

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

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HOUSE OF JOHN H. J. STEWART, ESQ., COLD SPRING HARBOR, L. I., N. Y.

MESSRS. NELSON & VAN WAGENEN, ARCHITECTS

VERSATILITY

The illustrations are of recent work by Nelson & Van Wagenen, Architects

WHILE the evidence of the possession of unusual mental equipment or superior manual ability may be, and often is, confined to a single manifestation, there can be no doubt that one of the greatest attributes of genius is versatility; the lack of it indicates a mind less active and one given to slow, although perhaps steady progress

in one mental groove. That every conscientious architect is aiming towards the highest expression of his art of which he is capable is, of course, true. Each one of us temperamentally differs from the other, and while the exigencies of daily practice condemn us to certain efforts which, although not exactly distasteful, are yet not thoroughly congenial, it is when opportunity is freely

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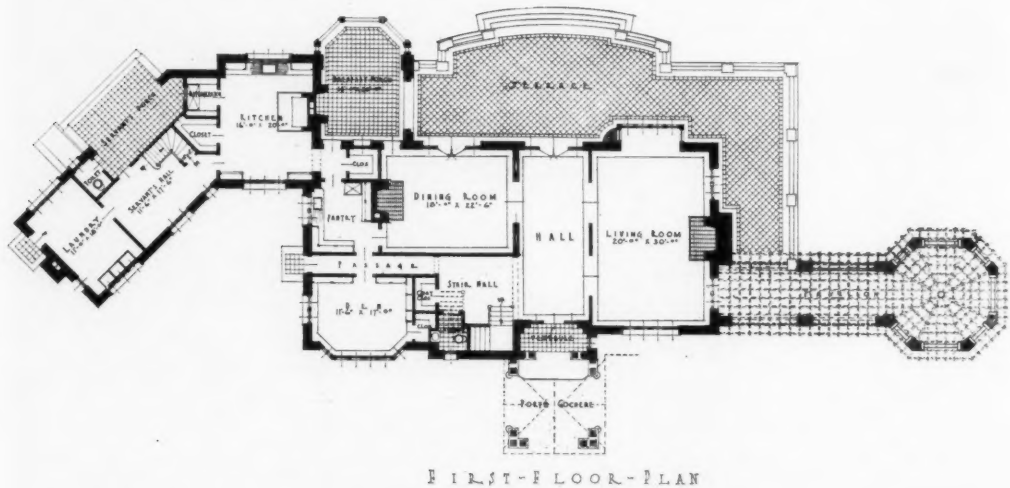
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offered for an untrammelled expression of our artistic sense that we do our best work.

The tendency of the human mind toward the line of least resistance leads to specialization as we naturally take most readily to the things in which we excel, with the least expenditure of mental or physical effort. But the man of one idea, of one method of expressing that idea, finds that, although when first expressed it receives the plaudits of competent critics, its constant repetition soon wears away its interest and what was

nature, goes on from one picture to another, creating exactly the same result.

The same thing done in the same way produces weariness. Many men with great talents have failed simply because they neglected to cultivate versatility of method as well as motive and they have sunk to a dreary level of monotony which meets its end when a patient public finds that in the possession of one of their canvases they have a picture so exactly like many others that there is little, if any pride in its possession, even although



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at one time hailed as a mark of genius has by constant reiteration become regarded as ordinary if not actually commonplace. Versatility is the antithesis of monotony and an attribute more likely to win recognition that will be lasting than will the highest form of artistic expression if constantly repeated.

There are two points of view in all matters pertaining to art, each with adherents. First there is the materialistic side that creates art for the substantial emoluments accruing from the work, and repeats with unending monotony the first pronounced success.

This phase is found, perhaps, more often in the painter's art than any other. A man having evolved a certain "palette" or scheme of color and selected a phase of

it has been most masterfully executed.

The other phase is that of those who pursue "art for art's sake." Probably there will not accrue to one of this class the same substantial returns as those realized by his brother of one good idea, but it may be safely stated that the versatile man who is not bound to one palette, to one stereotyped subject is contributing the greater share towards the advancement and uplifting of art.

We are told that this is an age of specialization in architectural practice and that so complex have become the problems arising in connection with the design of the various types of buildings that no one man could grasp all the knowledge that would be required in order to successfully conduct a large general practice. All of which is per-

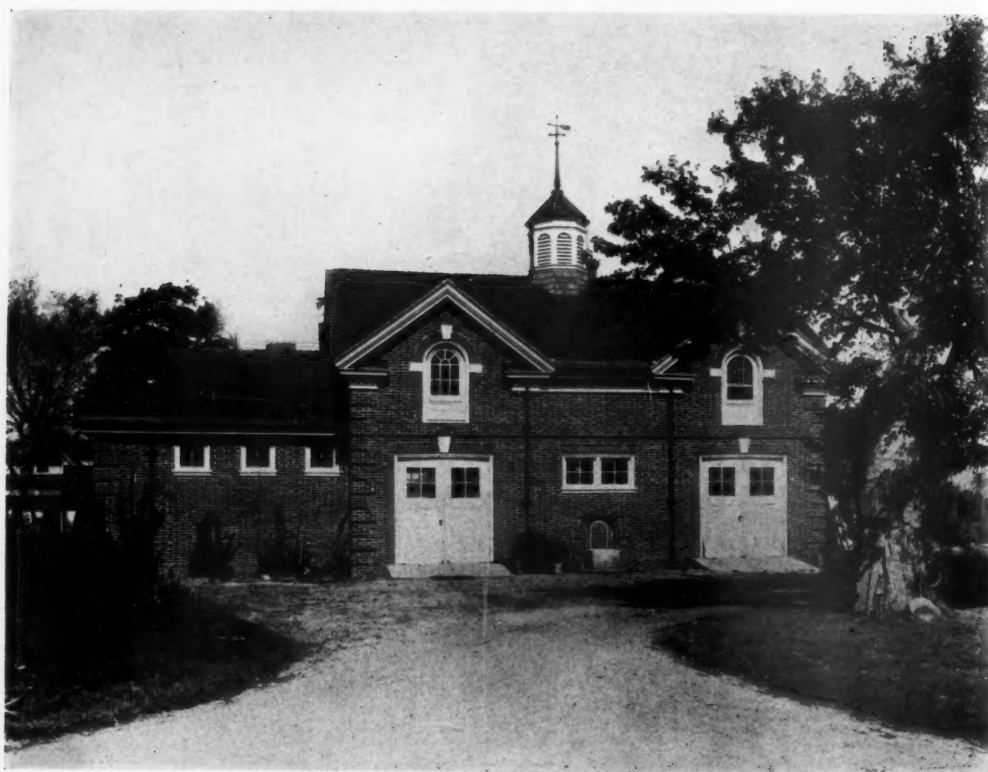


ENTRANCE DETAIL

HOUSE OF MRS. S. J. CHASE, COLD SPRING HARBOR, L. I., N. Y.

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STABLE OF MRS. EDWARD TRENCHARD, BABYLON, L. I., N. Y.
MESSRS. NELSON & VAN WAGENEN, ARCHITECTS; MR. THEODORE CRANE, ASSOCIATE

haps debatable, but at any rate we find one man who makes a study of hospitals, another of churches; some men do nothing but schools, while others specialize in domestic architecture.

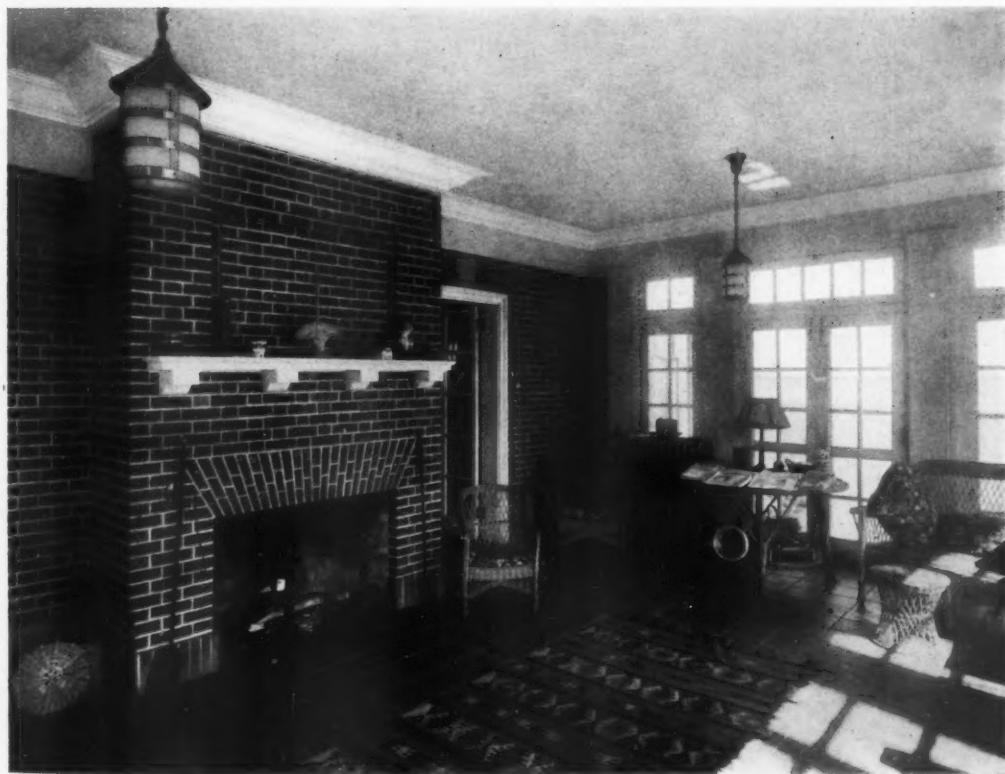
But there is nothing in this that need hamper versatility. There is as much opportunity for freedom of expression in design and the selection of varied material in a special line of practice as any man can wish. The lack of versatility is shown when certain tendencies of design lead to the constant employment of one certain material and the consequent artistic idealization of that material.

An architect may spend his whole professional life in designing country houses, but his ability to take either singly or in combination all the accepted good materials and create a design that will most artistically express his conception is what will bring him the most substantial success.

The requirements of location and environment, if rightly interpreted, lead in them-

selves to versatility. A rugged stone structure may be demanded by one environment, and be totally unsuited to another. In the same way brick, stucco or frame buildings may be indicated so clearly by the local conditions that to undertake to design a building for execution in any other material would be an unmistakable error. Obviously the man who has not cultivated versatility in design is limited to the execution of various modifications of buildings adapted to one style which ordinarily restricts him in the selection of materials; and if he is strictly conscientious must lead to the refusal of many commissions to which his "one idea" is not entirely suited.

An instance is afforded in this issue in which the work of Messrs. Nelson and Van Wagenen is illustrated. In the construction of the houses that are presented almost every material of proven worth has been employed in a versatile and highly artistic manner. It is this ability, this versatility and entire freedom in the use of materials, as



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well as of types, that gives a sense of "freshness" to every new design and begets for the architect in the mind of his professional brethren a deep respect for proven ability. It also secures the admiration of laymen. Perhaps laymen cannot define their reasons for this admiration, but an innate good taste tells them it is all worth while.

In most every profession of the arts the same arguments may well apply. We may have approved of Jefferson's masterly presentation of Rip Van Winkle, but we would not have cared to have seen it week after week. While on the contrary the versatility of Richard Mansfield in repertoire is something of which we would not tire. The versatility of the man, the artistic ability that made each characterization stand out clearly and distinctly as different from the others,

was what indicated the great artist and thorough student of his profession.

We may be philosophically inclined, but we are clogging our minds and hampering our reasoning powers when we fill our library with books on that topic alone and fail to freshen our mentality by incursions into other and lighter fields of thought.

In the last analysis, versatility is for broadness and the highest and most free expression of our art. The man who cultivates it and who strives the hardest to incorporate it into all he does will find that even though specializing in one particular field, he will not be able in the span of a single life to exhaust its possibilities or that he will ever relapse into that deplorable "stock pattern" state that is the sure sign of mediocrity and evidence of mental sterility.



STAIRCASE, HOUSE OF MRS. EDWARD TRENCHARD, BABYLON, L. I., N. Y.
MESSRS. NELSON & VAN WAGENEN, ARCHITECTS; MR. THEODORE CRANE, ASSOCIATE

Craftsmanship

In view of the definite advancement and continual development in the mechanical equipment of modern buildings, the improvements in structural design, and the advance in the science of planning and general architectural treatment, it is very evident that along with this universal advance there has been no improvement, but rather a decline in craftsmanship of workers of all kinds—that is, a lack of manual skill plus individuality and initiative.

The worker today is more highly specialized than in days before the advent of manufactured products and appliances in building, and today he is only a tool rather than a co-operative agent of the architect's. The modern system has extended, by its very nature, and the day of the individual craftsman is gone, except in a limited field. But along with this decline of artisan-thought has been a decline in the general quality of the worker himself. The architect's well studied drawings and thoroughly developed details, as exhibited in any set of up-to-date plans, leaves little to the workman's imagination or ingenuity. In olden times it was different; for then drawings were crude and extremely incomplete, and planning was not complex. In many respects the modern process has been well for the architectural profession, placing the sole responsibility for the result in the hands of the architect, has extended his power, and his potential capacity. The artisan, however, has suffered by this.

The modern workman is given little scope, his comprehension of the economics of construction, the purpose of architecture, the significance of modern improvements, is not broad,—often it is almost nil. Perhaps in New Orleans and the South, where so many thousands, tens of thousands, of negroes, are engaged in the varied building trades, it is particularly noticeable, and due also to the absence in the South of trades training schools.

Does it not follow then, that if such a condition is permitted to grow, it must inevitably react on the cost and quality of our architectural productions? Already we do see something of its impress.

It is a condition that the architects should

take cognizance of, and a remedy should be sought, suited to the respective special trades.—M. D. Hite, in New Orleans *Building Review*.

American Material to Be in Demand

It is increasingly evident that if the race for trade caused the great war the cause will not disappear with the coming of peace. All of the warring nations are looking ahead and are constructing schemes of commercial preparedness to meet the fierce competition of their rivals after the end of the war and to render easier the rebuilding of the industries destroyed or crippled in the great conflict.

As an example: A French trade commission representing the industrial and banking interests of France visited this country early in December to arrange for the purchase at the conclusion of the war of at least \$160,000,000 worth of structural iron and steel machinery and industrial supplies.

Prior to the war this great annual supply of machinery was imported from Germany.

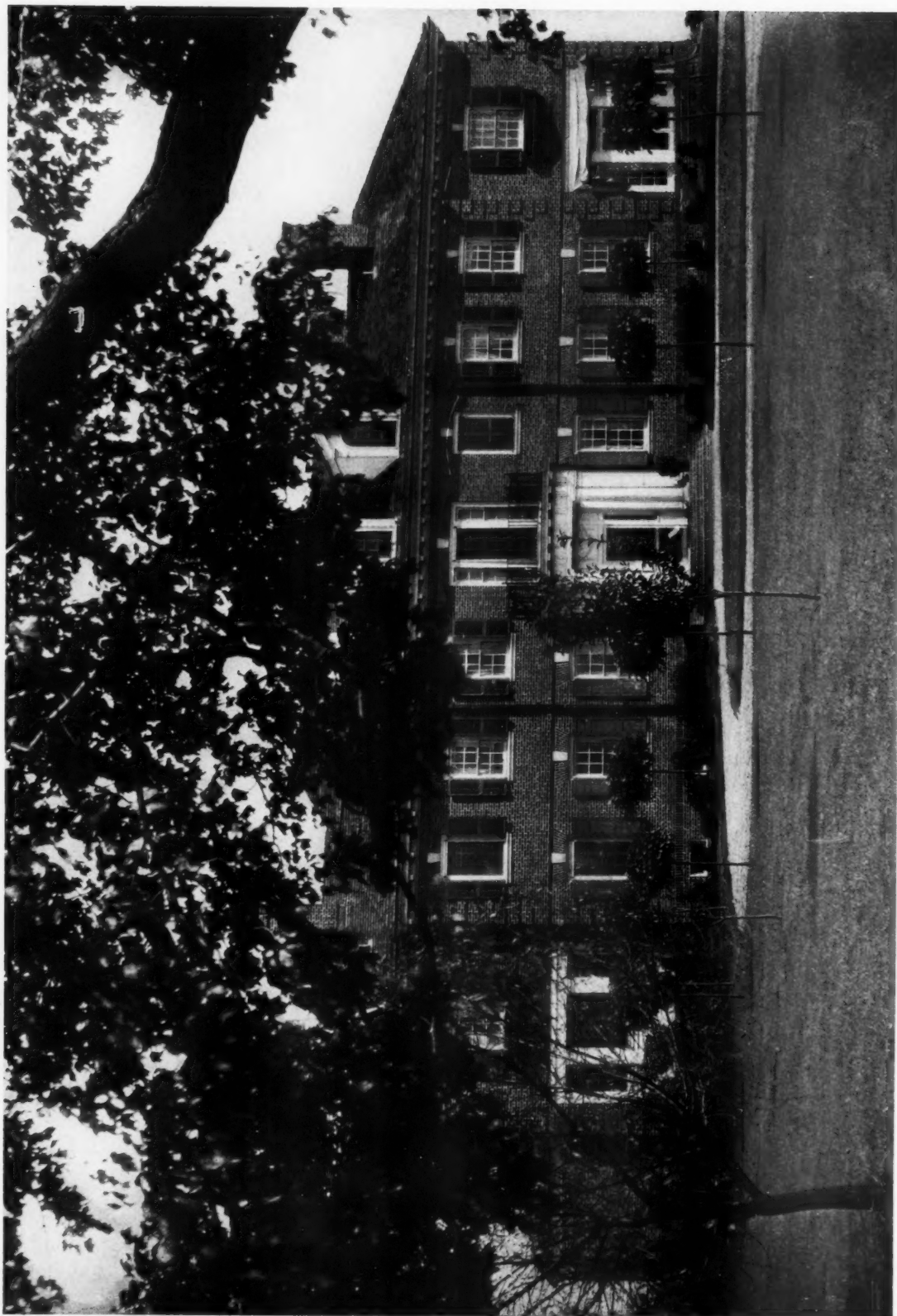
Further, Herbert Corey, the well-known newspaper writer, says of France: The amount of rebuilding which will be required cannot even be dimly comprehended by one who has not seen these wrecked cities. Street after street of residences have been destroyed in town after town. The stores, the factories, the public buildings, the churches, have been shelled to bits. No matter whether the shell of an enemy or a friend did the work. They must be rebuilt.

"An enormous share of the wealth of France and Belgium has been destroyed," said one American. "But the land remains and the world will call for French products even more than before the war, perhaps, because of the feeling against the Germans. Money must be borrowed for the rebuilding operations. Not only will capital be brought in from abroad, but it is practically certain that the French government will arrange long time loans to a great many persons. This will especially be the case where it is desired to start up factories and revive industries. Lace makers of Lille and the wool spinners of Roubaix may be given as a case in point."—*Southern Architect and Building News*.



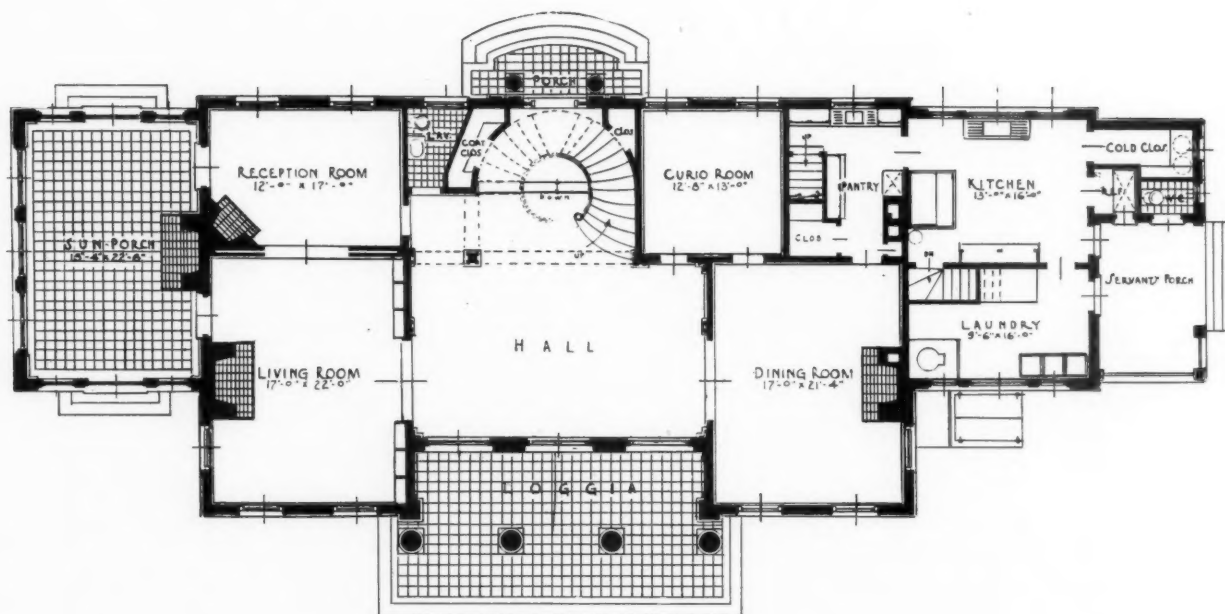
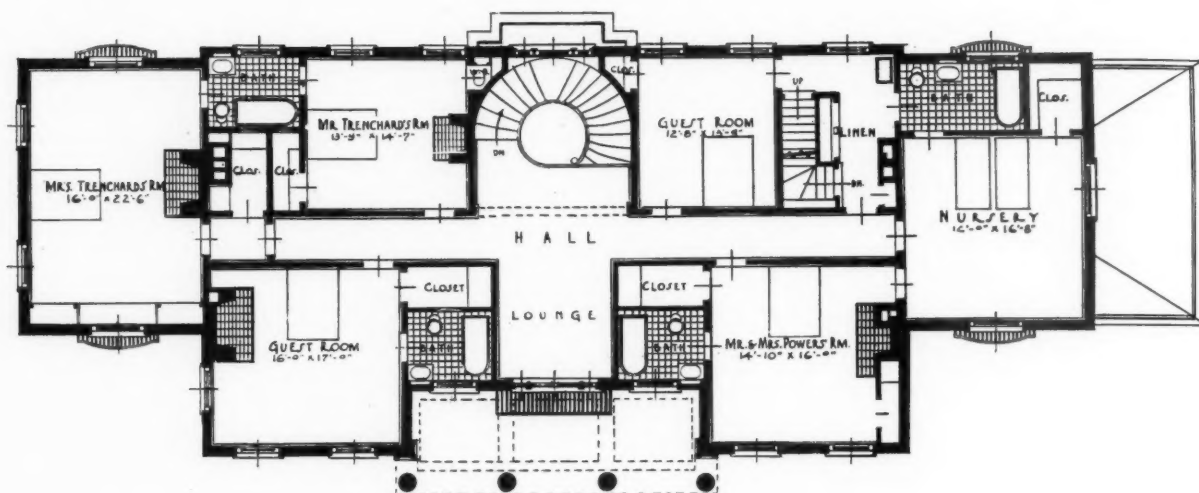
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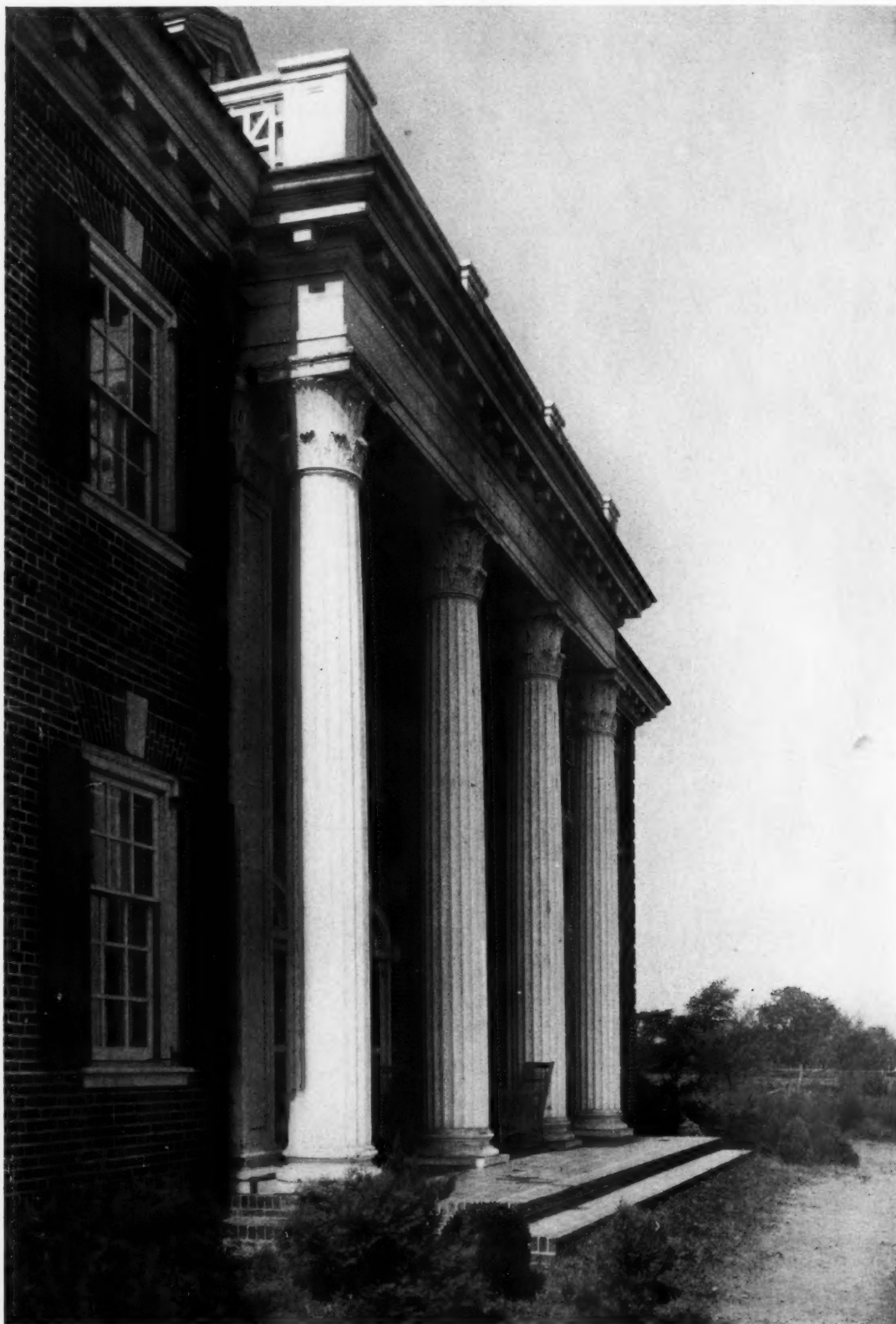


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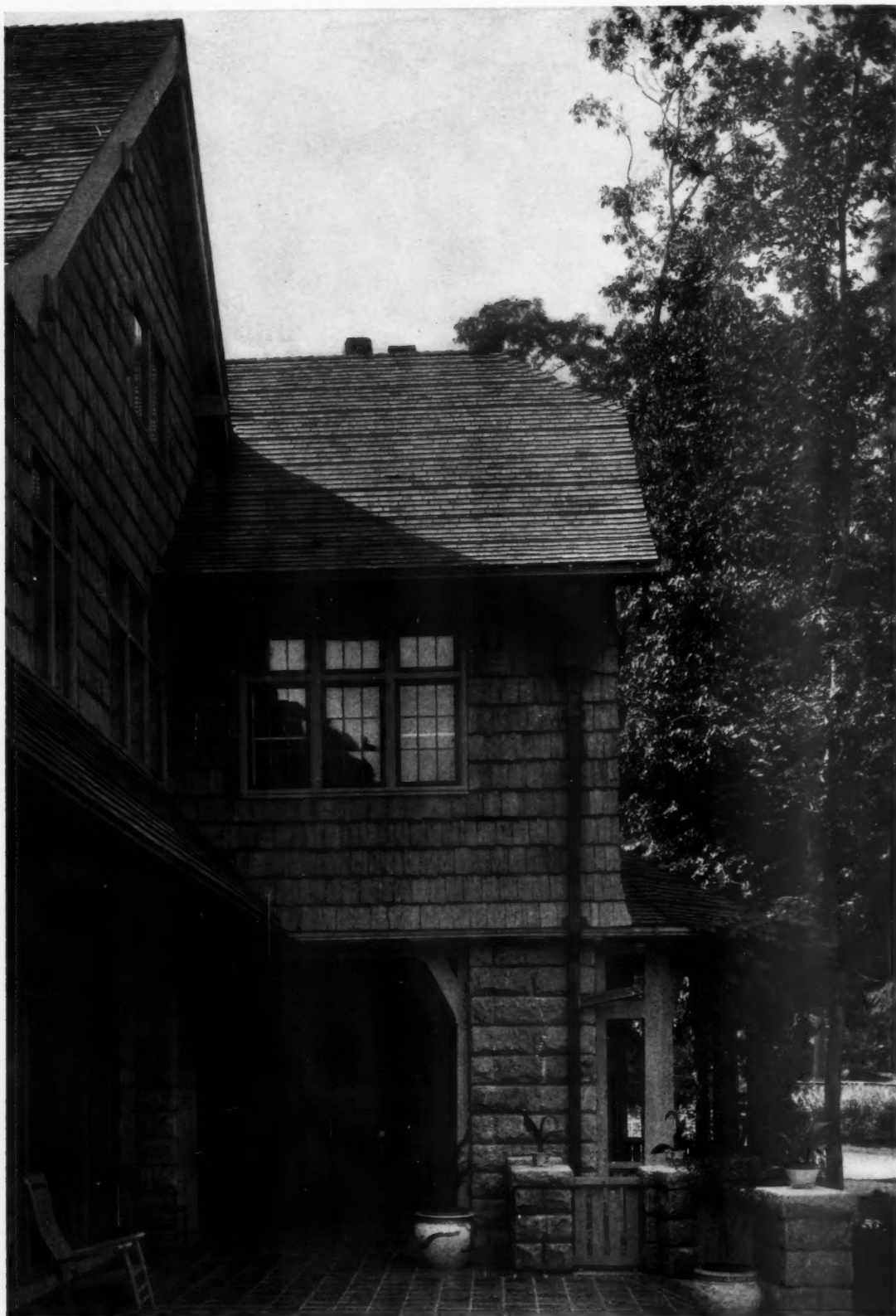
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HOUSE OF JOHN H. J. STEWART, ESQ., COLD SPRING HARBOR, L. I., N. Y.

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(See text for other illustrations and floor plans of this house)



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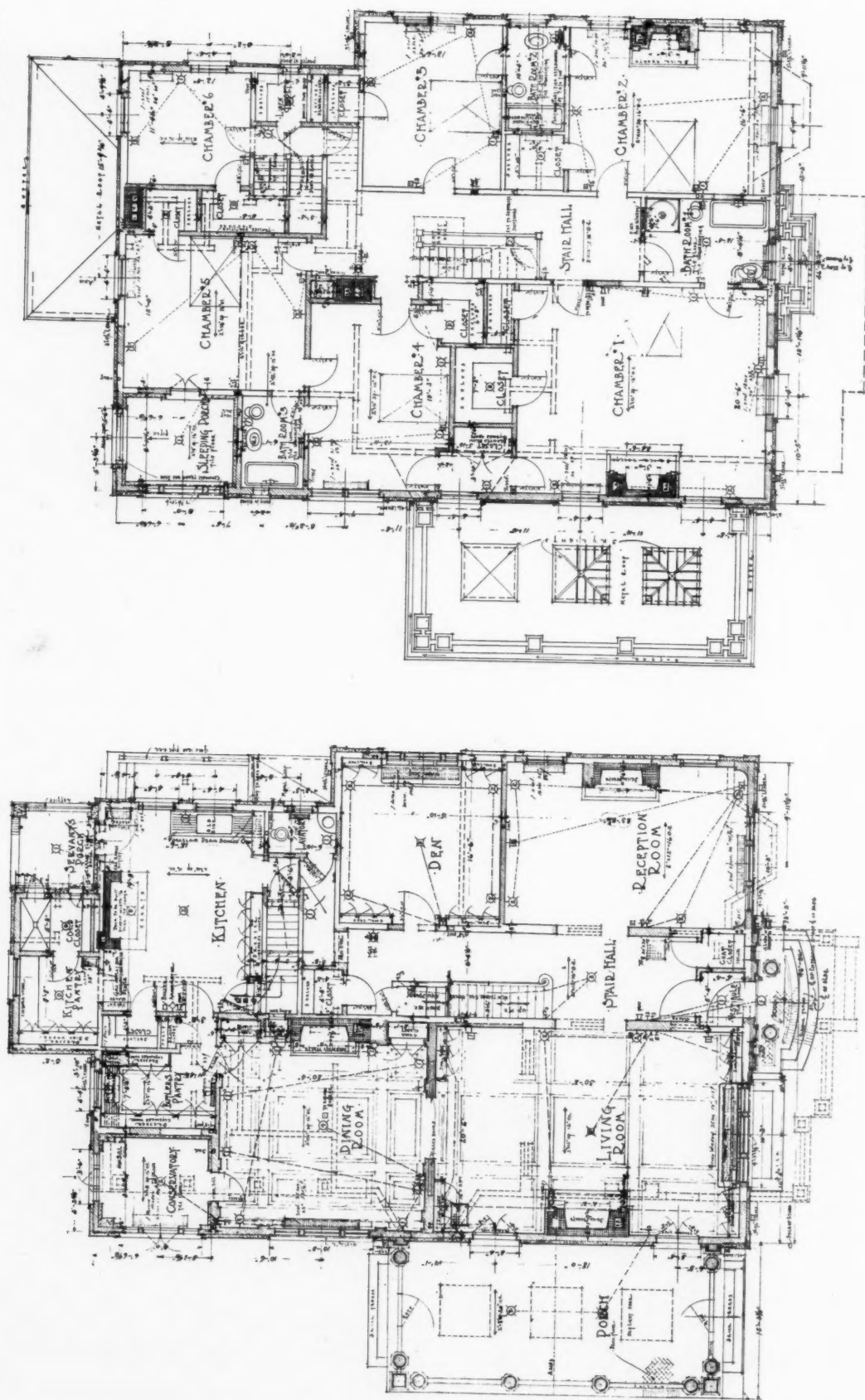
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ALTERATIONS TO HOUSE OF MRS. P. C. THOMAS, ROME, N. Y.

MESSRS. NELSON & VAN WAGENEN, ARCHITECTS

(See text for other illustrations of this house)



ALTERATIONS TO HOUSE OF MRS. P. C. THOMAS, ROME, N. Y.
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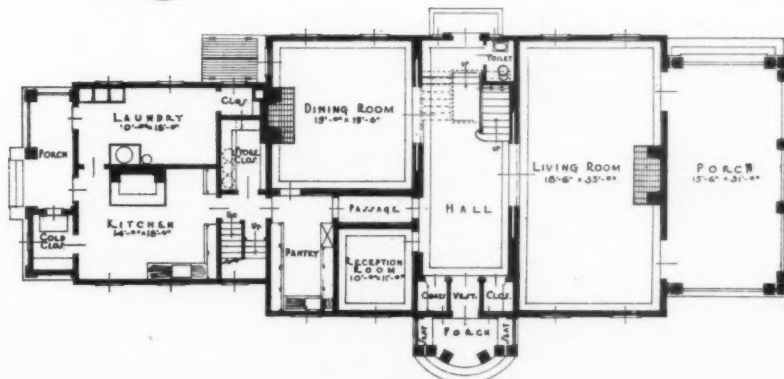
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HOUSE OF MRS. S. J. CHASE, COLD SPRING HARBOR, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.

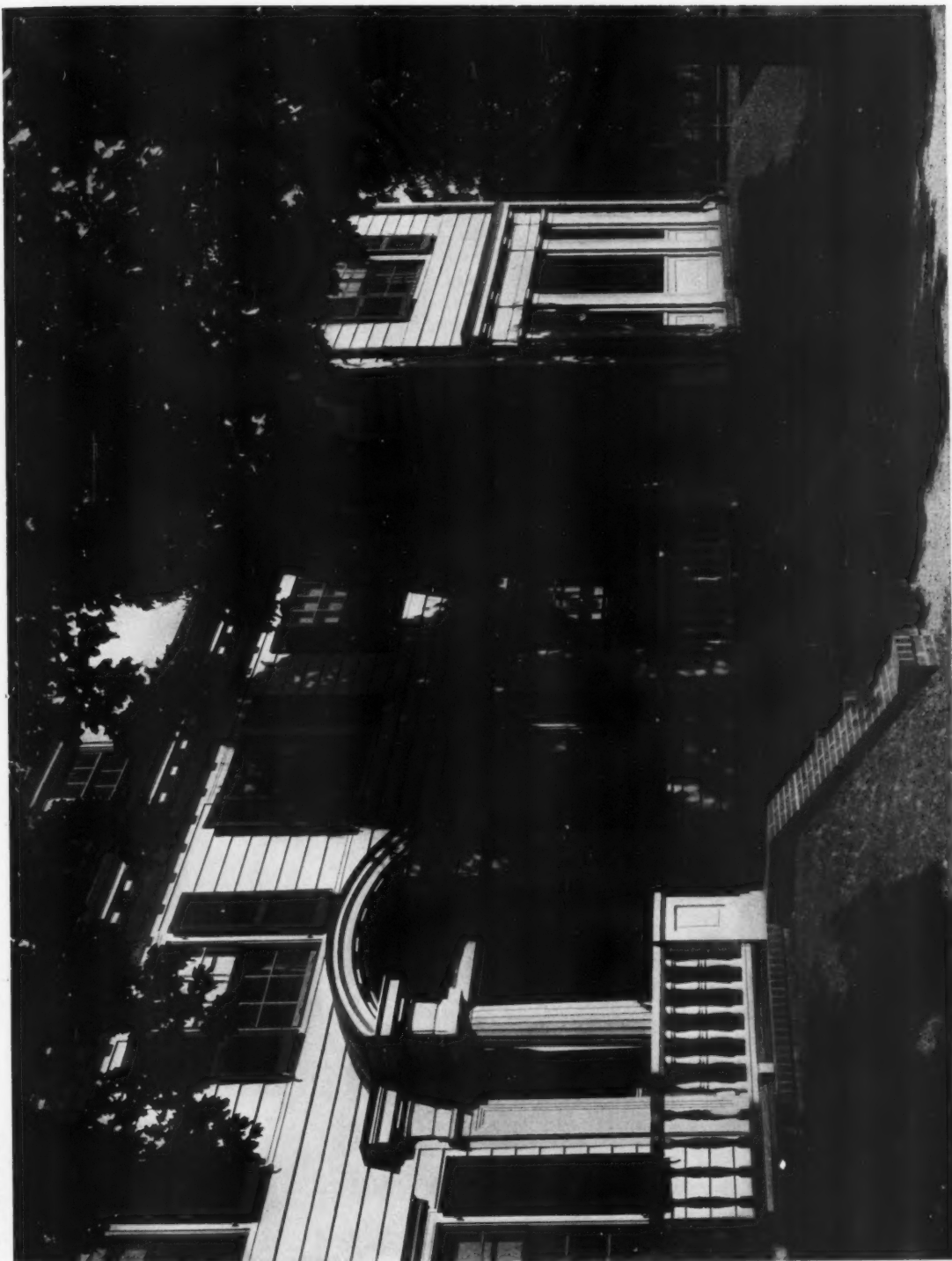
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HOUSE OF MRS. C. W. WHIPPLE, MASSAPEQUA, L. I., N. Y.

MESSRS. NELSON & VAN WAGENEN, ARCHITECTS

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HOUSE OF MRS. C. W. WHIPPLE, MASSAPEQUA, L. I., N. Y.

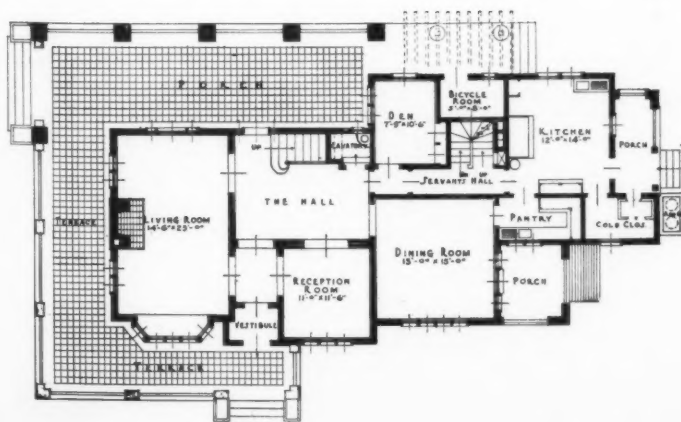
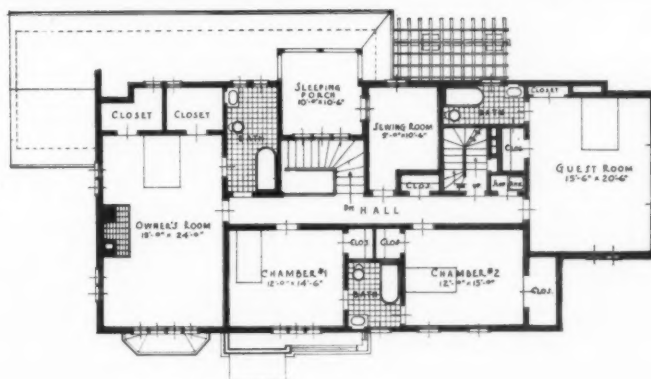
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HOUSE OF MRS. JAMES P. OLNEY, ROME, N. Y.
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HOUSE OF MRS. JAMES P. OLNEY,
ROME, N. Y.



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AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF EDUCATING THE LAYMAN ADOPTED BY THE CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER, A.I.A.

IT seems to be pretty generally conceded that only through the enlightenment of those to whom architects must look for employment may they reasonably expect the terms of that employment to ever improve to an extent that will eventually make possible the production of the best work. In fact, there can be little doubt but that one of the most serious problems now confronting the profession is the selection of proper and effective methods of educating the public regarding the architect's functions. Various efforts have been made both by individuals and organizations to create a better understanding and more thorough and general appreciation of the architect's work, and varying degrees of success have attended these efforts. Many chapters have done likewise and the American Institute of Architects, recognizing the importance of the matter, appointed a Committee on Public Information some four years ago, and since that time efficient service has been rendered in correcting erroneous statements appearing in the public press, and giving information of an

authoritative character concerning the practice of architecture, whenever the opportunity offered. In addition to this, individual members of the profession have, from time to time, delivered public addresses on various phases of architectural practice, and have written articles of an educational nature for publication in popular and semi-popular papers and magazines. These efforts and the methods employed are, however, besides being open in some cases to certain objections, more or less casual and indirect, and the results attending them may perhaps be expected to partake somewhat of the same characteristics.

There is, on the other hand, nothing indirect about the method of enlightening the public (concerning the services which architects are presumed to render their clients), lately employed by the Central New York Chapter of the Institute. It may be illustrated by the following "copy" clipped from the advertising section of the Syracuse, N. Y., *Post Standard* of January 8th, 1916:

INVESTMENT COUNSEL

An Owner's interest in new buildings or alterations extends beyond the immediate proceeds. The Architect should be able to advise the investor as to the probable *future value* and *future profits* of the enterprise. Such advice should be based upon knowledge of the trend of *population, industry, commerce* and *transportation*, as illustrated in the past and as indicated for the future by developments in *municipal boundaries, public service* and *private enterprises*.

The Architect should derive from such knowledge a conclusion as to the type of development whose *profit will survive anticipated changes in environment and relative location*, or whose *conversion* into other forms or use will be *economical*.

Such conclusions are *part of the service to the client*.

CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER

American Institute of Architects

The thought first suggested is, of course, that this is a departure from the rules of conduct laid down for the guidance of practicing architects, and as such is unethical; but if a close analysis is made it seems likely that this thought will be dispelled. Certainly it is the profession at large and not the individual that it is sought to assist (and that will reap the benefit if any accrues), by the methods of educating the public here employed. In other words, this Chapter is apparently bearing the expense of an educa-

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tional campaign, in the interest of all practitioners. Indeed, as far as the advertising aspect of the matter goes, there is probably less reason for criticism than in the case of the individual practitioner who writes signed articles for the daily papers or popular magazines on some phase of architecture, which is presumably of direct interest to readers of the periodical in question. The same thing might be said of the architect who delivers public addresses on various phases of architectural practice. In these cases the contributions to the cause of education often bear close resemblance to personal advertisements, when circulated among or delivered before potential clients, but no such suspicion can attach to a dignified explanation of an architect's functions by a representative body of architects, whose personnel is not disclosed. Of course, the Committee on Public Information of the Institute could and would in all probability give the information contained in this advertisement, if it was consulted, or if opportunity was offered it to do so, but it is questionable whether these opportunities are offered with sufficient frequency to result in the public's early or complete enlightenment. If, on the other hand, Chapters throughout the country follow the

example of the Central New York Chapter, and place their messages continually before the people through the means of the press, dwelling, in the order of their importance, upon the various phases of architectural practice that it is essential for the public to comprehend, there could be no doubt that within a few years at the longest, the public would have an understanding of the functions and an appreciation of the ideals of the architect far superior to anything that can ever be reasonably hoped for, if the methods heretofore in practice are alone followed.

It would undoubtedly be an error of the gravest nature to recede in any degree from the high standard of ethics prescribed by the American Institute, and followed by the leading architects of this country regardless of their affiliations, but a propaganda carried on in the names of the Chapters of the Institute or other recognized bodies of architects along the lines that are suggested by the action of the Central New York Chapter, would not, so far as can be seen, mean in any sense a lowering of the standards of practice. On the contrary, such a course might conceivably produce exactly the opposite effect, by securing the co-operation of enlightened clients.





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RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

FAILURE TO PERFORM BUILDING CONTRACT

(*Georgia.*)—Collins Brothers Company v. Georgia Hotel Company is an injunction proceeding brought by an hotel corporation against a contracting concern to enjoin the latter from interfering with the construction of a hotel building in the city of Savannah. The facts were that the Georgia Hotel Company entered into a contract with the contracting concern for the construction of a hotel to cost \$335,000, of which \$215,000 was to be paid in cash and \$120,000 in bonds of the hotel company. Payments were to be made upon monthly certificates of the architects, to the extent of 90 per cent. of the value of the materials furnished and labor performed. All work and materials delivered on the premises which were to form a part of the completed work, were to be considered the property of the owner, and were not to be removed without his consent or without the architect's order, but the contractor was to have the right to remove surplus materials, tools, etc., after the completion of the work. The work was to be completed by September 15, 1913, and upon a failure in that respect the contractor was to pay to the owner the sum of \$100 per day, until the contract was completed, as liquidated damages. The contractor was to be in personal charge of the work, but under the architect's supervision. He was at all times to furnish sufficient skilled men, materials of proper quality and perform all work with promptness and diligence. Failure in performance of the work was to operate as a forfeiture of the contract, giving hotel company the right to take over the work and construction of the building. The contracting concern failed and quit work on the hotel premises. The architect for the hotel company served proper notice and then made an effort to take over the work. Agents

of the contracting concern refused to turn over the premises, and in one instance a representative of the hotel company was ordered from the premises at the point of a pistol. The present injunction was issued by the Superior Court of Chatham County at the instance of the hotel company. The construction company sought to dissolve the same and the court in holding the injunction to be proper said that under the terms of the contract it was the privilege of the owners to take possession of the property and complete the work. (*Collins Bros. Co., v. Georgia Hotel Co., 83 S. E. 661.*)

BUILDING CONTRACTS

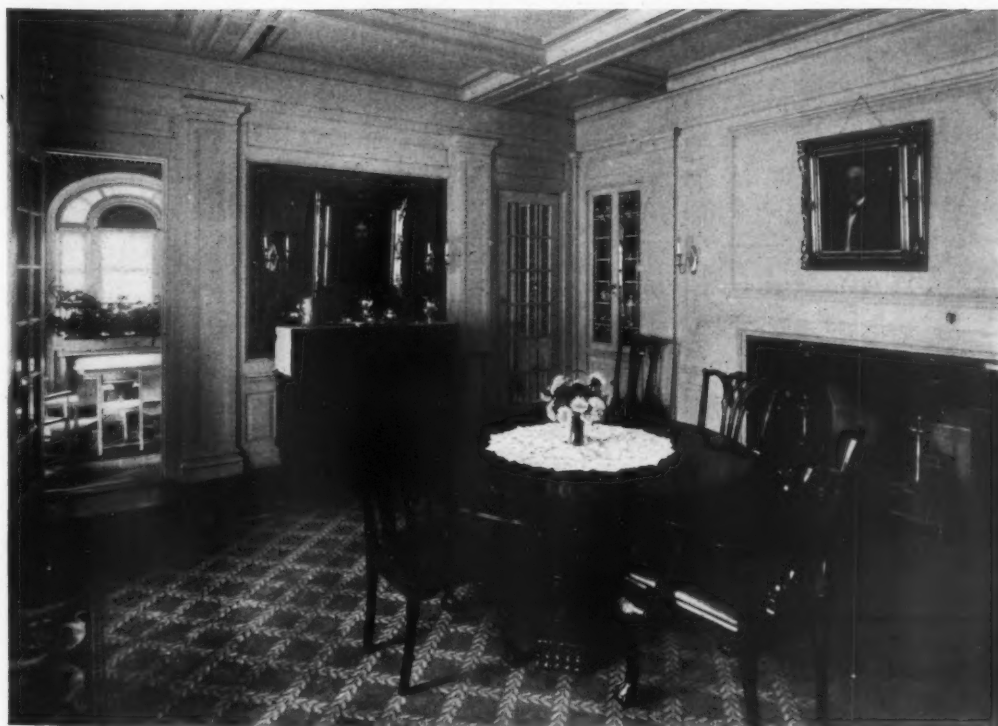
(*New York.*)—A building contractor's failure to complete the contract did not preclude him from recovering for extra work, labor and materials outside of and beyond the scope of the contract, furnished at defendant's special instance and request.

A building contract in the main contract contained no provision regarding extra work, but attached thereto were six distinctive sets of specifications covering electric work, painting, carpentering, etc. In the specifications covering carpentering there was a provision that no extra work would be paid for unless the price had been previously decided upon and the work ordered by the architect. Held, that this applied only to the work covered by that particular set of specifications.

Where a building contractor failed to complete a contract with defendant, the measure of damages was the difference between the contract price and the actual cost to defendant of completion. It was error to allow defendant to recover the entire expense of repairing and correcting faults, errors and omissions, without deducting the contract price. (*Along-the-Hudson Co. v. Ayres. 156 N. Y. S. 56.*)



LIVING ROOM



DINING ROOM

ALTERATIONS TO HOUSE OF MRS. P. C. THOMAS, ROME, N. Y.
MESSRS. NELSON & VAN WAGENEN, ARCHITECTS

CURRENT NEWS AND COMMENT

National Association of Builders' Exchanges

The annual convention of the National Association of Builders' Exchanges, will be held in the Emerson Hotel, Baltimore, February 22, 23 and 24.

Bartlett's Statues on the New York Public Library

By degrees, the Fifth avenue facade of the New York Public Library is assuming the final aspect intended by the architects.

For a considerable period, one of the six figures, Philosophy, has held a lonesome vigil on his pedestal and one wondered how long he would have to stand there without company. Later he was joined by a figure of Romance, and now the remaining figures are being placed and we are able to judge of the intended effect. These figures, eleven feet in height, are placed directly over the six columns of the main entrance.

Paul Wayland Bartlett, the sculptor, working under the direction of the architects, Currere & Hastings, has been engaged on this work for a period of some six years and the result is pronounced a very dignified addition to our municipal art.

Smoke Abatement and Electrification in Chicago

The report of the Chicago Association of Commerce Committee of investigation on smoke abatement and electrification of railway terminals in Chicago has been presented and printed. It constitutes a bulky volume of 1,177 pages and is probably the most thorough and exhaustive inquiry into these subjects that has ever been made. The report is divided into six parts and an appendix, and includes over five hundred tables, seven hundred and twenty illustrations, and a large number of articles on special topics relating to the inquiry.

Considering first the important subject of

smoke abatement the report reviews the literature on the subject, which includes similar reports put forth by other cities. The various means of abating smoke, physical, mechanical and chemical, are discussed at length. Sources of atmospheric pollution other than smoke are also considered.

The investigation and analysis of all the various smoke producing conditions and their influence on the general health, brings the subject to the electrification of the city's railway system as necessary in order to do away with the locomotive and other smoke producing motive powers.

The Commission has been in existence since 1911, and this report is evidence of the very thorough investigation that has been made.

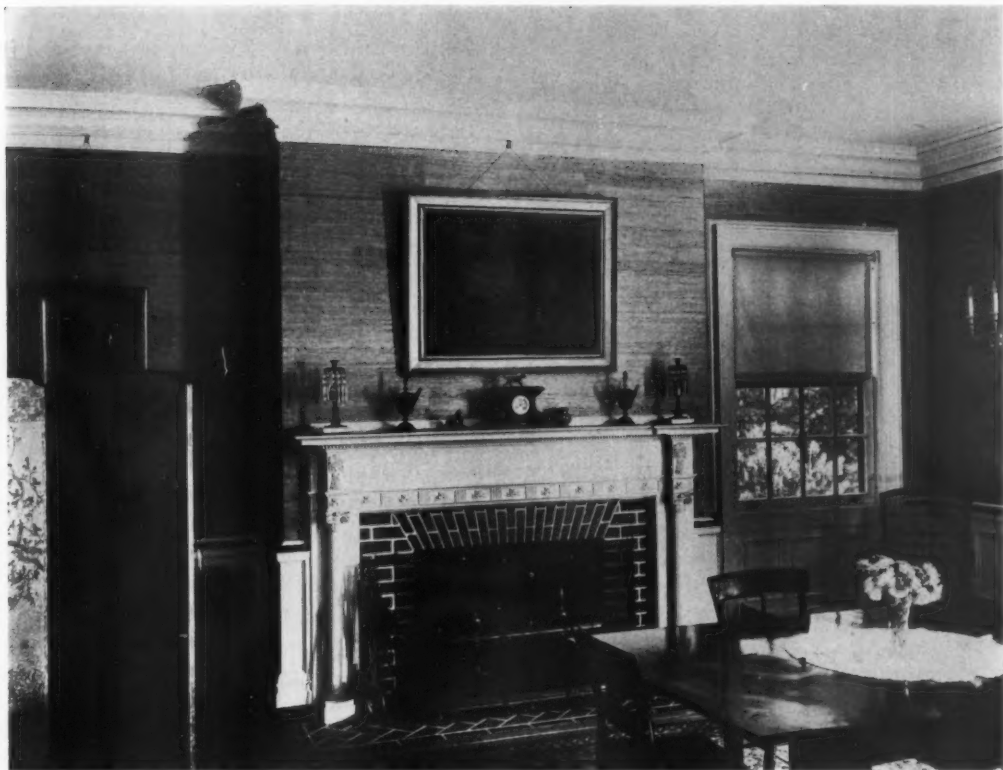
The price of the book is \$6.00, and it may be obtained by addressing H. F. Miller, business manager, Chicago Association of Commerce, 10 South LaSalle street.

An Interesting Pictorial Record of Old Work in Architecture

What proved to be a most interesting feature of the recent exhibition of the Pittsburgh Architectural Club, was a section devoted to old photographs and prints of city streets and of buildings that have been demolished.

The rapid growth of our American cities is resulting in ruthless razing of many structures of both historical and artistic interest. It is a source of satisfaction to note that the various architectural societies and chapters of the Institute have interested themselves in preserving some record of these fast disappearing structures.

The New Orleans and Philadelphia chapters have shown commendable activity in this direction, and the work of the Pittsburgh Architectural Club in gathering together and exhibiting pictures and prints of this class is an example that we believe could be with much advantage followed by similar organizations.



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A Correction

In our illustration of the prize winning design for the Carnegie Library at Sacramento, Cal., the architect's name was set down as Rexford. The correct attribution should have been to Loring P. Rixford.

BOOK NOTES

HEART OF EUROPE. By Ralph Adams Cram.

Full cloth, 325 pages. Size 5½x8, Illustrated. Price \$2.50. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Every architect whose privilege it is to read this book will experience a feeling of pride and satisfaction that it was written by a member of his profession.

The Heart of Europe, now the theatre of war, a territory in area about half that of our State of Texas, was responsible for all that Europe was to the world for the thousand years following the Fall of Rome.

In this comparatively small section all that was great in art had its birth and grew to the magnificence that we now know. Here was to be found "all the splendid pride and the open-handed beneficence of the burghers who loved their towns and bent the rebellious masonry to their will, working it with a stony lace and embroidery to the glory of trade and civic spirit."

All of these things that shed a halo of art over this wonderful Heart of Europe, that caused even the shallowest mind to dwell in reverence on their beauties are unfortunately either a thing of the past or threatened with a danger so imminent as to inspire a feeling of dumb despair over their possible destruction.

Mr. Cram knows the Heart of Europe not only from the point of view of the highly trained artist in his profession, but with a strong and deeply rooted knowledge of the history of the countries and the religious impulses that created much of the art he so eloquently describes.

As might be expected from one so reverential in his attitude toward the noble monuments of architecture, he loses the fine sense of neutrality in his strictures against the hand that he considers so largely responsible for this destruction.

As it has always been maintained that art has no nationality and that its preservation

was the first duty of whoever possessed it, its destruction even on the plea of war's necessity cannot always be patiently considered. Just what will grow in place of that which has been cast down, no man yet knows. It cannot well be in any sense a restoration, as to quote from the chapter in this book on A Sanctuary laid waste;—"The art of this land, or these lands if you like,—should be so considered, not as an interesting and even stimulating by-product of social, industrial and political evolution, with only an accidental relationship to them, and only an empirical interest for the men of today, but as the most perfect material expression of the great reality that existed through and by these agencies that were in themselves nothing; the character that emerged through the turmoil of human activity as it shows itself in the men and women of the time and expresses itself in their art."

Out of this crucible grew all these things, and to restore them would be in every sense an impossibility.

Books have been written devoted to the subjects discussed by Mr. Cram, and doubtless many more are in the making. None can have greater appeal than this one by an architect, high in his profession and with scholarly ability and eloquence to present the subject in a manner that carries conviction and inspires a desire to prevent at all cost further vandalism.

Personals

Mr. Percy K. Simpson, architect, has opened an office in the Bank of Carthage Building, Carthage, Mo., and would be pleased to receive manufacturers' catalogues.

Mr. Wm. C. Weston, architect, formerly located in Birmingham, Ala., has removed to Detroit, Mich., and has opened offices for the practice of his profession in the Kresge Building in that city.

Messrs. Hentz & Reid, architects, announce that Mr. R. S. Adler is now an active member of the firm, which in future will be known as Hentz, Reid & Adler, with offices at 932-933 Candler Building, Atlanta, Ga.

