to prevent the buckling sideways of the parallel arches when the concrete backing was thrown in. The possibilities of the use of pozzolana as a cementing material were quickly grasped by the Romans, who saw what economies of skilled labor might be effected by its use with rough unshaped scraps of stone as a monolithic backing to their masonry or brick soffit. The use of

this material, while economical, resulted in an arresting in development of the true principles of the arch, because as its use became more general the construction came rapidly to lose all relation to the arch principle, although its form was still retained.

Thus we see that when a very large apartment was desired, the only lighting possible—with a barrel vault, namely, at each end—proved inadequate, and so arose the custom of driving arches in each direction at right angles to each other. With their concrete system of construction, this was easy of accomplishment, because the line of intersection mattered little, the concrete backing doing the most of the work.

The Peril to Italy's Heritage of Art

The Architect and Builders' Journal, of London, in an editorial discussion of the menace to Italy's heritage of art, now that that country has joined with the Allies in the war, expresses profound regret that "the home of all the arts should be exposed, however slightly and remotely, to such risks as those which have materialized so disastrously at Louvain and Rheims."

A tribute, paid long ago to the glories of Italy, by the Rev. John Chetwode Eustace, in his work, "A Classical Tour Through Italy," is aptly quoted as follows:

"The Italians have been our instructors in the sciences, and our masters in the arts; their country is the garden, the glory of Europe; it is an inheritance derived from the noblest race that ever acted a part on this globe; its history, its geography, its literature, are connected with every idea, every feeling, of the liberal and the enlightened individual, and are interwoven with the records of every civilized nation." Mr. Eustace was an enthusiastic admirer of everything Italian, and on the people's love of art has the rather quaint observation that "they prefer Minerva to Bacchus, and take less pleasure in regaling themselves on turtle, venison, champagne, and burgundy, than in contemplating pictures, statues, marble halls and pillared porticoes."

*Extract, from a paper read by F. Radford Smith, before the Newport (England) Doric Club.